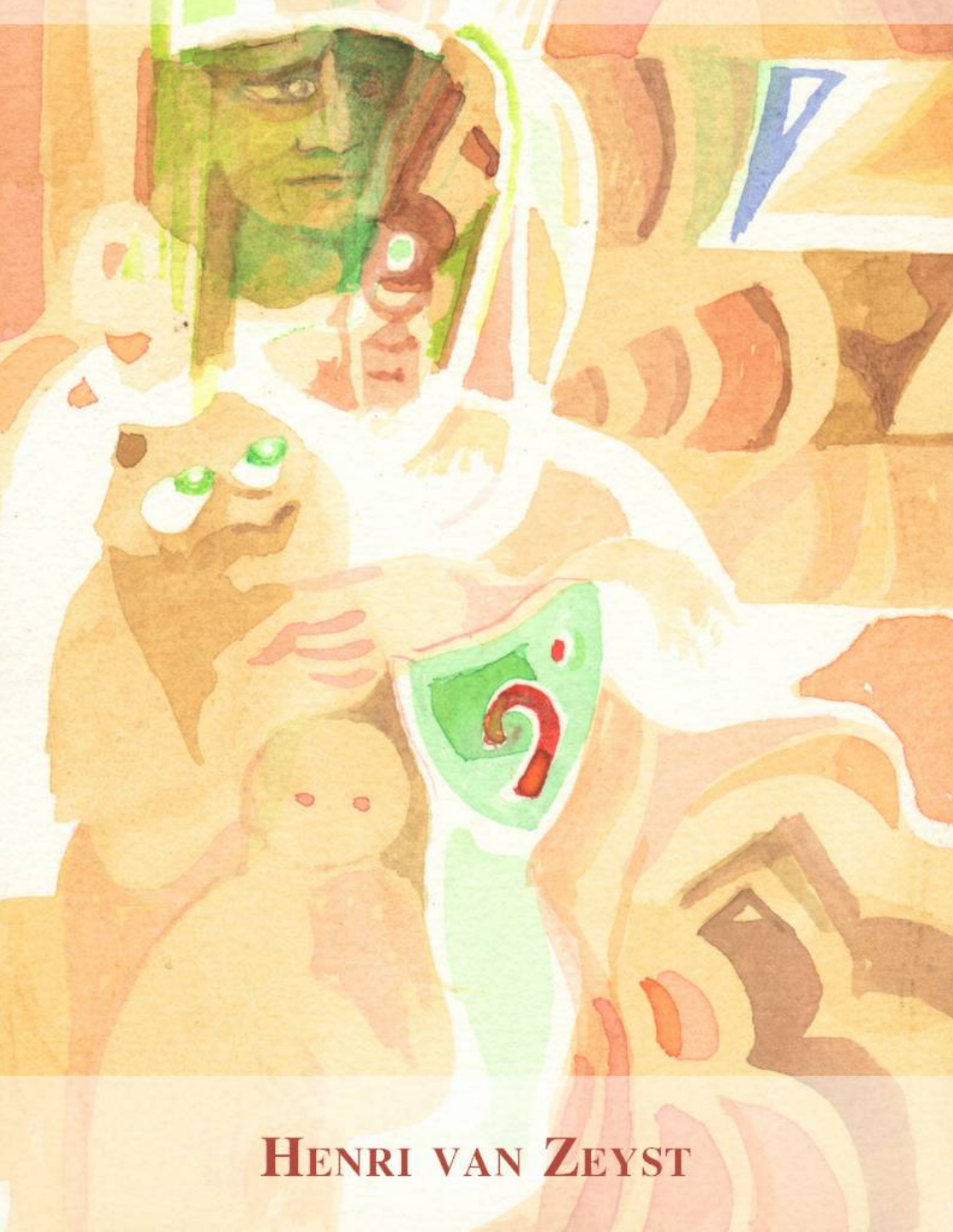


IN SEARCH OF TRUTH



HENRI VAN ZEYST

In Search of Truth

Henry van Zeyst

1980

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TO CHULANGANEE WHO SAW AND UNDERSTOOD THESE
FIRST

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Preamble

“I came in search of truth, and they gave me a bowl of rice”.

In these following, pages there is a search for truth; but not as it might be understood generally: for it is not possible to search for something one does not know. And it is too obvious to say it: We have not understood what truth is.

Truth is not something that exists in itself. Truth is not an object, and therefore cannot be the object of a search. It is rather like beauty and love, which can be experienced, but which cannot be made, or shown, or taught. But the understanding of what is, is an experiencing which is true. No disciplining, no culture, no tradition, no religious observance, no metaphysical analysis can give that understanding, which is not knowledge but which is the actual experiencing in an unconditioned freedom, which gives a sensitivity, open to learn, ready to receive, and to perceive. It is not learning with a view to acquiring knowledge, but a learning which knows of no goal, of no control or conformity, yet which is a simple awareness to understand. Without prejudice, without conditioning, without aiming, there is a freedom which comes from silence.

When the mind is silent, and not disturbed by thinking about a technique of searching for an object one does not know, in that silent awareness there is a direct understanding of what is, of the futility of an “I” searching for the truth of “non-I”, of the stripping of all the paraphernalia used in dressing up a void.

That understanding, that meditation of insight (*vipassanā*), is the truth which has no objective ideal, which is no subjective achievement, but which is an actual experiencing without comparing, classifying, or retaining, which has no memory of the past, no ideal in the future, and no “self” in the present.

This is obviously not a book to be read through, or to be used for reference, alphabetically, in a month of sittings, or when the mood moves the mind. It is more than a year of thoughts, and one for every day, although that was its beginning.

It won't be easy reading, and at the end of a day's thought there will be felt a need to rest, and to forget to think. If the mind feels uneasy, it will find out before long that one's own thinking makes one ill, creates all one's problems, causes all one's conflicts. And that would be a wonderful awakening from delusion, whatever else reality may be.

Thoughts have been made into words, and words have been said before, but here they are not quoted. A quotation may be literally correct, but in a new environment it may appear twisted, seeking the convenience of a new fitting. Thus, words have been said before, but the meaning in their present life must always be new. “Whether there is a Tathāgata (a supremely enlightened Buddha who has found the truth and the path for himself) or whether there is no Tathāgata, it always remains a fact that all that is composed will be decomposed (*sabbe saṅkhāra anicca*), that every complex is a conflict (*sabbe saṅkhāra dukkha*), that all that is, is not (*sabbe dhamma anatta*)”. And in that realisation there is a freedom of deliverance which cannot be desired, which is not an object of search and striving, which is not at the end of the path, but which is the ending, the cessation of becoming, which is the end of the conflict (*bhava nirodho Nibbānaṃ*).

Prelude

In the beginning was the thought
And the thought was made word
And the word was God-Almighty, my “self”,
Begotten by thought and creating the ideal.

In the beginning was the thought,
The memory of a dead experience,
Brought back to life as the word,
Conceived by thought as an idea.

In that conception was born the ideal
For thought to continue,
For self to become,
For craving to arise.

In that conception was born the conflict
between the past and yet to come,
Between the word and the fact,
Between the ideal and the real.

In that conflict, it was the ideal that won:
For, without the ideal there could be no conflict,
As without the ideal there could be no security
And without the ideal there can be no “self”.

In that conflict, then, there is only the “self”,
The ideal created by the word,
The word begotten by the thought,
The thought projected from the past.

Thus, in the ending of thought which is “self”
Lies the ending of conflict, now.
Thus it was in the beginning and is new,
When thought is free from the word.

1. Abandonment

This is not the same as self-denial, renunciation, self-mortification; for a denial of self has still the “self” as its object; self-mortification has still the “self” as its goal, albeit on a higher level as a super-soul or God-ideal. Abandonment has no end, no purpose, no aim, because it is selfless, it lacks the centre of motive, and thus there is no self-immolation, no sacrifice.

Only a simple and innocent mind can abandon, for it has no attachments, no beliefs, no ideals. Simplicity has no end; it just is not complex. In seeing it does not see beyond with a purpose, with a claim, with an aim. A purpose is not in what is seen; it is an ideal, a concept beyond, a projection of “self”. And thus a simple mind, which is not complex, which does not see beyond, which does not idealise with desire, can truly see things as they are in themselves, and experience a beauty which is not merely a matter of proportion, form or taste. In experiencing just what is, there is abandonment of the false, of the concept, of the image, of the ideal. And in the freedom from the false there is the truth. In seeing this truth even in the false, there is a freedom from the ideal, from thought, from memory, from projection, from the “self”, which cannot come through denial, but only in abandonment which sees and understands the false as false, and hence the truth in the false.

In that utter simplicity there is a direct contact in which there is neither self nor other. And that is love.

When there is love there is also immediate action, not a calculated reaction, but a spontaneous expression of gentleness and

understanding, of humility and patience, of cooperation and creation.

In that love there is no self in opposition, no conflict with others, no striving for attainment, no escape from the undesirable, but just the abandonment of all that self has created in its own image.

2. About

When one is confronted with a serious problem, a claim, a challenge which requires a response without delay, the first question we put to ourselves is: What can we do about it? Apart from being a qualifying adverb, it expresses a relation of place, time, circumstance or manner, without giving any deeper understanding of whatever is affirmed or denied.

It is the first reaction, intended to do away with the intrusion, even before understanding it. Any claim or challenge is considered undesirable, as it tends to upset the placid flow of security which has been created by the mind to protect its existence, continuance and expansion. And thus we want to do something about it.

With this conditioned attitude the approach is not only cautious, but definitely hostile, prejudiced, resisting. And in now meeting the problem there is the first consideration given to the safeguarding of the "self". Thus there is no attempt at understanding the problem (if any) in itself; but there is the immediate reaction to do something about it. This reaction is a reinforcement of the position taken by the "self"; and thought, which is the accumulation of memories, brings to the fore some remembrances of earlier relationship in different circumstances of place and time. The new situation is now confronted with those past experiences, judged and classified accordingly, till the mind is satisfied that it has done something about it.

But the entire process was one of prejudice, of resistance, of opposition, of conflict and conquest, while at no stage was there

an openness of mind without reaction from the past. The contact therefore was coloured and out of focus from the beginning without understanding, without the affection of learning, not about it, but what it is, and what “I” am in this process of reaction. In this learning there is no problem, there is no focus on an answer, because there is no “self”.

3. Absolute

The human mind wants permanency: a permanent soul, a eternal life, absolute truth, God everlasting, because the mind wants to cling to something fixed, something that will not pass, not perish, not decay, not cease to be; because only then can there be security in existence.

It is fear of the impermanent, of the new, of the unknown, that creates this clinging to the ideal which is permanent, to the finality which is absolute. Only in the absolute there need be no fear of relationship. It is the “soul” which wants to be absolute, the individual which wants to be the all, the soul which wants to be the super-soul, God.

Is truth absolute? If truth is relative, that is, dependent on conditions, can there be a time, an occasion, when there is no truth? Thus we have made of truth an object, and call it objective truth, absolute truth, which is not dependent on our observation. But even that concept of objective truth is still a mental concept, that is, an idea, a thought, and therefore not independent, not objective, not absolute. Is truth, then, subjective, relatively dependent on the subject, on the mind, on the idea? Such thought should be “yes” today, and “no” tomorrow. Can that be truth?

Is there any truth at all, apart from the human experience of truth? Is truth to be defined? And if it is defined, is that truth? Is truth not rather that complete freedom from conditioning which is the experiencing of relationship without dependence on the past in memory, without projection of the ideal into the future, a complete experiencing without thought of the experiencer or

the experienced, and thus without the opposite of relationship in conflict, and hence absolute and always now, absolute and never static, absolute and never final?

4. Abstraction (1)

Something of a vision, something separated from particular characteristics. It is a mental concept and not even that, for no mind can conceive the purely theoretical, the purely spiritual. God is said to be a pure spirit, but to conceive him one has to clothe him in a human body, endow him with human authority and majesty and all the other characteristics in a superlative degree which cannot be known: knowledge becomes omniscience, power becomes omnipotence, man becomes divine. One can pretend to believe in it, to cooperate with its designs, to work with it as in pure mathematics; one can presume it to have moral or ideological value; one can profess allegiance to it, religiously or politically. And yet it is a fiction, an imposterous swindle, a non-existent impossibility, to which one submits, for which one slaves and denies oneself, which becomes the sole purpose and goal of our existence.

We have given names to this abstraction, lofty and vague in its various imaginary aspects. In the name of the nation we stand united, salute the flag and call it patriotism. In the name of religion we bow down, worship an idol and call it God. In the name of society we restrain ourselves, practise morality and call it virtue. In the name of philosophy we follow a system, follow a thought and call it truth. In the name of meditation we seek isolation and satisfaction and call it ecstasy.

But it is always the individual, the concrete actor in this play, who seeks to forget his fear of loneliness, who tries to bolster up his courage in company, who seeks to drown his ignorance in faith and hope, who seeks to satisfy his desires and calls it love,

who attempts to solve the problems of the world, so that he can forget his own, inner, private conflict.

All abstraction is the stripping of an individual of all his characteristics, and then clothing that same individual in the colours of the rainbow, so that I may not face and not know that individual who is myself.

5. Abstraction (2)

The process of stripping an idea of its concrete accompaniments is going on all the time, for it enables the mind to classify events, place them in some same category for easy reference, but without understanding or insight. That is the work of memory, the only way mind has been able to invent in order to preserve an experience. One wants to preserve an experience, because of the intensity of the perception thereof; but, as perceiving, which is the actual experience, cannot be preserved, an image is created in memory and that is stored up to build up the reference library called “self”.

This process of abstraction has never been so severe as with perceptions which defy all description, such as truth and beauty and love. These experiences are so intense that there is no place for an interpreter or experiencer to make a record. A repetition is often attempted by creating similar conditions, but conditioning can only lead to frustration, confusion, misinterpretation and conflict.

It is only when thought is utterly silent of preconceived ideas, without desire for capturing an experience, without craving for storing and creating a memorable event, without will for expanding and extending a fictitious “self”, it is in that silence of awareness that truth of what is can reveal itself, not as an abstract ideal, but as a living experience of love.

Why should there be love without an ideal? An ideal is always a projection of thought, an attempt to make a memory continue in the future. Such ideal therefore is only an extension of “self”

and the apparent ideal of love is only self-love. When there is no separation, no opposition, no ideal, there will be no self-love. And then there is no conflict.

6. Abstraction (3)

Most of our thoughts are reactions kept alive in memory. Now, a living experience cannot be kept alive in experiencing, and thus the mind lays hold of it, and in an attempt to preserve, to continue and to project it, the mind forms an idea of the experience to be stored in the memory. Such idea, of course, is shorn of all its vitality and individuality, and is preserved with other such memories, registered and classified to become the possession of the "I", in which the "I" can live and continue to live.

Classification is possible only after subtraction and deduction of what the mind considers unessential and unsatisfactory, the remainder to be grouped as an abstraction. The idea, thus stripped of its concrete and vital accompaniments, becomes a dead memory to be resurrected as an ideal with hopes and desires to feed the projected "I" in its continuance.

The mind is kept alive by such abstractions as happiness, satisfaction, fear. But none of these abstracts have any independent life. Happiness is derived from something. Satisfaction is caused by some kind of indulgence. Fear cannot exist by itself; one is afraid of something.

Hence, instead of searching for happiness, or trying to escape from fear, it would be more to the point finding out intelligently what is it that we hope to obtain from happiness and through what is this happiness to be achieved? What is the object of fear, and can escaping ever lead to the understanding of the object causing fear?

There must be clarity in the mind, and not a vague search for

an abstraction, or a wild escape from the unknown. Only with a clear mind which is not conditioned by tradition and belief, and that means with a mind that is free from memory and ideal, can there be understanding of the object of the problem. And in that lies also the solution.

7. Accumulation

This may be of many types and it varies from stamp-collecting as a hobby to that collection of merit which passes for virtue. And in between there is the eagerness in accumulating property, knowledge, power in their many forms, both in the field of science and religion, of sociology and politics. In fact, there is hardly, any sphere of action which is not dictated and conditioned by this spirit of accumulation.

Whether it is the accumulation of knowledge as information, of property and wealth, of virtue in spiritual life, of influence in relationship, of power in politics, it always arises from the background of fear. Without knowledge I am lost, without virtue I am doomed, without influence I am useless, without power I am nobody. Without accumulation I would not know what to do and how to do it; and thus I rely on the accumulation of the past either in the book-knowledge of professionals, or in the memories of earlier experience; I rely on my family-name, race or nation, on my father's money, on my educational qualifications, or on the strength of my muscles, on the beauty of my wife's face, on the brightness of my children.

But apart from that, is there any security in the structure of my life? And how safe is all this accumulation? Still it is the only thing one can do in the face of total dissolution. If the spiritual world of faith and idealism is understood as wishful thinking of an "I" to continue, if the material world of strife and conflict can only lead to isolation and opposition, if the many ways of escape through accumulation prove futile and childish, it is time to cease

running away from what is, in an attempt at accumulating what is not.

The cessation of escaping through understanding what is, in relationship and love, is also the cessation of fear, of conflict, of the ego-centre which is the pivot of all gathering, preserving, desire, hope and craving, the building up of a fortress of security around an “ego” which is not!

8. Achievement

This has always the personal element at its centre. Even if a country gets a gold medal at the Olympic Games, it is always an individual effort and achievement. This personal element is the driving force of all action, of desire, of remembering, of projecting, of idealising, of identifying, of all search and striving. It is the observer in the centre who dominates and projects, who aims at continuance and security through achievement, attainment, success. Without continuance there can be no attainment of the ideal, and without attainment there is no security. The building up of this effort is based on reflexes from the memory which the mind stores up in order to continue, to attain, to achieve the ideal goal.

It is never clear to the mind what it wants, what is the precise nature of its ideal, for the ideal remains always as remote as the horizon. Yet striving for achievement is as necessary for thought as life itself, because this urge to attain, to acquire, to become, is the essence of “self”. Without striving there is no “self”; without desire there is no “I”.

Then how can the “self” overcome this desire to become, which is its very life? It cannot; for, every effort is a new ideal set-up for achievement. How could the “I” ever strive to attain “non-I”?

In attention and awareness of this entire process there is the understanding, the clarity, the vision, of the impotence of the will to still itself. But in the awareness of this, there is a stillness when striving ceases; when there is understanding that the truth

is not an ideal to be achieved, that all effort can lead only to “self”; and that there is no “self”.

In the cessation of striving, there is the cessation of willing to become. Then there is no conflict and no self. Then there is only peace which is stripped of all possessions and knowledge, which is not the end achieved, but the ending of striving.

9. Acquisition

What can be acquired is an object which has a subject at the receiving end. The recipient has a purpose and the object is the fulfilment. And thus there are the two poles united by and yet opposing one another in action. In their action of opposition there is striving to attain and to assimilate and the impulse to preserve one's own identity and enrich it with the new acquisition. All such action, therefore, is self-centred, egoistic, motivated, conditioned, lacking in understanding, based on exploitation, resulting in conflict.

Whether the object to be acquired is property, material or mental, or virtue, an ideal, or a concept of beauty or of truth, as long as it is an object of acquisition there is also the aim of achievement, of possession, of gratification, of self-enrichment, which is the origin and the basis of all conflict, the essence of all striving, craving and clinging.

When this striving to attain truth is understood as an ideal concept of the opposition, of a self seeking gratification and a concept of truth as a gratifying object, it will be understood that such striving is conflict; and in conflict there is no truth; in conflict there is contradiction, opposition, an urge to become, an escape from what is.

But when there is understanding of this entire process of acquisition, there is also an understanding of the inherent contradiction and conflict in this process. And when this process of acquisition is understood as conflict, then this understanding

is factual, is not acquired, is not of self, is not objective; and therefore it is true.

Truth is not to be attained, achieved, acquired; but in understanding there is truth. And without striving there is no goal, neither subject nor object. In truth there is no conflict.

10. Action (1)

Action is called that which has a result. Thus, we work, we act, for the sake of a result, for a purpose, for an end in view. Action is not important, but the result is. Action becomes a means to obtain a result. That means that the result, as an idea, is there already before the action. The entire process of activity is, therefore, of a projected mind, propelled towards action in the future, by a stimulus of the past. There is a memory of a result in the past, there is a desire of a result in the future, but there is no action in the present. At most there is a partially understood reaction, a process which can be performed better and more accurate by a computer. We feed the computer with earlier obtained information and data, set the machinery going towards the expected result, then press the button, and out pops the answer. Our action is confined to pressing the button; and even that is done in anticipation of an answer, which is a reaction to desire.

Both, the feeding of information which is memory, and the anticipation of a result which is desire, are the essentials constituting action. It is the dead self of the past memory meeting the unborn self of the future. Is greater confusion imaginable?

Now, is it possible to have action which is neither of the past nor the future, unconditioned by memory or by desire? Any action which is of the mind (*kamma-cetana*) is oriented towards the result (*vipāka*). The mind is the self which acts through memory and projects into the future. Is it possible to have action which is not an idea, a purpose, a means to an end? That is,

is there action without an actor? When the working of self-consciousness is laid bare, the mind cannot escape in memory or in desire, which are just ideas. The action which is not an escape is a pure action (*kriya*) without self-consciousness, and therefore without the projected result (*vipāka*).

11. Action (2)

That which is reaction, the result of purpose and intention, (that is) the effect of memory and attachment, (that is) the forecast of desire and ideal; such action is the bye-product of views, of conclusions, of knowledge. It is not increase of knowledge following a series of physical and mental activity. It is rather the activity which is the result and hence the reaction of such knowledge in the past, of such memory, of such building-up of the self-concept which is to be projected into the future to ensure the continuance, the security, the expansion of this idea without which there is no continuation possible.

This “self” is the outcome of the image, created by memory through selection, through ideology, through fear of insecurity. Thus it is the shadow of the image of the past which is now projected on the screen of the future as the ideal, neither of which is therefore a living actuality, even though we call it religion or sociology or politics.

In its relationship with and dependence on the past, this reactionary image of the “self” is the symbol of all our connections which we call culture, tradition, faith, society etc. and without which the “self” cannot survive or even exist for a moment.

To change all this is not possible through the introduction of a new ideology, through a revolution of thought or a reformation of religion. It is the process of thought which produces the “self” which has caused this chaos; and no change of chaos can produce order.

It is only in intelligence of perception that action which is

re-action can come to a standstill and thereby cease to produce more chaos. To see this in silence and perceive it without purpose is to see the truth: and from such perception arises an immediate understanding which has no ideal but only the necessity of direct action which is neither reaction, nor conflict.

12. Action (3)

Unless it is chaotic, action comes from skill; skill comes from knowledge; knowledge comes from memory; memory comes from thought; thought comes from ideas; ideas come from reflections about experiences of self and others.

Experiences of others are accepted on their authority; experiences of self are preserved as concepts in memory; and thus there is nowhere in this whole chain of activity any understanding, any intelligent perception, any vision of the motive of activity. It is just reaction which works like a clock, and which needs rewinding to keep going. The apparatus of this mental set-up consists of preserved memories which form the “I” with its foundations of traditions, beliefs, ideologies, organisations. The rewinding of this apparatus is done through projection into the future by promises, forecasts, hopes and fears, which are also ideas. There too, there is no intelligent understanding of the apparatus and its working, which is made up of ideas, moved by ideas and moving towards ideas.

When this is clearly perceived, there is bound to be a shock perception, as our entire life so far has been moving in this clockwork system. In perceiving, there are no ideas but only facts, and this will bring the entire process of thought to an end. When thinking as ideas and memories has ceased, there is a direct response to the facts of the present; and in the experiencing of that response, which is not a reaction to ideas, is the understanding and the solution of the problem with immediate intelligent action, not born of conflict, or of a projected “self”.

13. Action (4)

The result of thought is wilful action (*cetana*) and it is born of volition; it is not a pure action (*kriya*) which is complete in itself, but it is an action (*kamma*) which produces a result (*vipāka*). Whether it is good or bad, skilful or not (*kusala, akusala*), it is that type of activity which projects itself in repetitive rebirths in order to find completion in the ideal. Born of wilful thinking such action is based on thought which is a reflex of the past, on memory, on selection. Thus, such volitional activity is never complete in itself, and tends towards reproduction to find fulfilment and completion.

But there is another kind of action (*kriya*) which does not originate from thought, from memory, from volition; and which, therefore, does not tend towards completion in the future, which does not seek reproduction or rebirth, which has no concern for results. Being complete in itself it has no results beyond the immediate present. It is not born of thought and concept, and has therefore no ideal projection.

Such action, perfect in itself, and unconditioned by fear or desire, comes into being when thought is silent, when there is intelligent awareness of the need of action. Such action is the response to a need and has no thought of greed. Hence it is always new; it cannot continue, it gives no ground to clinging, and thus there is no opposition between what is and what should be. In the absence of conflict there is direct and comprehensive understanding without motivation of self-security in continuity.

14. Activity (1)

The desire for action is most frequently a sign of impatience and eagerness to get on, to obtain results. In the desire to obtain positive direction there is no possibility of real listening. Action with a purpose knows already the goal, and then the mind is only eager to acquire the proper means for reaching that goal. Thus the mind is all the time focussed on the distant goal which is the aim of striving, but which goal and the means thereto are all still well within the field of thought. And thought gets its knowledge from the experience gathered by oneself or by others. This has been collected in the many volumes of our memory. Such activity is therefore not in the present at all; being based on memory and projected by desire, it is of that past which is no more, and of the future which is not yet, and which may never come.

Then what is one to do in the present state? Can anything creative be done as long as thought is jumping back and forward, seduously avoiding the present? What is the present but the fleeting moment when one is challenged by life in relationship with others? Can one understand that challenge by action in the past and the future? That challenge can only be understood when relationship is understood. As long as we make use of relationship to acquire something for ourselves, this can only strengthen the “self” and increase opposition and conflict.

But when the mind can listen in silence without hope or desire, then the action which follows will not be the outcome of impatience and eagerness to acquire, but follow from the understanding of need without greed.

15. Activity (2)

Thought has to be understood by intelligence. Intelligence sees that thought is a response through memory, searching for an answer to a problem it is facing, but has not understood. As thought is the accumulation of memory and all it stands for, thought can obviously not understand its own process. As long as thought is active, it produces more memory in search of answers and solutions; And as long as that is going on, there can be no silent watching of learning, for intelligence to take over.

For intelligence to understand the activity of thought, thought has to cease its work of search in the past to apply that old knowledge to a future and ideal situation. Thought will never be totally inactive, for thought is necessary to be alive. Memory too cannot be totally wiped off, for that would mean death. The physical functions of thought and memory must be there, but under the watchful eye of intelligence they need not be more than that; they need not develop into psychological processes for the continuation of self-consciousness.

Intelligence therefore can watch a thought in its arising, its application and its cessation. Seeing the falseness of a move of thought towards psychological retention of greed to feed an ideal, it recognises the move as such; and in that recognition of the false it sees the truth. This intelligence does not dominate, but enlightens action of thought. Then intelligence can move parallel with thought, and such intelligent awareness can produce intelligent action, which is not prompted into activity by ideological thinking in search of an ideal, but by intelligence which is the

understanding of the need of action, preventing it to develop into the greed of activity, the greed for achievement, success, attainment. It is pure action, intelligent action without purposeful activity of will and desire, action without “self”.

16. Activity (3)

The brain is essentially superficial and mechanical in its reaction or responses, even if they are immediate. But this activity, its thoughts and feelings, are not the response to understanding, but conditioned; and thus the brain's activity is a reaction to memory which conditions its activity through reflection, comparing, judging, selecting, appraising, accepting, rejecting, all of which is a reaction, a response, to the past. Then the reaction is translated in terms of an ideal in the future with repeated comparing and judging, selecting and rejecting. Now the memory, which is the image from the past, is compared with the idea, which is the image in the future. And thought is the result of such conditioning activity.

Now, the seeing of this activity is not a part of this conditioned thinking; it just observes, and in observing sees the unreality of the process. Thus it is not conditioned thereby. There is no acceptance nor rejection in its response, but only one of seeing and understanding. And in understanding the unreality of a conditioned reflex, which is part in the past and part in the future, but never in the present, this activity of thought naturally ceases. Then a response ceases to be mechanical and superficial, ceases to be a reflex, a subjective reaction. Then there is silence of thought.

Silence is when the brain first has ceased to chatter with its desires and aims, when it has listened to the silence of its feelings; then, when it has become silent itself, ultimately does not even listen to its own silence.

In that cessation of activity there is no knowledge of action

and reaction, there is not even knowledge of the cessation thereof. In that utter silence, which is not of the self, and which has no object, there is no awareness of silence. There is just that intense stillness which is open and yet not expecting, which neither gives nor takes, which is beyond feeling and thought, concept and idea, which in its unconditioned state just is, neither acting nor reacting, neither perception nor non-perception, a total cessation of feeling, and thinking. In that gentle vulnerability creation is possible, which is not created, being which is not becoming.

17. Actor

As long as the performer is separate from the performance he comes into being when action is performed with an end in view. Action itself is only momentary. For it to endure, to have lasting value, it has to be projected as an ideal; and then action is enacted for the purpose of result.

When the result in view is a psychological and the action is merely a means thereto, and is not important in its own right. It is the instrument and is discarded after the operation. The operation in view is important because of its impulse to action, because of its idealistic value, because of its being the means to continue the action, even when action has ceased.

Thus the desire to achieve is the actor, whose desire brings about the will to act, while the result is the end in view or purpose of action. All three, the actor, the action, the result are fully involved in this unitary process of activity. But their separation brings about conditions far beyond the original will to act.

The will to act may be the result of the understanding of the need to act. Then, action completes the process, and there is no psychological hangover. The assistance given to a man in need is complete in itself; but if the end, the purpose, of such assistance is either my own gratification, the acquisition of merit or virtue or the expansion of power by placing that person under obligation, the act is not complete, and an actor, the "self", is required to see to its continuation. That is the process of thought which stores the act in memory, and later idealises it in projection, when the

whole Process is no concern any more of the person in need, but only for the gratification of the actor.

This separation of the actor from action, therefore, leads to exploitation, opposition and conflict, for the actor tries to escape by concentration on the purpose, by striving to achieve or to become better or different, without which there cannot be an actor and his action.

A grasping at an act for self-gratification has thus completely obscured the original act which was called up by understanding of a need, when in that understanding there was no projection, no ideal, no actor, no self, no opposition, no conflict.

18. Actuality

Distinct from reality, in so far as action is actual but not real, actuality is only reaction. Then, why is one so muddle-headed as to prefer an imaginary delusion such as a reactionary actuality rather than the obvious reality which is the truth? To be the truth, the answer should be obvious. If the answer is not obviously presenting itself, it is because there is a preference for the imaginary delusion. Why does the mind delude itself with actuality? Why is actuality not seen as action and reaction, but is viewed as something real, enduring, abiding, permanent? It is not the actual experience which is perceived as permanent, but its reaction which is preserved in memory, there to constitute the permanent “self” or “soul”.

If action were seen as reaction. It would be such a simple experience as the spontaneous response of a sense organ to an external stimulus. There the matter stands, and there it ends. It leaves no room for an agent outside the process. But that, from an individual’s viewpoint, is most unsatisfactory: There is no room for continuity, for endurance, for permanency, for “self”. And therefore, one would rather endow this actuality with the delusion of individuality and personality, thereby creating, however, the conflict between the reality of the impermanent process, and the imaginary actuality of a permanent “self” which is delusion.

But actuality is not a delusion, is not an empty thought, is not a thought at all. But it is made into a thought, a memory, an image, for purpose of preservation. As soon as there is thinking

about something, then the actual experiencing has ceased, and thought ceases to be actual to become ideal.

Yet it is only in the actual experiencing without reference to the past, to memory which is the possession of clinging, without idealising into a future, which is the process of desire and craving for continuance—it is only in the actual experiencing, which has no room for either past or future, that the actual present can be seen. If that present moment is actual and seen as such, that is the truth. If the actual false is seen actually as false, that is the truth.

19. Adjustment

The bringing together in harmony of earlier discrepancies is not a further purpose of gain, but a mental state of preparedness through voluntary attention and awareness of the true state of affairs. Such adjustment is brought about when it is noticed that vision is out of focus, when it is seen that the acceptance of certain values is meaningless, when it is understood that a disharmony is experienced because of an erroneous fixation.

This is the work of mindfulness which is an intelligent awareness, and therefore a different faculty from mind in the process of thought. Thought is reflective in dependence on memory, and the conclusions of thought are therefore based on experiences of the past. Thought is also projective in its desire for continuance in the future; it is idealistic, imaginative, but never realistic.

It is only awareness which can see the present; and it requires intelligent awareness to understand the present. But to be intelligently aware the mind must not rely on the past, must not be dependent on psychological memories and attachments, must not be influenced by future desire or conditioned by things which are not present.

To be able to see the present as it is requires therefore adjustment so that the intelligence can be fully aware and open and sensitive to the actions and one's reactions at this moment. Then alone will it be possible to see discrepancies and understand their causes. Then alone can there be right understanding and right mindfulness, with right thinking and right action and right living. Thus can this intelligent awareness bring about an immediate

emancipation, by seeing and understanding what was not seen or understood before. It is not a new wisdom, not a new truth, but a new vision which can liberate.

20. Affirmation

An expression of individual knowledge is not an existential or factual confirmation. Existence could be possible, independent of the knowledge thereof, and hence independent of any affirmation or negation. Also in reverse, any affirmation is never proof of existence; it merely proves the existence of a concept which is affirmed, or the existence of a negation which is denied as concept.

That which transcends human knowledge can neither be affirmed nor negated, just because it cannot be known, it has no existence within the field of knowledge. Thus, whatever is transcendental is not a subject of knowledge, of study, of achievement and any transcendental ideal is either not transcendental at all but a more idea or concept thereof, or is not an ideal, not conceptual, not comprehensible, and hence non-existential in the field of knowledge. But that means that there can be no relationship between the mundane and the supra-mundane; there is no relationship between the absolute and the relative, because any relationship would make the absolute also relative, whereby it would cease to be absolute. Hence, there is only the absolute without relation, in which case all relationship is erroneous, fictitious, based on ignorance—or there is only relationship without an absolute, a mutual relationship which may include error, fiction and ignorance.

Any affirmation of the absolute is a relative concept; it is my God, my creator, my absolute, because it is and always will be my concept, my relative concept, which must contain error,

fiction and ignorance, based on a conceptual view of “self” as an enduring entity, projected as an ideal from clinging to a past.

In the understanding of the relative conditionality of “self”, the need of affirmation ceases with its cause, the greed for security.

21. Aggression

As a search for power, aggression seeks the power of possession, which is a means of security for “self”.

Aggressiveness is not always obviously violent, but it expresses itself perhaps in a sense of self-assertion, a defensive attitude of an accepted ideal or opinion, the value of which is entirely subjective, that is, of the “self”. It thus bears out the truth of the old saying that attack is the best defence.

And thus, although aggression and aggressiveness appear to be an outward movement towards conquest, there is basically a tendency of self-assertion in defence of the ideal “self”. Aggression then is the outcome and the expression of a feeling of the need of self-defence. And to understand aggression one must need to understand this subjective need of self-defence.

In our society, through inheritance, environment, education, it is the struggle for survival not so much of the species which is a physiological process, but a struggle for the survival of the individual in competition with other individuals. Our system of education with examinations, our system of grading in office through efficiency bars, our system of promotion on the basis of seniority, our system of security based on relationship, connection, influence, name, ancestry, etc., are all subtle means of aggression through which the “self” seeks power which it does not have by nature.

For, what is this “self” without self-expression, without assertion, without progress, without the power of possession and security? It is all the thought of the past and the fear of losing the

ideal of the present, which has made of the present that one long struggle for assertion and aggression which is bound to break but in violence and hate.

It is possible for the mind to be free from such thought, and to meet that “self” in all its nakedness through understanding the void of power, of possession. Without that there is no need for search for security, for in the absence of self there is freedom which is always secure and unconditioned.

22. Aggressiveness

Generally disapproved of in a well-ordered society, aggressiveness is not understood, except when it comes to violent outbursts of brutality. Is there essentially any difference between the savageries of warfare or communal clashes, and the aggressiveness implied in commercial competition, in religious distinctions, in political opposition? Both sides have the same end in view: profit, merit, power. Even in the promotion of culture, of national feeling, of racial preference, there is the opposition of aggressiveness. Then there is the assertion of one's rights, the protection of self and property, the banding together of self with others in order to acquire greater strength in unity of aggression. And there is the basic aggressiveness in striving to become, to maintain, to expand, the aggressiveness of discipline, controls, patterns, traditions.

It is easy to see and to say that the "I"-concept is at the bottom of all this, but such knowledge does not make one less violent. That the "self" is expanding itself into the society and has thereby passed on its own aggressiveness to the community, still leaves one with the basic aggressiveness of that "self". But that is only knowledge which is memory of a reaction, which is past. At the moment of violence and aggression there is no reflection, no recognition, no knowledge. But the subsequent reaction compares the state of aggressiveness as a picture of a past experience with the ideal state of non-violence. Thus the past is compared with the future, neither of them having any actual existence. In that comparison and judgement there is conflict. To condemn the

conflict is to escape from it as not wanted. But escape is never a solution.

The knowledge of aggressiveness is always a reaction, either a condemnation of violence, or a partial approval as in competition; but when there is no knowledge of comparison with an ideal picture, there is just attention to whatever is. And that is the truth; that is never a reaction, and can never become a conflict.

23. Agitation (1)

The restlessness of a mind in search of an ideal, named peace, is the agitation of a mind which obviously knows no rest, no peace; and its condition is not different from its state of agitation. It is not the recognition of being restless which agitates the mind, but the lack of stability and security makes the mind search for an escape in which to find rest and peace. Not knowing what peace is, except from descriptions in books which speak of peace at the end of war, the search is then just an escape from the agitation and turmoil in which the mind finds, itself, when comparing its state with those remembered and desired.

As Christians look forward to the second coming of Christ to establish the new Jerusalem, and Buddhists aspire to be born again, when Maitri Bbodhisatta will usher in his kingdom of love—thereby, turning away from the teachings of Jesus and of Gotama the Buddha—so each individual agitation in search of an ideal is a turning away from the truth which is here and now. And the truth is that the mind is searching, is restless, is agitated.

Now, if the mind, instead of running away from that truth by trying to escape into an ideal, just sees the fact of its own restlessness without condemnation, without doing anything about it, it will not be searching for a possible escape into an ideal of peace, but it will understand that this agitation is just the wish to escape, to run away from what is, in an effort to become the ideal. In the understanding that a search for an ideal is not a search for truth, but a running away from truth, in that direct understanding all search will naturally cease, all agitation will

come to a natural end, without suppression or sublimation which are further ideals and agitation. And in that cessation of unrest there will be a natural peace which is not made by mind, and which is therefore unconditioned, without opposition, without desire, without conflict.

24. Agitation (2)

As a mental state of unrest and excitement, agitation is to be found in the constant movement of thought, away from the present moment. The unrest may be due to worry about the effects of past happenings, or to an excitement of agitation, due to anticipation of things to come.

Why should there be worry about the past, remorse for things not done well, regret for things left undone? Why do thoughts go back to the past at all? The past has come up to the present through a process of memory, which is a process of selection among events in which the “self” has been involved. They either flatter and then strengthen the “I” consciousness, or they are too humiliating to be preserved and hence are better forgotten. But they do come up, because they all constitute the “I” which is built up from experiences of the past; some personal, others environmental, educational, racial, religious or political; but all conditioning all the time. The “I” is the past which now has to be sifted to be kept or to be destroyed. And that causes the worry, when certain memories refuse to be kept down.

Then, the mind seeks refuge in an ideal future, where this “self” can be made safe; and such prospects and anticipations cause a mental excitement, which is equally unreal.

A refusal to see that the “self” is the past, and an escape into a self-made future are then the factors of this mental agitation which thereby is incapable of seeing and understanding its own activity which is in the present. Suppression and sublimation are

merely side-tracking the issue, which is the mind not knowing itself in its agitation and desire to be and to become different.

But when the mind sees its thoughts running back in memory and building up images in the future, it will pause for a moment. And in that quietude there is a glimpse of realisation that there is no “self” apart from that agitation. In that rest there is peace and the end of worry and anticipation, in which freedom can be experienced.

25. Agreement

Agreement and disagreement are of no importance. They are attitudes which cannot and do not alter the fact which is. It does not matter whether I agree or not with a toothache; it is there. Whether I like it or not does not alter the fact of my egoism. If I like it because it strengthens my position, it will take deeper roots; and if I do not like it, because my morality and religious attitude condemn it, I shall build up resistance against it by trying to become unselfish.

Agreement and disagreement, likes and dislikes, approval and condemnation, are only mental attitudes of comparing of what is with what the mind believes that should be. What the mind believes is a standard which has been set up by the tradition of ages in society, in religion, through rules and customs, in hope and in fear. That standard is the past coming into the present, conditioning it, shaping, pressing and repressing it, till the present conforms, and till the present can hand over the standard to the future in which the ideal can continue in security, grow in safety, expand with confidence.

But it is still the mind, the thought, the memory of yesterday, to conform with, which, in agreement, gives the satisfaction of being. Secure in good company, but without understanding, without joy of discovery in learning what is new.

To meet the new is not agreeing or disagreeing with it. To meet the new with the knowledge, which is memory of the past, is not meeting at all. When I put forth all my defences, no contact is possible. It is only the open mind which is sensitive and ready

to learn, the mind which can meet the new with affection instead of resistance, it is only that unprejudiced mind which can see and perceive things as they are, without agreeing or disagreeing,. Without comparing and standardising, without reference to an ideal “self”, which is but a reflection of a dead past.

26. Air

The element of oscillation (*vayo*), vibration, movement, change in time and space, growth, alteration, discontinuance, impermanence makes all things move in relation to other objects, and also causes all internal changes of growth and decay, of evolution and involution. It is the essence of energy without which no component things can cling together, nor repel what is inimical to existence. It is the essence of life and death in the psychological sense, as much as the air we breathe in is the bearer of the life-giving oxygen.

This movement may be the physical change in space and of place; it more often is the psychological movement in time without material extension, but with intensity of the mind.

One is only aware of vibration when there is friction, be it physical or psychological. But all friction comes from opposition; and thus this element of oscillation is observed as “other-than-self” in its opposition to “self”. Hence there is a resistance to all movement or change; and this friction is the cause of conflict.

And so, the mind attempts to avoid conflict in change and friction in movement, in order to create for itself an artificial peace, which, however, still leaves the “I” which divides, becomes, changes and moves in eternal conflict till the realisation of “non-I” brings about the end of conflict and becoming. The “non-I” is not an object for desire, a goal for achievement, but just the realisation that the elements of existence have no reality as a substance, no duration as a soul, no essence outside this relation of relative existence and interdependence.

Thus the four elements that push (*paṭhavi*) and pull (*āpo*), and burn (*tejo*) and turn (*vayo*), not only feed and sustain the growth of delusion, but they are also maintained by their own creations of craving and hatred, in their search for stability and security, in the face of conflict and impermanence, striving and searching for a “self” in delusion and ignorance, in order to reject all opposition, to attract all support, to consume whatever it absorbs, to find a permanent footing even in impermanence.

27. Alone (1)

Who dares to walk alone the desert of the human mind where every thought is a mirage, where every emotion falls apart as dry sand, as soon as we begin to understand its source, composition and motive? Who dares to walk alone without the support and company of our choice?

And yet to be alone with the elements that push and pull, that burn and turn, to understand their action, which is our reaction, that alone can give the only sense of reality which is not an actual illusion created by the desire for contact conditioned by the exploitation of relationship. We want contact and sensation, companionship and relationship, for then we can endure and escape the conflict of love and hate, of passion and friction.

We do not know the peace that surpasses all, because we do not want peace but satisfaction. We seek ourselves in others—and thereby we exploit them for our own ends. And so we discover conflict in our search for the mental illusion, our image of peace.

But we do not dare to meet “self” in that conflict, because we are afraid that that too may turn out to be a mirage, when there will be no “self” to search for the satisfaction of illusory desires.

While relationship reveals the nature of our approach to conflict in living, it is when that contact takes place without the colouring of desire based on fear that it can reveal the truth which cannot be seen by searching for ideals which are thoughts, for thoughts which are desires, for satisfaction of desire which is fear to be alone.

To be alone is to be without desire and without fear, to be

what one is. And that is to be at peace without conflict and without “self”.

28. Alone (2)

Why do we find it so difficult to be alone? In company we find distraction, satisfaction, consolation. In numbers, we find courage, agreement, confirmation. In systems we find support, conquest, victory. In religion we find hope, charity, salvation. But when I am alone, I miss all that which makes me strong, which gives me continuity, which makes the “self”. Without all that the “I” is not, and that seems to be unbearable for thought which can live and feed only on the accumulation of the past, which is the “I”.

When I am alone there is no opposition unless my aloofness is an escape.

To be alone is to be “all one”, without commitment of race or religion, without past or future, without fame or name, without memory or ideation, and that is without “self”, without division, without conflict.

Only in aloneness can there be completion of action; for there will be no ulterior motive, no self-projection, no purposeful goal of striving. Without reliance on memory thought cannot function in dialectics. In that stillness of thought there will be the one direct perception of what is. To be alone in that perception is an absolute falling away of “self”, which has no occasion for the arising of conflict, and is therefore peace supreme.

To be thus alone is to be whole, all one!

29. Alone (3)

Merely saying that man does not want to be alone because he is gregarious does not offer even an explanation; “man wants company because he likes company” is just tautology. Why do we want company? Or: Why do we not like to be alone? From childhood we have been brought up in physical dependence on parents, teachers, relations; and that dependence for physical needs has brought about a conditioned state of mind, in which we have become so psychologically dependent on society, on public opinion, on authority, that we are afraid to be independent even in our outlook, in our attitude, in our approach to the influences of tradition, religion, national or racial issues.

Fear of being lonely, of standing alone, has created a demand for company, physical, psychological, political, social, religious, etc. And that demand has created a market of exploitation by the teacher, the leader, the priest, each representing some higher ideology, class and even God. Yet, all that is invention of the mind seeking an escape in the refuge of some superior idea, trying to escape from the fear of being alone.

Still, it is only in being alone, that is, in being independent at least psychologically that the mind can be unconditioned and free. And as long as the mind is not free it cannot understand its actions as reactions to fear. In such a state the mind cannot make itself free, except by rejecting whatever is obviously binding such as organised thinking in religion and politics. But that requires great courage, for here is no support of kindred minds, forming themselves into another group of free-thinkers, of anarchists.

And yet, the mere shedding of dependence on false values gives a freedom, a release, which opens the mind to a direct and unconditioned contact, to an immediate response with intelligence. To be free one has to be alone; and to be free is to be freed of fear. With the intellect awakened, there will be an understanding of relationship which is not based on companionship or on the fear of being alone.

30. Aloofness

This need not be an opposition in isolation. It is rather a completeness in being, like a mountain peak or a solitary majestic tree. They are just what they are, and their beauty is in their completeness which is not dependent on supporting scenery.

There is a quiet dignity in aloofness which springs from the completeness and simplicity of its being what it is. It is the lack of pretension, the absence of striving to become, the quietude of independence, like the setting of a single diamond, the solitary moon at night, the meditation of the mind without thought.

It is purpose in activity, reference to memories of the past, which keep the “I” alive and dependent on what is not. And thus there is no aloofness, no completeness, no silence in its action, in its thinking, in its willing. There may be concentration which is one-pointed, but that is concentration on “self” which is isolation in opposition, and therefore conflict.

To be alone and aloof does not mean to renounce and reject the other. Aloofness is not to be found in self-sufficiency which is self-gratification. In gratification there is a search for self in others, which is not completeness but exploitation, which is conflict.

But when there is no dependence on the support of property or power, of name or learning, which is the accumulation of knowledge, when there is no dependence on an ideal for continuation of that gratification, then there is that aloofness which is the peace of completion, which is perfection in itself, which is the quiet of action which is not conditioned, which is the peace when

thoughts are silent. When there is clear and direct understanding of what is, simple, alone and aloof.

31. Altruism

“I would be very happy, if this makes you happy too”. It seems such a noble sentiment, a feeling of sympathetic joy (*muditā*); and yet there is plenty of self-indulgence in the thought of both enjoying this happiness.

Certainly, there are worse things in the world: antagonism and spite, aversion and hate. But any kind of self-indulgence must ultimately breed isolation and opposition.

Happiness in the happiness of others in a dependent sensation which is not of a free mind. And when my happiness is linked up with that of others, it is not true happiness at all. Here too I make use of somebody else's happiness to become happy myself. This leads to exploitation: helping others for my own satisfaction. This satisfaction may not be so crude as a purpose for increasing my own merit, or for the love of God, which is still seeking myself in the other, even if the other is my idea of God.

Then what is the right attitude? There is no right attitude, for any attitude is a more or less fixed position from which to judge, condemn, approve, assimilate, reject. And that is the position of “self”. Whenever “self” is made the starting point, or the instrument, or the motive, or the end of action, it is always selfish. And any action or view or intention or thought which is based on such attitude is equally selfish and can never be right. Right is to be straight, direct, immediate; not crooked, wrung or wrong; not mediate, purposeful, indirect.

And such direct and straight action can come only through direct understanding and straight sight, in which there is no view

of self, of benefit to other, no purpose of happiness, no aim of achievement, no dependence on the past, no stimulus from the future. Only then can the mind be free. And in that freedom there is the joy of independence, and the experiencing that there is no division between self and others, no opposition and no conflict.

32. Ambition (1)

An ardent desire to do something is an aspiration to become something. The natural instinct to be without fear, to be free from pain, is not ambition. But the moment one runs away from the undesirable in search of a substitute or a solution, there is identification with the object of that search, the ideal, which is the projection of “self”. That striving is ambition, for it is the aspiration of the “self” to become something or someone else.

The ambitious mind is not content with the absence of pain. It wants security in the certainty that pain, sorrow, conflict, opposition, enmity will not recur. And thus it searches for that security in which the “self” will be safe to continue, to expand, to project, to become; and that aspiration is ambition. In this psychological search the mind looks for consolation in sorrow, for comfort in pain, for acquisition in loss, for possessions in fear, for company in loneliness, for memory in the past, for ideals in the future, for security in continuation. All this activity is an escaping from the simple fact of pain which is experienced on the physical plain, through sublimation on a different plain of prayer and sacrifice, ideals and hope, in which the “self” can live in forgetfulness.

Yet, it is only in understanding the problem of fear and pain that one can meet the problem without running away from it. The problem arises in the identification of the self with the ideal solution whereby there is a conflict between the actual and the ideal. The escape and its method have become more important than the problem of pain; and in that opposition and conflict is found the driving force of ambition to do something, to become

something, in order to escape. But when the psychological “self” is seen as the ideal projection of the mind as the instrument of escaping, the search will cease, and therewith all ambition and conflict.

As in ambition there is becoming, so in ceasing there is cessation, not a volitional cessation which is but a subtle form of ambition, but a ceasing through the understanding of action which is escaping. Thus, without a goal there is peace. And when there is peace, there is clarity of insight which is truth.

33. Ambition (2)

As oil which makes the wheels of life go round, so society as at present constituted moves on competition and ambition. And that seems to be a fact accepted as inevitable. Individuals are born in a highly competitive society; their education is dominated by competitive examinations; lucrative jobs are few, and the applicants or aspirants are many. If one has to fit into this society, one must accept it under its own conditions. And there is fear that if one does not fit in, one will just go under.

But is this so? Is an ambitious way of life in a competitive society the only process of living? An ambitious man cannot be a man of peace. Ambition leads to conflict. Competition is conflict. Even if one acknowledges these facts, one's first reaction is: How can one get out of this net of conflict?

But the question: "How?" implies a willingness to live without ambition and competition, even an anxiety to live without conflict, if one only could be sure that the new way of life would be equally successful, equally safe. Thus, the "How?" merely is another step up on the ladder to success, to satisfaction, to the projected ideal of "self".

Just as my support of this system of ambitious competition will strengthen the society based on it, just as my ambition which creates opposition will make others also ambitious—in the same way my refusal to be identified with such a system will at least give a shock here and there, weakening the conditioning influence of an unthinking society, a stupid tradition, a computerised education.

Where the urge to become a successful “ego” is not there; there will be responsibility, which is the ability to respond to a challenge intelligently, but there will be no conflict.

34. Ambition (3)

An ardent aspiration is a desire to be, or to become, or do and achieve something. The word itself indicates a going round and about it, as canvassing for votes.

When there is physical pain and one wants to do something to relieve that pain, that is not ambition. But when there is a mental pain in the experience of lacking something, a deficiency of courage, of prestige, of influence, and one sets about to escape that deficiency by filling up that mental lack, by doing something totally unconnected with it, by saying prayers or getting drunk to bolster up one's courage, that is ambition.

It arises when one tries to run away from conflict, when one tries to cover up a problem without understanding, when one aspires to become someone different. In running away there is always the ambition to identify oneself with the thing one runs to: God, my country, my job, my vocation. It is the ideal expansion of the "self" in which the "self" attempts to submerge its conflict. Thus, the object of ambition becomes all-important, for it is the ideal "self".

It is not by fighting a problem, not by escaping from a conflict, not by ignoring or sublimating it, not through aspiration, desire or ambition that the experience of a deficiency can be understood. But if there is a direct perception of the situation without ambition to circumvent it, it can be understood that the very action of escaping causes the conflict between being and becoming; in direct perception there is no ambition to do something about it, but it opens the mind in understanding what to do. Then the

“self” is no longer the ideal and the centre of the problem, and intelligent understanding can deal with it directly without desire, without aspiration, without ambition.

35. Analysis (1)

Although it can ascertain the chemical elements of a compound, or in literature resolve a sentence into its grammatical elements, it does not go beyond and penetrate the elements themselves.

Likewise, it is not difficult to find out through analysis the cause of sorrow, suffering, mental pain and conflict, and point to desire, attachment, craving and clinging as the causal conditions for the arriving of becoming (*uppdana-paccaya bhavo*). Even desire etc. can be analysed into the various facts which make up desire, into craving for pleasure (*kama-taṇhā*), craving to become (*bhava-taṇhā*) and craving to cease (*vibhava-taṇhā*). The course of desire can be pointed out to be sensation (*vedanā-paccaya taṇhā*), and yet craving continues.

Something more than analysis is obviously needed; and that is the understanding of the components, the conditions, the causes which continue to produce the many kinds of craving. Not the mere knowledge of sensations as giving pleasure or displeasure, but the actual experiencing of those reactions and seeing them as reactions can be the factor for an open mind to understand and be free. Where the knowledge of conflict (*dukkha*) may lead to pessimism, the understanding of the process in actual experience will see the mind at work in selecting, judging, retaining or rejecting, comparing, classifying and storing in memory whatever is useful, supporting and helpful in the building up of that ideal which alone can resist the corroding nature of impermanence.

Thus, seeing the building-up process in actual progress, the mind will not be prejudiced in selecting, for there is no selection

in intelligent awareness. Then, sensations are seen, coming and going, as just sensations. And when this building activity is stopped there will be the end of craving in dependence on the ending of sensation.

36. Analysis (2)

Not an action in the present, but being concerned with the past which it tries to dissect, the object of analysis cannot be in the present where alone an actual challenge takes place. A challenge will produce a reaction, a response which, if not understood, will become a thought to be compared with earlier experiences, all stored up in the psychological memory, for the purpose of registration and retention. At this stage analysis becomes useful for purpose of classification. This whole process of thinking about an experience is therefore in the past, and its object is dead memory. Its result will be still more dead matter accumulating in the mortuary of the unconscious, with its attachments and conflicts.

Thus, analysis is of the past, just as a medical *post-mortem* examination. It can establish the cause and time of death, but will never meet death itself, when its challenge knocks at the door. And yet, to understand not only death, but anything at all, it is necessary to perceive its working, which can be done only in the present and not by a consciousness which can only compare with and refer to the past. Any attempt to understand by learning will miss the action. Action can only be seen in activity through awareness which is mindfulness (*sati*).

Here is no application of knowledge, no examination of contents, no dissection of remains, layer by layer, which must necessarily remain incomplete. But through total awareness of the whole of action, the discursive thought-process with its past mem-

ories comes to a halt. Only then can there be real insight into the nature of things as they are (*yatha-bhuta-nāṇa-dassana*).

37. Analysis (3)

It cannot lead to intelligent understanding, for analysis is like a logical deduction, leading to a conclusion from premises, major and minor, or symptoms, In such deduction nothing new is discovered, and the conclusion is there already implied in the data. It may provide knowledge, but that is only a process of thought, based on earlier acquired information.

The problem of analysis lies in the fact that there is an analyser, the subject, the psychiatrist or the “self” who stands apart from his object. The analyser has assumed the role of authority and assumes that he has all the knowledge required to analyse the situation, the patient, the problem. Thus an actual case is approached with knowledge from the past. Such an approach may be useful in rectifying a mechanical defect in an electric light switch, as such a defect is not a living problem, but is the result of an incorrect application of scientific knowledge. But when there appears a defect which is psychological, that is living, developing, changing, actual, then a mere knowledge of symptoms, cannot touch the cause and core. In fact, the cause of a psychological problem is the artificial division between subject and object, of which the opposition of the analyser to the problem is both the root and the result. In analysis there is an artificial division and opposition, which is based on the assumption of separation and isolation. It is the “I” who is going to analyse from across the table that symptomatic “I” in order to make it balance according to plan. That is certainly not understanding the problem, which is one of division, opposition and conflict. The division involved

in analysis can only aggravate the conflict with which the “I” has identified itself. The examiner is the past, and it is from that conditioned position that there is comparison, judgement etc. which is not free in understanding of direct perception. When the “I” ceases to be the examiner, and there is no opposition, the actual problem can be seen, and thereby solved.

38. Analysis (4)

Analysis is a mental, physical or chemical resolving into simple elements, ascertaining the elements of a compound. It is a reflex, a flash back, memory masquerading as a “self”, a thinker standing apart from his thought, in order to analyse it. But the thinker cannot stand apart from his thought, because he is his thought. Without thought there is no thinker, just as without walking there is no walker. Similarly there is no analyst without analysis and *vice versa*. But in analysing there is the object of analysis which is thought, which is habit, or any compound that you will.

In analysing there is a dissecting of the object, and if that object is a thought, an ideal, a memory, it is never a living object, for a living thing is always moving, changing. One can observe the working of the heart, the dilating diastole alternating with the contracting systole, but that pulse cannot be dissected, analysed. Thought-analysis is therefore always an analysis, a *post-mortem*, of a past thought, memory, and never of a present challenge. It is a mental stock-taking, the making up of an inventory, so that one knows at a glance how much one has of this and the other. All that is memory, and in that assurance there is the security of continuance. Without the memory, that inventory, that assurance, there is no security, no continuance, no “self”; and so the analysis is the “self” who now wants to analyse, to dissect his own thought. But the analyst, apart from having only dead objects at his disposal (light can be analysed in its spectrum, but not in its velocity) is merely tinkering with another thought,

the thought of analysis, which is also of the past, and of which he is not separate.

Analysis then is only possible when thought has come to an end. The movement of analysis itself can only be observed. And in that observation and direct perception, there no observer, no resolution, no memory, no mask of a “self”, no search and hence no conflict, with the brain at rest and all desires stilled.

39. Anger

Anger makes for isolation in opposition, in which all relationship comes to an end. As in total isolation, there is also despair in anger, which is the reason that anger always tends to violence.

Violence is one way of self-righteous assertion. And that is the basis of anger, when one feels unfairly treated. In the condemnation of others, one finds self-justification. And in this justification, anger is sustained.

The storing up of anger is, of course, the work of thought through memory. It is only in memory that the self exists, and through stored up anger the “self” is fortified.

This continued resentment of anger cannot be got rid of by action of the will. The act of willing is one of choice in opportunity, of desire in acquisition and therefore confirms the “self” in anger. One may transfer one’s anger to a different level, or direct it to a different object, but it is still anger which breeds violence.

Anger cannot be overcome by cultivating non-violence, for that too is an act of willing, and there is no substitute, no sublimation, no suppression of desire: it always is more desire, more opposition, more conflict.

Only in choiceless awareness of desire there is passive, non-violence, not as an opposite, but as the fading of anger. This is the absence of conflict in the absence of an experiencer, the “self”.

40. Answers (1)

Answers to questions are always the noise made by thought which has found the answer in that large junk shop called memory. But such an answer is a mere reference to some image which is all that is left over from some past experience. And even that experience could not have been complete as it has left a residue in the form of memory. An experience becomes a memory when it is not understood and seen as a living experience. One takes a photo of a lovely sunset just because the sun is setting and one cannot take it home for one's collection. Thus one makes a photo which can be brought up from the junk-shop, by means of which one expects to revive the experience. But was there any experiencing while there was only thought of capturing the fleeting impression? Can one be experiencing beauty while manipulating the shutter of a camera to a proper timing, using the correct filter, the right angle, etc.? Yet that picture after development is only the residue which now serves as the memory of an experience that never was. It is the noise made by thought in its search for an answer to the question. How can I retain the experience? The answer is only a mind-made picture, an ideal, a concept, a thought, an idea, but never an actual experiencing.

And so there is no relationship between the quest and the answer. This lack of relationship is the beginning of conflict. There is no meeting between memory and ideal on the one hand, and the actual presence which is the only experiencing possible from moment to moment, on the other. This lack of relationship and understanding is the conflict based on the retention of memory,

which is the “self” in ideas and desire, in search for continuance and security and in which conflict there can be no contact and no love.

41. Answers (2)

Topics are discussed and people accepted or discarded according to custom or prejudice; and it is rarely that it is discovered that there could be explorations or even questions. But the real discovery may come much later, when it is found that there are no certain answers, or perhaps no answers at all.

Answers are there only in the past, when no questions were raised. And that made life so much easier. When there is no question, or when the answer is ready-made there is no problem. Without all such differentiations and specifications, it is much easier to standardize and identify. A group-label can cover a whole mass. Jews are cunning, the Dutch are thrifty; in the north people think too much, they do not live, in the south people live too much, they do not think; in the west they work too hard; in the east they are lazy.

But are such classifications any answer at all? To attempt any generalisation is trying to fit an individual, or even a group into a ready-made pigeon-hole, be it square or round. It is the outcome of tribal thinking which makes one cling to clichés, without an attempt at understanding either its accuracy or still less its meaning. Why do I want a cliché, a label, an identification, an answer?

I want all that because without it I am lost. Then I might come to the ultimate question: Who am I? And I would not like to discover that I am only a label of convenience, a borrower of an identification mark. And if that were destroyed, there would be no answer to the question.

Is it perhaps that the question is wrong? Is one not putting the question, while knowing the answer, as Descartes: "I think, therefore I am!" If thought is the "I", then what is thought?

42. Anticipation

Invariably a problem that is not solved, leads to conflict. Anticipation is the work of thought in advance. The mind thinks about conditions which may arise in the future, and then thinks of the proper means to meet those conditions. But there is no meeting at all, there is no contact, not even a relation; for, the problem anticipated has not arisen and exists only in thought, in ideas, in imagination. It is therefore a confrontation of past thought or memory with an ideal situation in the future which has not even arisen. Any attempt to solve such a non-existing problem must fail.

The fault lies with memory which is thought registered, classified and kept ready for reference. This dead thought is brought up from the subconscious stores to meet an imaginary problem which may or may not arise. In so doing the mind remains shuttling between the past and the future, between the dead and the ideal, memory and imagination, without ever realising the only moment of truth just before us, without seeing what is. Thus, thought is always conditioned by clinging and craving, by hope and fear.

When there is an approach of awareness of this moment, and if the mind at this moment is intelligently aware of the need of action, there will be a spontaneous response to the challenge of the moment. But to be able to respond without conditioning, that is without hope or fear, there must be freedom from clinging to the past, freedom from craving for the future; there must be an intelligent awareness of this moment to act now intelligently

and spontaneously, which leaves no problem unsolved and hence no conflict. If the mind is clear now, it will know how to act then, how to meet life rightly without anticipation and without distortion.

43. Apathy

It is a state of insensibility which would have resulted in a disorganised function of the body, but is usually symptomised as an emotional indifference, which is indolence of the mind. But an intelligent approach will want to understand the reason why there is at times an indifference in emotional feelings, which is a tardiness amounting to laziness in the understanding of symptoms and events. It is not that the mind is incapable of understanding, but there is a reluctance to directing the mind to understand, or even to see a problem, and thus one rather pursues a policy of self-delusion.

It is a typical attitude of escape by ignoring the issue, when there is an unconscious suspicion that, if action is taken, it might result in unpleasant developments. Thus, one turns a blind eye and a deaf ear, and pretends ignorance as an excuse to non-action. It is an obvious case of extreme isolation in self-protection.

This insensibility is much more common than one would expect, and it expresses itself in a policy of non-involvement leading up to callousness. It is the mental reservation of a, conservative mind. Such attitude is a withholding of awareness through fear of consequences, fear of loss to oneself; and thus there may be a shifting of attention, to escape involvement through sublimation. All striving for the attainment of an ideal is basically an escape from actuality, an artificial insensitivity to what is, by focusing one's attention elsewhere.

It is only an open mind, which is not prejudiced by memory and its attachments, and which does not escape into idealism

with its thought-projections into the future—it is only an open mind that can be sensitive and creative and alive, aware in understanding, all-embracing in sympathy and truly universal in love.

44. Approach (1)

“The approach to a problem is more important than the problem itself; the approach shapes the problem¹”.

When we are facing a problem, our first and strongest reaction is to find a solution. And thus the search for a solution becomes of greater importance than the problem. But as a solution is not known, the search continues for the unknown. And that has now become the real problem, the search for satisfaction.

Having completely lost sight of the original, we now get lost in speculations, ideals, conjectures, leading to greater confusion. A conclusion may be found in tradition, in religion, in observances, which as means to the end have now become all-important. And in all this confusion the original problem is approached and a key-solution attempted, But in the approach the problem has not been understood own, and now it is warped beyond recognition, whereby a solution becomes impossible.

The only intelligent approach to a problem is a quiet understanding without prejudice of its nature, without desire for a solution even. As long as there is resistance there can be no relationship of understanding. In fear there will be rejection, in desire there will be acceptance without understanding.

Hence, without moving from facing the problem which is made by the mind, there is no moving back to memory. In the silence of thought, the problem will surrender its own solution in the absence of a seeker who is the problem.

¹J, Krishnamurti.

45. Approach (2)

There are as many approaches as there are problems. The natural approach is to analyse the problem in order to find out its cause. Thus a psychological problem may have originated in some traumatic experience in early childhood. Psychoanalysts believe that a recall of that experience intelligently may remove the scar left in the unconscious and thereby dissolve the problem. Only few can afford this lengthy process of psycho-analysis with its doubtful results, and most people take resort to the more simple reactions to a problem, by trying to go beyond it in idealizing and striving for some future goal. Faith is an essential character in this process of sublimation. Those who have no faith may try a method of suppression or rationalization which may explain the problem but does not resolve it. Then there is the most common reaction, which is that of escape, trying to forget or ignore the situation by diverting one's thoughts and action in a different direction, drinks, drugs, smoking, sex and various types of amusements. Reaction may take the form of social or political activity, in which attempts are made to lose oneself in mass-action. A total retirement from the worldly scene may also become an approach to the achievement of peace by avoiding conflict with others.

As all these various approaches to a solution have not approached the actual problem, can the mind perhaps look at the problem from an entirely different angle, not in order to find a solution, but just to understand the problem? To do so, the mind must be totally divested from all attachments, judgements, beliefs, fears, ideals and memories, in order to see the events as they

occur. Can the mind do that? That would be the end of thought, of desire, of self-consciousness, the total structure of the mental process. Without trying to become free from the conflict and the problem, the mind not seeking a solution any more because any seeking is self seeking—that mind will be free from thought, memory and ideas and therefore utterly quiet and still. In that silence there is a direct insight which now views the problem without an approach, and because there is no “self” there is no conflict either.

46. Approach (3)

The time and place of our birth are beyond our present control. And from the time of birth, even from the moment of conception, there have been influences at work which have moulded our character, our outlook, our way of thinking and acting, in other words, our approach to life and its wants. Whatever we have brought along from the past, whether we call it heredity or karma, it is only the basic material which from then on has been influenced and conditioned by the environment at home, at school, in private and public life, by the examples and teachings of others, by books, learning, education, association with friends and colleagues, their conversations, discussions, agreements and disagreements, the contact with the world at large, its temptations in the show-windows, in the advertisements, in our desires, craving and clinging.

And with all those conditioned reflexes we now approach a new problem. What is the chance of a correct approach which tries to understand a new problem at its own level with a new mind, open and unprejudiced? Is it possible? Can it be attempted even? Can one clear the way so as to be free?

One's very desire to clear the way shows a desire which is also the outcome of past conditioning. Is then every action a conditioned reaction? As long as there is the thought of action, there is the desire for action, and that is the past, conditioning the present, an approach with self in view. Only a new mind can look at a problem afresh, and approach it directly. But there can be a new mind only when one lets the old one go. Are we prepared

to let the old man die with all he stands for in property, and in power, in reliance and security? And yet, that is the price which has to be paid for a truly new life, an approach to reality in truth.

47. Argumentation

What does argumentation mean psychologically? A statement is made, argued, and proved. The statement has obviously some value, mostly psychological, as it is not just a passing thought or observation. It has value, not in itself perhaps, but for those who want to argue the case to obtain maximum assurance. That is the whole point of arguing: to prove that something which is highly valued is also right.

Thus, one can argue about the wrongs and rights of smoking. But the psychological fact underlying the argumentation is that one wants to smoke for some sort of satisfaction and at the same time wants to give up smoking for reasons of health or economy.

Not knowing the real reasons, one searches for good reasons in argument. And as one knows in advance what is wanted (the thesis), it should never be too difficult to find good reasons for getting it.

But the real reason for argumentation is to provide for one's own satisfaction good and sufficient reasons or excuses for doing what one wants to do, for getting what one wants to get, whether these are metaphysical proofs for the existence of God, the beginning of creation, the continuation of samsaric evolution or just the sociological arguments to convince oneself by soothing one's conscience that capital punishment should be maintained its a deterrent for grave crime.

When it becomes clear that the devious ways of the process of thought are based on deeper and hidden motives, it is obviously imperative to clear thinking that the mind be free from an

conditioning of past customs and tradition. Only an open mind can be free.

And only a free mind can see things independently as they are, without judging as to what should be. In direct thinking there is understanding and the freedom of direct action with insight.

43. Art

Art is not just skilfulness in a certain activity for a few hours a day, the skilfulness of the painter, the poet, the music-composer. There is skilfulness in the laboratory where poisonous bombs are made to destroy one's fellow man. But true art comes from skilful living in harmony, without conflict, in peace with all the world, in the silence of thought, in direct communion, in love.

There may be skilfulness in particular fields, the skilfulness of technique, the skill of philosophic analysis, the various types of artistry. But when the artist identifies himself with his art, it is merely the expression of himself. And that is the cause of opposition, giving rise to different schools of art, different systems of philosophy, different organisations of politics and social life, different complexes of religion. In those differences there is opposition because there is "self". All are based on choice, which is will with all its individual restrictions and conditioning, and none of which is truth.

Action that breeds opposition cannot be beautiful, cannot be true. As such action is the outcome of thought which makes the "self" endure, it is not such action which gives harmonious living in the communion of love.

Concentration on details is fragmentation, which prevents the seeing of the beauty of the forest in analysing the components of an individual tree. A dependence on individual expression is like an exclusive drug which dulls the mind, preventing it to be alert, awake, receptive, non-selective, non-conditioned. Only the non-conditioned, non-committed mind is open and free to

learn what is new, what is now. Without cause, without motive, without self, there is the only direct communion which is beauty, truth and love.

49. Aspiration

Aspiration is a desire to become, to achieve, to attain or acquire. It is usually considered as an earnest desire, with goodness or greatness as its goal.

Still, however lofty the goal of such aspiration may be, it must always imply a failure of attainment and a longing for a goal which is not real but ideal. Thus, even the aspiration of a bodhisattva, striving for enlightenment, with all his hopes and ideals, is still based on the mental picture of a previous Buddha, whose virtues he tries to emulate and imitate. One may even wonder whether it is not just because of such ardent aspiration that the road to emancipation is so winding and so long. For, once it is realised that all extremes of mortification and indulgence can but lead to “self”, once it is realised that even the higher spheres of formless trance cannot lead beyond, once it is realised that all striving is but for the attainment of a concept—then thought cannot aspire any more. When there is no beyond, the mind cannot project in aspiration, cannot strive in idealization, cannot cultivate in concentration.

When the mind is truly quiet, when it does not know itself, when it cannot refer things back to itself—then thought stands still, and there is only perception of what is. Then all can be seen truly, and all reaction thereto as conditioned. Thus the bodhisattva Siddhartha Gotama on the eve of his enlightenment saw the conditioned arising and cessation, through ignorance becoming the mental formations, leading to reactions. And in thus understanding the dependent origination of all components

of matter and of thought, he was free, emancipated, enlightened, without effort, without striving, instantly, selflessly, ultimately.

As long as there is a soul in view there will be aspiring to achieve; as long as there are mountains there will be the desire and the will to conquer them. For him that knows no “self”, there is no thought of conquest. For him that does not know, all conquest is in vain.

50. Association

On the one hand we want association because we fear loneliness, and on the other hand we meet with conflict in association. The fact is that we are very rarely alone; for, even when we are not in company of others, our mind seeks the association of ideas in memory and in projection. The mind is thought, and thought is always in action; without mental activity there is no thought, and without knowing it we are afraid of it. Not that we are afraid of being alone, for we do not know what that is; but we are afraid to let go all the associations of thought; we are attached to those associations as there is no thought without them. Thought is the retention of the past and the projection in the future; and in the present there is no thought. In the present there is only experiencing, which is the awareness of what is. But that has no duration, no security, no background; it has nothing for the "self" to get hold of, and so the mind forms its own idea of what has now become an experience, and that memory is relegated to the past to be classified and registered with other associations. All that is mine, and I am that.

Without association I am not lonely, but I am not. And that thought, that idea is of course very disturbing. The "I" cannot aim at its own dissolution, and thus we hanker after association, and find there the basis of conflict, because it is based on opposition: I and the other.

To be alone in experiencing the fullness of living is not an experience of loneliness which is of "self". It is no isolation for there is no thought, no idea of "self" in opposition. It is because

we are not whole, that there is room for a delusion of “I”. When association ceases to be a means of exploitation, then to be alone means to be free, unimpeded by thoughts of memory, of desire, of self, of conflict, when thought is utterly still, and association is integration.

51. Assumption

Perception is prevented by a prefixed attitude of mind, a thought resulting from a conclusion. There may have been arguments and motives which decided such an assumption, but all those are thoughts which find their basis in the past and which therefore are not actually experienced. A conclusion is the end of a wish, the attainment of a goal. When that goal has been fixed in advance as an ideal, all striving towards that goal is influenced and conditioned by that ideal. Thus the ideal at the end as a conclusion is also the means which propels thoughts and desires towards that end. And so, an assumption, a thought, an ideal, a conclusion, they all becloud the issue.

To find out the real issue of a problem, the mind has to be clear of all thoughts about it. To find out the true meaning of love, there should be no pursuit of the abstract idea. To analyse love as a biological urge, or as the delight of sexual pleasure, to call love sacred and sex profane, are so many thoughts which try to give continuity to the memory of an experience. That is the work of thought which in continuity seeks the security of attainment. And an assumption of any definition is never the perception of experiencing in actuality. It is a definition, an assumption, a word, a memory, an ideal, a desire for continuation or for repetition, but that is never love.

Only when thought ceases to assume and to conclude, when the past of memory and the future of ideals have ceased to fix the mind's attitude, only then can there be the direct experiencing of what is. In this experiencing there is no goal, there is no striving,

there is no desire, an ideal, no conflict, no self, no memory, no projection. Such is the beauty and the freedom and the truth of love. But in thought there is no love.

52. Astronomy

The science of the heavenly bodies is probably the oldest science known to man. Originally, it was not mere star-gazing, but a star-arranging (as indicated by its very name, derived from the Greek *nemein*: to arrange). And so, practical or natural astronomy developed into astrology, the art of judging the occult influence of the stars and planets.

The regular movement of the stars and the independent but also regular movement of the planets must have been a source of comfort and security in the midst of the hazards of life in the desert with its ever-shifting sands. They were made and arranged by man in patterns to suit him, which could explain the unknown, perhaps even forecast the future.

The human mind wants security, and in the skies he found something reassuringly fixed, an ordered universe, which in stages led him to his discovery of that ultimate reassurance and security which he still calls God.

But the order which man discovered is not in the skies, but in man's own mind. A day-to-day observance by the naked eye would hardly have observed the formation of new universes, and in fact did not discover some of the planets of the solar system till very recently, when with the help of powerful telescopes Neptune and Pluto had to be accommodated in his astronomical charts and astrological horoscopes.

Such is the mind's hunger and greed for security that even the heavens and their gods are arranged to find a place for man himself as the centre of that universe, the discoverer who now

becomes controlled, to provide continuance, regularity in space as well as time, the security and ultimate assurance in existence, in isolation, in opposition, in conflict, in “self”.

53. Atmosphere

Literally, this is a globe or shell of vapour in which objects, like the earth, move. Hence it has also come to mean one's mental or moral environment.

One is always building up and creating such an atmosphere in which to breathe, to move, to live; and thereby it becomes an extension of oneself, especially when one speaks of the sphere of influence. Just as our physical body cannot live without the air or the oxygen in the atmosphere around us, so the thought cannot exist without that mental or moral atmosphere, especially "created" for the purpose of the survival of "self". For, it is indeed the "self" that creates its own sphere of influence in which to expand, to continue, to grow; and it is that type of atmosphere (*atmos*—vapour) which now produces that type of life which makes the self survive in this shell, which could be named its atmo-sphere (*atma*—self).

What is the "self" without its sphere? It cannot be brought about without the isolation and opposition of its protective shell. It cannot breathe or live without or outside this shell of individuality. It cannot survive without the protection of this sphere which prevents harmful or destructive influences to contact it. In short, the sphere is the "self", the *atman*, soul, thought, memory, ideal, for without this shell there is nothing, not even vapour, but just an idea.

The idea is born from the desire to continue, for without survival there is no meaning and no purpose possible. But in that desire for survival is the germ of isolation, of opposition, of exclu-

sion, of egotism, of conflict. But the understanding of this sphere as a mere idea and ideal will bring about a cessation of influence and expansion, of isolation and exploitation, of opposition and conflict.

54. Attachment (1)

One is afraid of what one is or will be, if the other, the object of the attachment, is not there any more. What will happen to the “self” if it remains without its attachments, its possessions, husband or wife, children, property, learning, title etc.? Thus, this fear is causing the attachment.

The problem, therefore, is not how to become free from attachment, how to become detached, for that is merely a search for a new attachment: how to become independent? The problem is: Why is there fear? Am I aware that I am afraid? This being the cause of attachment. And afraid of what?

Fear is not an abstract idea; one is afraid of something. That something may be imaginary: afraid of the dark; but the fear is actual enough. But the object is not something positive. One is not afraid of ghosts, because there are no ghosts. But as fear is in the mind, there is fear that the mind, which is the “self”, may lose something which is essentially “mine”. The mind is afraid of losing its identity; and one has constructed this identity so carefully from attachment to the things which have made the “I”, memories, ideals, values, satisfaction, that the loss of anyone is felt as a loss of “self”. And that is the cause of fear and panic.

Not knowing what love is, there is craving for possession, because the “self” is but an empty shell of ideas, which has to be inflated like a balloon to keep its shape. This is not said in condemnation; but only when there is understanding of the fact, can there be freedom from fear which is the cause of attachment.

Fear of being alone, of being nobody, is only a reaction to the memories of past experiences.

To be alone is to be free, free from images, free from ideal, free from desire, attachment, fears and conflicts, free of “self”.

55. Attachment (2)

An escape from loneliness may take any form of worldly entertainment through company or drink, of spirituality through prayer, sacrifice or concentration, of political activity through social care or ideological propaganda. Even in our greatest isolation we seek relationship with kindred spirits in music or philosophy, in art collection or hobbies, because relationship makes us forget that unbearable loneliness which comes from dependence and disappointment.

All this activity of escaping is then entirely self-centred, be it in striving for attainment or in worrying about non-attainment. Even in our devotions we are devoted to ourselves; it is self-concern which motivates all our actions, directly or indirectly.

Is it possible to understand this loneliness instead of escaping from it in attachment?

This awareness of utter loneliness comes over us when there is frustration in relationship. But frustration can come only when there is an unfulfilled expectancy. When there is expectancy in relationship is there any relationship at all or is that not mere contact in exploitation, in possession? If we try to fill our loneliness, our emptiness, with possessions in exploitation, can this lead to anything but opposition and conflict. Then we draw back in deeper isolation with greater attachment, resulting in more frustration in utter loneliness.

Is it not possible to have relationship which is not exploitation? After all, to be alive in the world is to be related. Is it possible to be related without being self-centred? If the division

between self and others is the cause of the conflict in exploitation, is there no relationship possible which is not based on that division? What are the barriers that put up this division? Are they not all in thought, in ideals, in images, ideas, desires fulfilled or not fulfilled? Then, when thought ceases to project those ideals, there can be direct understanding which is not conflict, because there is no attachment. Without the escape into attachment, because there is no dependence, there is no loneliness, because one is all one.

56. Attachment (3)

Possessiveness enlarges the territory of psychological property, that is, the extension of the self. This may be an expansion of the dominion of power, or of influence, or of gratification through property or through sex.

This territorial protection is naturally a form of resistance against a possible encroachment from others. It is also a restriction of movement within one's own limitations. And thereby any form of attachment is resistance and restriction of freedom.

Seeing all this, one should intelligently enquire why one should thus restrict one's own freedom. Why does one form attachments which obviously lead to restriction of freedom, and resistance, which is opposition and conflict?

The reason is that we know of only one kind of relationship which is dependence. A relationship which is dependence is a relationship of exploitation. One seeks contact for a purpose. The cultivation of friendship has satisfaction as its goal; and that is a search for gratification through an exclusive possessiveness. "She is *my* girl. She is *my* wife, on whom I can rely for a welcome home. And she will be mine, because she wants me!"

But is there understanding of the need of one and the other? Is not my relationship entirely self centred, taking the other half for granted? And is that any relationship at all? Is there any contact even if we share the same bed?

Because there is attachment, there is no freedom, and hence no understanding. Without mutual understanding there is no coming together; there can be no love which does not know of

“self”. As long as there is attachment which is possessiveness, there is bound to be resistance in the lack of freedom. Only in the perfect understanding that all search of satisfaction can only lead to opposition, the thought of search will be silent. When the senses do not cry out for gratification, it is possible to see one another without the screen of possession. And in that stillness without opposition, without conflict, without “self”, there is the freedom of direct contact, of perfect understanding, of pure love.

57. Attention (1)

The present moment presents itself as a challenge, and there is no choice in observing. One does not choose facts. In the awareness of an event, a fact, or an object, there is no choice; it is there only when subsequently the mind begins to qualify the object, comparing it with previous observation, there is classification in memory. But that is not attention to the challenge.

In attention with full awareness there is no observer, accepting or rejecting. Such attention is not a continuous state of awareness in which the observer is absent. A continuous state would involve the continuance of an observer. But in observing there is no observer. The concept of an observer who performs the observation is a trick of the mind seeking to perpetuate the experience by storing it up and linking it with the past through memory.

It is obvious, therefore, that awareness is not a product of consciousness, but operates when thought ceases. Mind or thought can try to be quiet, can try to stop; but in that endeavour it cannot go beyond itself, and it is still thought trying to become no-thought. But when there is awareness of this struggle, the struggle itself is no more. In attention to the play of the “self” there is no “self” but only awareness, which has no past and no purpose. In that direct meeting of the challenge, there is no challenge any more.

58. Attention (2)

To be attentive, to attend with care. If it is listening it is paying attention to what is said, not to my interpretation thereof. If it is attending to a patient, it means a constant watchfulness over his every movement, which may express his need, his discomfort, his actual state of mind and body. It may mean only the adjustment of a pillow, the mere holding of a hand, or just one's presence to give the assurance that one cares. When there is this infinite care, there is no thought of self, of sacrifice of time or comfort, no calling back in mind what to do or what to say, how to act or to react. Then one is so totally absorbed in perception, that there is no analytical discussion of thought, but an immediate awareness of the slightest change in the condition of the patient. Such awareness and attention is not resulting in a reaction to a need; it even anticipates it, for there is full relationship in understanding.

It is not pity which motivates such attentiveness. There is no motive at all. Neither is it an idealistic feeling of at-one-ness. It is just that there is no thought of self, no attachment of past memories, no reflections in distorted ideas, no projection into an idealistic future. It is the immediate care of attentive watchfulness from moment to moment. In that attention there is such a clarity of perception of the immediate, that action steps in the moment it is required without conflict, without choice, without motive, without "self."

That is the beauty of love which cannot be made, which cannot be planned, nor retained; but which is alive and alert every moment. No striving can achieve this, no cultivation can

produce this; but it is there when there is full perception of what is.

The attention to what is, does not include a rejection of interference, of distraction; it is not a concentration in one-pointedness of mind. When there is interference, that too needs the care of attentive awareness in order to understand it, to see its implications as a reaction to conditioning. Then it ceases to be an interference; and in loving care and attention it can be understood and cease to be an interference. That is the beauty of love.

59. Austerity

The discipline of a monastery, the living according to rigorous rules of conduct, the abstinences from certain foods, drinks, sex, is not an abandonment of self; it is rather self seeking in self-mortification, one of the extremes, the other one being a life of self-indulgence. Vows of poverty and charity are based on choice and will, and therefore strengthen the “self” idea.

It is not in denying the “self” that truth can be found. But if the truth of no self is understood, then the austerity of simplicity comes naturally without striving, without purpose, without a further goal. Then there is a natural abandonment of whatever is false, a natural poverty of detachment in the midst of riches, a natural chastity in all one’s rotations.

In such abandonment there is an austerity of living which is simplicity without status-symbols, without the need of decorative make-up, which is true to nature and hence beautiful. In the detachment of self-abandonment there is no opposition and hence no conflict. In the austerity of self-abandonment there is no preference of attachment, no will to become, to acquire, to achieve. And in that understanding, living itself is an act of love. This love, this understanding, this abandonment gives a clarity of insight which is so simple and so direct as to be austere. No practice of austerity can ever lead to this insight; but insight leads to austerity which is found in the simplicity and beauty of nature which is always fresh and new in its creation, because there is no self to discipline, no self to idealize, no self to mortify. It is the beauty of love.

60. Avoidance

The search for the solution of a problem is the usual approach in avoiding to face it. Searching provides an opportunity for action, which prevents a direct relationship with, and thereby an understanding of, the problem.

In the activity of a search the mind cannot be quiet and passive; it is conditioned by its desire to find a solution, by its plan of action; and in this conditioned state the desired answer is already pre-determined; it is an idea, an ideal, a self-projected image into the future, and thus no actual facing the challenge of the problem in the present. In our anxiety to find an answer we have no time to listen to the question. It is the most subtle way in avoiding a solution while being actively engaged in the search for a solution.

“Why do we avoid?” is a question of greater importance than “what is the problem?” For life is a challenge; and a challenge not understood is a problem. Why then do we avoid a challenge? Why do we seek an escape before even understanding the problem?

We never meet a challenge face to face in the present. We face it with a ready-made answer, because a challenge is a disturbance; and the quickest way to do away with a disturbance is to find an answer. The mind has all the answers ready in the memory and from there it now goes in search for a solution, avoiding the real issue of having to face the problem. We avoid a disturbance because it disturbs our self-complacency. The searcher must be active, for without search he cannot survive. And *that* is the problem we avoid at all cost, the survival of the searcher.

61. Awakening

The transition from sleep and dream is an awakening to a world of reality. But the world in which we move and think and love in our waking state is frequently as far removed from reality as our dream state in which also everything seemed to be so real, even though completely lacking all reason and meaning.

The world in which we move and live and think is indeed but a world of actuality, in which we react to the environment as mechanically and unintelligently as in a dream. Here too our actions are conditioned reflexes, subject to the influence of the past, of memory, of attachment and repulsion, of love and hate, of the senses and their contacts, tradition and education, hopes and fears. In short, it is the world of “self” in which we move with self as the aim, in which we live with self as the centre, in which we think with self as the subject, the thinker. This world of actuality is then only a world of reaction, for it is seen only with reference to the “self”.

In this reaction there is a constant comparing, judging, selecting, choosing, willing, retaining, absorbing, prospecting and projecting, which has only one reference, the “self”. It is in this context that love so easily turns to hate, that memories are cherished and ideals are built up; for, all this reaction is necessary to maintain the illusion of a self as separate from its activity.

Awakening in the true sense begins with an awareness of this delusion-centred activity, which is the beginning of awareness which sees and understands things and people and events as they

are, and not merely as instruments and means of fulfilling an ego-centric life of reaction.

The mere seeing of life as a reaction to “self”, and the understanding of “self” as a reaction to life, will halt this delusion, this living dream; and in that awakening there is a new life, a new sight, at world with a new dimension in which “self” has no place, in which there is no conflict, but an approach of learning, of loving with deep sympathy, in which there is no more striving and becoming; and in which there is an immediate response in direct action. And that alone is truth.

62. Awareness (1)

Concentration, *samādhi* on something is not awareness (*sati*); for concentration is a deliberately focussing the mind on some particular object and therefore an act of the will. The object is selected, in preference to something else, of a chosen object, condition, ideal; and all mental energy is then concentrated exclusively on that selected object of thought. The deliberation, the selection, the preference, the exclusiveness of the mental choice, the chosen frontiers within which the wandering thoughts are controlled, require great mental effort, so much, that greater effort is exercised in the controlling of thoughts than on the focussing of the mental eye on the single object chosen for concentration. The means become more important than the goal; and the entire activity is a wilful exercise, a purposeful direction, unintentional restriction of energy to be channelled with pre-selection, with purpose of attainment, of gain, of making become something which was not there before.

Awareness on the other hand has no pre-selection and no re-active purpose. It has no particular relationship to individual conditions, and there are no methods or means for its passive activity; that is, its action is not intentionally directed, but is passively aware of any change of conditions that may occur. It is a watchfulness over the motives of action without itself moving in any direction. Thus there is no goal to be attained, no self to be satisfied, no knowledge to be acquired. The particular is not chosen as an object outstanding in selective comparison, but the particular is seen as an aspect of the entire movement of the

idealization process of the “self” in action, to continue, to become, to project, to expand. In such total awareness, the mind does not contribute its thoughts of memory or of ideal; and in this intelligent passivity there is no action of “self” and thus there is no conflict in opposition.

63. Awareness (2)

It is not enough to be aware of a certain event, but it is far more important to see the entire set-up in which the event takes place, its conditioning, its reactivity, its background, its aim and projectivity. This cannot be done by concentration of one-pointedness of mind, which focusses all attention like a spotlight on one particular, leaving the entirety of the process in shadows and darkness.

Concentration or even mere watchfulness on breathing may cause one to notice a change in the rhythm of the breath, betraying the interfering of some external thought. Then it is not important to follow up the breath from the nostrils filling the lungs, but rather the interference.

When an angry thought arises, it is not merely that anger which should be attended to, for that can be done by either suppression, substitution or sublimation. What is needed most of all is the understanding of that anger. It is not so much the knowledge of the immediate cause of my anger, which may be insufficient sleep last night, followed up by a breakfast with cold coffee and burnt toast.

But what does that anger represent? What does it try to express? Aren't the coffee and the toast instruments rather than the causes of my anger, through which a hurt feeling of "self" tries to unburden itself? Is not that "self" trying to assert itself and in a feeling of frustration taking it out on something or someone else?

Thus the particular must be seen in the whole; and when the

whole is seen and understood, the detail has lost its significance. Then the anger is seen and understood as wounded pride of an “I” which itself is a mere conditioned reflex grown out of the conditioning past, cherished memories, wilful projection, a bubble which has been pricked and is no more. Such complete awareness will discover that anger is no more.

64. Awareness (3)

I am not aware continuously. There are long periods during which I am inattentive. When I am aware, there is no desire, no choice, no division, because there is no thinking about it, but just being aware. But when I am inattentive, I say things which are not true, I am nervous in my reactions because I feel insecure, I lose my temper, I am in conflict and feel all the things which divide. I do not want those things to happen, and therefore I am trying to be aware all the time. But trying to achieve total awareness in resistance is not awareness at all.

On the other hand, to be aware of the fact of my inattention is awareness. And in that, all striving ceases, all nervous reactions stop, the quest of security has come to an end. For, the moment I become aware of my inattention, it is over. I need not strive and struggle to become aware all the time.

When I am aware of my unawareness, the conflict is finished. When I know that I am not aware, the whole movement of thinking changes. In non-awareness thought brings up the memory and establishes a thinker, thus causing division and conflict. But the moment there is awareness of this inattention to what is, the whole manufacturing process of self-consciousness comes to a stop, without division, without thinker, without conflict.

65. Awareness (4)

Awareness is a passive approach without choice, which gives the problem quite a different significance. An active approach means a method which the mind has adopted. Methods are the stereotyped approaches of memory, advocated by sages and saints, accepted on their authority in one's search for a solution, safety, security. In an active approach the method becomes all-important in its search for finding a solution. But a method is a memory of the past, while the living problem is vital in the present. How can the dead past solve a present problem, when the method of solving is more important than the understanding of the problem? A method has already chosen the approach without seeing the significance of the problem. A method is aimed at finding a solution to do away with the problem; hence it is a form of escape.

But in a passive approach of awareness there is only the seeing of the problem without judgement. Thus there is no identification, no colouring of the problem as good or evil, as mine or not mine. Then the problem can present itself in its own form and thus reveal its content. Without interpretation and identification there is no choice, no desire for a solution, for an answer, for a revolt. Then the challenge is not met with an old pattern which is of the memory, of ideals, of "self". In the absence of self-awareness there is only awareness of the challenge which is always new. But this awareness will show that we are not passively interested, but that we are related to the problem with self-interest, with

prejudice, with desire for an answer, with the image of an ideal solution.

Now, that awareness is the beginning of self-understanding. The problem is not a choice as between smoking and non-smoking, for which we know all the arguments, pro and con. The problem is why I want a solution, which is an escape, which identifies myself with the answer, which strengthens my own methodical approach, which actively supports the “self” in its choice. The intelligent understanding of this new problem or challenge will automatically (not methodically) dissolve all questions without choice, without conflict.

66. Awareness (5)

When I am aware of my reactions, I stop doing many obviously stupid things. And there is no problem. But the moment this awareness eases off, I am again at it, not only with nervous reactions, but also yielding to the many commands of society and tradition which form the background of the “I” which I am so keenly watching at times, and want to get rid of.

Struggling to be aware is just another form of trying to become reformed, which is the main cause of confusion and conflict in which the “I” projects itself in continuance. But, when “I”. Cannot become aware, I, can watch myself yielding to stupid conventions, keeping up pretensions, putting up a brave show, and so on. Then without trying to become different, this mere watching of activity of the body has made the mind alert. And seeing the implications of these concessions to society, their meaninglessness and harmfulness, I cannot in all sincerity continue with them. Thus, I simply drop them, or I am a hypocrite in my own eyes. Awareness of hypocrisy is not a thing anyone can live with; and so awareness of my unguarded actions gives that mental alertness which was missing a few moments earlier.

Now, what does awareness do? It not only sees my nervous reactions which drop when “caught in action” but it sees the entire building up of the mental system which has produced those reactions. For, reactions are not only of the nerves, they are also of the unconscious layers of thought, to which the “I” so readily reacts as the easiest way out of a problem. Conformity to fashion, social customs, cultural ties, national flag waving,

religious adherence to rituals, which one may laugh at privately and yet cling to in public to avoid “difficulties”, are some of the expressions of that inner fear of standing alone while losing the support of the mass. Awareness will not only expose the childlike immaturity of conformity, but also the basic fear underlying it. Exposure of fear does not make one brave, but shows the emptiness of the mind in fear. When the mind is truly empty, thought as reaction ceases, and in that silence an altogether new relationship of understanding can establish itself from moment to moment without attachment, without fear, without conflict.

67. Awareness (6)

A thinker who believes himself to be aware of his thought is only aware of his reactions which have adopted thoughts as his thoughts, in identification which involves memory, and in registration which aims at projection into a future, without awareness of the present.

In awareness there is neither thinker nor thought. Only a mind, in which thought, which is the reference to memory, is silent can be aware. In that awareness there is no flash back into some past experience, no reliance on some method of control, no clinging to the authority of faith or tradition. In that awareness there is no purpose of attainment, no aspiration of a goal, no projection towards an ideal. In that awareness there is no thought of self, no analysis of approval or condemnation, no introduction nor exclusion of what should or should not be done.

But, in that awareness there is the silent meeting with what is. Without judgement and without conclusion, without desire and without fear, there is a direct contact in this unprepared meeting with what is. Without acceptance of the beautiful, without rejection of the ugly, there is simple awareness in the total innocence of detachment. Without striving, without escaping, there is the full attention which is free from distraction. And in that complete awareness without the frame of desire, without the colour of ideal, there is a direct understanding which is totally empty of thought of self.

In that emptiness of "self", all thought ceases. In the absence of a "self" there is no clinging memory to past experience and

no future projection into an ideal existence, but there is just the present moment, which is innocent and beautiful and fresh, because it is just born, not conditioned, not finalised. In that moment there is the truth of understanding which is not the logic of science, not the reflection of a thinker, not the anticipation of a dreamer.

The truth which sees and understands the false as false is a direct awareness without prejudice. And in that truth is freedom, emancipation, deliverance, because it holds no conflict and no self.

68. Awareness (7)

Awareness is not the same as consciousness. Thought which is conscious thinking, is a logical deduction from previously obtained data; and as such, it depends on previous experiences which have been stored up by memory. It is, of course, not an actual experience which has been or even which can be stored up. At most it is a mental reaction on the verbal level, in which a key-word has been attached for reference.

Now, if one is aware of this thought-process, its futility will be at once evident; the memory of a label of a past experience is not an experience at all; just as a bottle filled with sea water, and even labelled as such, can never provide the experience of the perception of a wave in the ocean.

If this is perceived in awareness, it does not matter whether the object of conscious thinking was a highly abstract concept of the absolute, or a mere remembrance of a quarrel I had in the morning. When I think about anger, I am not angry. When I think about union with God, I am obviously far away from any union, even with a concept of the absolute (if such concept were possible).

In consciousness I am conscious of "self" as a past reaction. In awareness there is no thought of "self", there is no discursive process, there is no return to memory, but just awareness of what is being experienced, And that awareness dissolves all bonds of the past. Then there is freedom here and now.

It is, therefore, the consciousness of thought which is binding with its volition, which makes it dependent on the authority of

the past and which projects it into a desire for continuance to find a security which is not to be found in the present.

In being aware of this activity of thought, volition and projection will stop; and therewith craving and clinging are impossible. Thus, consciousness of thinking can only lead to a continuation of a delusion of “self”, whereas awareness of the void of such projection will bring this process to an end.

69. Awareness (8)

To be aware of something is not just some vague acquaintance with something in the background: a baby crying in a house down the lane. To be aware means to be fully involved. To be hungry is an experience which gathers in all the senses; even sight gets blurred, hearing indistinct, because hunger is a challenge to the entire system. We can read of people dying of starvation, and feel pity; but we are not involved in the same way, as long as there is a mere recording, a comparison with an image in the memory.

But when I am hungry, I am so totally involved that I am hunger itself; that is, I am the immediate response to the experience. There is no escape possible through thought, memory, sublimation, sacrifice; whatever I do or not do, I am experiencing hunger, to the exclusion of everything else. I cannot bring in another unrelated element, such as prayer, submission, distraction, for the experience of hunger is all-pervading. I can temporarily avoid the issue and escape in a dreamland of plenty, for the moment, by artificial means, prayers or drugs, concentration or activity; but I am still hungry, I am that hunger.

No logic of a super-ego, no vision of a higher nature can bypass the experience, because I am hunger itself, which makes me highly sensitive, not allowing anything else to intrude, not allowing the mind to change the object. There is no time, no space separating me from the experience; there is, in fact, no experiencer looking at the experience. The experience has no image; it needs no memory or thought.

In that awareness there is an immediate experiencing which

produces immediate action. If the hunger is purely physical I do something about it; if the need is extreme, I may even steal and disregard all consequences, because the awareness is not on the outcome but on the need.

Psychological hunger, which is the desire of the mind to continue in its search for self-satisfaction, will likewise disregard all consequences in its search for a continued existence of that "self". But here it is awareness which sees the reactionary activity of thought, seeking continuance in impermanence, causing conflict in its contradictory search; and it is awareness which can now see the void of both search and conflict.

70. Awareness (9)

Desire comes into being, when there is a disturbance of pleasure or pain in conflict. Every movement in life is a challenge; and challenge demands a response which is action. When response is inadequate, there is a mere reaction of thought running back into memory in order to find an explanation. But that, of course, is not meeting the challenge at all. And what follows is a mere reaction to the memory, when the old and the dead are brought into contact with the new. No adequate response is then possible; and the challenge remains unanswered. Lying dormant it forms the beginning of a complex which is a conflict.

When is a response adequate to the challenge? This is only possible when the challenge is fully understood. As long as the mind tries to find a solution, it is a reaction which is search for satisfaction, That search then becomes more important than the problem; and thus the response can never be adequate,

The mind, therefore, must give up its searching for an answer. This, of course, cannot be done by the mind itself by a “*tour de force*”, turning against itself. But when it is seen that the mind is the memory which searches and distracts from the challenge, then the thought-process will become silent and watchful. Not knowing how to deal with the challenge, but only knowing that the past cannot deal with the present, there is an acute alertness watching the challenge which is now not a disturbance of the mind which is quiet.

In this perception there is no classification or registration, but only experiencing the challenge, without a disturbance in

conflict of pleasure or pain, of desire, of self-consciousness. Then there can be a direct and adequate response which leads to action which is not reaction and which leads no further and which is no-more-becoming (*bhava nirodhā*). It is not a solution to a problem, but the dissolution of a dream, the fading of a mirage, in seeing that there was never a conflict while there was never a “self” in opposition.

71. Awareness (10)

When silence of the mind comes as quiet as the morning mist over the fields, as gentle as distant rain comes over the hills, as natural as the falling of the night, then there is no effort in being open to a blessing. It is only concentration which requires effort and desire to become virtuous. But in silence there is no denial or acceptance, for in contemplation there is no concentration. Then there is no purpose, no memory, no continuity of an ideal. There is awareness of the environment; but in this silent attention there is no influence and no response which is reaction. There is no thought in the silence of the mind but a wonderful peace of independence and freedom, of being alone and yet not in opposition.

Without purpose, without object, without thought, there is the need to let go, not in abandon which has gratification of the senses as its goal, but “the need of tired eyelids to close over tired eyes²”. When the mind is tired of its chattering thought, of its rushing for security, of its clinging to possessions of the body and of the heart, it becomes silent. But this tiredness does not come from exertion, not from failure, not from exhaustion, but from understanding which comes through awareness.

Knowledge through learning, the acquisition of a new thought, which keeps the mind occupied and dependent, which seeks continuity and security but which is not an awakening

²Tagore.

of intelligence which can come only in pure awareness, when thought of self in clinging and craving is silent.

In such awareness, every act of experiencing is a new creation, which has not been brought about, which is not a picture brought up from the past, or projected for continuation in the future. Just because the mind is silent without thought, it is open to see and receive and understand without prejudice or conditioning. And because there is no “self” in that unconditional awareness, there is the intelligence to understand what is without opposition, without searching, without conflict.

And that is the peace of being alone in all, the ecstasy of being no-self.

72. Balance of Mind

Equanimity is not such an acrobatic feat as the walking on a tight rope, although the secret of both lies in leaving all weights and burdens far behind and far below the point of contact, as in a jeweller's balance. The longer the distance between the balancing contact point and the weighted scales, the more equilibrium is effected.

In equanimity, even-mindedness, mental balance, there is just one small point of contact, and that is the present moment. The arms of the balance may carry all the weight far down on the scales. Their contents are not important. Brass weights or precious stones, all lose their values when being weighed. Their only secure place of importance is to be away as far as possible from the contact point.

It is in such balance of mind that there is no thought of attachment to values left behind, that the excitement of joy and even the serenity of well-being have lost their pull. Such balance is not an achievement of the mind on top, but it belongs to the whole, when all the forces of the mind and all the weights of material interests are poised and cancelling out one another in importance and weightiness. Then there is no comparing, no adjusting, but a calmness of stability which, however, is not the safety of fixed security. Its beauty is not in rigidity, but in the perfect poise in which all take their place.

There is no joy of mind over matter, no stability of permanence of matter over mind, but the complete realisation of the totality being in a perfect state of ease and peace, of being always new

and now, in which there is no thought of individuality, but only the total harmony of balance in the absence of conflict.

73. Barriers

The obstacles one encounters in life prevent the progress, the success, the attainment of one's ideal. But the real barrier is the not understanding that one's striving for success, one's endeavour to attain, one's effort to become, are the real obstacles to seeing what is, to understanding the motives of one's actions, to living in the present, free from prejudice, from conflict, from "self".

Not wanting to see and understand one's prejudices, one's attachments, one's ideals, is the cause of all conflict; for, therein lies the opposition between what is and what one wants to be.

This barrier may be one of self-delusion (*sakkhyaditthi*) or of pride which says "I am" (*asmi-māna*), of attachment to rituals, tradition, merit (*silabbata-paramasa*), of lust for self-projection in ideals (*rūpa-rāga*, *arūpa-rāga*), of affection or of hate (*kāmacchanda*, *vyapada*); it is always confusion (*viccikiccha*), and ignorance (*avijjā*), which cannot be removed by effort, which is always self-willing. Mere suffering in conflict does not provide a solution. A desire for a solution is still a desire, and can only produce more conflict.

It is then in the complete understanding of the necessity to be free from all barriers in order to be free—it is only in the understanding of the nature of those barriers—that they will tumble down; but not in an effort to remove them, which is an effort to become free; not in a desire to become free, which is still a desire to become, a desire for an ideal, a mental projection. But in a direct understanding of the action of the mind, which through the attachment of memory projects the desire of an ideal

“self”—there alone can there be an immediate response without purpose, without “self”, without desire, without conflict; which means understanding without barriers.

And that is the truth which alone can set us free.

74. Beast

The beast in man is always there as long as there is the division between his animal appetites of craving and lust, of hate and cruelty, and his intellectual escapes therefrom in hope and fear, in devotion and faith.

Nature strives for the survival of its species, which is but the natural outcome of its composite nature. Any composition tends towards decomposition, while its composing parts tend towards continued existence in striving for perfection. Thus, on the purely physical level there is competition leading to elimination of opposition. This is found in laws of gravitation and centrifugal force, in affinity between certain elements, in polarity, in resistance, in friction and in oscillation.

But when this competition is raised to the psychological level, in which physical need to survive is replaced by psychological greed to dominate, then it is mind which controls the body for its own further purpose. As long as the rational element controls the purely material functions of the body there is still unity in cooperation. But when the mind exploits the body in order to dominate and exploit other minds, the body becomes an instrument which may become misguided by an unintelligent mind. And then it is the beast in man that takes control.

It is then not the beast, not the animal appetites, emotions, feelings and inclinations which have to be controlled, curbed, suppressed, regulated, but the unintelligent mind which directs those appetites. And in this there is no method, no culture of virtue, no code of morality, which can prevent those sporadic

outbursts of hate and enmity, on the personal as well as on a racial level, For then it is a blind mind which guides the unseeing animal. Then the fault is not in the animal, the instrument, but in the blindness of the mind, produced by a blinded society based on competition and exploitation, produced by a blinded “self” which in fear and hope can only see its own interest, guided and conditioned by the past, urged by desire for security, living in a world of exploitation, growing up in a world of conflict, in which there is no place for anything but “self”, the real beast in man.

75. Beauty (1)

When beauty is a mere sensual appreciation of form and colour, it may be based on and developed by technique; but such talent has very little significance, as it can be learned and acquired by practice. For beauty to be something living which is not merely physical, it has to be an expression of love. This love, which is beauty and truth, is a complete abandonment of “self”. As long as there is love in return for affection or in expectation of return, there is “self” which is not the simple love of abandonment, without defence or resistance, without restraint or withholding.

Defence and resistance are the techniques of memory where-with the mind attempts a continuation of experience by means of rejection; restraint and withholding are other techniques of the memory to preserve in continuation what is building up the experience into an experiencer. Thus, the “self” is the experiencer of beauty as an image and reflection from the past, a subjective selection which is no longer experiencing but which has become the “self”, the keeper of remembered experiences. In this process beauty is not experienced but has been made into self-appreciation and self-love without truth. For beauty to be truth, there must be an immediate and direct perception, which is not a mental abstraction, and which therefore, cannot be analysed or defined, not retained in memory, not classified and made into an ideal which is a pattern to be taught in classes of art.

Here it is the mind which has to un-learn all that it has memorised; but not in an active process of demolition and iconoclasm, but in passive awareness of the meaning of the thought-process,

of the expanding activity of the “self” from memory to ideal, in passive awareness of the joy of being free from all techniques which hinder the direct perception of what is. Such a sensitive mind is capable of loving without attachment, of seeing without judging, of holding without desire, and abandoning without regret, always open to the movement of living, which is truth. In that harmonious living without conflict there is beauty and love,

76. Beauty (2)

As love and truth, beauty cannot be cultivated. One can cultivate taste; and tastes change like fashions. But that is not beauty. It is not a matter of education and conditioning, of custom, habit, style or fashion, of culture and tradition. All this may have beauty in it, but it not beauty, just as a saying may have truth in it, but it is not truth. A mere response of the senses may make the presence of beauty felt, but beauty lies beyond the senses. It cannot be seen or heard; it cannot be analysed or taught to others.

Beauty lies in the experience of communion without hindrance, which comes with a sense of goodness and of love to which it is a response. There may be beauty in an old woman's wrinkled face, for beauty does not exist in a smooth complexion, but rather in the peace of harmony which speaks through the eye and which communes in love and understanding, in ease of relationship, in oneness and completion.

Gracefulness in behaviour, gentleness in manners, thoughtfulness, consideration, are all as much part of beauty, as the rhythmic lines of structure or growth, cleanliness and neatness of appearance, as the towering strength of the mountains and ancient trees, as the gentleness of a babbling brook through flowering meadows. But all that is only the surface of beauty.

There is an inward quality which gives grace to movement, gentleness to form; but this inward quality cannot be seen by a mind which is preoccupied with the external forms as objects of possession, as means to enrich the "self", as instruments of self-satisfaction. Only the mind that is not occupied with "self",

that is free from ambition, that is not set on possessions, that is not caught in desires, that is not focussing on ideals—only such a mind is free and unconditioned; only such a mind can be sensitive to perceive real beauty when it is not related to self.

It is there, when there is the compulsion of abandonment of self, when there is a spontaneous rejection of intellectual analysis and synthesis, when all sense of division has disappeared between the observer and the object. For, beauty is not in the object, beauty is not in the reaction of the observer, but in the harmony of love, when there is no room for reflection.

77. Beauty (3)

Truth and love and beauty have become such abstract nouns that we cannot call them even concepts. A concept, after all, is a thought, an idea, and is never the thing, the experiencing itself. One may find a definition of one or the other in a dictionary, but that is not even a concept, an idea. It is at most a vague description of a past experience, a synthetic memory, a faint hope for a repeat, in which the “self” can visualise itself to live. But that is not living. It is not even a concept of life.

The “self” has separated itself from living; for, living is the opening of a flower which lasts but a day, a passing perfume wafted by the wind, a rolling wave which cannot isolate itself from the ocean. But, the “self” has to separate itself from all that is passing, for its essence is existence, is continuance, is expansion; and therefore it is opposing, struggling, conflicting. It can only see itself, which is its own reflection in all its activity; it can only act purposefully, ideologically, selfishly, for that is the only thing it knows. And to retain that reflection, that ideal, that memory, one has to separate them from the actuality which is living in beauty, perceiving in love, experiencing in truth.

As long as we seek beauty, truth and love, we are but chasing ideas made in our own mind; that means we are only self-seeking. Then those ideas become objects to possess, in which to delight. And that indeed is the activity of the “self”. Then the action is more important than anything else, for that action is the “self”.

But, when there is no search for an ideal, then there is no separation between the actor and his act; then there is no possessor

of truth, no gatherer of beauty, no retainer of love. Then there is no pleasure which is selfish, no investment of beauty as in a museum, no memory of gratification, because there is no “self”, no opposition, no conflict. And when there is no conflict there is beauty; when there is no opposition there is love; when there is no desire there is truth.

78. Beauty (4)

When beauty gives the pleasure of satisfaction, it is a self-centred activity. Any action which has “self” as its source, “self” as its function, and “self” as its aim, cannot be sensitive to anything but “self”. All else then becomes an instrument, a means to self-satisfaction; and in this self-absorption there is only a bluntness of insensitivity which cannot see, which cannot understand, which cannot relate to anything but “self”.

There is beauty in relationship, in harmony, in feeling and understanding together. But in “self” there is no beauty, because in stead of relationship there is exploitation, in stead of harmony there is conflict, in stead of feeling together there is isolation and opposition, in stead of understanding there is self-seeking.

But beauty cannot be sought, cannot be made, cannot be an object of desire. Like love, it has a great sensitivity, which is a capacity for receptivity. But there can be no receptivity unless there is an emptiness of “self”. And that is beauty. To be sensitive, receptive, open, there can be no isolation which is opposition. To be tender, vulnerable and understanding with the heart as much as with the mind, there can be no clinging to what is past, no building up in idealism, but just simple and humble awareness of what is in relationship, without aiming at results, just acting without reacting, as a flower gives out its scent.

Life is beautiful when it is lived in simplicity, in humility, in actuality, in harmony, because then there is no opposition. But when life is being lived for a purpose, then the aim becomes all-important, and life becomes an instrument with a purpose and a

goal. That may be an ideal life, but not the real life of living now in harmony, in peace, in understanding, in beauty, in love. In love there is no search for satisfaction, no hope for continuation, no fear of separation. Those are the reactions of “self”. But in love which is loving, there is no self”, no thought, no conflict. That is the beauty of love.

79. Becoming (1)

All conflict is caused through opposition, which is a refusal to accept what is, and a striving to obtain what is not. As long as this striving is confined to creative productivity without further projection which makes of the product an instrument for ambition, it is the natural tendency of nature to protect itself by renewal. But, when striving becomes a means in advance in security, it is the desire not merely to exist, but to continue in existence. Then there is no more a natural tendency of a species to continue its existence through renewal of its individuals, but there arises the greed of the individual to continue as an entity.

The individual, however, being a composite, is subject to decomposition, which is the general law of impermanence. Whereas the species can continue by creating new individuals the individual attempts to continue through growth. Through growth there will be more power and greater strength to oppose all contradiction. It is only in opposition that the individual can expand; it is in opposition that the individual more and more isolates itself; it is in opposition that the individual tries to prevent domination by others.

This is the psychological process of becoming (*bhava*) which makes the "I" in isolation, which strengthens the "I" in opposition, which enlarges the "I" through absorption, through exploitation, through expansion of influence, through property, learning, virtue and countless other artifices, which make the "I" become, and make it strive to obtain what is not. This is the conflict between the actual and the ideal.

The actual is what is in action; that is, the action and the reaction which constitute the impermanent flow of living in conditioned existence. The ideal is the concept of security in which the “I” can be permanent, independent and above conditioning. And the friction between the actual and the ideal is conflict which is the essence of striving to become. Whether this ideal of becoming is mind-culture (*bhāvanā*) or a desire for rebirth (*bhava-taṇhā*), there is the conflict (*dukkha*) which can only cease in the cessation of becoming (*bhava nirodhā*).

80. Becoming (2)

To become is coming into being. It is the crux of all problems which are essentially unanswered questions, unsolved doubts, inconclusive actions. The undecidedness of a proposition leaves a vacuum, an uncertainty, a lack of resolve, and brings with it fear of insecurity, instability, insufficiency.

Not knowing how to deal with a vacuum in which there is a total void of security, a total absence of a base for action, there is the immediate reaction in physical nature as well as in the procedural mind, to fill that vacuum: nature abhors a vacuum. But such action of equalising pressure, of filling up, is but an escape from the fear caused by the image of insecurity. Thus, becoming is an attempt at escaping from not-being.

In a world of universal impermanence there is no security which can fill that vacuum of fear; and thus thought creates an ideal of security in which there can be continuity of existence. This can be done only by separating the fleeting action from the concept of an actor who can remain as an ideal, a substance, an entity, a soul. In that ideal, the "self" is brought into being as the solution of all problems, the actor of all action, the essence of all existence. Thus, standing outside the flow of impermanence, this "I", the soul, God, will naturally be thought of as permanent, as eternal, as infinite. But these are mere words, not even concepts; for no finite mind can ever conceive the infinite.

Thus, fear of the void has created an ideal of continuity in individuality. The ideal of continuity brings about an opposition between the actuality of impermanence and the ideality of a

permanent entity. This escape from actuality is the urge for becoming in an ideal security of being; and thus this urge for becoming is the basis of all conflict. The solution of conflict then does not lie in further escape, but in the solution of the ideal, which is the dissolution of “self”, the cessation of becoming (*bhava-nirodhā*).

81. Begin (1)

To begin is always difficult, because one does not know from where to begin. And then, one looks at the other end: where to go to; and so, the beginning is made with the end in view.

When one looks for a beginning, it is always with a looking back into the past with the help of memory. In that past there would have been experiences which left their impressions on the mind, either because they were flattering the ego-consciousness and then became necessary to keep up that image, or because they were destructive and inimical to that ego, and then there was felt the need to build up a self-defence. But that means that the experience was not completely understood in its own rights, but only as an instrument related to the maintenance and continuation of the "I".

Now, in the present moment, memory recalls that experience which was incomplete and never understood when it was experienced, and uses that image of the past as a foundation to start, to begin, to base on. And even that is not done wholeheartedly and intelligently but only purposefully to serve as a medium of bringing the past into the future for continuing with security.

A beginning can be made only now, and with the material provided by the present moment. There need not be a selection of material, because any event, contact, experience of this moment is a challenge to which a response has to be made. A response to a memory or an image thereof is not a beginning at all, as it is a mere continuation of a delusion. But when this delusion is seen and understood to be a delusion, then that is the beginning

of insight, to which an immediate response provides the right answer with the right action, which is then not a reaction to the past.

Dependence on an ancient doctrine, on sacred ritual, on authority, is never a beginning, and is therefore never anything else but a reaction. But, that reaction, when it is there, is in the present; and therefore, here a beginning can be made in understanding this reaction: Why do I want a ritual, why do I want dependence? Is it not to strengthen that "I"-concept which has no existence of its own, but which can continue only through memories and thoughts of others, which can only live on the dead?

82. Begin (2)

Beginnings are always small, as the mighty river at its source. While proceeding they gather from above and from the sides; and all that constitutes the process. To understand the process it is not necessary to collect all the information en route, but it is essential to understand the beginnings. So, to understand the mind and its activity, it is essential to understand the beginning of thought, not “in the beginning”, but the beginning of a single thought, for the process is the same throughout.

Thought is a reaction, a reflection, a search for an answer when a challenge presents itself. And as life is a continuous chain of challenging events, the search for a response is on for ever. Immediately after a contact with a challenge, the insecurity, experienced through contact with the new, wishes a solution to the disturbance and so it reflects into memory where past thoughts are stored for a solution and answer. Thus it is memory which is set to meet the challenge, not to find out its nature and demands, but to find an ending to the disturbance.

Memory has a pattern of the ideal life, based on religions, observances of others, on cultural traditions, on social codes of ethics. And that is the answer of memory applied to the challenge, which is thereby suppressed or sublimated.

But the challenge is not met unless it is understood. And how can a mind which escapes in memory ever understand anything? Seeing that thought is an escape from real life as I live it, with its conflicts and self-gratifications, with its posing of humility while full of conceit, with all its desires and yet full of fears—thought

sees the absurdity of escape for meeting life in understanding. When thought is quiet without search for escape, there arises self-understanding in peace and tranquillity, without worry and agitation, without fear or hope, seeing what is, and acting with understanding, now.

83. Belief (1)

Conflict is increased by beliefs, because there is no action with understanding, which can only cause confusion; and action born out of confusion is conflict. And yet, for so many it is their faith which gives them something to live for. Without belief they cannot act. There must be for them a goal, an incentive, a purpose to their activity, without which they are lost. This purposeful action, however, is but a subtle form of desire; for a purpose is only an extension into an imaginary future of a past, long dead and buried in memory. It is through desire that the dead “self” of past memories is kept “alive”, or what we think it is to be alive. And so, belief comes as a necessity, and is for many the only thing which can give meaning to life.

But, to give meaning is not the same as understanding; it is rather the opposite, for we can give meaning only to something which is meaningless; we can only believe in something of which the intellect tells us it is not true, not possible, not comprehensible. Thus, one cannot believe in truth, except in ignorance. Truth, which is the only reality, is to be perceived without prejudice, without presentiment, without expectation, without concept, without projection, all of which belong to, the “self”, which needs the darkness of faith to clothe itself, which needs the vision of belief to fill its emptiness, the reliance on promises to spur itself to activity.

Such activity is of necessity as dark and confusing as the faith from which it sprang. It is only in understanding that belief is

“make believe”. It is in that perception of what is that the truth can set us free.

But this freedom is as much a concept as the idea of truth. We only know dependence and conditioning; and we know that we do not like it. But still we need dependence, because we are afraid to be alone, afraid that the “I” cannot continue by itself. And that is so; for, the “self” has no meaning except in opposition, which is always conflict. Seeing then that “I” am conflict, there arises an intelligent awareness in which there is no reaction of thought, no search for escape, no belief in ideals. And that is insight which is direct understanding and spontaneous action.

84. Belief (2)

In the mundane sense, belief is the acceptance of the word of someone else on trust, but which we need not accept, as it can be verified by other means. Then belief is a simple relationship between individuals, which simplifies life which is too short to verify everything for ourselves. We buy and sell on trust even though once in a while we are cheated. We stick a stamp on an envelope and we strongly believe that the letter will reach the desired destination. Letters do go astray sometimes, but that does not shake our belief in the efficacy of our postal services.

There are other things which we cannot verify for ourselves, as the experiment is too complicated and expensive, such as the existence of nitrogen on the planet Mars; but the experiment has been made, the result of the inquiry has been made public, and the outcome so insignificant to our daily routine life, that we are quite prepared to accept the verdict, be it positive or negative.

There are still other types of belief which are not verifiable, and to which people yet attach the utmost importance. They allow their entire life to be directed by such belief as if it were true, even though the proof will never be coming forward. And that is a more serious matter, because such beliefs have great influence over one's life, to the extent that some have been prepared to die for it.

If the truth of such belief can never be known in this life, it should be at least understood as regards its origin, its function, its purpose. Belief is a concept, a thought, an idea, not a reality; and therefore, it is beyond understanding. Its origin is in the hope,

the desire, the will of human mental activity seeking an escape from reality, as it does with all it; conflicts. The function of belief is to transpose the effort of the present moment into an ideal striving for an unknown state, or condition, while its purpose is to lull the mind to sleep and drug it with ideal promises of a future in which there is everlasting peace.

It does not matter what one believes in, whether it is called God or any other name with a capital letter. What matters is, why does one believe? Facts are not influenced by belief: more people have been killed in wars for the love of God than as a result of hate. And yet one must have belief, because without that, there can be no belief in self. And belief is the antidote to fear, which is “self” in conflict.

85. Belief (3)

It is clear that the many beliefs of religion and ideology have divided mankind rather than united; they have created intolerance, arrogance, hate and opposition. Is it possible to live without belief? This is not the same as living in disbelief.

We have obviously to accept many things which we are not able to verify for ourselves but which we may take for granted, as they are verifiable. When we hear that both the United States and the Soviet Union have sent their moon-ships in orbit, bringing back data without contradicting one another, we may safely accept their findings as scientifically correct, although not verifiable by each one of us individually.

But when we are asked to believe in a soul by some, in a super-soul by others, in no-soul by a third; and when one's eternal salvation is said to be dependent on such belief, it is about time to question the entire issue of belief.

Belief is the acceptance on the authority of others of something which my own mind finds it difficult to accept. And yet the mind wants to believe. Why? What would happen if one did not believe in a life after death? There is no way of finding out; and that leaves one in a state of uncertainty and insecurity. But insecurity is the most detestable state of mind imaginable. Lack of security leads to fear; fear means building up resistance against opposition; opposition means exploitation, hate, jealousy and more insecurity. Hence one believes that in some next life things will be better, and at least the "self" as a soul will be able to live in peace always.

Belief therefore is an escape from actuality. Actuality is one's existence in relationship with others. But if that relationship is built on fear, mistrust and opposition, the mind seeks an escape in isolation. In isolation, however, there is the building up of walls of resistance in self-defence; and then there is only a growth of antagonism.

All this activity is going on around the idea of "self" as we know it through tradition and faith in church and state, an idea which has grown from selected memories of gratification which one hopes to preserve in fear, to project in desire, and which therefore have to be protected as the "self", having nothing else. But in not being lies the greatest security in the absence of opposition and conflict, without desire and without belief.

86. Belief (4)

Not only the religious acceptance of dogmas in faith is to be thought of as belief, but also the reliance on rituals and sacrifice, and also the search for consolation in prayer and concentration. Belief may stem from one's own individualistic standpoint which may be a political conviction, a patriotic adherence, an economic theory, which are all investments of thought to protect oneself against fear. It is fear which binds and then creates a belief in an ideal escape. Thus, thought, which seeks the ideal escape, is not the way to truth, but to belief, to authority, to reliance, to dependence, to exploitation passive and active, but never to the freedom which is truth.

The negation of such thoughts is the setting aside of tradition, environmental influence, cultural education, of any sort of alliance or allegiance, which can only subject the mind to the thought of somebody else, but which can never bring about a direct and immediate experiencing. Only in the negation of thought is there a freedom from thought, thought which is the outcome of the past, of memory, of the accumulated effect of experiences, stored and hoarded to be used in the projection of an ideal which is belief, and which is fear.

But such negation of thought, which is a negation of belief, is also a negation of the whole structure of self which one is afraid to lose, and without which there is no self-reliance possible. Thus, it is attachment to this ideal "self" which will not and cannot deny the dependence of thought. Yet, without this there can be no freedom, and hence no independent understanding. But

without belief, without ideal, without fear, without “self”, there is a new revelation of life every moment, a creation in which “self” has no place, and which is, therefore, the actual experiencing of truth and love.

87. Belief (5)

Reason is the moving force behind the acceptance of a choice; for if there is choice, there is a reason for that choice: and where there is reason there is no belief. One believes because one is made to believe; from childhood one is told to believe in the various dogmas and tenets of one's religion; one has been told to accept the tenets and customs of the society, the country, the race in which one is born. One submits to the propaganda of tradition, of party-politics, of systems of education, of advertising, to the dictates of public opinion.

All these forms of belief constitute consciousness which is conditioned, influenced, prejudiced in every movement of thought. And the outcome of such thought is therefore bound to be an imitative reaction to such conditioning, instead of the creative activity of a free mind, open and alert, sensitive to every movement, keen in listening, keen in learning, keen in understanding.

The mind can only be open and free, if it can discard all beliefs, all authority, all conditioning. This is not a matter of spiritual effort, for such effort is also the outcome of belief in authority, the result of pressure leading to submission, the effect of thought as thinking along determined lines of logic and experience of the past. When one sees the reason for belief, that is the end of believing; when one sees the reason for religious and cultural propaganda, that is the end of propaganda; when one sees the reason for the acceptance of authority, that too is the end of authority. The end or purpose is always the confirmation of the

“self”, to which purpose all beliefs are made subordinate. When reason ceases, there is no basis for memory and reliance on the past, no foundation for the projection of thought.

Thus, belief as well as reason are hindrances to understanding, for both are based on standards of ethics and logic, standards of security, standards of “self”.

When belief is ended, there is no impediment to seeing. It is not seeing which is believing; but thinking which is projecting, and thereby not seeing what is, but that thought thinks that should be—that is believing. In seeing there is no choice, no conditioning. When understanding is free, there is truth.

88. Belief (6)

Motives play an important role in conditioning one's behaviour as well as one's beliefs. Thus, beliefs which appear to frustrate one's desires, or which are not consistent with one's accepted ideals, will be rejected on rational grounds; while other beliefs which appear more consistent with prejudicial thinking will be accepted even without convincing proofs. Thus, belief as well as reason can be manipulated to suit one's convenience. And as there are good reasons, which may not be the real reasons, for explaining one's actions, so there may be reasonable beliefs as well as irrational ones, based on wishful thinking only.

The mind is quite used to the setting up of a theoretical framework, within which any working hypothesis can be explained, and to the provision of such proofs which may seem adequate to those who already believe and who do not require proof to be convinced. Proofs for the resurrection of the body in Christianity and proofs of rebirth in Buddhism belong to this category of willing faith, backed by a strong appeal, the desire for continuance.

But the attitude of a mind in search of proof provides also the clue for such attitude. Only he wants proof who wants to be convinced. And a wish to be convinced is already a prejudice, motivated and conditioned. A conditioned mind is rooted in the past and is stretching out to the future, when there is no cognition of the present, still less an actual experiencing.

The goal of belief is an ideal, whatever name it may assume. And that ideal, just because it is ideal, is not actual. It is not experienced at this moment, but it is hoped for as an extension, a

continuation; but it is still only an idea, a thought, a wish, a belief. And as thoughts and beliefs are the outcome of the past when thought was crystallised in memory, there is no understanding in belief, but only the desire to be, to become, to continue. That is the motive which turns belief into blind faith.

89. Belonging

For most of us, belonging is as important as are belongings. Belongings are the properties we have acquired, and which may be the physical ownership of a house, a car, land, or investment; or the intellectual property of knowledge, of a degree, of books and articles written by us; or the mental property of authority over wife and children, position in society, and so on.

Still, all these belongings are rather fickle, and such value can easily be upset. They do not provide much security, but rather constitute the sphere of influence in which the “self” operates.

Belonging provides much more security, for in belonging to a certain group, the “self” has the backing of that group. It may be political; and then to be a member of the ruling party gives the satisfaction of stability which property cannot always promise one will belong to a particular religious institution, and then the collective prayers and services give one even power over life-to-come. One is proud to belong to a particular profession, caste, nationality, race or colour, and one enjoys the privileges attached thereto. They all provide deeply gratifying comfort, but thereby they distract from understanding the real nature of this “self”, which not only moves and acts in belongings and in belonging, but is those belongings and nothing else.

Just because the “self” is nothing in itself, it has to acquire property and become property, in order to exist at all, even if that is only an idea, a mental concept. This concept cannot be undone by the mind; for, any mental action is renewed in new concepts. Can the mind not cease its action which is only reaction; and

just perceive and see what is happening, without preconceived belonging?

For that it will be necessary to divest the mind of all property, so that it does not belong, and has no belongings. But divestment is not a positive goal of achievement. It is an abandoning as the result of understanding the nature of belongings, the purpose of belonging. And in that understanding, the stripping is not a painful process of self-abnegation, renunciation, sacrificing; but a simple act of dropping what is not wanted, of discarding what is a hindrance, of denying what is false, when there is no belonging, there is no "self". And with that, all conflict ceases.

90. Beyond (1)

When the present is not fully alive and fails to satisfy the demands and hopes of yesterday, it is the future which is more alluring. All life is in the present, and to be fully alive in the present, one has to be free of yesterday and of to-morrow. But, what one finds to-day is usually the outcome of yesterday's expectations. Then to-day is not alive, but a mere reflection of the memories of dead experiences. It is the hope to continue and to revive those dead memories which has brought about that isolation and opposition, that choice and purposeful approach, that craving and clinging, which is the "self" of to-day. With such expectations unfulfilled, there is the continued yearning for the beyond, for the ideal future, for a to-morrow, which is but another reflection and extension of yesterday.

The search for the beyond is activated because the present failed to satisfy, as the present is not understood. Thus, it is satisfaction which is the goal of striving. That goal may be camouflaged under the name of truth, but even that is only known as an ideal, a mind-made idea. To be fully alive in the present there can be no hankering and clinging to past experiences and memories, no stretching out and craving for future images. The purpose of life is not an ideal in the future, but is living itself. But to be truly living one has to be free of the past and of to-morrow; that is to be free of self.

The "I" is the continuation of the past; and the future is the extension of that "I". Without past there is no memory, and hence no basis for the "I" to build on. Without future there is no security

and hence no incentive for building. But that does not mean that the “I” is in the present moment. For, in experiencing the present moment to the full, there is no thought of “self”, no pleasure-seeking, no ideal-projection, but just the perceiving and thereby the understanding of what is, without retention or projection, without attachment or rejection. Without self or a beyond; and hence a complete freedom. In the ending of the beyond is the beginning of now, always beginning, always new. And that is the end of conflict.

91. Beyond (2)

A term, indicative of something out of reach, the beyond surpasses the present and is hence of the future and the unknown. As such it becomes a positive ideal for attainment, for striving, for escaping to the other shore from whatever there is on this side. But it is always an ideal, never to be reached; for, on attainment it would cease to be.

It shows the chaotic state of the mind striving for its own annihilation in fear and ignorance of what is. And yet, this transcendental image offers sufficient impulse to an isolated activity of mind in systems of faith and methods of concentration.

The beyond, which is the goal, is then only an idealised image in which the reactionary “self” can endure in its selfish isolation, producing thereby more opposition and conflict on this side of the “beyond”.

In striving for the absolute, beyond contradiction and conflict, there is the illusion of the destruction of the “ego”, which illusion would take away the sting of death and the impermanent, only to be led into a much more subtle illusion of immortality and permanence of a higher reality, of a super-soul finding its ultimate reunion with the absolute and the infinite.

Yet, all this is not “beyond”, for it is still within the compass of thought and imagination, even if it is said to be beyond words. The very absolute becomes relative by being thought of as an ideal attainment, as it is conditioned by our striving, by our hopes and desires.

Thus, the “beyond” is just a subtle escape of the mind in fear

of what is, a running away from the actual and the real into the ideal. But the ideal is still the actual, as the mind in hope for the future is the same mind in fear of the present. In understanding the “beyond” in the present, the attempt at escaping can cease. Then what is can be seen, contemplated and understood; and that is the known, that is the present, that is the truth which is now free from fear, from desire, from ignorance.

92. Body

Psychological suffering is a distortion some physical suffering which has not been understood. Thus a beginning must be made with understanding the body, which is comparatively easy, since our medical men have physically analysed the entire system and structure of bones and tissues, of muscles and nerves, of veins and arteries, of the function of the many organs and senses and their inter-relation, till they knew exactly how it works, but not why. And in trying to find an answer to this: Why? There is the psychological distortion with its interpretation, because explanations are always distorted when they are based on prejudiced concepts.

The chief conditioning concept is, of course, the concept of an “I”, which, it is felt, must underlie the many and constant changes which constitute the process of living. It is this concept of a permanent “self” which makes the whole process circulate around this idea, and which would come to a complete standstill and collapse without it. Thus, it is imperative to understand the validity of this concept in respect of the functions of the body.

Knowledge can be obtained through analysis and deduction, but that cannot solve the psychological demand for a substance to continue and be the basis of all changes.

But, if there is understanding why there is this demand, the psychological explanations will not be needed. This understanding can come through watchfulness without prejudice and pre-concepts. Merely saying that it is necessary may produce a categorical necessity according to Kant, but such an *a priori* concept

is not insight into the actual problem. The answer to: Why is there this problem of a “self”, is simply; because without a self there would be no problem, no conflict. And conflict is essential for continuance in impermanence, for isolation in relationship, for security in the baseless. There must be fight as long as there is the will to fight; and such will must be there as long as there is the will to be, the will to become, the will to acquire, the will to possess, the will to continue, the will to project, the will to say “*I am!*”

93. Boredom

The mental weariness from lack of interest, the tiresomeness, the dullness, the tediousness of endless and meaningless repetitions, that is the boredom in the routine of daily living. It is the feeling of annoyance with the insupportable ennui and pointlessness of human life.

Many there are who believe to have overcome this tedium by their introducing an aim and purpose in their lives. By inserting a point in pointlessness they feel revitalised; they have made life worth living for; and now they derive interest (in more than one sense) from their investment. They have sown their ideas and are now reaping the fruits of their ideals.

But, whether it is dullness or interest, pointlessness or purpose, weariness or zest, it is still the same mind pursuing the thought of “self”, either in escape or in acquisition. The mind is weary when there is no “self”-interest; but it is the same mind which feels elated in the finding of self”-interest. It may be directed to others in social service and politics, it may be directed to a spiritual super-self or God in philosophy and religion; but it is basically the same “self” which tries to escape from knowing itself as the cause of boredom, transforming it into the cause of interest, meaning, purpose.

Living is tiresome when the search for self remains unfulfilled; living is pointless when the search for an aim is self-induced. But, if living is understood from moment to moment with the ever-new freshness of a creative revelation, then there need not be a “self” as object of fulfilment. For, in the openness of learning

there is an immediate contact and relation without purpose or opposition. And that is the understanding and the love of life.

94. Breathing

The exercise on breathing is a widely known form of concentration and meditation. As a form of concentration it is a yogic practice of breath-control, breath-retention, leading to self-control. As a form of meditation it is a watchfulness, following the inhalations and exhalations, the variability of its rhythm, the self-hypnosis which excludes all foreign thoughts, thereby leading to one-pointedness of thought. Neither form leads to the silence in thought which is necessary for the mind to be highly sensitive, without being conditioned into acceptance or rejection. Any form of concentration and of meditation is an exercise, a method, a search for effect, result, achievement, which is always a form of search for "self". As an exercise it is the acceptance of the authority of the "guru", the aiming at a goal, the striving for an effect, an ideal. The ideal may be lofty, supernatural, spiritual; yet, for all that, it is a thought, a desire, an expression of the will-to-become.

True watchfulness which is real meditation without concentration, is not the following of an idea, of an image, but the awareness with full understanding of what is. That is meditation of insight.

Whereas breathing is a physical function which can and does operate without any intentional intervention of the process of thought, just as the blood-circulation is regulated by the heart-beat, it may provide a clue to a change in that mental process with the onset of excitement in love and hate. And so it remains a mere pointer. The focus of attention then should not be on this

mental barometer, but on the change, of mental impression and depression. This awareness requires a great sensitivity of mind which should not be side-tracked by attention to the duration of one's breath. Only in perfect stillness of thought, when there is attention to what is, that is, to the affections and disaffections of the "self" in thought without attempt at overcoming or controlling—only in perfect quiet without striving is it possible to see and understand directly the meaning of striving and controlling; and thereby bringing to an end the process of becoming, of achieving, of reproducing, of "self".

95. Brotherhood

Universal brotherhood is a wonderful ideal, a marvellous concept. Yet, how little is it understood, and how often misapplied. The concept of brotherhood involves tolerance; but, tolerance is neither acceptance nor rejection; it is just a camouflage of conflict which results from the opposition between the “I” and the “you”. In the tolerance of brotherhood one believes in many facets of the truth, but one does not know what truth is. Then the idea of brotherhood is an invention of the mind which seeks the firm establishment of “self” through the united strength of others.

As long as the idea of brotherhood is a means to bring and keep together in faith and discipline what is essentially divided, it is a mere camouflage for hypocrisy, an escape from fear and doubt, a cover for exploitation and opposition. Then, as soon as brotherhood does not serve the common interest in business or in politics, the individual resistance will break through in hate and cruelty. And so, the concept of brotherhood is made use of for private ends; and that in itself already is the seed for conflict.

Brotherhood as an institution to bring individuals together in striving for a common goal cannot bring about the change of heart and mind without which all striving is for self-interest and security, even when “the other” is the means thereto.

If this is truly understood, then there is no need for tolerance, because in love which is not possessiveness, there is no opposition. Without personal attachment there is freedom of understanding of need; and such understanding does not require a united brotherhood in tolerance, nor a united organisation for

political or religious ends. Only when there is opposition and hate and conflict, the idea of brotherhood arises.

96. Buddha

A Buddha is one who has perceived just for himself the reality which is not dependent on ideology, which is not conditioned by memory and tradition, which is not inspired by desire for continuance. But, he is also one who has been able to awaken in others that flame of intelligence which lies dormant and forgotten in everything that is. He does not create a fire of desire, not even a desire to become more, better or perfect. But in kindling the intelligence to perceive what is without distortion, he has opened up the way which leads to nowhere. For, the goal is not in the distant future. And thus, although he is compared to a charioteer and a tamer of the human heart who can guide and steer to final victory, it is clear that the Buddha only gives direction without grace, so that each one for himself has to discover when the day's work has been done and the burden can be laid down.

Supreme as a guide he does not enforce one way or the other. He is truly a Buddha, that is an enlightened one, a shining light for everyone to see, yet not to follow or adore. Thus, his teaching has come our way and can enlighten our lives, if we care to see, to perceive, to understand.

In that sense he is not a teacher on whom the pupil depends; for, there is no salvation through him, no vicarious redemption, no following in blind faith. But in understanding with intelligence which is not conditioned by traditional and repetitional sayings, there follows action which is not aimed at a purpose, of achievement. Such action which is not reaction is free and unconditioned. And in that freedom there is deliverance. In that

perception there is enlightenment. In that enlightenment there is Buddhahood, where each one for himself can discover the truth as the essence of every moment of living without clinging to the past or craving for the future, where there is no conflict and no “self”.

97. Buddhism

A Buddhist is one who accepts the doctrine of the Buddha. But it is not so easy to define that doctrine, for there are so many aspects involved, such as the doctrine of karma and rebirth which the Buddha evolved from the existing theory of re-incarnation by giving it a very special character; such as the doctrine of dependent origination which brought enlightenment and Buddhahood to prince Siddhattha as a Bodhisatta; such as the ethical doctrine of wholesomeness (*kusala*), the doctrine of the middle path, eschewing both extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification.

But above all there are the three marks (*ti-lakkhaṇa*), the three marks of distinction: impermanence, conflict, soullessness, which are inherent and essential in all, and which are so closely intertwined that they can only be understood together. That things are impermanent is so obvious that we do not need a Buddha to tell us so. But to realise that the conflict within us (*dukkha*) is due to the non-acceptance of impermanence (*anicca*) when applied to our own individuality, that is found only in the Buddha's doctrine that all things are without substance (*anatta*). It is the realisation of the void of conflict, (*dukkhe-anatta*), which gives impermanence also to conflict. Whereby one is set free to be a Buddhist in the perfect sense.

But one cannot become a Buddhist when it is understood that Buddhism is a doctrine of no-more-becoming, of cessation, of freedom and deliverance. As long as there is striving, there is desire; and as long as there is desire, there is "self". Only when

there is the cessation of becoming (*bhava-nirodhā*) is there the realisation of no-self, which is Nibbāna.

And so Buddhism is not an organised religion which leads people in the practice of worship and faith. It is not a religious organisation either, for everything depends on each individual for himself. In stead of salvation through grace, there must be understanding and insight as the basis of action. And in understanding without fear or hope there will be immediate and perfect action which is not a reaction to dogma or tradition, but which is the effect of an intelligence which is fully awake and aware, which is living in the present.

98. Burden (1)

There is no way to describe an actual experience; for to translate a living experience into words, it must have ceased already. Yet even if there is no desire to re-capture the experience, there may arise an urgency to share with others, to make them open their eyes so that they too would see for themselves.

Just as a photo may give an accurate portrait of the sitter, even to the extent of showing something of his actual mood at that time, it is the painter's privilege, if he is a real artist with insight, to communicate to his canvas, and through that to others, something more of the real character which shows itself may be in action, but not in a flash-photo. Thus an abstract painting may be more revealing than an exact copy of the original. The artist in words has that same advantage, when he attempts to express in poetry what cannot be said in prose.

That is what the ancient arahants and mystics did, when they composed their verses, using images of daily life with so much insight, that any other way of expression would have been totally inadequate.

One such image, as found in the Theragāthā, for the experience of emancipation is: "the burden is laid low". We can share the feeling of relief, when at the end of a tiresome journey the traveller not only can lay down his luggage, but is actually able to discard it all as a burden, never to be taken up again. It is the end of the road: freedom.

But, freedom is not a goal to be achieved, and the laying down of the burden is not a means thereto. The burden has to be seen

as a burden, and nothing else. Then there will be no attachment, no hugging, no preserving, no purpose in retaining. It is just a burden, a hindrance, an obstacle, a fetter, which prevents the utter joy of freedom. When the burden is seen just as such, there is a natural discharging, disburdening, which has no further object or goal to obtain. It is not a search for an ideal freedom or ease or pleasure; but when the burden of an isolated “self” in conflict is laid down, there is the natural release which is deliverance. And that is joy and peace and freedom.

99. Burden (2)

Several of the chants of triumph, uttered by those who experienced the unutterable “deliverance of heart and mind” contain the paeon “the burden is laid low” (Theragāthā). There is, however, no personal feeling of conquest and victory, of attainment and achievement. That would have been a reasoned thought, based on memory, of an achievement or an acquisition, and therefore, the acknowledgement of an “I”.

There would have been many occasions of struggle in the body, in heart and mind, being oppressed in conflict, darkened in ignorance, frustrated in expectation, even shrinking in fear, protecting against injury, till the mind, not knowing where to turn to, how to escape, would be shivering in exhaustion, all its self-confidence utterly drained off.

It would have been on such an occasion that the mere sight of a daily occurrence, such as the bursting of a water bubble in the rain, provided just that little shock which gave a completely new light on the constant struggle for freedom from the problem of conflict. The problem is there because of the struggle for freedom, when freedom is only an ideal, when the conflict is not understood, when all struggle can only increase the problem. It is in utter exhaustion in failure, that the mind cannot fight any more, not even for survival. That is the moment, when in the ending of the struggle, there is a new sight, which is not a vista of escape, but insight which is understanding without fear or hope, seeing that the struggle for achievement is the cause of conflict.

It is the ideal of a continued “self” which is fighting for existence against the constant flow of change and impermanence.

It is the burden of this ideal which is now laid low, with the immediate release of all anxiety and fear, in the understanding of no-self, and no conflict. The haunting fear of insecurity to provide for continued safety, of failure in existence, in appearance, in progress—all that fear is gone with the understanding, that conflict experienced in impermanence (*anicce-dukkha*) is gone with the insight of the void of such conflict (*dukkhe-anatta*). There just is no burden.

100. Capacity

The ability to act is not something separate from action. Capacity, ability, possibility, etc. are concepts, ideas, whereas action is actuality. Concepts have no actual, but only an ideal existence. But, just because they are not actual, they have been endowed with some vague reality which, however, is merely ideal and conceptual. This separation between the conceptual and the actual has resulted in a separation between the ideal and the real. And that is the very core of the conflict and the origin of all conflict. There is no built-in capacity for erupting in a volcano. But, when the contributing factors are there, even stones will ignite and melt.

Thus, there is no knowledge which can be accumulated by memory, and then be used in action which is non-technical. Intelligent understanding is there when all obstacles are removed; and then there is also immediate action which is not reaction from the past. This intelligence is not a tool for action to be made use of in order to obtain a result.

Moreover, intelligence cannot be cultivated, for, understanding is not accumulated knowledge; it is seeing and perceiving without distortion through desire, through tradition, through fear. When there is no distortion there is clearness of seeing, which one does not have to learn operating. There is no faculty of sight first, and then a follow-up of seeing. Even the faculty of sight cannot see blindfolded or in the dark. The obstacles have nothing to do with intelligence; they are the protective wall, erected in defence of an ideal, which is the continuation and security of

an isolated “self”. When there is the intelligent understanding which is insight into the delusion created by and for this “self”, then there is no “self”, and all protection and projection become meaningless. In that insight there is clarity of understanding which can act in immediate response without purpose. Then seeing is doing.

This seeing is not a stored-up capacity for action, but it arises every moment afresh by just seeing without motive, seeing things as they are in themselves. Then there is action, which is not a reaction from the past.

101. Care

One who really cares to learn something, must have affection without a desire for possession. It is like taking in the total beauty of a flower, its colour, its shape, its design on the petals, its scent, without wanting to pluck it, to take it home and put it in a vase, to possess it. There is joy in caring, for in that affection there is no approach of a “self”, there is no opposition, no separation, there is no lover, and there is only the beauty in experiencing.

In that affectionate care there is freedom from the image one has made of oneself, and there is direct perception and understanding of what is. Such understanding is truth, because it does not hold an image, a reflection, an ideal of what should be, or a memory of what has been. Such image in the mind is never real; it is only a thought projecting a delusion called “self” and that can never be the truth, for it is not an actual experience.

In actual perception there is direct action. And as there is no perceiver in the act of perceiving, so there is no actor in direct action. Without actor or “self” there is no motive in action, no desire for result, no craving for profit. Motives and profits and purposes contaminate the purity of action, the directness of understanding, the loving care of attention. But, this loving care of understanding cannot be produced, for that would be another result from desire.

When there is a readiness to learn, not for the purpose of increasing one’s knowledge, but in a total opening up of the mind and the heart, to receive and to perceive, then the mind can conceive the need to act with understanding, which is not

motivated by greed. Then there is no thought of “self”, no clinging to past memories which make the “self”, no craving for ideals which project the “self”. Then, there is just love which knows no conflict, which is beauty and truth.

102. Cause (1)

The knowledge of causes appears to be the end of all philosophic and scientific knowledge. As long as one knows the cause of some defect or irregularity, one feels confident and able to control it and rectify it.

But, knowing the cause of mental suffering to be the desire to enjoy, the craving for what is not, the clinging to the past, that knowledge does not end the conflict, unless there is the insight into the nature of such desire, craving and clinging. This insight cannot be obtained through the knowledge that enjoyment is impermanent, or through the knowledge that craving for what is not can never be satisfied, or through the knowledge that clinging to the past is a mere shadow of what was. In other words, the knowledge of analysis does not provide new understanding. And where there is no understanding of the cause there is perpetual repetition and continuance in fear and hope.

It is not the knowledge of the cause, as the knowledge of how it happened, but insight into the nature and the motive why it happens that there is craving and clinging. This insight, although it can be put in words, cannot be acquired. One cannot learn to see. To understand the motive of craving is of a straightforward simplicity. The motive of craving is obviously the acquisition of property, or power, or influence. But in themselves those things are of no importance. Their importance lies in being the means of building up and strengthening the "I"-concept.

But again, this knowledge does not set free, as long as there is not the liberating insight of the nature of that which binds. It

is only through insight, and not through knowledge, that there can be an intelligent awareness, that without motivation and acquisition there can be not even an idea of “self”, or desire to continue in property and in power, which is the greed to become, the basis and cause of all craving. Insight into the nature of “self” is the deliverance from all delusion, which was the cause of all conflict.

103. Cause (2)

The eternal chain of evolution, involution, change; becoming, ceasing, continuing; modifying through cause and effect, that is existence, brought in from the past to become the present in order to continue in the future.

The past is not only the action which immediately preceded and produced the present one, as a question precedes the answer; but the past is the collective influences through many ages, which have crystallised into customs and traditions, which have erected the barriers between nations and races, which have created individual idiosyncrasies, likes and dislikes, loves and hates, prejudices and conclusions, character and the lack thereof.

And with that entire past one now faces the single instant of the present moment, with an impact so overwhelming that all is swept away before it, even before there is a cognisance of the contact. Then that tidal wave rolls on into the future, gathering momentum, here sweeping away all in its devastating course, there building up enormous barriers of debris, chaos and destruction.

Then, with the help of religion and politics we try to disentangle the chaos and bring about a reformation and order. We try to stand apart to look at the damage and consider where to begin with the repairs. But the very effort of building up is conceived as an ideal in the mind of one who believes himself to be outside the chaos. While in fact he *is* the chaos; his thought, his memory, his desire, his ideal are the very materials which constitute this chaos in the effort of changing the shape of disorder. The observer *is*

the chaos by placing himself outside the relationship. From that point he tries to compare, to judge, to rebuild, but only with one motive; to establish order on a stronger footing than ever before. And that order is his ideal, his thought, the fabric of his own mind and wish.

Is it possible to see the wreckage of the present without carrying over the memory and regrets of a past which has failed because it was built on the image, the ideal, the worship of a "self" in the future? Only in silence of thought can there be understanding of the present, of what is, of the need of action without the greed of self. In that silence there is no opposition, but love; no conflict, but truth.

104. Cause (3)

Cause and effect play such an important part in the philosophy of the Buddha that his doctrine is frequently called a doctrine of causality or conditionality. “Dependent on sensations arises craving”, and “with the cessation of clinging there is the cessation of becoming”.

But the mere knowledge of the cause of a disease does not produce its cure. What happens when we search for the cause of a problem? Are we truly investigating the cause, or are we merely looking for a means to get rid of the problem? In that case, the means has assumed greater importance than the cause; and as the means and the end are really the same, the search is on for the effect. With the effect in mind, thought sets out on a determined road to find an answer which it knows already. Can anything else be expected than confusion?

The desire to get rid of desire in order to overcome rebirth, which is the result of desire, is not a serious quest. Either it is a mere playing with confusion which can never result in clarity; or it is an attempt to evade any enquiry.

It is the mind which constructs the hurdles and then complains of obstruction. Still, it is not the mere recognition of the fact that the mind is the cause of all confusion, for the mind seeking a solution is still confused. It is the seeking which must cease. In stead of trying to remove the obstacles, let me face the obstacles and see what they are. In my full attention to see and understand the true nature of these hindrances—not in my trying to remove them, when removal becomes all important—the

hidden becomes exposed and the escape route is cut off. In fact, there is nothing to escape from, and the whole process being the thinker, there is no thought of escape. Thus, without a cause there cannot be an effect: "With the cessation of clinging, there is the cessation of becoming".

105. Cause (4)

Cause and effect are sometimes mistaken as different terms for the law or the doctrine of dependent origination (*paticca samuppāda*). Does knowledge of the cause prevent the arising of the effect? It is not the mere knowledge that ignorance is the cause of karma, which can prevent rebirth, but the understanding that mental formations or ideas are the outcome of ignorance (*avijja-paccaya saṅkhāra*), in the sense that there would be no ideations if there is complete understanding of the nature of those ideas, then, dependent on the cessation of ignorance there will be cessation of mental concepts (*avijjā-nirodhā saṅkhāra-nirodho*).

In other words, knowledge of cause and effect merely enquires how the two are linked, but understanding brings about the cessation of mental concepts, for understanding is not content with the understanding of the working of action (i.e. how it works?) but it enquires into the nature of activity. What are those ideas? And why are they there at all?

An idea or thought is a reflection, a memory of an experience in the past, which the mind has retained. It is no more an active, actual experiencing, but a remembrance of a skill acquired, then analysed, classified, labelled and stored in memory. Why? This is the only way for the enquirer to make future use of this skilful experience. Thus it is an act of acquisition and the result thereof, which sustain the image of an enquirer, of an experimenter, apart from the actual experiencing, in which there was no thought, no thinker, no ideal, no purpose.

Only when action becomes thought, ideal, memory, it will be

retained as a result (*kamma-vipāka*), but when action is complete in experiencing in which there is no desire for a result, no thought of self-consciousness, no projection for purpose of continuation, then such action is complete in itself without *kamma*, without result (*vipāka*), without ignorance.

106. Cause (5)

One usually understands cause and its effect as a cause producing the effect, which then has its own separate existence; and the two continue individually, independently one from the other. But is that so?

A cause cannot exist in isolation, just as a father cannot be unless he has produced a child; but neither can there be a child without a father. The father may die and the child continue to live. Then we still consider the child as the son or daughter of the late Mr X. Is that correct? Can one be the son of a dead father? Can a dead man be the father of a child? There is no relationship. Similarly, there is no connection between the cause and effect as separate entities, but there is a cause-effect relationship in the actual movement when the cause becomes the effect. The so-called effect is a process which continues in relationship of conditionality.

Thus, the “self” has no separate existence from its cause; but the conditional relationship continues in which the concept, the idea, the thought, of “self”, continues to arise in dependence on the accumulation of memory, desire, attachment, projection, anxiety, search for security, fear, escape, which is the complex of self-consciousness, causing the conflict between “self” and “non-self”. I am that; and without all that, there is no “I”.

And so, when I am angry, there is no anger apart from me, and there is no “I” apart from this anger. It is the “I” who is anger. It is the “I”, the idea of separateness, the concept of individuality, the image of continuity, of substantiality, of an abiding entity

in opposition—it is this “I” which is opposition, and, therefore, which is anger. But this “I” is just the outcome of the urge to become, because without becoming there would be no possibility of continued existence. It is the will-to-become which is the effect of the illusion that there is only security in continuance; it is that will which is always in opposition and in conflict. Thus, the “I”-concept is the effect of this conflict; and the conflict is caused by the isolation of the “I”. When this relationship of conditionality is fully understood, there is no cause separate from the effect. The cause is the effect; and the effect is the cause. In this actual perception there is no place for striving to become, and hence no conflict.

107. Cessation (1)

Neither denial nor opposition can bring about cessation. Denial causes confusion because there is no conviction in denial; and opposition causes conflict, because there is only suppression in opposition; in suppression there is resistance, but no cessation. The suppression of violence is also violence and can, therefore, never bring about an ending thereof. Denial is not understanding, but choice; and as choice is always conditioned and hence never free, a denial based on choice is not free either, and cannot bring about right understanding.

In cessation there must be ceasing without reservation, without postponement, without pattern; and thus it can never be an ideal. Virtue has been made into an ideal; and we hear of people trying to become humble in taking religious vows of chastity, obedience and poverty. To appear humble may appear to be virtuous in certain monastic societies; but, that which has to be cultivated is the outcome of conflict and choice; and that is not virtue. When training and discipline are thought to be necessary, it is a sign of opposition and conflict; and in that way there lies no cessation, but only suppression.

But, when there is no choice and hence no opposition, there is no ideal as an object for striving, for imitating, for attaining. In the absence of opposition through choice, there is a deep attention which is understanding. In understanding there is no choice and hence no denial; and hence no confusion and no conflict. In such understanding there is a natural humility of non-striving, which opens the mind in alertness to what is, without choice

or will. And in that non-striving there is the cessation of the will-to-become.

Cessation, then, is the ending of the “I” which cannot be suppressed, just because it has no existence except as an ideal, as a concept, as a will-to-continue. Any act of will is aimed at becoming, even when the aim is thought to be no-more-becoming, striving cannot be made to cease, but in ceasing there is cessation.

108. Cessation (2)

We like theories and speculations about the meaning of life and death, and we have created for our own satisfaction the most marvellous systems to avoid facing an actual cessation. Heavens, transmigration, rebirth, concepts of soul and God, various systems of morality, all are directed towards that goal of survival, which is an escape from cessation.

But, can we face cessation? We do not even know what it means: not to be. The mind is always so active in thinking, registering, memorising for the purpose of continuation, that the thought of cessation comes as a shock, a challenge, for which we have no answer, Thought through memory has as its only function the building up of the "I", so that it may continue, expand and dominate; anything but cease! The mind is not prepared for that, and has no machinery ready to deal with the problem of cessation. And a real problem it is! For, what can thought do, when it ceases?

Fear can build up new defences, refuse to acknowledge discontinuance, and thus bring up more confusion, more speculation, more food for thought. Can we face the fact that all this is a mere attempt to escape from the fact of cessation, and find comfort in that ideal escape, the image of continuance?

Facing the fact of cessation, not knowing what cessation means, not escaping into a denial; but seeing that if there is fear, it is not fear of cessation but of the image which one's thought has produced, fear of losing all that which has gone into the building-up of an "I"; seeing that cessation is no-more-becoming

of that illusion; seeing that cessation is the ending of a dream, not the fulfilment of a wish but the ending of wishing—the mind will naturally be still, not in anticipation, not in bewilderment, not in despair, but with a stillness which has ceased to will and to project, which has ceased its operation in the past through memory, its operation in the future through desire.

109. Cessation (3)

Thought must cease, for thought is the storekeeper of the past through memory, thought is the builder of the future through ideals. But thought is never new; it is only about something else that was, that should have been, that may be, that should be. Thought is never what is.

It is thought that interferes with what is when it tries to preserve, to remember, to retain, when it tries to make or un-make, to do or to un-do, to become, to continue, to accept, to absorb or to reject, to compare and to judge, to make the “I” which is not. It is thought that protects and divides, the cause of conflict, the maker of the “self” (*ahamkāra*).

But there is no method to make the “I” cease. When there is no self, how can it cease? It is thought that must cease, not by mere thinking in logical discursive methods, but in seeing what thought is.

Seeing is not thinking; seeing is direct observation; thinking is going about it. This going-about is the will-to-do, the will-to-become, the will-to-continue; and that will is thought projecting itself in order to expand, to exist, to improve upon its own ideal.

When thought is seen thus in direct observation and perception, there is understanding in which thought ceases. For, understanding which is direct perception, is not knowledge which comes from experiment. Experiment comes from intention which is desire born of thought; it is the striving to attain an goal, a purpose, all of which is thought.

But in understanding as in seeing there is no purpose, no

going beyond, but just seeing and understanding what is, the nature, the make-up, the aim, the cause of thought. And in that understanding there is no thinking about thought. In is seen for what it is, a concept, an ideal, a volition, an escape a desire to become, a will to continue of a something which, is not, which is a memory, a picture, an image. And with that understanding, thought ceases. And in that cessation is the ending of “self” and of all conflict.

110. Challenge (1)

Response to a challenge is the way of life. There can be no cessation to challenge, because every movement of life is a challenge. “If there is no awareness of challenge, then there is decay, death³”.

But the response to the challenge can be inadequate, and then it provokes thought, searching for a mere satisfactory response in memory. That is not really a search for a response, but a search for satisfaction. Such a search in memory is for an idea, which is always from the past. When thus the old word meets the new challenge there is conflict in its incomplete meeting, in the inadequacy of the response.

Can there be an adequate response to a challenge? As long as one seeks a result, it is not action but reaction according to memory, belief, tradition. And all that is dead. Can there be a response by thinking? That too is memory, reference, method, ideal; all of which are equally dead. Can the response be separate from the challenge? In that case the response is one of opposition, and it contains the condemnation, of the challenge.

Then, what is the challenge? It is the movement of life which is felt in relationship. As long as the mind attempts to analyse that relationship, it stands outside the movement as an observer. But the observer does not experience the movement; he is not of life; he too is dead.

Is there an awareness of experiencing which is not outside the movement? That is only possible in actually experiencing the

³J. Krishnamurti.

movement of life. And as there is no cessation In this movement, so can there be no cessation in experiencing. In experiencing, everything is always new. In experiencing, there is no one to gather experience; and thus there is no storing In memory, no comparing, accepting, rejecting. In the awareness of this movement there is only moving without a mover to meet the challenge. And thus there is no conflict in responding adequately without opposition.

111. Challenge (2)

Challenge has become a necessity for the activity of thought. The mind depends on a challenge as on a drug to activate thought, to force it into a certain line of activity, which is an escape from the momentary action facing it. Thus the mind depends on reaction, which, of course, is a flashback through memory to retain an earlier gratification, to repeat a pleasurable experience, to feel its being alive in action, to project itself into the ideal future.

It is thus one's dependence on challenges which keeps one alive, notwithstanding the routine, tradition, the order, which have made of life the computerised system, which it is hoped will smoothen the flow of life, prevent its relapse into chaos and solve all its problems.

Routine activity is the action which proves to oneself the vitality of existence, but which in reality is but a reaction with a purpose to achieve a goal, an ideal, a self-projection, without which action would be meaningless, purposeless, aimless. Would that be lifeless? We try to vitalise life by giving it an aim, a purpose, a meaning; But is life not but "a succession of meetings round street-corners⁴?"

Is it not living, meeting life moment by moment without scheme or plan, without desire or self, just as it comes, just as it presents itself, just as it challenges the immediate action and calls for an immediate response? A planned action is a battle in warfare, to be won or lost. But a challenge which comes to

⁴Aldous Huxley.

meet us round the street-corner has no preparation, no goal, no ideal, no self, no reflection, no memory, no ideal. It is then not a reaction to a past experience, not a projection to a future ideal, but just a meeting of things and events as they are, not necessitated by escape, not an escape from reality, but contact, a meeting which must be met, and in meeting must be understood without desire or goal. Such action in understanding is not of "self" and is therefore of love and is free of conflict.

112. Challenge (3)

The ending of sorrow does not come with the answer to a challenge, for the sorrow of conflict is not in the challenge, but in the search for an answer. A challenge can be answered with an argument; and that would be the answer or the intellect meeting the challenge with an idea, rooted in the past. But there is no meeting, no contact, and the answer is a gesture of despair and of misunderstanding. And so the conflict continues. So long as the mind wants an answer, it does not meet the challenge. The answer will be one of propaganda, of dogma, of knowledge; and it is the result of many memories. But the challenge remains unanswered, because it is not understood.

A challenge arises because there is opposition; and the search for an answer is the desire to wipe out the opposition. So now now the question is: Where is the opposition and where is the challenge?

Isn't the opposition always a call for better? And is the answer not always a refusal to change? Improvement is not a change; it is merely a new coat of paint, but underneath the paint the rot is still the same. Does one want a change? Honestly? What is it that resists the change? Is not the real challenge a call for a radical change? And is not the answer one looks for, an accommodation of the old in the form and pattern of the new?

There is only one change possible in life, and that is death. And when life is the "I" in action, in thought, in desire, in memory, in ideals, does one want to see the answer in death to all this? Does one ever meet the challenge of change, of renewal, of

rebirth, of death? And is not the refusal to meet this challenge the beginning of sorrow, of the conflict of the ideal “self”?

“Self” is not the answer, and yet that is the only answer we look for. Where is the challenge, if there is no “self”?

113. Change (1)

That which is pursued as a psychological escape is only a modification of the ideal of continuity. It is the concept of change in time, in the course of time, through rebirth, through gradual realisation, through improvement, through step-by-step renunciation, through development in stages, through culture of virtue, through practice of concentration.

Time, which is a thought of postponement, can never bring about that radical mutation from “self” to “no-self” which can only come through insight which is immediate, now. All acquisition of learning, virtue, skill, can only strengthen the concept of “self” as the ideal of striving, of becoming, of continuing, even of continuation in change. This is the reason why the change of impermanence has remained so ineffective on the mental outlook in which change is merely a reform, but which preserves the underlying ideal as an entity, a substance or a soul.

Change, to be a total mutation from an ideal to the real, cannot be a mere alteration of a pattern, of a style of living, a mode of thinking. An alteration can be affected in time, as clothes can be altered to suit a new style of dress. But they still remain a dress. So the acquisition of better habits and a better conduct is still the same, basically, a conformity to conduct, to a pattern, to respectability. Then that ideal of respectability or virtue is the object of striving, and there is no real change at all.

What is needed is a total and radical change not in striving but of striving. So that all striving ceases and the “self” ceases; and with it all ignorance, all craving, all conflict. That is not an

improvement of “self”, not an escape from “self”, but a realisation that all striving and changing is only a change in oneself, which still leaves the “self” intact. Change itself must change in ceasing. Then alone can there be a constantly new creation.

114. Change (2)

Modification is not renewal. One may change the method, but the goal remains the same. To keep the goal in view, one has to adhere to the past, cling to memory. The goal has been set in the past, in tradition, in authority: and that has been accepted without understanding, in fear and with the ease of self-satisfaction. The goal, set up in the past, is the ideal, an abstraction, a perfection in the future; perfect happiness in a life to come, perfect virtue, perfect love. It is the outcome of conflict, of the experience of conflict, of sorrow, of imperfection. The memory of such experiences is repugnant to the snug security of the mind, and thus one opens up an escape from that conflict into an ideal.

But, it is the same “self” which was in conflict, which now attempts to escape, and which seeks an ideal in the future. Hence, there is no real change, but only a modification in the approach to, the problem, while the goal remains the same. It is in memory that the “self” continues; it is in escape that the “self” keeps alive in action; it is in ideals that the “self” projects itself as an image into the future. Memory, activity, projection, are modification, changes, but the “self” remains without renewal. Is there a “self” apart from memory, apart from action, apart from projection? Is there a “self” (in other words) without memory: is there a thinker without thought; a singer without song; is there a projector without desire?

What is needed, then, is not a mere change which is modification, but a completely new understanding, a renewal which is

not based on memory, not conditioned by desire, not activated by the urgency of escape.

Such understanding is only in direct perception, in the experiencing of what is, without choice, without placing, without expecting. In such complete experiencing there is no continuation of experience, but a totally new insight. It is such insight which provides the entirely new approach, which does not deal with circumstances, with conditions, with appearances, but which sees the root of the matter, and in seeing the nature of the ideal, solves the problem of conflict.

115. Change (3)

Because we live in conflict and chaos, we want change. The chaos exists in man's relationship with others in society. We want to change society, because we think that society is the basis of chaos. But, society is the outcome of the working of the individual mind. There is no society separate from the individual constituents. And it is the individual mind which has formed society as an extension of "self", for greater security of "self", for self-aggrandisement and self-satisfaction.

It is the accumulated knowledge of experience which makes the individual. But, experience and the outcome of experience, which is the idea, the ideal, the projection, is always interpreted according to the conditioning of the mind by memory, by tradition, by belief, by authority, by fear.

Can the mind of the individual, conditioned and dependent as it is, can such a mind change society which is always the outcome of that mind? Can the mind break its own pattern? I want to change; the mind may want to change and it can think up some ideal state; but that is still an ideal, which is its own thought, which is still "myself". One can alter the shape or the structure of society and deceive oneself in thinking of it as a new society, a new world-order, but it is only an adjustment to hope and fear, to conditions which create the idea. The change is an ideal, which has arisen in memory, when thought attempted to preserve an experience which it now projects into the future as a new world, although it is the old memory.

What else can the mind do than full back on its memory and

project its desires? What then is the mind that does not live in the past and in the future? It is living in the present. But the present has no pattern, no fear of losing the past, no hope and desire for a better world of to-morrow, no clinging to memory, no craving for change, but is seeing and experiencing the present, watching the working of the mind without conditioning. And when the mind is not conditioned, there is neither chaos, nor conflict. And that is not a change, but a completely new mind.

116. Change (4)

As a relief from monotony, change is welcomed. But constant change without stability becomes fearsome. It is thought that breeds fear of this constant change. It is thought that seeks something permanent in its need of security. For, only in security can fear be drowned. It is not the fear of the unknown, but fear of insecurity, of the possibility of losing whatever is known to build up and strengthen the “self”. To make the “self” secure it needs endurance, continuance, projection; and so the thought of ending, of cessation, of death is fearsome.

But all this is thought; and thought itself is impermanent, even if it creates an image of the everlasting, calling it soul or God. That image or ideal is a self-projection and therefore impermanent. Whatever the name, it is the “self” all over again. Thus, an attempt at escaping from change into the permanent has created this fiction of a beyond, an image of the ideal, investing it with all the qualities which the impermanent cannot provide. The impermanent thought, however, can never produce the permanent; and trying to find security in an image of the ideal can only lead to frustration. Thought, therefore, cannot be of any help. Thought, therefore, has to cease; not by force, for that would be striving for another ideal: the attainment of the cessation of thought.

When it is seen and fully realised that the process of thought is based on the memory of accumulated experiences, to be brought forward into an ideal future, wherein to continue, then that very process is seen as futile and idle, and will come to a natural

end. In the stillness of thought which follows the realisation of the impotency of the process, there is direct contact with the relationship which is life in the present. Without desire for a future, without idealising a dead past, there is just the awareness of change without attachment, in which there is no conflict. And with the cessation of striving there comes into being a new present without projection and without fear.

117. Change (5)

In all we see and experience, change does not provide a stability and security. And so we want to change into the changeless, although the attempt to achieve that is still a process of change. We have and we are change, but we do not want it, and so we use more change to obtain changelessness. What can be the result of so much confused thinking? There can be only more confusion and conflict of interests, which the mind cannot go beyond. Thus the mind attempts change at a different level; we try to change the world economically, society morally, the family educationally; but the only item we do not touch is the “self”, which is at the bottom of all this confusion and conflict. All must change, but all striving is that the “self” may remain unchanged, permanent, secure!

As long as there is change at one or on several levels only, but not a total change, there is only patchwork, leaving the essential, the source, untouched.

When there is a change of government-control over property, one gets easily upset. A change in educational policy sets off fireworks of dispute. Religious interference by the state has led to, and will lead again to, murder and war. But on the psychological level where change is essential, we remain unmoved, because we do not want to move. For, any change in the order of thought may totally upset our entire mental outlook with its systems of ideological security.

Can thought move at all on this level? Is it not thought which has created these various levels by dividing life in compartments?

Is religion to be reserved only for the full-moon-days and education only for the mornings from Monday to Friday? Our whole life is so superficial and divided, that attention to one level leads to confusion on another.

If change is necessary, it is at the source; and there no reformation can succeed, for at the source there is that concept of “self” wanting to become changeless. Understand this “self” and the change will be there, not as a reform, but as a total revolution with a new beginning.

118. Change (6)

The only motive in action, whether it is to become or to achieve or to obtain, is always the desire for change which drives to action. When we see the chaotic conditions of life in the world at large, or in the smaller society in which we move, or in the family which is our immediate surrounding, or in our own private way of living, our mode of thinking, it is necessary and essential that a change is contemplated.

Beginning with the mind, the first question which arises is always: How can I change the mind? This question can have no meaning, unless I know what is wrong with the mind, unless I know how the mind works. We see that the entire working of the mind is thoroughly conditioned by our relationship with father and mother in the past and in the first instance, then with the religion into which we are born, the schooling we receive, the friends we make at school, the indoctrination received there, and so on—all during the most formative years of our lives.

Are we aware of that conditioning? And is this very awareness not some kind of unconditioning? But who is conditioned, and who is aware of being unconditioned? As to the question: Who is being conditioned? It is obviously the content of my consciousness, which is the “I”. All the memories of all the influences which have crystallised as the “I” are the conditions which constitute the “self”. There is no separate “I” apart from the conditions. I am conditioned; I am the conditioning; I am the conditioner! And so, as there is no “I” apart from the entire process, awareness of unconditioning means dissolution of the “I”.

Now, awareness can go beyond the obstacle, beyond the motive, free from conditioning. And what does that mean? That means that there is not just a change, but a total revolution. There is no becoming, no being; no desire to obtain, but seeing what is; no projection to attain but a rejection of all ideals. And in that awareness with a complete stillness of the thought which is self-conscious, there is no change, no conflict, but an ever-new creation of peace in insight.

119. Change (7)

Although universal and essential to all that is composed, although it is said to be a basic characteristic of all that lives and moves, becomes and ceases, although it is the source of all conflict, yet change does not provide that frightening aspect which its insecurity upholds. That is because change is seen as a modified continuity, which in a way has its own attraction, away from monotony. One likes a change!

But that is not the change which is inherent in all that seems to exist. To deny in action the totality of change, to believe in outward change of existence, while accepting a continuity and sameness in essence, is a denial of intelligence, without which there can be only confusion and conflict.

Only when change is seen, accepted and understood as total and essential, there is a destruction of all opposition, a denial of all conflict. For, conflict is in lack of intelligence, in a refusal to see what is, in valuing emotions and reasoning, in isolation and opposition, none of which has meaning and existence in change. In change there is no "self" apart from others, no substance apart from phenomena, no entity apart from qualities, no soul apart from matter, no thought or mind apart from thinking, no doer apart from his deed. Intention, purpose, craving, clinging, striving, volition, have never any meaning in change.

But, when change is seen as total without continuity, then there is renewal every moment, a fresh approach, a new life, which is unconditioned, independent, creative and free, always new because it always changes.

Then, change is no more a source of fear in insecurity, but is a source of joy and release in freedom from being bound to the old for ever, freedom in being independent without the burden of a “self” in memory and in ideal. It is to be what one is, without the anxiety of becoming and not becoming. It is that truth which sets free.

120. Change (8)

We think that our lives are changed under the influence of religion, under the indoctrination of political ideology. But, what is changed is only the pattern, a very superficial pattern. A capitalist society has been changed into a communist society; a social democratic ideology into a democratic socialism. Inventions and reforms have changed the mode of living; and even the mode of thinking. And those changes are witnessed by the changing pattern of behaviour, of the attitude of the young ones towards their elders.

But none of those changes is fundamental, because they were all conditioned and motivated; and the motive has remained the same. Thus, the changes we see are only reactions and are never radical, essential, fundamental, we adjust our lives according to the new pattern of society which was made to change its direction by various types of revolution, peaceful or bloody, industrial or ideological. But, such adjustment is not a real change; we only change the pattern of living to ensure the continuation of our security, even if that involves an adaptation of living for the sake of racial or physical survival. And so we accept new techniques of government, of comfort, of economy, as long as there is no essential change involved in the approach to the security problem of the individual.

Only a complete transformation, not of values but of valuation which is an attitude to life, an approach to relationship in understanding, only that can bring about a freedom from fear, a

freedom from bondage, a freedom from change of pattern, which cannot be brought about by any religion, by any reform.

Such radical change can take place not in some artificial grouping of an ordered society, but in each single individual which constitutes that group. And as the individual himself is also a grouping of ideas and ideals, the radical change must be brought about in those ideals. And that means a change from the ideal to the real. But as the individual is afraid to look at the real, in fear of losing his ideal, any change effected by him is only meant to improve his own ideal condition.

121. Chaos

Confusion and disorder do not submit to the rational laws made by man. But chaos too is made by man, even though it is meaningless. The projections of meaning and value, superimposed by man, have no value of their own, thus they are not much different from the meaninglessness of chaos. But to provide sanction to these self-made laws, man invokes an outer authority of eternal values. In other words, man attempts to clothe actuality with the image of reality, but it is still his own image.

In stead of realising his creation of values as he goes along, man identifies himself with them; and then his introduction of meaning and value and purpose into factual relationship is not altogether without rational basis. But this basis, that is reason, should not be beyond understanding.

Man, if he thinks at all, must be aware of the uncertainty, the insecurity of life, which endangers and undermines his very existence. For, existence has no value, if it is not endurable and stable. Most of the chaotic conditions prevailing in the lives of the younger generation are due to the uncertainty of their future, the insecurity of their relationship with life. Against this factual relationship, against this insecurity, man builds up a resistance in isolation, for the purpose of his self-establishment. That this setting-up of himself in isolation and defence is also a resistance against the free movement of life and its evolution, does not strike him, as his aim is the defence against insecurity which he sees as chaos.

And so it is his isolation in self-defence and his resistance to

relationship which are the basic causes of the chaos, which he now tries to regulate with his laws. It is, therefore, in understanding his own chaotic ways of thinking, that there will be order in his mind, in his actions, in his relationship with others.

122. Character

Originally a distinctive mark, such as inscribed letters, engraved or carved figures, a further meaning of character indicates a person's collective peculiarities, his style, idiosyncrasies, distinctive characteristics.

When a person is full of expectations, ideals, anxiety to achieve, to attain, to become someone of importance, he is merely imitative, copying from the past experiences, the words and memories of others. In repeating the traditional, in accepting the dogmas, in following the party-slogans, one may become a good patriot, a faithful believer, a clever politician. And all together they may make one a respectable citizen. But there is nothing distinctive in that, nothing characteristic, nothing original, independent, creative, free. Without character there is imitation which is fear, there is conditioning which is unintelligent, there is pretension which is hypocrisy.

It may look respectable to belong to a recognised religious institution, to follow an internationally accepted ideology, to be a law-abiding citizen, but when these attitudes are merely covering up one's fear of loneliness, one's anxiety for recognition, one's greed to belong, then they also reveal one's lack of character, one's lack of understanding, one's lack of being what one is.

It needs character to be alone; but to be alone does not mean to be opposed to anybody and anything else. To be alone is to be free, unconditioned, intelligent, understanding, without imitating, following or worshipping. When there is understanding right action will follow, not the following of a law or a code of morals,

but a following of insight which is not self-centred, which does not seek security, which does not oppose or copy, but which in understanding has the characteristic of love.

123. Charity

A saying which is even more true than one may imagine, says that “charity begins at home”. But first of all: What is charity? Is it only to give away things, of which we have no further use? Is it only giving away, in order to obtain more and better results? Is it only to give presents to people we know and like?

In real charity those questions do not even arise. Generosity is not the actual giving; it is rather an attitude of mind, an attitude of not wanting; and hence the question of possible returns does not even arise. And that is where charity begins: in the mind.

Giving to others is still an attitude of division, of opposition between the donor and the recipient. Such attitude is difficult to divorce from generosity, for it still remains the donor’s gift. Even after giving there will be the thought and the hope that the best use will be made of the gift. It is then the outlook of an investment, which, of course, is not charity at all.

Charity is love; and how can there be love when actions are inspired by self-love? In the attitude of love there is no separation between individuals, even though there is the acknowledgement of individual functioning. That does not amount to more than the individual functioning of the various organs of the body: the eye, the mouth, the feet, the heart. There is no generosity of the mouth when allowing the food to pass to the stomach for further digestion, for absorption into the blood-stream, for providing the necessary carbo-hydrates, oxygen, proteins etc. wherever they are needed.

Thus, the mind’s attitude, if devoid of “self”, is also selfless to

that degree, when the benefit of one benefits all. This, however, is not an attitude to be acquired and cultivated. One can explain the internal and external relationships between individuals within society, made by nature or by man. But as long as this “relationship” is seen from the individual’s standpoint, there is only exploitation instead of love. And in exploitation there is no generosity, no charity, no love.

124. Chiselling

I am that rock, I am that mountain, which prevents a clear view of the entire valley, of the plains which are there below, unrolling themselves till they meet the immeasurable ocean. And as I want that peaceful view, I take up a hammer and a chisel to chip away that rock; bit by bit, day after day, life after life. For I have all the time of saṁsāra, all the time of eternity before me; and one day, I believe, the task will have been completed. Yet, the very enormity of the task holds me back, in hesitation, in doubt, in fear. Can I do it?

The question itself holds that fear in a frightful opposition to the little “I” who is chiselling away at that huge rocky mountain which is also the “I”, although far from little, but grown up out of the many upheavals throughout the ages, and which (I am afraid) is growing bigger in evolution, out of desires, hopes and fears, out of social revolutions, philosophical involutions, religious reforms, racial traditions, political machinations, growing more and faster than my little hammer and chisel can wither away in decay and death.

The problem of this fear which makes the “I” labour so incessantly lies in its very opposition. As soon as it is realised that this entire mountain, whether we call it society, religion or the state, is the same “I”, built up, grown by, erected on the same “I” which now tries to chisel it away, the absurdity of the attempt will be seen. My chisel can only alter the view here and there, but nature always wins in the end, because “I” am that nature, “I” am the one who builds and reforms, who grows and prunes,

who hopes and fears. As long as I keep on chiselling, I am bound to that rock without being able to see the mountain or to view the valley. But one chisels on, because one wants to have and to possess that view, the freedom of the plains.

To be free, one has to negate all possessions, throw away the means and the will hereto, just climb the mountain, without trying to make it or the self wither away. There is beauty in seeing, not in collecting; in experiencing, not in striving for possession. When the “I” is seen as the “I”, there is just seeing without the “I”.

125. Choice (1)

Good choice is also considered to be right, when it turns out to be profitable, honourable, suitable, desirable, ethical, expedient. But all this shows the utilitarian aspect of the choice. Such choice is made with the goal in view, which may be selfish pleasure in sense-satisfaction, a financial bargain, a rational decision, spiritual merit, etc. But such goals, which determine the choice, merely make use of the chosen object or person or event, as a means or instrument for attaining the goal. Once the goal is reached, the instrument can be discarded. Thus, there is no consideration for the object at all, except in so far as it serves its purpose, which is the satisfaction of the chooser.

The desired effect may be good and praiseworthy, such as the tranquillity of the mind; but with that end in view the means thereto are harmful in other aspects, such as drug-addiction, it is obviously not a good choice, because there are so many harmful side-effects.

And that is the case with all volitional activity, called karma, even if they produce the desired effect (*vipāka*), just because they contain the element of volition (*cetana*). And volition, will, desire, craving, clinging, can ultimately produce only greater conflict and continued dissatisfaction. Even desire for what is ethically good and wholesome (*kusala*) is still a desire; and the effect of such action is a reaction with a purpose, and hence reproductive and self-projective.

Only in perfect comprehension of the necessity to act, irrespective of conditions of advantage or consequences, can there be

a perfect act (*kriya*) without choice or will. When the necessity of action is seen and understood, there is no more choice, because there is no purpose, no profit, no gain. Then such action is not a means to an end; it is the end itself; and in that lies the ending of becoming (*bhava nirodha*), the end of willing, which is Nibbāna.

126. Choice (2)

When there is doubt, uncertainty or confusion, choice becomes necessary. When one sees a thing very clearly, when there is no doubt, there will be no choice either; only direct decision following the challenge. But when there is no clarity, there is the need of choice. Such choice, however, arising from lack of insight and understanding, can only lead to greater confusion. Still, we pride ourselves on our freedom to choose. But this freedom is very deceptive—for, apart from the confused thinking involved on choosing, there is also the conditioning of the mind by the various objects of choice, which therefore can never be free.

In the act of choosing one has to rely on the images created in the past and stored in memory, for it is the reliance on past experience which mostly conditions the mind when a choice seems unavoidable. Then there is never a direct confrontation with a challenge, but a pushing back and away from an actual challenge, in order to make up one's mind to effect a choice. On such an occasion, which occurs only too frequently, the choice is not in the present at all, but in a confrontation between a past experience which is but a memory, and a future aim which is but a mental image. Then the choice is not in respect of the actual presentation, but between the past and the future, the memory of the past and the hope of the future. As neither of them is actual, the choice between them, for or against, is basically a misunderstanding.

In such a case, what is the position of the mind? Is a choice possible at all? When there is clear understanding that the choice

is a challenge between the past and the future, it will not be difficult to discard both disputants, as neither forms part of the choice. When thus all conditioning has ceased, there can be a clear vision without doubt, without confusion, without uncertainty, a vision of fact, based on understanding and insight. Then the mind is free of thought and there is no more necessity of choice, because the opposites which confronted one another in past clinging and future craving, have both been dissolved through insight in the actual need of action.

In this direct vision there is the freedom of direct action which is not through a free choice of will, but through the freedom from choosing and willing in understanding.

127. Cleverness

Having come into being through the accumulation of acquired skill, cleverness may be useful in arguments and applied knowledge. But, as it does not bring about fresh understanding, cannot give freedom from those conflicts which are born from knowledge, which is possession like skill. Yet, when it is discovered that the skill of the mind lies in the retention of memory, then the knowledge of futility of that kind of exercise makes the mind silent. There is nothing more that the mind can do; and the less mental activity there is, the less confusion there will be. In this knowledge of its own futility the clever mind should not run away into explanations of intentions, analytical dissections, uncovering the unconscious, but accept that its own silence is not one produced by the mind in monastic discipline; for whatever is produced by the mind is not silence.

The silence which lays bare the emptiness of the mind with its hollow, although clever, subterfuge and escapes and concealments, that silence comes from the incapacity of the mind to bring about new understanding. That silence knows of no conformity, no effort, no ideal, but is an open receptivity, without looking for results or fulfilment.

If there is no pursuance of a plan or an ideal, the mind has no work; it cannot go back for reference to the memory; it cannot go forward in self projection, for when the mind cannot work there is no mind. The mind is not a machine, which is still a machine when it is idle. The mind is thought, and thought is thinking and thinking has no thinker apart from it. And thus, when the mind

is idle and silent, there is no mind, no thought, no memory no thinker; and thus there cannot be a desire for silence. But there is silence and utter quiet when there is no thought about it. In that silence all cleverness has disappeared, all argument is lost; but there is a total freedom even from the memory of skill and experience, in the direct relationship of experiencing. And that is truth.

128. Clichés

Life is made of ups and downs, for better or for worse, light and shade, contrasts; one is always comparing the differences in opposition, bringing out the disagreement, showing up the non-identity with a standard, with an average, with an estimate. Then it is the standard that matters, the principle of social and moral behaviour. The model for imitation, the propriety of action. For, that is considered to provide the peculiarity of security, which is so much wanted to give the “self” a stability which it needs for continuity.

And thus one compares, judges, approves or condemns life according to such standards. Then, it is not living that counts; it is the counting that makes one live! And thus life is made to fit, is conditioned, is made shock-proof against non-identity. In that conditioning life is cast, re-cast and duplicated from a stereo-typed cliché. The more conditioning, the more drill, the more obedience, so much better citizens for the state, believers for the church, soldiers for the army!

Is that all that life can offer? “Hollow men, stuffed men!” Are we living at all? Is living not rather an ever new meeting of a fresh challenge, along “a succession of street-corners”?

For certain, there is conflict. But that is a challenge to our arrogance which wants to take possession of life, to dominate it as our own. It is conflict which confronts us with our own frailty. And if that is understood, conflict shows our own emptiness, the void of our ambition, the folly of the will-to-become. And that,

perhaps, is the meaning of pain and suffering—and the solution of conflict.

When pain exceeds the physical unease, it becomes a psychological disease in its search for ease, for gratification. Conflict is that unease in which the ideal “self” discovers its insecurity. When the mind tries to cover up its own nakedness by means of common clichés which are frozen thoughts without understanding, there is no understanding of the voidness of life. Living is only possible when there is a total rejection of the framework in which life is stuffed.

129. Clouds

Either in fear or through belief, the mind is incapable of understanding, of realising what truth is. A mind in fear, in hope, in belief, has no contact with what is; it lives in illusion, it escapes through fear, it strives in hope. Fear, belief, escape and hope attempt to reach a conclusion in which fear becomes a certainty, belief becomes vision, escape becomes attainment, and hope becomes safety. But none of these ultimates are known, because they are ideal concepts of a mind which is incapable of understanding, when it is in a turmoil of striving under the cloud of ignorance.

What it known to the mind is only an image of the past, not even the past experience, but only the memory, the image, the concept thereof.

To understand what is, there must be the actual experience in experiencing without reflection, without memory, without projection, without classification, all of which is the work of thought which is a reflection of the past. On that reflection has been built the image of an enduring "self"; for, no "I" can be experienced in the fullness of experiencing. Then there is no separation or opposition of the observer as being apart from the experiencing. When the lover knows himself as a lover, he is not in love more; he is merely enjoying the self-satisfaction of the memory of having been in love. Having nothing else, the "self" believes in that, and hopes for its continuance and repetition, which is also fear for its disappearance. For, that memory is the "self", and without that memory there is no "self".

Acting in that cloud of memory-knowledge, there is no understanding possible of an actual experience in which there is no “self”. Memory, therefore, must cease, and with it the reserve of knowledge, of ideals, of beliefs, of fears. In the present actuality, when there is no “self” to grasp or to retain there cannot be either belief or fear. And when that cloud of the past is lifted, there is the reality of experiencing, the present, which is the truth, which is neither good nor evil, neither hope, nor fear, nor belief; but which is love without the cloud of “self”.

130. Co-Existence

Co-existence is a word much used, politically and most of the time grossly abused, because it is not understood. Co-existence is not just tolerance, because it contains the seed of intolerance in opposition. I am “I”, and you are “you”; and I allow you to remain what you are, as long as I am allowed to remain myself. We run on parallel lines and do not meet, do not attempt to meet, and we even prevent all contact. This is evident in thinking on political lines, where systems of ideology are constantly confronting one another, even when they sit around the discussion table, each one trying to convince the other without yielding its own dogmatic viewpoint. It is even more evident in thinking on religious lines, when various religious groups meet to discuss a common search for truth, without knowing what truth is, but each having its own conception of truth and its own method to achieve its own goal.

When both Christianity and Buddhism make their claim to universality, they are obviously thinking on different lines. Then the only coexistence possible would be a completely ignoring one another’s existence without interference. As soon as one tries to substantiate a claim either to divine inspiration and an initial creation leading to an individual salvation, or the other attempts to prove an eternal cycle of evolution and involution in the past as well as in the future, there can be no basis for coexistence, but only a basis for self-assertion. But, self-assertion necessarily leads to the destruction of the other, which is the end of coexistence, even in principle.

It is then the basis of one’s thinking which has to be under-

stood, not by comparing it with others, but is true understanding through insight. It is not a point of debating to find out which religion leads to the truth, but discovering whether there is any truth in religion with its separate dogmas, its individual striving for salvation, and methods for personal attainment. There might be more religion, if there were no basis for conflict, for without opposition there would be no need for co-existence.

131. Collective (1)

From our way of thinking and acting it is obvious that we are not individuals. We are collective in our patriotism, in our religion, in our community, in our family, in our school-tie, in our acceptance of authority, in our choice of leadership; even in the food we take, the clothes we wear, the fashions we follow; and so in our convictions, our ideologies, our styles of music and writing and building.

Thus we all belong to something, are part thereof, are fragments thereof. The whole or the greater part influences us, conditions us, binds us together; and in that we find greater strength, greater security, greater influence. Thus, being conditioned ourselves, we condition others. And that makes the collective, a mass of conditioning, *vice versa*, in which opposition and ambition form the causes of chaos, and of hate.

There is no way of changing that collective society, because society depends on that collectivity. Anyone who wants to change that, becomes an outcast. And so we conform in still greater collectivity.

Therefore, I am responsible for that chaos, because I am afraid to be an individual; I am afraid to change, because I do not dare to stand alone. And yet there is no other way. If a total change is essential, it must begin with me. With my approach, with my relationship, with my refusal to conform, to believe, to accept without understanding.

Only he who dares to stand alone without the support of race and religion, of public opinion and moral standards, of qualifi-

cations and property, only he is an individual who can begin to see for himself, to act creatively, in stead of collectively and in imitation. For, only he is free.

132. Collective (2)

Collectivity is merely a concept opposed to that of individuality. The individual, which is the ideal based on personal memory, in an attempt to expand its existence in continuation, also experiences the lack of security as an individual standing alone, in imitation. Thus, the concept, of an individual soul (*atman*) produced the ideal of a super-soul (*paramatman*), the individual seeks protection in the herd, whether that is society or religion, nationality or race. One being the extension of the other, there is no real difference of opposition; the individual is absorbed in the community, and the individual feels strengthened and supported by the communal force.

Thus, the evil embedded in individualism with its natural resistance, opposition, exploitation, egotism, becomes merely enlarged in the idea of collectivism with its racism and political ideologies. Neither can provide that intelligence in living which is the only thing that matters.

Beauty, truth and love are not the exclusive property of any one individual or any organisation of individuals; and thus, any claim made by a religious institution or political party to be the only means of spiritual or material salvation is without foundation. They are merely means to an end; when the means become more important than the end, and when the end is only an idea, the outcome of wishful thinking, then the relationship between the individual and society is a mere academic distinction, neither of them being able to induce action which is not reaction.

The intelligent awareness of this unreal relationship is the

ending of all ideology. Without the “self” as centre of action and reaction, there is the ending of all centrifugal escape, the outgoing activity, which is based on the delusion of “self” as an entity, a soul, a substance, an abiding individuality. When this is seen as delusion, there is the freedom of direct understanding and unconditioned action. In that understanding there is love and truth.

133. Comparison (1)

The normal process of thinking is a reflection of the memory of an earlier event, a thought about the perception of an experience. It is not a straightforward perception, but an attempt at strengthening the “I”-concept by enriching it with the memory of an experience. Apart from the fact that this can never be enrichment in any sense, as the memory of an experience is only a dead image of the actual perception. It is also an evasion of the actual issue, the challenge of the experience, by making it an object of comparison, labelling, qualifying, registering, memorising it, and thereby attempting to strengthen the possessive element of the “I”-concept.

Such an attempt at evasion can only breed dishonesty in a refusal to see actuality. Honesty of total perception can only be found when there is no evasion but an open-minded receptivity, which is meditation. This meditation is not a religious act of concentration with its intentional focussing of the mind on a selected image of religious importance, but a total awareness of and attention to the very movement of thought, thereby exposing its dishonesty. In the light of this awareness all furtive mental activity will stand revealed and thereby come to a stop.

Comparison is a diversion of thought from the present which is facing us to the sterile memories which mind has collected in the process of evasion. Comparing is collecting and selecting with the focus on the collector. Comparing leads to choosing, which makes the “I” strong, but which cannot lead to the understanding, without acceptance or rejection, of what actually is. But then, the

mind does not want to know itself, is afraid to meet itself, even if that is a mere reflection. And thus the “I” lives on as an image.

But, when this process of comparing and classifying, of identifying and registering, ceases, there results a silence of thought in which truth will stand revealed by itself without comparing, without an image of expectation, as a pure perception of a living experience.

134. Comparison (2)

Complete understanding is prevented by comparing when certain aspects are singled out and set against similar aspects elsewhere to be judged. In comparing, the mind is really occupied with the image of an earlier experience as a standard, and thus cannot give its full attention here. When there is no full attention, how can there be understanding?

When thus there is comparing without understanding, a new image will then become perhaps the image of an ideal for becoming, for possessing, for achieving a future object.

Comparison is always leading to choice, which is will; and that is a projection of desire. A dead thought trying to become the source of life in an ideal future, is the source of confusion, chaos and conflict. Out of this confusion one acts in contradiction; out of this chaos arises disorder in thought and deed; out of this mental conflict spring antagonism, hate, war and destruction.

But if one looks without comparing, then one's only concern is to understand. This concern to understand does not lead away, but stays with the subject. Then there is no classification, no grouping, no partial understanding of fragments, no registration in memory, no projection in ideals; then for the first time the searching mind ceases its restless roving for a solution, for security, in an ideal answer. Then, for the first time, there is a direct communication which is a communion in which no word need be spoken, when understanding which is insight can arise. No fiction, no image, no, ideal then stands in the way to distort the view, to compare, to judge; no clinging in memory to the past, no

hankering for the future with an ideal; but a direct seeing things as they are, without self-reference, without self-consciousness, without self-projection. And that is the direct communion of love in which there is no self, no conflict.

135. Comparison (3)

One meets with a new situation, and at once a thought flashes back into the past from which memory has stored the selected images of experiences from experiments, from teachings, from books. Comparison is always of the new with the old. The selection which has been retained in memory is that of intended benefit. Such benefit need not always be pleasant, for one has been taught also that one can learn from experience.

But what happens, if this learning is merely a reference to the old, in search of confirmation of a prefixed opinion? Then, of course, there is no learning at all: there is only repetition which is mechanical rather than intellectual.

In comparing one does not meet the new situation with a new mind, but with old thoughts of prejudice, with conditioned thinking dependent on traditional views, religious beliefs, ideological dogmas, racial bias, class consciousness, personal likes and dislikes, caused by individual idiosyncrasies. Thus, thought is never clear and fresh, open and free, to see and understand without the screen of memory, the shadow of the past.

To understand a new situation is to meet a new acquaintance with open hospitality, without being influenced by the fashion of his clothes, the accent of his speech, his similarity in appearance. But, in comparison the mind is focussing its attention on the past, and it cannot see the present, cannot listen to the new, and cannot understand the new message. In comparison, there is the static thought of the ideal which is the "I" as a reflection from the past, preserved in memory; or the "I" has an image projected as an

ideal in the future. It is this image which forms the platform on which the old and the new are meeting to be judged. And thus there is no approach to the new, for, the new is measured by the old standard.

Only in complete openness of mind and susceptibility of heart can there be a direct approach, to whatever is new and now. Only then can there be a relationship of mutual understanding, appreciation and love.

136. Comparison (4)

In listening and learning there must be no comparison. If one compares what one hears with what has been heard before, there is obviously a divided attention, with most of the stress laid on what is already known. Then, in comparing the new with the old, the new will be accepted in so far as it agrees with and fits into the cadre of the old. In that way, of course, there is no learning, but only a gathering and rejecting of information in dependence on its agreement or otherwise with what has already been accepted.

Such learning is not with a view to discovering something, but only with the aim of finding corroboration for one's earlier accepted views. Those earlier views, too, have been collected in the same way, and thus the whole structure of one's knowledge is but the erection of selected pieces of information, all selected with the intention of building up a fortress of isolation to make the selector more and more secure. The information itself is then not important, as long as it confirms the old ideas, corroborates the ancient views, supports the preconceived ideal.

It is the "I" which needs the support; it is the "I" which needs continuance for its existence, which needs continuance for its security, and security for its existence and continuance. It needs satisfaction for its security, and it needs security to exist at all. Thus, the past which has collected these memories which give security in isolation, now endeavours to project them into a future ideal. It is only in the future, and thus in the ideal, that continuance is possible. And anything to the contrary will upset

that balance of power. Hence, selection based on comparison, acts as a safeguard for the continuance of this “self” ideal.

In listening without comparison, but with a totally open mind, fresh without preconception or prejudice, there can be a learning of the new through seeing and understanding, which is new and fresh and free, and which is insight and truth, and which can act without reaction.

137. Compartments

Man has divided the universe of his contacts in many compartments, which he keeps carefully away one from another, without overlapping, without mixing, without allowing one to influence the other. Thus, religion is strictly reserved for the Sunday or the Full Moon-day, the family for the home, business for the office, etc. And because there is no communication between those compartments, there is opposition, rivalry, misunderstanding and contradiction. None is complete, none is happy, and life is chaotic.

Moreover, man has divided himself, his very being, in compartments, the intellect, thought, the emotions, each producing their own ideals, desires, memories, attachments, dependencies. And with this divided self he approaches at different times the various compartments of what he calls his life. Thus, religion becomes divided into a rational and a devotional religion; the family is divided into the convenience of a home, a means of continuance, and an opportunity for self-expression; business is either exploitation, a means of security, or an escape both from home and from God.

There is only one thing common to them all; and that is the fabric, the material of their construction. All these compartments have been created to satisfy a want in many different ways, but the want is one and the same. It is the want of the past to become the future, the want of “self” to become better, the want of the “self” to dominate, to survive, to destroy the opposition. It is the

“self” which is building those walls of separation, behind which the “self” attempts to find security in isolation.

But, in isolation there is no understanding, no contact in relationship, no communication, no love. In the isolation of a compartment there is fear and craving and conflict. There is no method for love; but an intelligent awareness will break down those divisions of hate. And when there is no “self”, there is love.

138. Compassion (1)

As a passion it is love for everyone: but we do not know that passion which is love. We know only passion which is lust, passion which is hate, passion which is greed.

The passion of love is not divided, not personal, not egocentric. It is all-embracing; and hence it is called compassion. But to understand this compassionate universal love and to experience it from moment to moment, one must know the meaning of it. This understanding cannot come through semantics, not through verbalisation, not through word-analysis; but there must be a total experiencing of "it." When one feels sorry for the plight of a poor man, one places oneself in that spot and feels his suffering, his loneliness, his misery; and one wants to do something about it. If no help can be given individually, he becomes the trademark of sorrow, and one generalises one's feelings, organises one's sentiments, and tries to rope in others to help combating poverty, disease, death.

But, that is merely substitution: Whatever I do to the least of them, I do unto myself, in the name of humanity or in the name of God; and I create beatitudes for next life: "Blessed are the poor ..."

But, do I realise that I am the creator of that poverty and loneliness, by placing myself opposite? I try to provide help from the opposite camp. How far does that go? And can I really reach them, as long as I remain here, and they are there?

If there is no understanding of the gulf I have created and which I maintain in preserving my own identity in search for

“self”, even in substitution, there can never be a bridge across that gulf. But as soon as there is understanding of action which is not reaction and reflection, then such action will not need to be spurred on into activity; for it will act spontaneously without motive, without purpose beyond the action, without intention to help myself in others.

Then there is no reaching out, no bridging of a gap, because there is no gap. Compassion can live only in the unity of love which does not know of division and opposition.

139. Compassion (2)

Can one be at peace, seeing that there is so much suffering in the world? Can one remain indifferent? But on the other hand, what can one do to alleviate all that misery? It is obvious that I, as an individual, without any status or influence, cannot stop the war in the Middle East, break the race-barriers in south Africa, level the class distinctions all over the world.

But, what can be done in the sight of all this conflict is to see it intelligently, that is, to understand what it is and how it comes about, to understand the structure of society which is always at war though always striving for peace. And that society is the extension of myself.

It is myself that is in conflict. I *make* the conflict by wanting security for the “self” at the expense of the “other”. I create opposition, exploitation, hate, because I *am* that conflict, I am that ideal of security, that statue of achievement built on the foundation of suffering, of memory, of hopes and fears, of desires and wants. And this “I” in its isolation cannot understand the division it creates, because it has separated itself from the movement of life in its desire to stand outside this chaos as an independent observer, as a reformer, as a saviour.

Can there be compassion while causing this conflict? Is not the desire for peace just another escape from the truth that “I” am conflict?

Without moving away from that fact, that “I” am conflict, there is no attempt at making peace in the world, but there is the cessation of escape, cessation of isolation, cessation of becoming,

cessation of the ideal; and so there is cessation of conflict. And in that ceasing there is no "I". And that is peace. That is compassion which is feeling together and which is understanding that there is no isolation, no separation, no "self".

140. Compassion (3)

Much more than harmlessness, compassion is an active attitude, a direct approach, which not only avoids inflicting pain or sorrow on others. Generosity and liberality can be practised with a sense of moral obligation, as the paying of income tax, to provide a better adjustment in social unbalance. But compassion is the friendly relationship of sympathy, that is, of feeling together. This requires not so much a sense of detachment which enables one to give and help freely, but rather a deep understanding of relationships which require adjustment so that there is no longer the opposition of donor and recipient. It is the natural outcome of love, which in loving does not know of a lover and the beloved.

Thus, compassion cannot be cultivated, as it is not an aim to be reached, a perfection to be acquired, a virtue to be developed. It is the natural state in which relationship is not of opposition, in which needs are understood and vacuums filled without thought, or scheme of merit, or greed or exploitation.

Compassion is not a feeling of being sorry for the misadventure of someone else, for it is not based on comparison. In comparing the loss of someone else with the gain in oneself, there is that distinction not only between self and others, but also the concept of gain and loss. In compassion there is no substitute of feelings which make the "I" think of gain or loss. For, that would be a mourning over the less of property. True compassion is not related to property but to mutual relationship which is non-existent if there is no understanding and love.

In compassion there is no thought of others, because there

is no thought of “self”. But there is the overwhelming urge to act in need, thoughtlessly and recklessly perhaps, but ever so sensitively, invitingly, openly, in love and understanding.

Then the mind will be free from all prejudice which divides and distinguishes, which separates and opposes. Compassion is universal, or it is not.

141. Compassion (4)

Compassion is something much more radical and fundamental than just feeling sorry for somebody's misfortune, and than organising or doing something to help him on his feet again.

Compassion is a deep inner awareness which simply radiates understanding in such a way that action follows of necessity. It is not being charitable, and thus it cannot be developed as a regular habit, as a subscription or donation for deserving institutions and individuals. These are, of course, very necessary, but their source should not come from a sense of religious or social duty or obligation. Even psychological impulses which make one "feel" with another, as if suffering together (com-passion), are not true compassion, because there is still the element of "self" in them through comparison.

But when there is a true awareness of injustice on whatever field, then there is a spontaneous outgoing warmth which is creative and communicative in itself. There is no purpose or plan for sharing or being communicable, but a totally selfless compassion, which is all the more general and universal because it does not radiate from a central "self", and does not seek fulfilment in an ultimate destination. Thus, in such compassion there is neither plan nor purpose, neither beginning nor end.

Such radiation is a true transformation, the warmth of which will be experienced by anyone who comes into contact with this compassionate "heart".

There is no donation, but just transformation. And thus, without "self" and without motive there is no influencing and no

conditioning. And yet there is a great creativity, which awakens not through skilful development, not through discipline or education, and which therefore has no limitation. Then one is not compassionate, but there is compassion; then one is not loving, but there is love, all-embracing, just because there is no self-starting activity. This creativity lies in the total surrender and abolition of all that is false, divided, in opposition, in conflict.

142. Compassion (5)

The word indicates it to be a feeling together which is a sharing of suffering. That does not mean that we must inflict pain upon ourselves so as to share the feelings of others in pain, for that would merely double the pain without bringing about an alleviation. But, if there is to be a sharing of feeling in love and sympathy, there must be, first of all, understanding of what that suffering is in others and in ourselves.

What is it that causes pain? Toothache, a wound, failure in an examination, anxiety, loss of property, death of relations. All these are feelings we can experience in ourselves, but can we share such suffering in others? We can say that we feel very sorry, when hearing of some bereavement in the family; and the person concerned will be happy to know that there are sympathisers, that he is not alone in his sorrow. And that will be some relief, some distraction, as it brings about a togetherness, which is feeling together.

Physical pain, of course, requires physical attention; and the best man for that is a dentist or the home-medicine chest. But, there are other pains which cannot be shared, but which can be understood. Understanding goes to the root of suffering; for, when the cause is truly discovered the symptoms will disappear by themselves. What is the cause of mental pain? What is mental pain? It is an indisposition, a conflict in the mind, which wants one thing but cannot get it. Why does the mind want something? One does not want things one dislikes. And thus, we want things we like; we want satisfaction. Physical satisfaction,

a piece of chocolate, is easy to get, but of course it does not last long. But what is mental satisfaction? What pleasure do I get from bullying others, except the satisfaction from knowing that I am the strongest, the greatest. But why do I want to prove that to myself? Is it not because inwardly I am not at all convinced of my greatness, because I am lacking something which makes me feel insecure? And so the mind is in conflict; and only an understanding of myself, of my reaction, of my desires, can lay bare the deep causes of that conflict of mental pain. That is a way of sharing the pain of my heart with the understanding of my mind which is true compassion, which can make us free from conflict.

143. Complete (1)

We feel very much the need of a change in living, in our outlook on life, our attitude towards what makes life worth living, but we do not know where to begin; we do not have the strength to begin, even if we knew where.

We change governments as we change our shirts, and we feel in the end that they are all the same, that no one can pull us out of the mud in which we are stuck. And then we say that there must be a complete change, and we put our hopes on international conferences to put our economic house in order on a new footing, to give all in the third world a better chance. We change educational policies to bring students' unrest to an end. We create useless jobs for the unemployed who do not want to work in the first place. Then finally, we come to the creation of new ideologies to do away with the old divisions and distinctions, new superstitions to replace the old dogmas of religion.

But there is no change in the outlook on life, because there is no understanding of what we want to make of it. Of course, we want to make a better life of greater equality for all, greater comfort, greater security; but in doing so there is no new approach; the change is one of method, of ideal, of name, but not of heart, of mind, of essence. It is still the safety, the security, the continuance of satisfaction which remains the same old object in all change. There may be devaluation and revaluation but the basic meaning of value remains. It is still the "self", in individual life opposed to others, in social life opposed to other groups, in

religion opposed to other creeds, in national feeling and culture opposed to other races.

Can there be change in “self”? That is the mistake we make in our search for improvement. We search for improved conditions, but leave the basic question untouched the basis which has produced those conditions, all conditions.

To be complete, there must be a totally fresh understanding of this basic problem of approach to completeness, which can never be understood as long as the search is predetermined by “self”, and for “self”.

144. Complete (2)

The last words of the Buddha seem to sum up his whole doctrine, both of philosophy and of ethics: “Complete with care” (*appamadena sampadetha*).

How little do we complete! Most of our actions are reactions to the past with a view on the future. Actions are based and moulded on remembered experiences from which we try to learn. And thus our action in the present is a conditioned reaction to the past. The past wants to continue; in fact, it must continue if it wants to exist at all. And thus an image, a blue-print for the future is set up, towards which one has to strive in order to be, to become, to continue. This ideal, too, is now conditioning the present action, which is therefore, never complete in itself.

For an action to be complete, it cannot be inspired by a purpose, an ideal, or by a command. Inspiration makes it an imitation, a reflection, a thought-image. To be complete it must then be free from all image-making purposes. To be complete, there must be an inner necessity to act which is not a reaction, but an understanding of its need, which is then a spontaneous growth, culminating in its own blossoming and perfection.

An action can only be complete if it ends with its action: that is, when it does not push further to the achievement at goal, when there is no further search for fulfilment or perfection. For such an action to arise there must be a total awareness, without pollution of motives.

When action is motivated, it is conditioned. When it is conditioned, it is not free, it is not perfect, it is not complete. Thus,

completeness has a twofold aspect, of being finished, made whole and perfect; and of being finished with no more to come, brought to an end. That is the perfection of virtue and the end of becoming.

145. Complex (1)

Every complex is a conflict, just because it is a complex, that is, a composite of various mental abnormalities, arising from suppressed tendencies, undigested memories, idealised projections, each in its own way a conditioned reflex, an unrealistic imposition, a disposition dependent on the influences of education and environment.

Our tastes are influenced, formed and developed according to modern trends of art and concept, while those trends are the outcome of the current outlook on, and reaction to, the world of events. Any new fashion in dress or architecture, in painting or music, is bizarre till it has established itself, and one has come under its influence. Such fashions are like the seasons and their changes; they are neither good nor evil; they are just symptoms of the present complex, reactions to suppressions, feelers towards a better expression: they are a test, an attempt, a search.

To understand all that, it is not enough to analyse the trends and fashions, but one has to see deeper into what has produced those complexes. It is easy enough to accept a diagnosis of suppressed tendencies leading to a revolt. But that does not answer the question: Why should a tendency be suppressed? And why should there be a tendency at all?

A tendency is a leaning towards a new becoming, but that involves a rejection of what is, and the building up of an ideal complex, which is still a built-in conflict.

Only the ideal is complex. What is, is not complex; it is, just actual. And the understanding of what actually is, sees no place

for attachment to memories and craving for ideals. It is simply seeing things as they are. Just that simple!

146. Complex (2)

Life is as complex as we make it. We divide it as the higher and the lower, the spiritual and the mundane, the present and the life hereafter. We give to our thinking subconscious and unconscious layers, in the same way as we have divided our daily lives and keep our activities in separate compartments: ten minutes in the morning and again ten minutes in the evening for concentration, allowing the rest of the day for dissipation; six days for work and one day for religion, or for play, or for relaxation. And in each of these compartments the other must be excluded or suppressed, just as we ourselves have to conform to the higher demands of society, of the job, of the state. Going to office by car, one claims the right of the road as a motorist; but, walking the last few yards, crossing the road from the car-park to the office, we claim the right of a pedestrian, and complain of the inconsiderateness of the other man.

Life is simple, but the approach is complex.

In each position we support one and condemn the other. But whatever our position at the moment, it is the “self” we seek to put in power, and thereby divide and rule. Creating opposition and conflict. Every complex is a conflict (*sabbe saṅkhāra dukkha*). Conflict cannot be controlled, for control means more power, and hence more conflict. But the complex can be understood, as the will to become what one is not, the desire to obtain what one has not, the lower “self” wanting to become the higher; is is the will to arrive. All this is not living, but projecting, which is complexity

It is clear that simple living and seeing life as it is, not in

compartments, but as a whole, will give that smooth flow which in its stillness has no conflict, because there is no complex.

147. Complex (3)

Desire is the beginning of complexity. It may be a desire to accumulate or to renounce; but it is always a struggle, through detachment or through attachment, to become different. And it struggle, a conflict, is always a complex. This cannot be solved by adopting rules for simplicity of living with fewness of possessions, because the effort of renunciation is a struggle in itself. The problem of complexity does not lie in the amount of property, not even in the kind of property; for, spiritual property can be attained through physical poverty, and than cause much deeper complexity than physical wealth and comfort.

Simplicity is not an ideal to be achieved by getting rid of complexity. Any ideal (and that does not exclude the ideal of simplicity) is complex, because it is a striving to become different, to achieve, to acquire, all of which are aspects of the very complex process of escape. As long as simplicity is an ideal, it is the goal of an escape from complexity, another concept for thought to entrench itself in the isolation of virtue, but merely adding to the confusion of an already confused and complex mind.

Complexity is a life of problems and conflicts; and that cannot be changed by simplifying one's mode of living and dressing. The very desire for a change to simplicity cause further complexity.

Simplicity is of the heart and cannot be acquired through discipline of the body or control of the mind. But when body and mind cease to worry about becoming simple, there will be no desire for simplicity, and no effort to overcome complexity. In the simple understanding of the hollowness of this struggle, of

the emptiness of this striving for becoming and escaping, there will be no desire to accumulate or to renounce: there will be no conflict.

Thus, without striving or struggle, without acquiring or renouncing, there will be understanding of the irrationality of this process; and life will shed its complexity and be simple.

148. Computer

The nearest that man has come so far to perfection is the computer which gives the answer with absolute accuracy within a short span of time, which would be impossible to achieve with the workings of the brain only. But it must not be overlooked that it has taken many years of intellectual labour to bring together those instruments of precision and make them work in response to a question, the answer to which has already been fed into the machine earlier under varying aspects, with different terms, just as a whole library is contained within the 26 letters of the alphabet. The composition of the answer was made by the one who made the question. Any error in the final answer is not the fault of the computer, but of the one who operates it, just as a misprint is not the fault of the alphabet, but of the composer. The machine, the mechanism, may be perfect within its limitations, but the operator is not. And where the questioner is wrong, the answer cannot be right.

Thus, the computer, or any other machine, is only perfect in copying, in repeating, in providing a solution which was there already. The perfection of the machine, therefore, is dependent on the degree of perfection of the brain which made it; and thus it can only imitate in its production.

Is that not also the way the mind works in its striving for perfection, for satisfaction, for continuation in reproduction? The mind as thought can only react to the information received from the past, collected and preserved in memory. Such thought is applied to the new set of conditions; and a conditioned answer

is provided within the limitations of the mind's activity. There will be a good amount of adjusting and regrouping, but the final answer will still be within the limits of the old, the past, the dead.

When the brain is the perfect machine for imitating, copying and even selecting from the immense library of memory, there is no direct approach of understanding the motive, the cause and origin of the question. What is wanted is an answer; and the brain provides that. But, understanding is not through memory and application of thoughts, but in the silence of insight, when there is no disturbance of search and purpose.

149. Concentration (1)

The need to concentrate is felt as a result of distractions, which leads to failure. Thus, while focussing all thought on one centre, it excludes and cuts off all unwanted activity, And so, in concentration there is the basis of distraction, in control there is opposition, in discipline there is conflict, as long its concentration is a selection, a refusal and a rejection. In repression there is no understanding. A selection is made by a distracted mind to bind its wandering thoughts to the preselected object of concentration. The object, thus chosen, may not even be actual; it is always ideal and is held up before thought to follow and imitate. In such exercise there can be no attention to what actually is, for that is excluded as a distraction.

By refusal to attend, except to one's own choice, there is wilfulness, ego-centricity and a cultivation of insensitivity which is intended to prevent contact with the unwanted. This, obviously, dulls the mind, and increases the routine activity of thought through memory, repetition, isolation and conditioning.

Concentration means judgement, comparison, evaluation, attachment; and the result of concentration will be a greater concentration on the "I", the centre of all this effort.

For the mind to be sensitive, it has to be open without reference to authority or to memory, without expectation of result, without fear of letting go. The thought will be quiet without aim or purpose, but ready and receptive to see the truth in whatever comes, without bringing it back in ego-centric concentration. To be open, attentive, sensitive and truthful, that requires no

concentration, but that is meditation, in which there is understanding and insight. Then there is no need for a search for quiet, because the mind which has ceased searching is quiet. And in that stillness of thought there is a perception of what is, which includes the perception of one's reactions.

And that is truth which is omnipresent and which can be seen by an attentive mind which is free from concentration.

150. Concentration (2)

Concentration is always selective. But to be selective one has to have opinions, views, ideas about things and people, being better or not, etc. That involves choice; and choice is based on comparison which cannot function without memory. Thus, concentration is a selection from among past objects, memories of experiences, traditional views, which have been judged already, and hence accepted or rejected.

Concentration, in its very selective activity, also isolates itself in the past; for, all thought is of the past, and selection is then not of the present. In isolation there is opposition and conflict, to which one can immunise oneself temporarily by withdrawing oneself again into the past. Thus, concentration is not actual.

In concentration there is an escape from the unwanted, but such withdrawal is not a solution of the conflict. In concentration there is not even awareness of actuality, for all movement of challenge is carefully excluded; no distraction is allowed, so that the mind can concentrate on the object of its choice. But, the mind is thought and thought is a response to memory. Thus, once again, concentration is a withdrawal into the past, an escape from what is, a search for the pleasurable. And yet, tradition in all religions tell us of the efficacy of concentration, as it purifies the mind, directs the mind to higher things, prepares the mind for the spiritual battle against evil; but all this involves conflict between the pure and the impure, the higher and the lower, good and evil, all of which is still within the framework of thought which is responding to memory.

In the present there is no selection, no choice, no will, no opposition, no conflict, and hence no need of an escape. Without effort at concentration, there can be simple awareness of the desire to concentrate, without rejection or condemnation, an understanding of the motive and the goal of such effort. That is not an object of choice, but a presentation of facts as the mind unrolls itself as reaction with clinging to the past and craving for the future. In the understanding of the mind, thought ceases without choice and without selection through insight without concentration.

151. Concern

Solicitude can become an anxiety about what is going to happen in the uncertainty of the future. It is a desire to be prepared to meet troublesome events. But, one does not know what is going to happen, a war, an epidemic, a bankruptcy, a death. How can one be prepared for everything? And how efficacious can one's preparations be? Life being a succession of street-corners, there is no knowing what lies round the corner, and there is no way of being safe.

Yet, without anxiety, there can be a regard to the relationship in living, to the way people and things affect us, and the way we affect them. Such concern is then a deep interest in the actuality of a contact, an attitude of learning what is on now. When such attitude is that of an open mind which learns of a new situation first hand, and is not conditioned by traditional approaches of customs and conventions, then in such direct learning with deep concern in whatever happens, there is a direct contact. Then there is no standing aloof in unconcern, which is opposition born of the desire not to become involved, a fear of becoming affected, of losing one's security.

When the open and unsophisticated mind can see what is taking place without interpretations or explanations in that direct contact there will be a direct; response. But, as long as the mind is concerned about the uncertainty of the future, about the insecurity of continuity from the past, there is obviously no concern about what actually is but only about the effects thereof.

It is only the open and innocent mind, which is not dependent

on the experiences of the past, not prepared with the ideologies of the future, only such an open mind can learn, without anxiety but with full interest, and then act freely with understanding, meeting the present moment with full concern, with tender care, which knows no prejudice, but which is full of love.

152. Conclusions (1)

No further enquiry is needed, when conclusions mark the end of the road, the end of knowledge. It is the end of and the cessation of intelligence. One is usually satisfied with a definition. The dictionary tells us that a conclusion is a termination, a final proposition, deduced from previous ones. It is a decisive settlement, and there is nothing more to do about it.

It shows the difference between knowledge and intelligence. Knowledge is satisfied with a definition, with a conclusion; but intelligence is of an enquiring mind. Inquiry means questioning, learning, watching, observing without opinion. True intelligence, then, must discard all previous opinions, all authority, all conclusions. To do so, one must be fearless, for one has to stand alone, without accepting the conclusions of others, without faith in religion, without reliance on tradition, without submission to a social structure, if one wants to find out the truth for oneself.

Books can impart knowledge which is information, and which is useful up to a point in practical, daily, physical life. But to understand the working of the mind, to find out whether man is anything more than a functioning organism for feeding and breeding, there must be a constant enquiry into the motives of action. Knowledge tells us "how", but intelligence enquires into the "why" of things. Knowledge is about the world, but intelligence must begin with the understanding of oneself, of one's relations to the world of people in which one lives. And that understanding is not to be obtained through study, but through intense and sincere observation, through constant enquiry without reaching

a conclusion. For, life is a living process which has a constantly new challenge for an enquirer, as a river undulating towards the sea with ever-new wavelets, without which there would be no beauty and no life.

Such understanding in intelligence can come only through intense devotion and sincere love, without ambition to attain a goal, without a “self” to acquire knowledge in conclusions.

153. Conclusions (2)

There was once a learned priest who could prove, logically and scientifically, the existence of God. His logical arguments failed, and his science did not rise above matter, but still he believed in God, because he had come to a conclusion. He who has reached a conclusion, may speak of the nature of God, of the essence of Nirvāṇa but he will fail to communicate, because conclusions bring communication to a stop, even though discussions may continue endlessly.

He who has reached a conclusion has achieved his goal, and there is for him nothing beyond. Life has come to an end; he is dead. But, when there is no conclusion of “I know” there remains the open door of a new experience every moment. In experiencing there is no conclusion of the experiencer, there is no memory of past experience, there is no desire for continuation of such experience, because there is no thought about the experience. There is just the experiencing of that moment, in which there is no subject and no object, and hence no conflict. It has no beginning and hence no ending, for it is just in that experiencing that everything else has ceased.

In that absolute silence of mind and memory there cannot be a conclusion, a definition, a qualification, not even a perception, because there is no perceiver, no “I”.

In such a complete experience the image of “self” has been smashed and cannot be revived. In experiencing there was no conclusion, and hence it cannot be stored up in the memory as an experience, because, as a living action it had no purpose, and

hence no conclusion. This is not memory, not knowledge, not a logical deduction, but a living experience which can set free from all rules and conclusions.

154. Conclusions (3)

There can be only right conclusions, if they are deductions according to the rules of an accepted system of logic, and if those deductions are based on rightly observed and verifiable premises. Thus, quite a number of conditions have to be satisfactorily fulfilled, before one may even dare to begin drawing conclusions. Moreover, the system of logic, the rules of dialectic and the forms of syllogism, as well as the degree of observation and verifiability are all predetermined in their set-up, so that one may finally arrive at the only possible conclusion, that no conclusion is ever conclusive.

And if one then is at a loss how to arrive at any conclusion, that is the right atmosphere for putting that other question: Why does one want to arrive at a conclusion at all?

Living is for most of us a series of conflicting problems, in which some physical problems are left to be solved by the state, and other metaphysical ones either by philosophy or by religion. In this chain of conflict and chaos the individual is caught and forced to take sides, in the hope of finding a solution satisfactory to him. It is this search for a solution which is based on a desire for security which drives him to conclusions, hoping to find therein the end of his conflict.

Desire for satisfaction, a search for security, the establishment of an ideal, are all focused on the future in which the individual projects himself, having escaped from the insecurity and the chaos caused by the present conflict within himself.

There is only one observation possible, namely of the present

moment. It is the actual fact that the individual mind is in turmoil, because it is experiencing the security it wants. It is not in isolation and opposition that “self” can be made secure: but in the understanding that without projection there is no “self”; that without conditioning there is no isolation and hence no “self”; and that in the absence of “self” there is no conflict—there lies the solution of all problems and conclusions.

155. Conditioning (1)

Conditioning is a process which has been going on from the time (they say) that Eve persuaded Adam to share with her a bite of the apple recommended to her by the serpent, in the hope of gaining immortality. It is the natural process of adaptation to climatic changes, the process of evolution not only of the species but of everything composed, from boiling gas and solid rock to the cunning brain of animal and man. It is the evolution of the amoeba and amphibian through the avatars into the divinity of man as Krishna, they say.

We are still conditioned, consciously and unconsciously, through the propaganda of culture and ideology, of racial preference and superiority, of religious dogma and belief. We are conditioned by advertisements on sex in the purchase of a piece of soap and toothpaste. But mainly we are conditioned by our own fears and hopes. Conditioning is the answer and the supply to a demand for growth, for becoming, for ever-increasing security of “self”, of the individual living in opposition, in isolation, in conflict. And the more we withdraw from conflict in fear and isolation, the greater becomes the distortion of the lonely mind, seeking security in the thought of permanence.

To be free from conditioning is necessary for an unbiased approach; but to be thus free means to be free from a desire for psychological security. It is this demand for security which provides and supplies the ideal of a permanent “self”. The mind with all its thoughts and emotions is guided by this desire for security in continuance and permanency; in its opposition to

impermanence the mind has created this concept of an ideal “self” or soul, an abiding entity, a spiritual substance, upholding all material and immaterial qualities and phenomena. A desire for freedom can but increase this opposition. It is only an intelligent awareness of conditions and their conditioning, without demands of hope which follow the fear of insecurity, that can bring about a sensitiveness which is not biased, not conditioned and, therefore, free to understand.

156. Conditioning (2)

The beginning of thought is conditioned in its origin and source; and conditioning is its function. Thought can never be still. It was born from memory which is clinging to the past; and it stretches out for an ideal, which is craving for the future. But it never is quiet and still. Even in its desire to become quiet and still, it is conditioned by the image of its desire, which is only an ideal projection in its striving to become that ideal.

There is no solution to this problem of trying to make the mind still, to quieten all thought-projections. The endeavour to make, to become, to develop, is the problem; and all effort is conditioned by this desire. Thus, what to do?

This question itself shows the totality with which we are involved without understanding: We want effort to become still; we want to run so that we can rest; we want security in the future, so that we can live at peace in the present; we keep the burden of the past, in the hope to be free in the present and in the future. What is wrong with all this? What is wrong is that we are throughout influenced and conditioned by neurotic patterns of thoughts and emotions, which make us act according to our conditioning, rather than dealing with a situation as it is. In other words, there is a reaction, psychological or emotional, rather than an intelligent action. And when there is an unintelligent reaction to emotions, there cannot be an intelligent awareness even of the real problem at issue.

“Then what to do?” This question would not even arise, if

there were intelligent awareness, for the problem is not: how to solve the problem; but, why is there a problem at all?

The problem seems to be that the thought which wants to be free only knows that it is conditioned, and now wants to make itself free according to its ideal, which is thought itself. Both the “want” and the “ideal” are the problem, created by “self”. When that is truly seen then the actual ideal will disappear, and then there can be no further conditioning. Then “thought” will cease and there can be direct understanding in stillness of thought.

157. Conditioning (3)

The mind has now come to the point that any movement made by the mind to make itself free from the conditioning influence, is still seen within the mind, and that is a thought-reflex dependent on the past, on personal contact, on reading, on learning, which is conditioning. The mind that wants to become free is conditioned by the ideal of freedom. This ideal is a projection from memory; and thus the past is still conditioning the mind. The mind cannot go beyond thought; whatever it does, it is always the "I" that wants to do something. We think we can do something about our being conditioned. That is still thought, and it is still conditioned by desire. The conditioned mind cannot de-condition itself through thought which is conditioned.

The mind which sees this is obviously not the same mind that wanted a freedom which it does not know, except as an ideal. The mind which truly sees that thought is conditioned, whatever else that thought may be, will not try to become emancipated through thought. And yet that seems to be the only approach! Whether it is Freud, or God, or Krishnamurti it is still a thought, an idea, which is conditioned, and hence cannot set the mind free.

What does the mind do? What do I do when I cannot do anything? More thinking will not do, for that is still the "I" at work. When I am faced with a bad toothache on a Sunday-morning, all my thinking about how to get hold of a dentist will not cure my toothache. I do not know now what I might do then, but if the toothache is really bad and unbearable, I will do something even without a dentist, without thinking about it. Now

I do not know what I might do; but when I get that toothache that bad, I will do something which I dare not think of otherwise. It is not thought which is acting now under pressure of the memory, telling me what I should do or not.

When I had to break away from the church, and later from the *sangha*, do not believe it was easy to break my parents' heart, to disappoint the expectations of my pupils; but thought could not guide, and thus a new mind took over which understood without desire. And there was no conflict.

158. Conditioning (4)

In all spheres of life there is so much conditioning that the only activity resulting from this knowledge is an attempt at escaping from it all into an ideal, an unconditioned state, where peace will be absolute in the absence of class struggle, where perfect happiness will reign in the total fulfilment of all physical and mental needs, where there is no dissatisfaction, no disharmony, no conflict, because there will be no more desire.

To desire for such a state would be the absolute conditioning of the “ego” in total isolation without relationship, without understanding, without living. The striving for attainment of such an ideal state is in itself a symptom of the struggle for survival in opposition, between the actual “self” in conflict, and an ideal “self” in freedom. The search for freedom, bliss, emancipation, deliverance, union of the super-soul with its God, is the process of conditioning by the ideal of attainment in order to escape the chaos and the conflict experienced by thought without understanding. It is the conflict between what is, and what should be. It is the “self” posing as an ideal attempting to escape from the actual confusion, caused by that conflict.

The individual “I” is not different from the ideal community, religion or state. They exist only in the relationship of opposition. The beliefs of various religions, the social programmes of political parties, the mental segregations between races, nationalities and classes are all relationships of opposition, in which one or the other as the individual “self” endeavours to gather support to

exist, to continue, to expand, to exploit, in the hope of ruling supreme in an ideal peace of isolation.

This total action of conditioning does not lie entirely in the past, but it is also the present which lays hold of those memories, and then projects them as ideals into the future. The process of un-conditioning is therefore not a setting back of the clock. It has to be seen now in its totality of past clinging, of present ignorance and future idealism. The entire process is thus one of “self”-building; and in that build-up there is the conflict in which the present is caught.

159. Confidence

There are two kinds of confidence. There is the confidence in one's own convictions, in one's strength in the power, and success of one's action or of the action of one's party, religion, country, nation. All that is really self-confidence: for, the party, the religion, the nation, are but extensions of the "self" which derives confidence from their backing. Such confidence is really arrogance, intolerance, opposition, competition, leading to enmity and hate, with the feeling that only my ideals can lead to success in attainment. It is the ideal of success which gives strength to self-confidence. Political and religious reformers in their spirit of antagonism are truly destructive, for they have "self" as their aim and ideal, which lead to conflict.

But there is another kind of confidence which perceives the inner and essential goodness in others; and in that perception one can approach the other without antagonism, because there is no opposition. It is an approach without self-confidence, but with an openness to all that is good and beautiful and true. It is the confident approach of an innocent child which knows no danger, because it knows no "self" and no opposition and conflict.

Such innocence can come about when there are no conflicting interests, such as "mine". And in that confidence of innocence there is a totally different approach to life. In such an approach with confidence in the other there is no fear, and in that openness of innocence there is immediate and direct contact without purpose, which is perceived immediately as love. When there is love, there is no "self", no opposition, no search, no purpose,

no desire, no exploitation. Thus, the entire surroundings, society, culture and education, assume different characteristics which are not conditioning the individual mind, but give it freedom without fear, freedom with confidence and love, in an that is beautiful and good and true.

160. Conflict (1)

When one speaks of sorrow, it is the experience of an inner conflict within the individual. This is always subjective; and, even if one feels grieved over the misfortunes of others, it is by way of substitution that there is experienced a vicarious sorrow in relationship. Such experience is always a disturbance, because there is a conflict of interests.

To avoid this conflict, an attempt is made to withdraw from actuality and the impermanent into the ideal, and the eternal. Such untruth is, in the Buddha's way of thinking, the principal sin of delusion and ignorance (*avijjā*), the misconception of individuality (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). The objective approximation-process to the concept of truth, which by its very nature is a subjective idealisation, must lead to the absurd contradiction in its very terms of reference. And that, without doubt, is the greatest offence against human intelligence; a belief in the absurd. Such belief cannot be cured by more belief, but only through understanding.

When, therefore, the individual conflict is understood as an escape from actuality in the search for the ideal, it will become impossible to be further deceived and deluded. But there is no method for the overcoming of sorrow, for the conquest of conflict, for the understanding of delusion, because all methods are by nature based on the ideal which is its opposite. And thus, the striving for the opposite, even if that opposite is the ideal of overcoming conflict, is still an opposite and hence a conflict in itself.

Opposition then is the basis of conflict: and opposition is

possible only if there is a fixed position somewhere, from where to carry on the struggle. This delusion of fixity, of the permanent, of a self-entity, which must continue in the face of all opposition, it is this delusion which is the cause of conflict by placing itself in opposition to the impermanent, thereby attempting an escape from the actual which is seen in opposition and hence in conflict.

When self-satisfaction ceases to be a goal of striving, when faith in the absurd has made way for insight in the actual, then there cannot be conflict, if there is no misconception of individuality.

161. Conflict (2)

To understand what conflict is, there must be no distortion in the mind: for, it is distortion which causes the conflict. To see the impermanent is easy enough and straightforward; but to see the impermanence in everything (*sabbe saṅkhāra anicca*) and to be satisfied with it, is not so easy, as it will not be accepted by a mind desiring for self-continuance. When the “self” is included in this universal flux, and when it is understood that there is no “self”, no soul, no substance in anything (*sabbe dhamma anatta*) then there is no conflict (*dukkha*) any more. Conflict then exists only when impermanence is seen, but not wanted. The mind which has understood conflict, is free from it.

For such understanding, which does not come about through logic, through striving which is desire, through concentration which is an escape, it is necessary to have direct insight. But, insight which is direct perception is prevented by the distortions of desire, by the prejudices of immature judgement, the conclusions of thought, by the clinging to a remembered past, the influences of dogma, the conditioning of ideology, the formulas of behaviour, the codes of moral conduct, the dictates of society, the projections of an ideal future, the fears of being lost, the anxiety of insecurity.

There must be understanding of these distortions, as misshapen reflections in a curved mirror: for, in understanding there is no fear: and without fear there is no conflict. Fear is not of the unknown; it is the dread of losing all that which constitutes the “I”, all its images and projections: it is fear to acknowledge the

fact that without this entire build-up there is no “self” to continue, to become, to be secure, to be permanent. It is fear of an image.

And what happens when that image is gone? With it go all those distortions and prejudices, all hopes and fears, all conclusions and conditioning, all dictates and anxieties. It is to be free and without conflict. Only then can impermanence be seen as impermanence, which is a fresh awakening every moment with the impossibility of clinging to it, just because it is impermanent, and because there is no “self” to be turned into an image for worship and possession. That is the joy of living without fear or conflict.

162. Conflict (3)

For conflict to exist, there must be two or more conflicting parties. Conflict may arise between me and my environment, my family, my religious or political associations. Or it may arise between what I am, and what I think I should be, or what I would like to be. But always, one of the conflicting parties is the "I". Even when I am involved in the conflict between two external parties, neighbours, clubs, societies, the involvement is there because of my identification with one of them.

It begins with an idea I have formed of what I should be. It is an ideal concept arising in thought and fixed in memory, which is the real "I" from which all conflicting activity starts. That "I" could only be formed in opposition to others; but more than that, the idealised "I" now stands in opposition to what actually constitutes that "I".

The ideal, the pattern, the myth is the cultured product which was born from tradition which exists in memory, and which through that memory will expand its influence into the future. The present has no place in it, except as a means and stepping stone from the past to the future. The actual "I" is a bundle of memories extracted and selected for purpose of gratification. Of possessions without an owner, a dream of the past without actual existence in the present, a projection as a shadow into the future, a moment of activity without an actor standing behind it.

Conflict is the actual opposition of these apparent contrasts. And as long as these two face one another there is conflict. But when intelligent awareness perceives their true meaning and

nature, then there is no “I” in the ideal pattern and no “I” in the actual present. Then, where is the conflict? The view of opposition is maintained for sustaining the concept of “self”. Without “self” there is no “other”, and without “self” there is no continuity possible and no future. The preservation of the past in memory is aimed at the preservation of the “self”, without which the future has no meaning. And thus conflict is essential for continuation; it is essential for the “I”-concept to exist at all. “I” am conflict; and the conflict is the “self-projection which overlooks the present, and escapes from the actual into the a ideal.

163. Conflict (4)

Conflict is of extreme importance in our life, because we think that only through resistance there can be growth. Ignorance and poverty are challenges in human life, which have to be overcome, removed, because they resist progress.

Can ignorance be removed by knowledge? Can poverty be overcome by wealth? Knowledge is gathered information stored in books and in memory, which may have its uses in geophysical and psychological disorders. Through knowledge one can learn the nature of disease; it can cure and even prevent it sometimes. Can knowledge tell us what is living? Knowledge is memory; religion is speculation in hope and faith. Can either remove ignorance, when we do not even know how thought has been building up a barrier of self-defence in order to protect the "I", a creature of its own memory, a projection of its own desire? This is not the outcome of knowledge or the progress of science, but the simple understanding which comes from observing without interpretation, without resistance, and that means without conflict, without the attachment of an observer, of a "self".

Can poverty be removed by wealth, by equal distribution of property? Is property not the essence of poverty? We cling to property of possessions, or of the mind, because there is poverty in our heart. More possessions will create greater poverty, which is felt as a resistance to an empty mind and heart. More property can only create greater resistance, without filling a void which is not understood.

What is that void which cries out for fulfilment? It is the

image of a “self” which cannot endure in impermanence and which cannot exist if it cannot endure. Thus, it is the craving for continuance in existence, which is in conflict with the impermanence of all that is—it is that craving which is the void, the hunger, which cannot be satisfied, because it is only an image of ignorance which does not understand itself.

A void understood is not to be filled with ideas, but to be cherished and loved as an unconditioned state of an open mind without attachment, without conflict, without “self”.

164. Conformity

The psychological support of strength through unity is provided in conformity. It is not the unity which is desired, but the strength coming from united effort. Strength is required, not to preserve unity, but to uphold and maintain individuality. And thus, to support that individual “self”, I seek the strength of others to bolster my own stand in unison. But, as this striving of the individual is for personal survival, such dependence on the strength of unity is not a striving for unity at all. It is an exploitation for selfish ends by enlisting the help of others for personal gain and psychological reasons. It is my dependence on others which is made into an instrument for obtaining my individual freedom and independence. The other has now become the means to my own end.

Of course, one has to pay a price for securing this cooperation, but when there is no understanding of need, it is merely the exploitation through greed. The price to be paid is conformity, an adaptation through a pattern. We seek confirmation through conformation; we seek “self” through “others”.

This is the basis of all conflict in society with its class divisions, caste distinctions, political association and opposition, religious adherence and preference, national and racial prejudices, when every issue in relationship is judged from some fixed standpoint of security which is strength through unity.

Will the absence of conformity not lead to chaos? Chaos is not healed by conforming to standards, for the standards themselves are the cause of chaos, of opposition and conflict. Standards are

the ideals which have been set up as a revival of what is dead. But that is never an approach to what appears to be a new problem. It is an attempt to circumvent the present, to ignore the problem by falling back on memory which has become standardised as a measurement of comparison, a rule of law to judge. It is the past which is dead, trying to meet the future which is not born. And thus there is no understanding in conforming, which is a search for security. But when there is an unconditioned understanding, which is not prejudiced by tradition or desire, there is a direct contact which has the strength of its own conviction, and is not in need of conformity to find its strength in others for selfish ends.

165. Confusion (1)

I do not know what confusion is but if I am certain of one thing, it is that I am confused. That does not prove that there is an “I”, but only that there is confusion. Now what happens if the “I” sees itself to be confusion, if I realise that memory and tradition can only make me more confused? I do not know the way out of chaos; I do not even know whether there is a way out; and so I am lost. And if I am really lost, I do not go about in circles, for I have done that already by following various systems of philosophy, by worshipping at the many shrines of religion, by repeating the many slogans of ideology, the words of leaders and teachers. I do not cry out for help, for I have done that also in my prayers and sacrifices.

Now I just sit down and think. But thought does not help me either, for thought is a reference to memory; it is like checking up the meaning of a word in a dictionary. The word “confusion” will be there in my dictionary; there it will tell me that it is disorder in the mind, perplexity. But that, of course I know already; that knowledge does not help me to get rid of my confusion. Thus, reference to the past by means of memory or a dictionary, does not help either. And so I stop running about, running after, running backwards. In fact, I do not know what to run away from. And I stop running.

Now, having ceased all this activity, I am sitting here, looking at confusion. But is that a fact, now? Am I confused, now that I have stopped all my search for order? What is this search for order, what is this escape from confusion? Now, when running has

stopped, I see this search and this escape as a desire for security of an image of myself. And now that the running has stopped, there is no desire for a solution. In awareness of confusion at work, in experiencing confusion, there was no one to record the experience; there was no "I" to be confused. And that is the end of confusion.

166. Confusion (2)

A confused mind cannot find a way out of its own confusion. There may be a feeling of unease about this state, but any action taken as a result of this feeling is an attempt to escape. In confusion attempts are made to escape through sex, drinks or drugs; they may be followed up by escapes of transcendental sublimation in religious practices of worship, sacrifice or concentration; more often they lead to violent rebellion against a society or order which one has created by one's own confusion.

When the "self" sees its own impotence, it will create an image of authority in dogma and faith, in ideology and obedience to discipline in the political party, the state, or society, or in the most ideal escape of the hereafter. But, all these are creations of a confused mind trying to escape through some activity of a mind already confused. Therefore, the first thing is to stop acting through a mind which can only think of escapes from confusion. When all attempts of escape have ceased, there is still confusion, and confusion only.

What is this confusion? Is it something which can stand apart by itself? Has it any objective reality which can be seen, analysed and known by an outside observer? Is not this attempt at viewing confusion as something to be observed by an observer, is not this attempt a new effort of escaping from and standing apart from confusion? It is not that there is confusion, but I am that confusion; and I make that confused "self" by separating this "self" from the confusion; for, by creating an opposite, an observer standing apart, I also create this "self" in confusion.

Once it is seen that “I” am that confusion, all activity of the “I” will cease. All endeavour to escape, to become, to acquire, are then seen as the confused actions of an “I” trying to separate itself from its own actions, leading thereby to opposition and conflict. In the perception that I am that conflict there is no more separation and no more conflict in confusion.

167. Conscience

Conscience is the ringing of an alarm-clockset and wound to go off at a pre-determined moment. Everything is arranged, the setting of the hour, the winding of the mechanism, the will and the purpose of interference, all of them indicating the knowledge and the intention of future activity, conscience then, far from being an innate moral sense of good and bad, is ill acquired attitude of mind which approves or condemns activity according to a pre-set standard. Through comparing a thought or intention or action with such standard, it is judged and classified as fitting or not fitting.

The fact that standards of conduct change with the years, and that therefore conscience also changes with the times, provides further evidence of the artificiality of conscience, moral standards, or civil behaviour, which change like fashions and other acquired tastes.

Morality, to be truly a virtue, can therefore not be based on rules of conscience. In fact, any action according to rule cannot be virtuous; it may be expedient to obey the rules of the road in order to avoid accidents but that can certainly not be classified as a virtue, even though the breaking of such law is a punishable offence.

The following of one's conscience then is a mechanical reaction according to plan. But to be truly virtuous, there must be a complete understanding of the motives of one's action. If action is performed with an ulterior motive of self-gratification, of virtuous acquisition, of meritorious accumulation, then such

self-directed action is twisted in its motive, wrung in its method, and that is always wrong. But an action which is a direct response to the understanding of a need for action, such direct action is straight and direct and right; and hence good, free and independent of the rules of conscience. Only action which follows from the understanding of the need of action can be selfless, spontaneous, creative. And that is the real meaning of conscientiousness, which is action as a result of knowledge and understanding.

168. Consciousness (1)

At the end of a long process of mental activity, not long perhaps as chronological time is involved, but long in a line of experiences and consequences, there comes consciousness. It begins, if one may speak of a beginning anywhere at all, with a physical contact (*phassa*) with one of the six senses of perception (*saḷāyatana*). This produces a sensation (*vedanā*) which is the experiencing of a challenge. It is at this stage that the process tends to become mental, when the sensation is perceived (*saññā*).

This perception is usually a way of seizing (per-ception, from *capere*, to grasp), of getting hold of the sensation for the sake of its effect, pleasurable or unsatisfactory. This seizure takes place because of the necessity of the “self” to continue the experience, for it is in continuation of experience that the “self” attempts to survive as an individual entity.

Without seizure there can be no continuation in memory and hence no survival of “self”. It is at this stage that the long chain of dependent origination can cease to become and continue, when sensations are experienced as mere responses to stimuli. But, when sensations are grasped at for the psychological survival of the experiencer, they will be seen as pleasurable or not; and in that gratification the “self” grows, establishes itself in memory, projects itself in ideals, and the chain of dependent origination (*paticca samuppāda*) continues, when sensations become the source of desire (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*) leading to the becoming (*bhava*) of self-consciousness in which the “I” continues.

In this process of conditioning (*saṅkhāra*), the experience is no longer experienced, but its memory compared with earlier gathered experiences. Then, when need has become greed, the stored or re-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi viññāṇa*) can bring its idealised image up and project it for further action (*bhava-kamma*). This process of recognition and registration (*tadaramaṇa*) completes the process of thought, when out of decaying memory new thought and action are formulated to reform and restart the cycle of consciousness in ignorance. Only the perceiving of experiencing without thought of seizure can awaken the intelligence which can break the perpetual chain of rebirth of thought.

169. Consciousness (2)

What is the difference between consciousness and awareness? Consciousness is thought; and thought is the result of thinking, which is a process of application of the mind with logic and memory, with volition and determination, with judgement and selection, with prejudice and ideals, with fear and hope.

Consciousness, in other words, is the “I” in action which is reaction, because all thinking is the conditioned result of the entire past, not only of the individual past, but the accumulation throughout the ages of the struggles for survival, the interminal wars for emergence, the endless conflicts, with the ideas of the mind controlling the weapons of the pen and the sword. Consciousness is the past trying to become the future, without understanding the past, without knowing the future. Thus, consciousness or thinking is always in conflict; it cannot solve any problem, because it does not try to understand.

But awareness is not thinking, is not the memory of the past, is not desire, is not the longing for the future. It is just to be open and receptive to whatever is or happens. There is no approach to the present; the present is here already and we are facing it directly without fear of the past, without hope of the future. Awareness is seeing what is as it is with openness and directness, without expectation of results, without fear of consequences, without reflection as to a “self” judging in prejudice. It is an immediate experiencing, in which there is no reference to “self”, and hence no thought, consciousness, reaction. Unconditioned,

there is no conflict, no opposition, no “self”. And where there is no “self”, there is no problem.

Can the “self” become no-self? Such question is obviously formulated in ignorance, for it is still the “self” that wants to become its ideal. Only in stilling all consciousness there can be awareness in which there is no striving for attainment of an ideal. And consciousness is still, when there is awareness of what is.

170. Consciousness (3)

The conception of a thought is consciousness. Before conception there are several stages of capturing, re-ception, per-ception, conception before a thought is born. There is the reception (*vedanā*) when contact is established without understanding; and there is perception (*saññā*) which is a kind of recognition or remembrance, and which establishes a link with a past experience, preserved in memory. Then there is conception (*saṅkhāra*) in which impressions and memories are put together, labelled, registered and preserved, to be produced as a newly created thought (*viññāṇa*).

In this entire process of thought there is knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of the past, as well as grasping of the future, this last one, of course, not being knowledge at all but an ideal conceived as thought. Thus, in this knowledge there is imitation and repetition of action, which is nothing but reaction (*kamma-vipāka*), because there is no understanding or insight (*paññā*). Such repetitive action is rebirth.

Thought which is imitative memory and projective ideal cannot make itself free from this capturing process (*upādā-nakkhandha*). But, seeing the fact of being fettered by its own reactions, it might cease to react; and thereby see the process without being captured. Seeing is understanding, when it is not conditioned. Seeing the fact and process of conditioning is the understanding of the process of thinking; and the understanding of conditioning is to be free from it. When thinking as a reaction to conditioning ceases, there is an open vulnerability, a total exposure of all subconscious and unconscious motives, And in that

exposure there is an immediate awareness of what is (not what was, or might be, which is memory and ideal).

The awakening of this intelligent awareness is the freedom from all stages of capturing in reception, perception and conception (*pañc'upādānakkhandha*) which is the deliverance of insight.

171. Consciousness (4)

To be aware at a conscious level of the movements of thought, that is of the arising of fear, of pleasure, of desire, is to be aware of the contents of consciousness, of the incidents and accidents. There is no consciousness apart from its contents; consciousness is not a mirror in which these movements are reflected. It is what thought has made it in attachment and dislike, ambition and frustration, impulse and desire, hope and fear, knowledge and belief. It is with that total of contents that further impressions are absorbed, which modify or strengthen one's loves and hates.

Thus it is, that pleasures are experienced and fears are nurtured. It is this "self"-consciousness which relates every movement of thought to that ideal "self" which is nothing but the sum-total of experiences remembered and retained to constitute that which now poses as the owner, the individual, the "I", although it is only a projection of the desire to continue.

Awareness of the movements of thought is consciousness which can rationalise, pursue or reject, enjoy or suppress, and with each movement strengthen the "I"-concept. Thus, when there is hurt (not just physical hurt, but mental pain) it is the "self" that is hurt. And that "self" builds up resistance in greater isolation, so that not only pleasure but also pain strengthens the "I". But a "self" which can be hurt cannot understand and thus cannot love.

Now, without trying to heal the wound, there can be pure attention without attachment or rejection. Then attachment or hurt can be seen as reactions of a mind that wants to possess, to

become, to continue in security. In attention without resistance there is no fear, there is no movement of thought: and in that attention there is no hurt, there is no reaction of the "I", there is no desire to possess or to reject, there is no conflict. There is just the wisdom of insight in what is; and that is truth.

172. Conservative

To be, or to appear to be, conservative, is as much an attitude as to be progressive. The advantage of being conservative is that one can criticise change and thereby camouflage one's fear of letting go one's hold on what is old. At base there is an attachment to the old, however bad, because it is known, experienced and remembered. Thereby it has the advantage of an apparent security with its promise of continuance; it is the aspect of security which is the basis of conservatism. And that aspect is frequently strong enough to suppress the new and the progressive; although it is probably fear of consequences which prevents the mind to open itself in a spirit of enquiry, to see without prejudice not only the facts of whatever is, but even to see that this attachment to the old is really a fear to abandon the known.

Nothing should be condemned because it is old, and nothing should be hailed because it is new. When such judgement is made the criteria, all action is still a reaction, as arbitrary as the reverse which clings to the past because it is known and which repudiates the new because it has not been tried out.

The actual problem is neither the past and the old, nor the future and the new; for the actual problem is here and now in the present. The question is not whether to adhere to or not to memory or to the ideal, but why should one adhere at all? Why should the present be conserved, or why should the present progress? One is a memory and the other is an ideal; neither is real. One is afraid of the present and clings to the past; the other

one is afraid of the present and craves for the future; both are escapes.

In seeing the present as it is there can be immediate action according to understanding. And understanding is not an experience in the past. It is desire for continuance of security, for becoming, which is the motive which makes all action a reaction. It is the purpose which prevents understanding and which makes the mind adhere to memory or to an ideal. It is the purpose of security in the old as in the now, which makes one blind to the present.

173. Contact

Without contact there is obviously no relationship. If there is no relationship, there is obviously division and separation and in division and separation there is clearly opposition, lack of understanding, isolation in which the “self” protects itself. And in that isolation there is no communication, no sympathy, no love.

Then, thought leads its own existence, creates its own ideals, and excludes everything that cannot contribute to that marvellous structure, an ivory tower, a tower of Babel, a life which is not living at all, but which as a silk-worm spins its own cocoon in self-sufficiency, building up a universal opposition against all that is not “self”. Thus we live in that tissue, in that shroud, made by ourselves, by our desire not to be disturbed in the dreams and the images we have made of ourselves, and which we now must continue into an ideal future, where alone continuance is possible. For, what is the use and the pleasure of gratification if there is no continuance?

It is then the continuance of the “self” (made from memory) which alone can give the satisfaction of existence and its continuation in the future. Thus, the past is but an instrument for building the future. The present has no duration and cannot give satisfaction to provide security. And yet, it is only in the present contact that there is any relationship at all. There is no relationship with a dead memory of clinging or with an imaginary desire for an ideal, the future of which has not been born yet.

It is thus only in the present contact that there is relation-

ship. And this relationship should not be one of expectation or exploitation, but a relationship arisen from direct understanding, not for achievement, physical or mental, but arising from the immediate understanding of a need, and not from the arising of greed. When there is no greed, no expectation, no exploitation, then such action has no motive; it is the direct result of understanding, and understanding is communication, is sympathy, is a relationship of love.

174. Contemplation

Meditation is a word so often used with different meanings that it might be better to forget it altogether, or use it in a more general way to include both concentration and contemplation. Then, meditation would be mind-culture (*bhāvanā*) in the sense of making mind as thought become in a process of focussing one's attention on one centre, and which thereby would be concentration, leading to tranquillity of the mind with a concept thereof (*samatha-bhāvanā*); but mind-culture of meditation (*bhāvanā*) could also be allowing the mind to grow without hindering or directing its progress, yet all the time watching its process with understanding of the aims and the goal involved.

Such contemplation (*vipassanā-bhāvanā*) is a meditation of understanding through awareness and insight, leading not to the pacification of the mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) in the development of the mental states of absorption and ecstasy (*jhāna*), but to insight which is deliverance from all concepts. That is the meditation of contemplation, which does not attempt at a pacification or a calming (*samatha*) of the "I" with its cravings, lusts and tendencies, but which sees and hence contemplates that there is no individual "self" neither a superficial, empirical entity apart from the process, of activity, nor a spiritual, mystical "soul", seeking a reunification with its supernatural source.

Contemplation is not concerned with experiences or with results; hence, it does not seek, but merely sees. It may not be able to explain or to prove what is being experienced; and thus it may seem rather unnecessary and superfluous in a life devoted

to activity, to doing good, to becoming good in a world (even that of the mind) which is so obviously selfish and chaotic.

In concentration one may work out a plan of salvation, a path of purity, a scheme of service to self and others; in contemplation the mind is silent and thereby opens up the intelligence which is insight, which sees the conflict and understands its cause to lie exactly in the mind's agitation to save and to be saved. Contemplation is an intuitive awakening in which there is freedom from all deductions, from all searching for a truth as an ideal.

175. Contentment (1)

To be satisfied or to be content with something is to find a relationship based on exploitation. To find one's satisfaction with something or in somebody in a self-indulgence at the cost of the other. The other has become the means, which we try to separate from the end, our own pleasure. It may be that the other does not mind so much to be exploited, as for instance in hired labour, when his conditions without being exploited would be perhaps even worse. And that is the usual relationship in present day society, which is certainly not based on contentment.

Contentment may be obtained through religious practices, but then religion is not the end; it is only a method. And in thus separating the means from the end for the sake of contentment, only conflict born of opposition can be the outcome. As long as contentment depends on relationship, there is only self-gratification.

But there is a contentment which is not the end of a search for satisfaction, but which is at the beginning of realisation. This contentment is totally unconditioned, and free. It is not born from desire, as an image, discovered in memory. To be totally unconditioned, contentment cannot be brought about through possessions or through the renunciation thereof. It is not an acquisition through virtue or practice.

When in passive awareness the mind is still and silent in the understanding of the empty movements of thought through memory into ideal—when thought is still and silence is perceived, there is contentment in the utter void of “self”, in the total absence of desire in self-projection, in the complete stillness of the

absence of fear—and in that contentment there is truth, the joy of contentment without the pleasure of satisfaction. Satisfaction is always the fulfilment of a desire, which is but a thought in anticipation of acquisition. It is in acquisition that the “I” can grow and become, and thus it is in satisfaction that there is a search for security and fulfilment of an ideal. But, contentment is in the present and has no dealing with satisfaction, with ideals, or with “self”; and thus it cannot be made or acquired, and is not subject to moods and methods. It is based on understanding and seeing things as they are.

176. Contentment (2)

One can seek satisfaction which is self-gratification by means of money, political or religious power. Satisfaction is the fulfilment of ambition, which is of “self”. But contentment cannot be acquired, possessed or developed. Renunciation cannot buy it; meditation cannot produce it. It knows of no achievement, no ambition, and therefore it is never frustrated in idle search.

Satisfaction breeds fear because it is an acquired possession and may therefore be lost. And whatever is possessed must have a possessor, an owner, It is the “self” who lives and continues, who grows and hopes to grow more by means of his possessions. He can only express himself in terms of his possessions, because he is possessed by his possessions. And without those possessions he is not.

But in contentment there is no accumulation; there is only the awareness of the state of being content, which does not know of any desire, which does not live to continue in acquisition, which has no fear of losing what it does not possess. Contentment does not look back in memory on effort well spent, does not look forward in planning for expansion. Contentment is entirely of the present moment without holding back greedily, without looking forward eagerly. In the present moment lies its fulfilment, because there is complete understanding in the experiencing of contentment, so that there is no thought of ownership or owner, no thought of “self” or others in opposition. In fact, there is no thought about it at all. There is just contentment which has no

conflict, no ambition, no fear, no illusion, and which is thus totally free.

Any search for contentment is a contradiction from the start, for contentment is the ending of all search. Hence, contentment cannot be brought about, but in understanding that any search for achievement, for property, for an ideal, for virtue, for truth, is still a search for self-satisfaction—in that understanding there is a cessation of searching, and that is contentment without satisfaction, without acquisition, without purpose, without goal, without “self”.

177. Continuity (1)

In the physiological urge for existence, the struggle for life is for the sake of continuity of the individual and of the species or race. But in this urge for continuity of the species through renewal of the individual, there is another process of the mind which clamours for continuity out of fear of non-existence. This continuity is attempted in thought by self-projection, which, however, is not possible without the basis of existence of this self in the past. And this continuity-in-reverse is achieved by memory, which is the retention by selection of self-conscious experiences.

When nature attempts its continuity through natural selection where only the fittest survives, there the mind attempts its continuity of a "self" by causing a foundation to be laid retrospectively, by means of a selective memory of thoughts which are ideas and ideals to be projected in the future. The struggle for life in physical nature becomes in the mental sphere a struggle which is conflict. In biological existence, continuity is secured by renewal, that is by death and birth. But as the mind abhors the unknown factor of death, it does not attempt a renewal, a creation which is a new mental life, but seeks continuity of the old by reviving dead memories. It is the "self" which wants to continue and hence cannot be renewed.

Thus, thought as memory becomes a problem, when the old cannot meet the challenge of the new. Then one clings to ancient culture and traditions, merely showing the emptiness within, the incapacity at creativeness. It is only in death that life can be renewed; as it is only in renewal that there is no fear of ending.

And what is death that it should be a source of fear? Death is feared because of its separation from the known; and the known is clung to because it is the only thing that makes the "I". The known is the past, and without the memory thereof there is no "I". And what is there to continue if there is no "I"? When death is seen as the ending of self-delusion, when death is seen as an experience of every moment in allowing thought to discard its memory of a past "I", then there is the opportunity of a totally new approach which is truly creative in stead of being a continuity of the old.

178. Continuity (2)

In the face of the fact that there is nothing permanent either in ourselves or in the universe around us, thought wants to continue, for thought has no meaning. Without a future there is no sense in the storing up of the past. Thus, continuity is bestowed on something by thought.

It is on the past, on the memory of experiences of the past, that thought is building up an image of that "self"-concept, to be projected into the future as the ideal continuation of itself. Thought can and does build up that image of continuation; but it is nevertheless a mere thought, even if it is called soul, super-soul or God.

It is the activity of the mind in fear of losing the memory of an experience, stored up to provide substance to a faded phenomenon. The memory of an experience, be it love or hate, cannot be experienced, as it has no existence in the present. Thus it is this activity of the mind which creates fear of loss. And out of that fear now arises a desire for an ideal without that fear, an ideal that cannot be lost. And that is the idea of permanence, of individual rebirth, of eternal life. It is this belief in the ideal, which has created the authority, the sacred books, the visions, the dogmas, the rituals, the organisations which have all the same object; the continuity of the past in the future.

But when the activity of the mind in the pursuance of security is exposed, and all ideals are laid bare as so many thoughts in escape from the actual impermanence, then the mind does not see a way out; and not seeing, it does not seek an escape; it

ceases to escape from what is. And in that inaction there is quiet, when for the first time things can be seen as they are. In that intelligence without desire there is tranquillity and peace in the absence of choice and conflict. In experiencing the present there is no thought of continuity.

179. Contradiction (1)

The mind is in constant contradiction, when on the one hand there is a constant self-assertion, the activity of self-expansion, in political ambition, in worldly acquisition, in spiritual striving, all for the “self” to become the ideal—and when on the other hand there is a constant attempt to escape from the actuality of life, when the search is on for forgetfulness of that actual present, in drink, in sex, in social work, in prayer.

Contradiction in the mind leads to conflict in life. Then, whatever one does is not done with understanding, but in a blind escape from actuality in fear of losing the ideal of security. Then, the short relief from that contradiction in self-forgetfulness, when immersed in drink, or in sex, or in drugs, makes those acts appear as temporary solutions, whereby they become so important as to enslave the mind in stead of setting it free.

It is this contradiction in the mind which leads to conflict in life. And any striving, any activity to escape from that conflict, is only intensifying the contradiction, because striving itself is but an attempt at escaping from it, from what is.

The act of smoking, drink or sex is not problematic, but the approach and the attitude thereto are so. When I exploit my wife as a common prostitute solely for selfish satisfaction, there is obviously no relationship of mutual understanding and love. And so in every action performed for a purpose of satisfaction, it is the approach in division, separation, opposition and exploitation which is the cause of the conflict. Thus the mind creates its own conflicts when the purpose of action is the satisfaction of oneself.

A contradiction is not something imposed externally. It is an inner conflict which cannot be solved by external means of control, suppression or sublimation. Only when a contradiction is seen as such it disappears as such, for it has no existence outside a deluded mind. The contradiction between self-seeking and escaping from self can only be solved in the awareness of no-self.

180. Contradiction (2)

The only problem and the only conflict for which there is no solution to be found, either through striving, through sublimation, through suppression or through escape is the contradiction in oneself. All other problems are derivatives from this one central problem of the “self” in contradiction, in conflict with itself. Anything can be achieved through the application of mind and will; even the moon and the planets are now within reach, conquered by the power of mind and will.

But the inner contradiction in man who wants to become what he is not, is only strengthened by increased will-power. This contradiction within oneself is of the most complex nature; and the more one wants to do something about it, the greater the complexity becomes with the increase of desire, of projection, of idealisation, all built upon the foundation of a mental image, a dead memory, a store-house of skeleton experiences, which constitute the “self” brought from the past; into the present with the intention of projecting that image into a continuation of that “self” in satisfaction and security.

What is needed is a great sensitivity to be aware and to observe whatever is: desires to become, will to dominate, greed for expansion and security. When there is this great sensibility, there is no further conditioning, and there will be an intelligent awareness of the activities of mind and will. Thus exposed, without suppression or condemnation, they will be seen as they are, utterly empty, a shadow of a dead image, without substance or life, and hence impossible to survive or exist.

When all thought of becoming has thus ceased in the intelligent awakening of what is, there can be no “self” to desire continuity, and hence there can be no contradiction in a will-to-become what is not. The contradiction which causes the conflict lies in the will refusing to understand, in thought refusing to be still, in the past, refusing to remain the past while impinging itself on the present in order to become the future, in the ideal wanting to grow out of the real, in the impermanent “non-self” wanting to be a permanent “self”.

181. Control

Thought-control has been advocated by many religious leaders as a preliminary step to concentration in meditation, to a sharpening of thought, to any form of improvement in business as well as in morals.

But who is this controller? Is he not also a part of that very same process of thought which he is trying to control? Control means a certain amount of coercion, which can only produce resistance to domination. We are not considering whether this is good or bad. The fact is that control breeds resistance. And resistance is conflict. Can any good come out of conflict?

Control and concentration are so easy. A child with a new toy need not be told to concentrate: he is absorbed in it. The toy has brought the wanderings of the mind to a centre. What the toy does to the child, that the image does to the worshipper, the slogan to the politician, the prospect of money to the merchant, power to everybody. Thus, the image controls all; but does it free the mind in exploration, in understanding, in meditation on what is?

The first step to freedom is therefore not control, but understanding of bondage; for, as long as one is controlled, one does not know what it is to be free. Control is always aimed at an ideal state, but that ideal is an outcome of thought, as much as the idea of control. Substitution of an idea by an ideal can never solve a problem. It is as the explanation of the unknown X by an equally unknown Y, such as: God is Truth.

Concentration which is promoted by control is a method of

desire: it aims at an ideal goal, a mental picture, and thus all the more dangerous because it is not factual.

Understanding requires freedom from conditioning, from aiming, from concentration, from control, from the controller, to see what is, to watch what is without attachment, without projection. And that is meditation. In meditation there is no control of thought; there is no thought!

182. Coordination

There may be various movements, but as long as they do not take place at the same moment, there is no contradiction or conflict. Thus, love is not opposed to hate, as there is no hate. But, when those perceptions are stored up and classified as emotions of the heart, they may find themselves labelled on the same shelf side by side, yet separate as opposites. Then the work of coordination begins, when one is considered good and the other bad, to reconcile the opposition by (for instance) extending one's love to one's enemies. This work of coordination never extends itself in the opposite direction of hating those we love. That is, of course, considered impossible, and rightly so, for we endeavour to expand our influence of satisfaction which strengthens the "I"-ness positively, while the spreading of dissatisfaction is at most a defensive attitude. Yet the fact that this work of coordination appears to function in one direction only, seems to indicate that this coordination is a function of volition, of choice, which is selective thought based on memory, which is of the past, and hence not a function of understanding.

In choice there is opposition. Contradiction and conflict. When there is no opposition there is no choice. The basis of opposition is always the choice of "self"; but "self" is the creation of thought seeking permanence through retention in memory. Without "self" there is no choice, but in understanding there is just the perception of emotion without opposition. In perception which is neither acceptance nor rejection, the emotion is not purposeful and hence not reactionary. Without reaction there is

no opposition. Then there can be no love of one for another which is possessive, and no hate which is suppressive. Then there is no need for coordination in the absence of opposition and conflict.

The absence of coordination is not the same as the lack thereof which is chaos. In the understanding of relationship in love there is no need of cooperation and coordination, just because there is understanding without greed to be controlled, because there is love without “self”, to be in contradiction and in conflict.

183. Courage

To be whole and to be alone requires great courage. For it requires courage to pay the price for being alone and whole. That may mean to be without friends, but never to be without enemies. Friends may encourage us, support us, help us on, but their views and commitments are still those of individuals and become the conditioning factors which can only limit and obstruct one from being whole. One's enemies are in some respects better than friends, for they are known as opponents, and their opposition has not the conditioning influence which it is so difficult to shake off.

To be whole requires the courage to abandon the search for more, for better, for continuity, for security. It is the courage to embrace the risk of living in the present, the risk of loving without the expectation of a return of love. The risk of not being an individual in a group of sheltered memories and attachments, with their assured ideals and desires. To be whole requires the courage of not being an entity in isolated protection, a personality in the accepted circles of society, a recognised member of a successful institution, whether religious or political.

To be alone requires the courage to abandon the knowledge of faith and dogma, the reliance on authority, the fear to deny; it requires the courage to open up oneself in experiencing what is not known and what cannot be known. For, experiencing is the only life in the present from moment to moment without reliance on the past, without projection into the future, as a bird in flight,

without trace or path. Without the knowledge and the safety of a goal.

But to be whole also means to be free from both fear and hope, to be alive in complete awareness without system or project, to be alive without the knowledge of “self “, to be alone, without conflict, without the need or the greed of search.

The price seems to be great, and greater still the courage it needs. For to be whole is not the end of the road of life, and one has to go that road alone. Yet, that is living!

184. Creation (1)

The new, the totally new, is not the continuity of the old, not a reform, not a transformation. For, even if the form is different in reform, that is only the outward appearance, while the old is still there. Creation is a new vision, not built upon the old views. Creation, therefore, is only possible, when the process of continuity ceases.

Continuity is the blending quality of time, not time of the clock, but time of the mind, time which tells the mind it is this in memory and wants to become that in desire. But, becoming is not creation, it is only transformation, and is bound by time; it needs time to become, to change, to acquire.

Creation means cessation; for, without cessation there is continuity which can only lead to becoming more, or less, or different, better or worse. When a seed becomes a tree or when the tree produces its seed, it is a time-process of growth and becoming. Likewise experience in an experiment begets thought, and thought becomes memory, and that is the "I" which can only move and change in time, which is the old, the past, the dead.

Only in the total absence of the past, of the old, of memory, of thought, of self-consciousness, of continuity, there can be experiencing the new, the unconditioned, the non-translated, the non-desired; and when there is no continuity there is the new in vision, in perception, in understanding. And that new creation as the unconditioned is not bound by conditions and reflexes, by memory and by desire, but is totally free. And in that freedom lies the liberating truth, with its truly creative action.

Action which is creative, has no purpose, is not aimed at producing, and therefore there is no reaction which projects the self-conscious act into a future ideal. Action which is creative has not the background of memory, nor the pattern of tradition, and thus it is not dependent on the past. Thus being free from the past and from the future, it is free in the ever new present through understanding and insight of what is, here and now.

185. Creation (2)

Creation is to make something entirely new, not a mere transformation or evolution, which means change and growth. Creation is to make something out of nothing. God is supposed to have done that at the beginning of the world. But then, who created God?

The mind can be extraordinarily creative. The whole field of scientific knowledge, of technological progress, of the advance in medicine and surgery, is not the outcome of imagination, but the fruit of thought, of experiment, of vision. But the mind has also created the boundaries which divide people, which cause wars, which foster hate. Thoughts have separated people in opposing camps, not only racial, but also ideological: Thought has created a “self” out of fear of impermanence, has created conflict in search of escape, has created its own objects of escape in its search for security. In its search it has created the different religions as escapes; and for the security and continuance of its “self” it has created God.

And yet, the mind which made them all, is the mind in fear.

In creating the supernatural, man is destroying his own nature. His thinking is a reflection from accumulated experiences, stored in memory to form the basic elements from which to make a better and glorious future according to the ideals of his creative imagination. But that creation is a copy of the image of the past, and has only one object: the perpetuation of security for “self”. Thus man is his own god; and his entire life is a dedicated slavery in the worship of “self”.

Seeing this, the mind can be still, and in its silence understand what is this conflict of self, its cause, and its functioning. And in that stillness of understanding there is no prejudice and no fear, no desire of change or wish for growth. Then, without conditioning of background, there is the present moment; and in that single moment there can be the flash of true creation.

186. Creation (3)

Coming into being spontaneously without dependence on a cause, and without conditioned origination would be considered a creation. Thus, insight is not caused by suffering and conflict. But the understanding of conflict, as the understanding of void, is a new creation, not cause or conditioned by conflict, but revealed by the understanding thereof. When a sculptor sets to work on a block of marble, he chips away what is not relevant; and what remains stands revealed as his creation. It was there all the time, and the sculptor did not make it; and yet he is the creator.

Thus, out of sorrow, if there is no escape, can come a revelation, when intelligence is sufficiently awake to do away with dependence on tradition, with dependence on an authority, with dependence on ideals. Because there, in sorrow and suffering and conflict, can arise the truth which was there all the time. But in the attempt to escape from sorrow, to find a solution for conflict, there is also an escape from truth.

If “I” am the conflict, there is no other “I” to run away from, or another “I”-ideal to run into for security. Only in the death of “self” stands revealed the living truth of freedom. It is the beauty of death that it holds the creation of life in freedom. Creation is not dependent on death or cessation; but the image, the ideal, the memory of what is dead must cease, for creative living to reveal itself. This is not a new self, a new escape, which can only cause further dependence; but in the awareness of the cycle of dependency is also shown its unreality. And that is freedom

which is not caused or conditioned, but which is creative in its action, spontaneous in its understanding, immediate in its insight.

Such understanding through direct insight cannot be acquired, cannot be copied, cannot even be an ideal to obtain for it is there always as the obstacles are removed. It is in the refusal of dependence that creation creates, that action ceases to be a reaction, that seeing is insight.

187. Creation (4)

A creative mental process is, of course, not an absolutely spontaneous arising of a concept without ancestry; but, like inspiration, it comes unexpectedly, without effort. Effort and expectation are provided already with an ideal and a goal of striving, whereas creative inspiration is not the result of application and concentration with an end in view.

That does not mean that inspiration, to be creative, does not require any preparatory spade-work. But this spade-work is mainly negative. It is the clearing away of rubbish, of prejudices, of conditioning influences, of traditions, beliefs, fears and hopes. Only when one is not consciously thinking about finding a solution to a problem, the problem itself becomes more important than an escape. And when thought which is memory or ideal does not intrude, the mind will lie fallow, which is as it were the incubation period. Then, without effort there will come into being a new look, a new approach, a new understanding, which is the stage of illumination, throwing a completely new and different light on what was there all the time. It is not a supernatural inspiration coming from some heavenly source, but truly creative as unconditioned, unvolitional (or is it involuntary?) not aimed at and, hence, not an achievement.

Yet, such creative intelligence will produce a complete revolution, as it happened when the Bbodhisatta became a Buddha. No more striving for self-indulgence, no more effort in self-mortification, but the spontaneous insight in the dependent origination of all things, which is brought about by the creative

intelligence that impermanence is conflict only, because of the attitude of “self” (either in indulgence or in mortification). Thus, with the creative insight that there is no “self”, no substance, no entity, the basis of conflict has been annihilated. And that is the unsought solution of the problem of conflict.

Such solution is truly creative with insight of truth and the bliss of true independence and emancipation.

188. Creation (5)

As long as something is made from something else it is not created; for, creation implies originality, independence, spontaneity. A carpenter does not create a chair as long as he merely repeats an old pattern or conforms to general requirements. Creation is not just knowledge, not even intelligence.

It requires deep insight and understanding which cannot be produced in mental exercises. For such insight to arise, there must be freedom of sight; that is, there can be no restrictions to sight, no media or methods, no expectations or plans, no hindrances or distortions. But one is usually so conditioned in every activity, that direct insight or spontaneous understanding seems to be very difficult. And difficult it is, as long as it is an object or state to be achieved; for, then it is made into an idea; and whatever is made is not created.

Thus it is not possible to say how to create. But it is possible to remove obstacles which prevent direct seeing. It is possible to understand intellectually and intelligently that certain actions and customs, traditions and habits, are silly and foolish; not only outdated, but essentially stupid, such as the offering of food to a stone statue. Of course, one will answer at once that the statue is only a representation, a symbol, an image of a concept. But, if the image does not want the food, does the concept need it? The one who needs it is myself who has created this symbol and now has to keep it going by my offerings. No amount of arguing or quoting of authority can ever make such an act as spontaneous as the giving of food to a starving dog or a beggar in understanding

his need, and without exploiting that need for the satisfaction of my own greed, by making it as a sort of spiritual investment for the donor.

Creation then implies deep understanding and great sensitivity. In mechanical or functional reaction there is no sensitive tenderness, as there is no real contact even. In reaction there is only the reflection of myself as the ideal to be achieved, but there is no loving insight which alone can provide that direct action which is not influenced or conditioned by motives, by false objectives, by purpose or desires. Only such an act of love is truly creative and free, for it does not bind the gift either to the donor or the beggar. Being without thought of “self”, it is truly free of conflict.

189. Creative Action (1)

All our activity is aimed at getting something, becoming somebody, making something: and this productivity is mistaken for creativity.

Action is for the sake of achieving, arriving, acquiring, gaining; but the object, the goal, the property, the possessions are not the ultimate end of action: they are merely the means thereto. The end is always for the “self”, the striving to become greater, safer, more powerful, more secure. Thus, possessions of the material and of the mental world are mere instruments towards this self-aggrandisement.

In striving to become secure, there is the fear of insecurity, the panic of not being somebody, the feeling of loss of whatever is important enough to exist for. And thus it is this fear which compels one to action which is productive, but not creative. It is productive only, because it has an end in view: it is activity with a purpose, with desire which is striving for an ideal. This ideal has been set up as a target for the mind to achieve. The mind only knows the past through accumulated memory and stored up craving, clinging to past experiences, projecting them as an image into the future, as an ideal worth striving for. But, the ideal, the image, the picture is always the projection of “self”. And the “self” is only that accumulation of the past in memory, in tradition, in faith, hope and fear.

For action to be truly creative, therefore, there must be a total cessation of this activity to become the ideal, a cessation of productivity in order to make the ideal come true; for that is

merely copying a pattern. Hence there must be a total abandonment of compulsion to action which comes from striving for a predetermined goal which the "I" wants to attain.

With this abandonment of a goal, there will be naturally a cessation of fear of failure, a cessation of reliance on faith and tradition. And with the cessation of all reliance there is freedom to act without a pattern or ideal, but from direct understanding, which is insight and which alone can be creative without motive or desire.

190. Creative Action (2)

A mere capacity to express an idea in the form of a poem, a song, a painting, a sculpture, which happens to attract the applause of the people in vogue, does not necessarily constitute creative activity. The expression, of an idea, however much applauded, is never creative; it is the sterile representation of a thought captured in memory, and then in words, or in stone.

Creativeness is neither of “self”, nor an expression of self. When in the fullness of living an experience, that is, when actually experiencing a living challenge, then the mind is not analysing, the memory is not recording, the self is not approving or disapproving, the will is not appropriating; then there is no ambition, no desire, no purpose, no projection, no pattern, there is just experiencing without any reference to either self or no-self.

And that is absolutely new, without relation or conditioning, without cause—and that is creation. This state is not a continuous existence, but it is new from moment to moment, not to be copied, imitated, repeated or preserved. It can not be imagined or conceived; it cannot be expressed in any form, because it is formless, expressionless. And thus it is inconceivable by thought which is never creative, as it always lives in memory.

Creativeness cannot be produced, induced, attained, for all such action needs a “self” as a producer; and that again is memory and not creation.

But, when memory is silent, when thought is still, when desire is unborn, then in the stillness of the unconditioned may arise that spontaneous alertness which sees and perceives what is not

an image, but which is free from past and future, the perceiving of the creation of the present.

191. Cui Bono?

In times of mental disturbance, of disappointment, of failure, so often comes up the remark: To what purpose? To what end? To whom brings it profit? It is a feeling of frustration which makes one regret all one's effort going waste. Now, in stead of lamenting one's loss and waste, which are now past, let us look at this sense of frustration which is actually present.

The sense of loss, of failure, of disappointment, arises from the non-attainment of a pre-set goal. Thus, this frustration is a kind of awareness that I have not lived up to the standard of my expectation. Of course, there is the natural tendency of self-excuse by putting the blame on others. If I fail as a teacher, I can always blame the present mentality of the modern child in a distracting society, and that seems to soften the blow to my sensitivity. Whether this is so or not, the fact still remains that I have failed to do what I set out to do.

It is this ambition which prepared the goal which gave the energy to strive for attainment. And when that goal is not attained, I feel lost and disappointed. Trying to understand this attitude, one can see there is a plan in the approach, which is a wish to do good, to become better, to reach the best. It is always comparative, competitive and compulsive. An ideal is fixed for self to attain; and that ideal is necessary, for without it, the "self", that concept of "I"-ness could not exist. The "I" is an idea, and thus an ideal, based on an image. The image is the past, and is now projected as an ideal in the future for that "self" to become in order to continue. The ideal is built up from images in history,

in virtue, in learning, which are now presented for purpose of imitation. Thus the ideal is an attempt at continuation through imitation. It is necessary to become in order to continue. Without continuation there is no “self”; and without past there is no continuation. The “self” is then the past, and non-existent.

Only the present is, and the present is neither a concept nor an idea of memory, nor an image of an ideal. Then, where does frustration come in? In the present, there is no loss of the present.

192. Cultivation

The developing, the preparing, the cultivation of something to become better, more fertile, more productive, is a process of making become, a process of action with a further motive in view. It may be the cultivation of paddy-fields, or of the intelligence of a child. It may be the cultivation of a virtue, or of a special taste. But it is always the action of making become something which is not. Thus one cultivates according to plan, according to an ideal, according to a standard set by an ancient religion, or by a modern political utopia, a standard set by thought.

The development of an ideal is still the cultivation of a thought, of a rejection of what was, to acquire what may be. One may see the disadvantages of attachment (religiously), of possessions (politically), and thus form an ideal of detachment. Yet, the cultivation of detachment is but another form of attachment, all-be-it the opposite of the original selfishness. It is in detachment that one hopes to find the satisfaction of peace without conflict, the satisfaction of acquired virtue, the satisfaction of living up to the political standard.

That attachment to an ideal and the cultivation of detachment are two forms of resistance to what is and in that opposition there is no freedom, because there are the conditioning influence and attraction which bring their own conflict. Thus, in detachment there is no freedom, as it is an escape from attachment, as it is a cultivation of an ideal, of a desire, of a self-projection.

Hence, in stead of fighting or running away from attachment, there must be an intelligent approach towards understanding

why there is attachment at all, and why one should cultivate the opposite. Seeing one's own unimportance and emptiness, one tries to forget, to fulfil through hope, through striving, through cultivation, in order to attain the ideal state of "self". In this striving, the escape is more important than the understanding of the fact. Yet, in the fact of emptiness lies the freedom from all conditioning and in seeing this fact as it is there is an openness of mind, a susceptibility of learning which is new and creative, which does not appropriate, because there is no reference to "self", but pure perception which is truth.

193. Culture

The word means to cultivate, to make grow that which has not grown, that which is not. If I am aware that I am angry and if I do not like that state of mind because it perturbs, I may begin to cultivate loving kindness. Then I begin a culture of the opposite, which is not my present state of mind, which is angry. Although I am cultivating loving kindness, I have not really moved away from my anger, because the culture of loving kindness is motivated and conditioned by my state of anger. The resultant virtue is therefore dependent on my lack of it, an impossible position. I have not even understood my anger, because I have not even looked at it. But having perceived the angry mood, the mind has registered it as such, and condemned it as undesirable.

Throughout the ages everybody has condemned anger, and therefore I should not become angry. Either it is a sin, or it is unwholesome; it arises in a defiled mind, it is a binding fetter, etc., etc. And thus, even before knowing what it is I have taken refuge in tradition, in the past, by thinking of it as undesirable. But I have not moved, and love cannot remove anger as long as I do not know what it is.

Now, when I look at anger, at my angry mind, in that very enquiry is brought about an awareness which shows that the mood has instantly shifted from anger to attention. I am not angry any more, but fully attentive. In attention there is the awareness that this anger is a mood which cannot arise or persist by itself. It has arisen in my mind; it is the "I" who is angry. Then what or who is that "I"? In attention to this functioning of the

“I” and in the awareness of the mind that there is no anger apart from the “I”, which can be seen and understood for what it is, namely a bundle of reactions to conditionings by past memories and projected ideals, in that awareness there is no anger, nor any other feeling, sensation, perception, concept or ideal, which is not a reaction to this conditioning. Thus, there is no anger when there is no “I”. I am not escaping from it, but anger is escaping and giving way to attention which is the only now. This is not a culture of the opposite, of non-anger, but awareness of no-self.

194. Danger (1)

According to the dictionary definition, danger is a liability or exposure to harm. There are several things involved here. First of all, there is the possibility of something undesirable in the future. Then there is the likelihood of being involved. And finally, the unpleasantness of harm in some undecided way, physical or mental, emotional, or financial, to a degree and in a manner not to be foreseen. Thus, it is fear of the unknown in the future.

But, the unknown cannot be an object of fear, and so it is really fear of a mental image created in the unknown future. That, of course, can arise only through thought; and that is a reference to the past, through memory.

Then there is the personal involvement which at this stage is still a conceptual built-up personality, being a complex of traditional reactions, of defensive preoccupations, of ideological isolations, of social enforcements. And finally, there is the anticipated concept of harm, that is of the undesirable, of that which breaks down the fortifications of self-defence.

In short, it is a self-exposure which leaves one stark naked, without support, without clothing, without protection, to such an absolutely negative degree that any self-protection becomes impossible.

It is at that moment that freedom is realised. That is the meaning of living dangerously. Which is to live without protection.

But life as it is known in all its activity is focussed on this idea of self-protection. It is in tradition that one preserves the past; it is in religion that one secures the future; is in politics

that one protects the environment. And yet, the past, the future, the environment have only meaning in relation to the “self”. It is then this “self” which is to be protected from danger. And by throwing all protection to the winds, one opens the “self” up in total vulnerability. Yet, it is this very past and future and relationship which constitute this “self” in its activity. It is, therefore, the “self” which is the danger.

And living dangerously is living selflessly.

195. Danger (2)

When the animal brain sees danger, it must respond with a physical reaction, often involuntary. Then the individual seeks strength in numbers, in the known, as a child runs to its mother.

But in psychological matters this same brain, as developed in man, has been conditioned to see danger in certain positions. And then the tendency is not to unite, but to divide, and to seek security in a divided isolation. The conditioning which has taken place is the desire for individual survival, which has now usurped the need to survive as a species.

The individual has not seen the danger of division, and thus there is no reaction, no response to this type of exposure. The danger of division is not understood, because the individual approaches the danger from his individual and isolated position. Expansion, improvement, investment, are all means of making the "self" secure at the cost of the "other". The "self" lives on division and cannot see the danger thereof. It only sees that it cannot continue, cannot exist without division, opposition and conflict.

Animal nature has to contend only with physical nature; and any physical conflict can be faced immediately by the herd instinct. Man, however, is isolated even within the herd; and the herd as race, nation, caste or religion are only means for the survival of that psychological "self".

When there is, therefore, a psychological, intellectual awakening which truly sees and understands the action of the mind in isolation, in opposition, in conflict, as the psychological reac-

tion to retain its individuality, that same intellect will then also perceive the danger in seeking isolation of an ideal “self”. In that exposure there is no more danger, because there is no “self”.

196. Danger (3)

When one feels to be left alone and unprotected, that is the occasion when danger seems to lurk. All one's life one has been brought up in dependence on others. A physical dependence of a child on its parents is a physical necessity of nature during a period of growth, physical growth. But when that period of growth is being extended in space and in time into a psychic development, there is brought into existence a psychological dependence on the parents, the teachers, the priest, the leader, the politician, all of whom tell us what to do and what to think. In this constant conditioning the mind is more and more soaked into the ideas and ideals of others; and when those constitute a group, their influence will increase with their numbers. Thus, the authority of the family is superseded by the educational and social environment: the teacher by the system, the system by an ideology, the family by the state, till the pressure becomes so great as to be practically irresistible. Then the dogmas of religion, the demands of one's country, far exceed the simple appeals of one's individual nature to understand the needs of one's neighbour.

A wish to break away from the machine is checked at once by the alarm of danger. What can one do when left alone without the support of the group, the party, the mass, the fatherland, the hopes and fears of a life-to-come?

Admittedly, there is very little one individual can do to reform the world and sort out the chaos of the last 500 centuries and more. But is that chaos not in the individual mind which is afraid of being alone, independent and free? As long as I consider to be

alone as a potential danger, I cannot break away into freedom. Thus in seeking dependence on others for greater strength, I deny the possibility of being free without thinking the thoughts of others. In greater conditioning there is less understanding. In greater involvement with the unthinking machine there is more automatism, authority, submission, fear, which is a feeling of danger, the very thing one tried to avoid in becoming dependent on others.

To be alone, then, is to be free, to be able to see, understand and love.

197. Death (1)

What is death; and what is life? The two are not separate as entities or as opposing states. Life is not existence, for even a rock exists; and so, death is not non-existence. Life is rather a process of dying. Life as living must be new every moment, just as a river must go on flowing. As soon as the river-flow stagnates there is no river any more, but there is a lake in the making. Similarly, life must be always a process of living which is new every moment with a fresh meeting of a new challenge in an open mind. When that meeting is not there, or when the mind is not open, there is no living either. The physical process may continue, but even that process must proceed and renew itself all the time, renewing the body's tissues and blood cells. When that process of renewal ceases, there is decay; and that is death. But even for the renewal of the tissues and the blood cells there must be a discarding of the old ones. Thus, renewal which is life can take place only when there is a discarding which is death.

Living then is dying. And the mind which refuses to die by its attachments to possessions, which continues its past through preserving its memories, which cannot meet a new challenge because it has already formed its ideas and ideals for the future, as moulds into which to continue from the past, such a mind is decayed already and dead.

Death, therefore, is a refusal to be born, to be alive, in an alertness from moment to moment. It is the incapacity to let go by clinging to dead memories, traditions, dogmas, hopes and fears, the incapacity to let go of a "self" which is but a concept,

a projection from the past on the screen of the future, based on clinging to what is dead.

And so, in the same way as living is a process of dying, so death or dying is the only sane and healthy way of living, intelligent living, creative living, living with understanding and with love.

198. Death (2)

Notwithstanding frequency, its inevitability, its universality, death has remained a mystery, because of its uncertainty, unpredictability, and of course, its undesirability. The mind refuses to understand what it does not want.

In our search for the meaning of death and life thereafter, it is not truth we want, but gratification through continuation. We want to know about death, but we refuse, to accept it. And so the search is on, not for the meaning of death, but for means to conquer death, in other words, for continuity.

There is no continuity in the fleeting experience of the moment, and so the mind has given it a label whereby it can be recognised in memory. This storing-up process with its selection and rejection has been going on for many centuries. Our entire civilisation with its religious and political set-up is the product of that process in history; and the "I" is the conditioned outcome thereof, living and continuing in memory. Thus, searching for the meaning of death, we are not even aware that we are already dead, psychologically. In our craving for continuity, this has naturally created a conflict, and in that movement of opposition we feel to be alive.

But, when thought tries to get hold of the thinker whom it has created, it finds it impossible to penetrate this mystery of life and death. This is the moment of truth when thought cannot function, when thought is silent, when memory is closed, when there is no "I" as observer. For, in that moment there is death

to all the past, and there is the possibility of a new and living experiencing of what is.

It is thus that life comes out of death.

199. Death (3)

We fear death only when there is lust for life. It is not possible to escape death; and as there is nothing more universally common than death, this most familiar sight should not be the cause of fear. Neither is the uncertainty of a life hereafter, the unknown future, a source of fear; for, we cannot be afraid of what is not known. One may be afraid in imagining a future of pain and torture, but a rational mind should not find it difficult to dispose of such phantoms. Fear of death is, then, not fear of the future but fear of losing the little certainty and security in this present life. It is the lust for life which makes one cling to life, and which makes one afraid of losing it. For, what will be left when life is lost?

Thus, to understand this fear of death and to overcome it, it is necessary to understand life and the lust for life.

Life is action, is striving to become more and better, safe and secure in property and virtue, in means to continue and to progress. Without striving, life has no purpose; and without purpose, one feels lost. And so, life is ambition, desire, lust, self-projection. Without this self-concept there is no incentive, no progress, no goal. But that goal and the progressive means thereto are mere ideals, which are projections of that same "self", drawing empty circles of action and desire around that imaginary "self", which has no existence but in fleeting action.

To realise the nature of this "self" it is necessary to quieten the thought which makes the "self". What is the position when this concept is no more active? Without ambition, without de-

sire, without craving for the future, without clinging to the past, without protection, without memory, there is no opposition, no conflict, no fear, no death. But there is the living in the present moment, which is always new, which is full of life and love and understanding, freedom from fear and freedom from death, life without lust.

200. Death (4)

Have we ever experienced death? We may have seen dead bodies, dying people, but that was not an experience of death. We may have seen the slowing down of breath and the stopping thereof almost imperceptibly, and then a sudden relaxing of all tension. That is all we know of death. Medical men know more, and so they can speak of clinical death, when a person has died according to their text-book, or when he still can be revived artificially.

For most of us it means the end of a life, not only the end of the functions of the organism, the heart, the blood-circulation, the lungs; but much more than that. It is the end of a life in constant travail, in search of something which seems so near and yet is never attained; a life of strife and striving to become more and better, to continue its search, to survive in order to exist.

But one cannot believe that death can be the end, and thus even before the end comes, one prepares for its continuance in a life to come. All religions have that sole object as the goal of all striving, and they would make of life a preparation for the next one. The fact is: We do not want to die; we do not even dare to imagine what would happen if thought ceases with the stoppage of the heart. And thus we believe in a resurrection, in transmigration, in rebirth, in a soul, in God, in anything, as long as death is not the end of everything, the end of life.

But we have not understood life; we do not know what living is; we only hope and fear, hope for the best and fear for the worst. And between these two there is living, a reflection of one, a projection of the other. Is that living now? Or isn't that rather

death, which ignores the present in abuse and exploitation, in self love and hate for others, in ignorance preferred to understanding, in clinging to memory and craving for an ideal? Is that living?

All that must die, if one were to live now in this moment, if one were to be free from striving, free from searching for the satisfaction of a projected image. That would not be a continuation of conflict, but the cessation of all conflict, here and now.

201. Death (5)

Can we die to-day, now? We only think of death as something which is still far away in the future. We accept the unavailability of death, because we have seen death chiming to all, young and old, at the end of a life-span when the works have run down, or in the midst of the full force of living, through sudden illness or accident, or in violence. But our preparation for that certainty exists, perhaps, in the making of a will, in providing compensation through insurance, in making provisions in cash or in property, which are preparations for security, not for death.

One cannot provide for death by escape, by postponement, by distraction. In fact, we do not even know what death is. We only know it as a loss. My child has died; I know it as a loss, because it was my child and he is no more. But that loss is not death; I am not dead; I am only a loser, and I do not know the meaning of death.

How can we ever understand death, unless we invite death, in stead of pushing it away in fear and ignorance? We rather think of immortality, of supernatural bliss, of eternal existence, even though all that is still and always will be mere thought. To find out what death is, it must be brought close so that we can live with it, as a mother with her child. Others may think her child to be deformed, but the mother knows it as her child; and thus she cares for it, looks after it, loves it, as herself.

Well, death is myself; death is my child, because I live in death, in isolation, in opposition, in sorrow, in conflict, all my own actions, the children of my dreams. But do I recognise them

as my creations? Do I really look at them and know them for what they are? Only then can I know and understand what is death; only then can I be free of fear. For, then I can see and understand and love death every moment; for, in death there is a falling away of all that thought has made. But that is not a loss; and I cannot be a loser, if I truly die to-day, now.

202. Dedication

Dedication to one's work, to one's duty, to one's God, to one country in patriotism, to one's fellow beings in service, it all sounds so selfless and sublime. Yet, how often is not there a hidden motive, quite different from the object of dedication.

There is first of all the choice of work through which one tries to express one's dedication, religious, political, social, educational, scientific. Whenever there is a choice, there is will and volition and "self". And then there is the question, most important of all, which is not one of choice or method, how and in which way to serve, but why is there this urge to serve, this planned and arranged method and goal, which is such a determining factor in a life of dedication.

You may camouflage your loneliness, you may deceive yourself, but that loneliness will remain with you, till you dare to face it. Is not dedication a way of binding oneself to a fixed way of living by means of vows of chastity, by an oath of allegiance, by promises of faithfulness to love and to obey? And is not the wish to bind oneself an indication of one's fickleness? Why should one wish to bind oneself, if there were no doubt about one's weakness? Why should dedication be so determined, if there were no lurking fear of one's own inconsistency?

A planned way of action is a projected and idealised way of acting with a view on the future. And that is an escape. Is loneliness to be overcome in activity? Is it not rather the man who is and who dares to be alone, is not he the man who is independent and free, who can see and understand the need of

action when the necessity arises, and who is not bound by his own dedication?

Through dedication one's work becomes an extension of oneself in a search for an escape from conflict, which is caused by the isolation and the loneliness of misunderstanding.

203. Degeneration (1)

A reversion to lower type, a disintegration of tissue, of structure, or of mind, must set in when living or existence is not maintained on its proper level. The jungle takes over, the rust sets in, and general decay and decomposition is in evidence.

That happens to a mind which declines in its intelligent alertness by living in the past, glorifying in a culture of ages gone by, feeding on remembered experiences which once provided some nourishment for the pride which is self-consciousness. Degeneration is there already, when the mind lives on satisfaction derived from technical knowledge, when its sole ambition is to grow bigger, to become better, to live longer, to exist in greater comfort and security. Then the mind, to make itself secure, seeks power in property, in authority, in achievement of learning and virtue. It is a striving for an ideal which is a picture in the mind based on a memory which is dead, our accumulated knowledge which is to be found in books and in the words of others, is a pool of stagnation in which life slowly disintegrates and ceases to live intelligently, awake, creatively.

When this degeneration has set in, there is the natural and instinctive struggle of the animal to survive through strength and through cunning. And that has become the structure of our progressive society.

In this self-centred, self-seeking world there is no thought of relationship; and thus there is no understanding and no love. It is the disintegration of a living death.

To be alive the mind must be aware of its own actions, its reac-

tions, its motives, its aim in life, its contacts and relationships—an awareness which then will not be an exploitation in striving for the formation of a super-self. Only intelligent living, unconditioned by the past, unmotivated by the future of ideals, can keep the mind alert and alive in a constantly new rebirth in which there is no “self”.

204. Degeneration (2)

Anything which is not properly used, that is, which does not function according to its nature, is bound to get damaged, and nothing but deterioration in an excessive degree is to be expected. Deterioration, of course, is a very relative term; and in the way of impermanence and change, deterioration is only one aspect of that process. But, degeneration is a loss of proper qualities; it is a degrading and debasement, which is worse than disintegration. This can be noticed in a man given over to drinks and drugs, when his human nature degenerates to the lower levels of animals.

Such degeneration also sets in in the mind when not properly used, not intelligently employed. And that happens when one is living according to the knowledge of others. In religious dogmas one accepts the revelations of others; in social living one accepts the dictates of customs and traditions of society; in morality one accepts the rules of the church and of public opinion; in politics one accepts the division of classes, of countries, of races; in culture one accepts the inheritance of the past and takes that as a norm for the future.

Is there anything left that the mind can do intelligently, independently, fearlessly? And if the individual mind does not dare to do that, is that not the cause of degeneration?

In the way the mind is nourished with knowledge, which is memory even when projected into an ideal, it ceases to be intelligent. There is an accumulation of knowledge, but no understanding. There is the urge to accumulate, to gather, to collect, because that is the only way to feel secure, to continue, to grow.

But, such growth is really decay, for in the abuse of intelligence there is only the reaction of thought to the image. It is this mechanical reaction of thought as desire, as will, as fear, as hope, which is the cause of degeneration, of the lack of understanding, of insight, of freedom to be and to see what is.

205. Deliverance

Frequently one hears the pious wish: May he attain Nibbāna. And now the question is put: Can I attain Nibbāna? And to find out the answer, one must first find out whether an answer is possible. Who is putting that question? If the question is raised by the “self”—that ideal entity which has come into action through the attachment and memory of the past trying to continue, expand and establish that ideal into the future through desire, search for security and choice of will—then it is obviously a thought of that “self” trying to escape the consequences of a problem facing it.

What is that problem? It is the problem of continuity, without which there is no “self”, no existence in duration, no past and no future. Without continuity, without becoming, an ideal is impossible; and striving for an impossible ideal is heading straight for confusion and conflict.

Can the mind, which is the “self” of memory, of acquired virtue and possessions, be delivered into a future of ideal existence of which one cannot even dream? Is not such question an expression of desire for becoming something which is not? Can desire ever lead to deliverance from desire? Is not this very desire, however pious it appears to be, is not this very desire the cause of conflict, wanting to escape, but not knowing how?

Thus, to the question: How to attain? or: Can I attain? there is no answer, because the questioner obviously does not want to attain deliverance; he only wants to become better and continue on a higher level. As long as there is a desire for attainment, a wish or a will to become, there is also the striving of a “self”. And

as long as that is not seen there can be no understanding of the problem causing the conflict which it is trying to escape.

And without understanding, which is insight, there is no deliverance.

206. Delusion

As long as the individual does not know himself, he lays himself open to deceit and cannot know reality; and thus he continues in delusion, which is self-deceit, dressed up as reality.

Can the individual know, which is delusion, and which is reality? Can a man asleep know that he is dreaming? Not from the standpoint of the individual, of course. In fact, not from any standpoint, for *that* always involves a fixed position from which an event can be viewed. How then can one see delusion as such, while moving in delusion? Is it possible to measure the speed of a train while travelling in another moving train on a parallel rail-track?

The obvious starting point is, of course, the recognition that one is moving oneself; that means, that there is no fixed position. For, just as the concept of speed is relative, so the concept of reality is relative. As long as the “I” considers itself an abiding entity, it will view “reality” as eternal existence, which means that the subject will view reality as an object. But when it is seen that the so-called “I” is itself a process of movement, of change, of becoming, of cessation, then the only reality will be the actuality of all that is involved in that process. Then, the movement has only reality in its actuality, and not the mover, or the moved; only the action (*karma*) and not the actor (*atman*); not a goal, neither good nor God.

Being left without a goal, there is no point of going. And this is the moment of understanding. When thought, which is will, ceases, there is no ambition to achieve, to become, to escape.

And thus the mind can see what is. There should be no desire to know, which will introduce an image of an ideal which is based on memory, on hearsay, on an authority, on books.

But in direct seeing what is, not from any viewpoint and thus without self-interest, the only observation or perception is that of movement, of change, of impermanence. When this is seen without the desire for permanence, that is, without “self”-reference, that perception will be without conflict. And when there is no conflict, there is no “self”, and there is no delusion.

207. Demand

The most basic and insisting demands are for continuity and security, two aspects of one desire. The desire to be secure is the fear of insecurity; and that may take many forms. Fear is at the base of every movement in relationship, for we seek relationship for reason of security. And so there is fear in worship which is prayer in hope or despair; there is fear in one's ambitious striving for success; there is fear in life and its defence against death; there is fear in the search for continuity, in the accumulation of knowledge and wealth, in the dependence on authority, in the homage to superiors, even in the disdain to our inferiors lest they rise above us.

Fear is thus caused by demand, and expresses itself as a flight from what really is. This flight is not from actual or physical pain, which can be seen to by any doctor. But the flight is psychological, and may be even a flight from pleasure. For, thought will pursue pleasure for its self-satisfaction; and thought therefore will fear its ending, which is the ending of "self". Thus, whatever the demand, it breeds fear.

When there is fear for what is, there must be distortion. Hence, fear leads to pleasure-seeking in things which are not. This is the great delusion, the delusion of double-thinking, not only hypocrisy and double dealing, but the double-thinking of a permanent being as an ideal in an impermanent world, which is the essence of all conflict. This distortion creates naturally double standards in living: the intellectual against the emotional,

reflected in private life against life in public, the religious against business principles.

The ending of fear then can come only through the ending of demand. But demands do not cease by denial. Self-denial is as much an extreme as self-indulgence, and both demands are based on fear.

Demands are thoughts; they are ideals of escape with the hope of achievement. Demands, as inspired by ideals of continuity and security, will cease in the understanding of the will-to-become. When the “self” is understood as a reaction and a projection, there can be no fear at the thought of losing that ideal. It is in the present moment that there neither fear nor demand.

208. Denial (1)

A denial is a refusal to accept a statement or a mode of living; or it is a declaration of untruth, of non-existence. Whether it is thus seen as a negative refusal or a positive declaration, it is a contradictory statement, equally inadmissible as its opposite. The fact of opposition gives it an, imaginary status. Thus, the denial of authority is merely the establishment of another authority. So it is with tradition, reform, faith, the denial of which is just the same in another garb, another viewpoint, another stand. Even the denial of the “world” by leading a secluded life in a monastery is only another mode of living in opposition with and in contradiction to another mode but still a method of choice, of “self”. The phenomena may change, but there is no change in the essence.

What is this essence? Can we understand it without denying it? Without making a positive declaration about it, without a negative refusal? Any denial, as much as any affirmation, is an approach from the standpoint of “self”. It is a thought with its reliance on memory, the past, tradition, faith, authority, which seeks therein its own security and continuance, which builds up its own structure of faith and ideal, also for its own security and continuum.

Now, seeing the fact of authority and the reliance thereon in faith, tradition, imitation, adherence, allegiance etc., and without denying that fact which is self-evident, we may understand the significance thereof as a means to obtaining security for an ideal, a concept of “self”, without which thought cannot cling, nor reproduce. Understanding the futility of denying and rejecting

the present for the purpose of escaping into and accepting a mind-made ideal of the future, the mind may accept the present as it is. It will then see the futility of escape, the impossibility of denial without affirmation, the conflict in the process of trying to become. And in seeing this as actual, it will also understand the only reality of what is, even if that includes the attempts of the mind to escape, to continue, to project. And in understanding that, there is freedom from ideals, not through denials, but through insight. And in that freedom there is no more denial, and no need for denial.

209. Denial (2)

Acceptance and refusal, capture and denial, acquisition and renunciation, all depend on choice. It is volition which decides what to renounce and what to retain; it is purposeful willing which fixes the goal, the reason, the motive of leaving and taking. And a decision which depends on a predetermined goal is never a free choice, but is always conditioned. Such action without clear understanding can then only lead to confusion and conflict.

It is not through abstinence and vows that there can be an awakening of intelligence; not in piecemeal renunciation can there be found emancipation; not in striving which is volition can ever a goal be reached; not through choice can ever the truth be realised. For, abstinence and renunciation are only a partial denial, while striving and choice provide the positive supplement. We are on a boat in the river, trying to empty that river on our right hand with a bucket, by pouring it out, back into the river, on our left.

Perceiving this, one understands the futility of purposeful effort to attain an ideal goal, which can only be an intensification of that urge for self-determination, self-gratification, self-continuation, which is the basis of all intentional activity.

If denial is needed, it must be the denial of what is false, for we do not know what is truth. In the denial of what is false, when the false is seen as such, there will be a spontaneous falling off of whatever is produced and conditioned by choice. For, choice is "self", whether it is the choice of charity, of spiritual acquisition, of knowledge, or of property. When there is a denial of choice,

there will be only direct action, the necessity of which is understood, and which has no further purpose, no goal of achieving or becoming. In thus being what is and doing what needs, there is no conflict, and hence freedom from all conditioning. The denial of the false is not the outcome of effort, is not an acceptance through choice, but is necessity of action, necessitated by insight and not through choice. It is truth which sets us free.

210. Denial (3)

As a cultivated activity of austerity, denial is deeply rooted in fear. Now, fear is not something abstract; it arises in dependence on something, and essentially it is a fear of losing something. Loss also is not an abstract concept, but it is the loss of property in the widest sense, property not only of possessions, but also of quality and qualification, of ownership and propriety, of all that makes and belongs properly to the "self". Fear is that anxiety which feels that it cannot afford to lose that which constitutes the "self".

Austerity then is based on fear of losing one's ideal quality through decay and corruption. And thus, to prevent corruption of the ideal there is denial in austerity. In denial then, there too is the affirmation of the "self"; thus it is not the corruption through property which should be denied in austerity, but the delusion that property can make the "self".

We know and see that not only clothes make the man, but everything in his environment, education, tradition, in the background of his race and nationality, in the history of his country, in the dogmas of his religion, in the culture and cultivation of morality and social graces, in the cultivated activities based on hope and fear, of which the denial in austerity is but one symptom.

There is austerity in just being what is, which leads to a simplicity of living which is not a renunciation through mortification. Self-mortification is but the seeking of a higher "self" and is therefore not renunciation at all. But there is an austerity which is not cultivated, which is not a denial of property and propriety, but a denial of delusion, of the false, of an ideal "self" built on clinging

and craving in memory and projection. It is such denial which knows no fear, because it knows no “self”. In the understanding of no-self there is no sense of loss but of freedom; not of freedom gained, not of a liberated “self”, but of freedom through denial of what is not. The denial of the false is truth.

211. Denial (4)

Affirmation does not provide new understanding; it does not even give knowledge. It is merely a corroboration of the known, which is the past, which is memory, which is not now in the present. For knowledge of the past to give way to understanding in the present, a denial is necessary of the false, of the past which is no more.

Denial is a refusal to accept more affirmation, for it understands that there cannot be an acceptance in the present of an ideal still to be born perhaps in the future; it is a refusal to accept this conflict between what is and what is not. Thus, denial is much more positive than affirmation, for it rejects social values, religious dogmas, economic patterns, moral grounds for public behaviour; it rejects a present dependent on and built up from the past.

In denial one has to be alone without reliance or support; and that means there has to be a very great sensitivity and alertness; for in not knowing one has to be awake and aware all the time; that is now, and now, and now. In denial there is no to-morrow and no security; also there is no clash of memories and ideals; there is no conflict.

In denial, although one has to be alone, there is no fear. Fear is never of the unknown; fear is of the known, which is the past, or of the idea which is the picture known in the mind. The picture, the image, the concept may not be real, but it is in the field, of knowledge as an extension of that kind of knowledge which is memory. Fear is of that kind of knowledge in thought. Once that

knowledge is denied by understanding, there is no more fear. The present moment, not being an object of knowledge cannot be an object of fear. Denial of the reality of memory, denial of the substantiality of the image, leaves only the present moment in experiencing. In experiencing there is no knowledge and hence no fear.

Denial of fear, denial of memory, denial of ideals, denial of security, denial of “self” is then a denial of conflict. In that there is a discovery of what is always new, independent, unconditioned, with a mind which is fearless and free.

212. Dependence (1)

Attachment in some form or other is dependence. There is, of course, the simple attachment of the child to its mother on whom it is dependent for everything concerning its physical survival. Grown-ups too have their necessary attachments to physical conditions on which life depends. One may argue that life itself is not essential, but that is not the point. Here is life: one is alive; and short of committing suicide, this life has to be maintained. The continuation of physical life requires only a physical dependence on nutrition and shelter, which is hardly ever a serious problem.

This physical dependence, however, can be met and satisfied abundantly in many ways, which results in a choice of a particular way, special food, selected shelter, which choice is not any more the result of physical necessity but rather of a psychological interest.

Then the physical dependence becomes a psychological attachment which is not to physical objects, but to the psychological values they represent. If clothes are a physical necessity of protection against changes in climate, they soon become of psychological importance when their choice follows the trend of fashion, a symbol of status, an expression of “self”. Then such attachment is not to the clothes, but to the things they represent. A uniform, a robe, a cassock, a school-tie, or even the absence of clothes in an ascetic have all psychological value far beyond their intrinsic value.

Dependence on those psychological values is attachment to a “self” which would be lost without these protective layers. All

attachments then are to labels, to ideas, to ideals; and on those labels depend the very existence, continuation, expansion and projection of this “self”-concept, which can exist only in imagination, continue in opposition, expand in exploitation, and project itself in conflict.

True independence is, therefore, to be found only in true non-attachment to psychological values; and this can only be found in the complete understanding of the methods and aims of attachment. It is only understanding which does not create dependence on fictitious values.

213. Dependence (2)

Physical reliance on the environment is a dependence without which life itself would be impossible. But there is another dependence which is a subordination of the mind, a psychological reliance, in which one depends on somebody or something else for one's happiness and satisfaction.

This psychological reliance is an emotional dependence which is the bondage of the mind. The mind seeks satisfaction; for, only in satisfaction can be found that gratification of the urge to live, to continue to live, to become better and greater, which is so necessary for the existence of the "self-ideal". It is self, seeking the continuation of self in gratification, which makes itself into a slave by dependence on the means of gratification.

This dependence on means for continuance of self is its sheer act of exploitation in relationship; and exploitation means opposition and conflict. Thus the very search for satisfaction brings about conflict. We seek satisfaction in relationship, we seek truth in the hope of becoming enlightened, seek self in the ideal projected by the mind.

Why is there this search for dependence on others, on authority, on learning, on beliefs, while we claim to strive for independence in all spheres of life? In our very striving for independence we are dependent on others, not only physically, but emotionally, and psychologically. And not only are we dependent, but we also like it. For, we find strength in the reliance on others, satisfaction in the confidence and consistency of others. To rely is to bind together; and in that unity lies our strength.

But the fact is that, without this reliance I am weak and nobody. I cannot and hence I dare not stand alone, because I cannot exist without this “self”. To be without this “self” is to be without the background of tradition, memory, hope, fear and ideals—all of which are mental projects on which the “self” depends. The “self” is those thoughts and the dependence thereon is the chaos of conflict.

214. Dependence (3)

From various aspects of social living, dependence may be necessary. There is, of course, the dependence on the labour of others to grow and prepare our food, to build our house, to spin and weave and cut and sew our clothes; we depend on the organisations which provide water and electricity, on the postman and the bus-conductor, the book-printer and the salesman. It is physically impossible for any man in this world to be absolutely independent. For purpose of travel one must have a passport; and to get that, one has to belong to a certain nation. But all these kinds of dependence, although restricting our freedom of movement, are also means of preventing total chaos and impossibility of movement at all. We depend on them for our physical well-being and survival: and they are therefore quite natural and normal, just as the physical functions of the internal organs of the body, on which we depend and which in some way restrict our physical freedom, provide the smooth working of the whole system.

But, there is another kind of dependence, that of the mind, which makes us dependent on others psychologically, because we seek in them our own satisfaction and security of continuance, as an individual in our position in society. This sense of psychological dependence on people, on property, on tradition, on beliefs, is really a total denial of freedom. One who is dependent on those sources for his mental health, is living in constant fear of ever losing them. If we miss a train or a bus, we can wait for the next one, or till to-morrow; but to miss a friend or to miss our position in life means an emptiness, a loss, an insufficiency

to exist independently. The “I” cannot exist without dependence and at the same time the “I” wants to be free and independent to expand, to continue, to project into an ideal future.

All this gives rise to fear of loss, and conflict in mind.

To be free of fear there has to be freedom from the “I”. Only through understanding the void of that “I”, not through seeking shelter for that “I”, can there be freedom from that “I”.

215. Dependent Origination

A long and apparently never-ending chain of conditioning with its basis on not knowing what is, such is the process of evolution and involution, of dependent origination and cessation.

It is a mixture of fear and desire, which prevents one from looking at what is, and rather looking forward into some imaginary future with hope and desire. This desire for pleasure, if well understood, is not only a wish for self-satisfaction, but it is really a search for security, for a state to be without conflict. But not knowing what conflict is, and by what it is caused, it appears as a desire for satisfaction.

In this search for security against conflict there is an egocentric isolation, which is intended to strengthen the "I"-position, but which in reality makes for an exclusiveness which is opposition, and therefore conditions the state of conflict, the very thing one intends to escape from.

In this search for an escape one has nothing to be guided by, except the words and dust of the authority of others and of one's own memory of past experiences. As in all this one is motivated to select whatever seems favourable, one is really guided in this search by one's own desires which, however, are pale reflections in memory, now set up as ideals to be achieved in the future.

These ideals are one's ambitions to become more, greater, better, in the many fields of existence; but, basically they are the

mind's projections of a desire for continuance and for greater security. And so, this search for security brings one round again to the starting point with fear and desire, fear of insecurity and desire for satisfaction in continuance.

All this happens, because we have not looked at the basis; it is our refusal to see what is, what conditions this endless movement of search and escape, of desire and not-knowing, of satisfaction of self, which is opposition and conflict. And all this need not happen, if one sees and understands what is; and that includes the understanding of one's conditioning in dependent origination.

216. Description

A verbal portrait of a person, thing or event, as it presents itself to the mind, according to the preconditioning of the mind, may be a record, but is not an experience. As a record it is meant to be kept, and that is the work of memory which thus creates the record-keeper. And just as the record-keeper stands outside the records so the description stands apart from the experience, as much as each painting of the same object differs from the others, because it is presented by a different mind in a different mood giving a different impression.

To arrive at true understanding of an event, one has to ignore all descriptions and representations. Such portraits of the mind are the outcome of its various moods and conditionings rather than actual experiences. Thus, what is recorded in memory and described by thought are the paintings of the mind. As such they may be interesting and even valuable, for they provide at least a picture of the mood of the mind at that moment, even though they are not presenting the actual experiencing which is already past.

Memory, therefore, as image-storer and image-maker shows the process of thought at work, showing how the clinging to the past and a craving for continuance in the future form the image, the idea, the concept, the ideal, the “self”. Now the object which was memorised and classified, recorded and described, is of no importance; but the process of image-making shows the inner workings of thought, while building up the “I”.

When this process is seen and understood, the portrait or

description have lost all value in the actual understanding of mental activity. The mind, thus being deprived of its object, is now still, without purpose. And in that stillness there is an unconditioned opening up. When there is perception of what actually takes place, in experiencing without reference to a flashback, without reference to either record or recorder.

When description ceases, the truth can be seen.

217. Desire (1)

There is in man an unsatisfied inclination to collect and to possess. As this is still an inclination, it is clearly a mental image of the object, or person, or state which is desired. Even with the object present and within reach, it is still only the image thereof, which has produced this state of mind. The image is a mental picture, an ideal, projected by thought and built up from past experiences and memories thereof. It is always the pleasurable which is desired, for that strengthens the "I"-concept.

Desire is always a mental striving to obtain and to attain, which is a process of becoming better or stronger, more safe, more secure than before. Based, therefore, on the memory of the past when the "I" felt insecure, there is now a protection to obtain or to attain that which gives security. Desire, therefore, is an escape from insecurity. The objects of desire may change, but the process remains the same. The object is not important, but the goal is the acquisition of security, of continuity, without which no acquisition has any value. Then the mental image of the desired object is the means of sense-satisfaction towards that goal of security in existence.

The mind clings to those ideals of which the material objects are mere symbols; and thus the mind has become the instrument of sensation and memory, seeking satisfaction and continuance. The mind may know that those ideals are not satisfactory, and it may try to get beyond. But that is merely another desire, more subtle than before. Thought cannot get beyond desire, because thought is desire. Desire cannot be overcome until and unless

thought is still. But thought is memory with all its tributaries from tradition, belief, education, authority, fear and hope, becoming ideals and desires.

Then let there be awareness of this process of thinking in desire. In this close attention there is no memory to fall back on, no thinking about it, no prospecting of an ideal state, but seeing things, i.e. thoughts, as they are, thought as an image, thought as dead memory, thought as a picture of desire. In that perception there is no thought and no desire to become free. There is freedom from the entire process; and desire has lost all its significance.

218. Desire (2)

The problem of desire is not how to stop the effect but to understand the cause so that it will not produce further conflict. Still, as long as the cessation of conflict (*dukkha-nirodhā*) is the aim of action, all action will be inspired by the desire to become free from conflict. And that is, of course, but another way of becoming, leading to more conflict. Even the cessation of becoming (*bhava-nirodhā*), as the end of striving, cannot be brought about, for the result of desire can never be the cessation of desire.

Ono knows that desire is at the bottom of all this confusion; one sees that desire cannot be conquered by more desire; but this knowledge is not enough, as long as it leads to further searching. Hence, to disentangle this confusion, one must first of all understand the nature of desire.

Thought becoming memory is the basis of desire, for it is in memory that attachments are being formed. These attachments to certain selected experiences help to continue the delusion of a separate owner of these experiences, even though clear thinking cannot admit the existence of a thinker without thought, of a walker who does not walk, of an owner without property, And yet, that is the position of a self-deluded mind, which must continue in activity in order to continue in existence.

Is it possible to cease the operation of thought, which is memory, desire, “self” with all its consequences?

When thought is faced with the problem of ceasing, it cannot act; desire cannot stop desire. But what happens in this experiencing? There is no answer from memory. To find a solution,

thought will try to go back to find a trodden way, a path out of this jungle. In its attempt to find a solution, thought is only trying to find an escape; and thus it wants to rely on past experiences, that is, on memory, looking for an escape. But there is no answer from memory; thought has never ceased before. And so there is no self-consciousness recording the experience of cessation as an experiment, for such recording would not be an actual experience.

When there is no memory, there is no thought, but only perceiving and experiencing what is, there is no memory called in to look back, and there is no desire to look forward, There is just awareness of the cessation of desire. And that is the end of conflict,

219. Desire (3)

Craving for mundane things, such as money, fame, sex, excitement, is acknowledged by all religious teachers as evil. They may differ in their methods of overcoming this evil. Some suggest prayer and self-mortification, others suggest sublimation by focussing the mind on a higher, more sublime object, whereby desire becomes spiritualised. But for all that, it is still desire.

Desire is a single, unitary, indivisible process. The cunning mind may try to divide it into more or less profitable and harmless desire; it may separate itself from desire by wishing to overcome and conquer all desire. But, when all is said, it is still the same “self” made up of many opposing and conflicting urges, the same “self” which can only survive in desire which is self-projection.

It is obviously impossible to overcome desire by wanting to conquer it. The simile of using one thorn to remove another thorn from a wound, and then throw both away, lacks reality. As it is not within the power of the thorn to throw itself away, so the “self” which is desire cannot get rid of “self”. Whatever the activity of desire, it is still desire in its motive.

Thus it is clear that only action without motive can put a halt to this intricate problem of desire. But action which is the result of thought is always conditioned and motivated. Hence, all action which is a response to thought must cease. As there is no external agency to bring this process to a stop, it is thought itself which has to face the problem. And not being able to deal with the situation arising in the present (as thought can only

respond to memory which is past), the mind will be still; and in that stillness all activity which is desire has ceased.

Thus, in seeing things as they are, there no seeing things as one would wish them to be. In that freedom from desire, there is release from conflict.

220. Desire (4)

What is wrong with desire? Everybody says it is wrong. All religions preach against it, as a sin, as unskilful; common sense is against it, because it is unsatisfiable. But so is hunger; and I do not give up eating because I shall be hungry again to-morrow anyhow. And nobody says that eating is bad, even though the doctors advise moderation. Then what is wrong with desire? Is it merely wrong because everybody has been saying so for the last few thousand years?

Is desire wrong, because it produces an undesirable effect? If that is so, even abstinence or a negation of desire would be wrong when that is done to obtain a desirable effect. For that would still be desire. Giving up desire out of obedience is another kind of desire, the desire to submit, to acquire virtue, to feel good. Then what can one do about it? About what? About giving up? About indulgence? About calling it names?

Do we know what desire is? It is obviously the search for satisfaction, either the satisfaction of need or of greed. The object, or the purpose, is then self-satisfaction, which we want because without that there is frustration, which is conflict within. And conflict is disturbing, which is not good for the growth and the security of the "I". Thus, the search is actually for the security and continuity of "self". But that very search creates the conflict of opposition which breaks down all measures for security. Am I prepared to let down all barriers? Race, religion, clan, family, party? Aren't they all extensions at myself, protecting walls of isolation, of opposition, of conflict, so that "I" may be "I"?

What is this fear that the “I” may not continue? If there is understanding of continuance, can there be a desire for permanence without renewal? Can there be fear of beginning afresh? Can there be fear of being free?

221. Despair (1)

It is the very nature of despair to be without hopes, when hope is wanted to succeed, It is a mental sickness for which there is no remedy. When there is no hope, there will be no incentive to action. The despair will be advanced by ignoring the issue, by acting as if one exists for the future. Then one puts purpose in action, one gives a goal to one's striving, an aim to living. And if success comes, it is that encouragement which overcomes despair.

But if despair is a negativity, such as the absence of hope, it cannot be avoided by circumvention, or conquered by ignoring; it will have to be solved in order to see the truth without which it will always be there even in one's activity, when fear and despair may drive one on.

Despair arises from a feeling of impatience to arrive at an ideal. Thus it is a misjudgement of placing the ideal too high beyond reach. "Crying for the moon" used to be an expression for this aiming too high. But now that man has gone to the moon and far beyond, one may have to change the words, but despair still arises from aiming too high. It is this aiming which is to blame, not the impotency to attain.

And so, the first step must be to understand one's own position, one's strength, one's desire to aim, for in that understanding lies not the cure, but the dissolution of despair. There is no cure for despair in eternal hope, for that is still a concept, a wishful thought, an ideal. But a dissolution of despair is possible in the realisation that all hope is false because hope is not actual, just

because it is ideal. When there is no escape into an ideal “self”, a super-nature, an eternal future, a permanent entity, soul or God, when there is no search for an escape of any sort in any action, be it religious, social, intellectual or political, when there is no hope of finding a super-ego, then there is a piercing of the delusion, based on the ignorance of existence, on the ignorance of becoming, on the ignorance of “self”. In the understanding of the cause of despair will also be its ending.

222. Despair (2)

When is no more hope, the result is despair. Hope lies in the future, whereas despair grows from failure in the past. The future, however, is the ideal, a thought-projection, a mental picture, of how things should be, of how the “self” can continue, how the “self” can become. The fact that there is this projection into the future shows that there was failure in the past; and hope provides an escape.

The acknowledgement of failure and its subsequent escape into hope arise from comparing, wanting, judging, attempting to achieve, to become, to fulfil. There would have been no failure, if there had been no striving, no hope. And so one has come round the full circle: there was striving, desire, hope, which did not reach attainment and fulfilment, and so there was despair; and from despair one tries to escape in hope of fulfilment. It may not be the same hope for the same ideal; it may be a sublimation from worldly ambition to heavenly reward; but basically it is the same wish for self-fulfilment which has brought about the despair of ever attaining that goal.

Such self-fulfilment is obviously centred around the concept of a “self”, a soul, an abiding entity, which would be empty, void, meaningless, if it had no properties, no fulfilment. The very idea of “self” therefore is an ideal of satisfaction with the hope of ultimate gratification in the beatific vision of God, or the absorption into the Brahman, where the individual soul can continue as a super-soul.

Still, all this is a mental concept, an invention or projection to

ensure continuation in endless rebirth, reincarnation becoming God, but this mental concept is an escape from the actual failure of ambition, leading to despair.

Intelligent awareness, seeing the nature of this escape and its impossibility because it is based on the fallacy of ideal thought, cannot entertain hope, for all it understands is an experience in the present. Without hope, there is no despair in failure; without projection there is no future ideal, no hope which is the reaction of despair.

223. Detachment

Dependent on sensations arises craving (*vedanā-paccaya taṇhā*). And with the cessation of sensations craving will cease. Why then can one not bring about the cessation of sense-activity? First of all, there is no need to bring the activity of the senses to an end, but only their reactionary activity, because it is the reactionary activity of the senses which brings about the product called the “I”. This product of the past—when consciousness is based on memory of past actions (*saṅkhāra-paccaya viññāṇam*), when both body and mind depend on such consciousness (*viññāṇa-paccaya nāma-rupam*), when physical and mental activity are the cause of actions of the senses (*nāma-rūpa paccaya saḷāyatanaṃ*), when those senses produce sensation (*saḷāyatana-paccaya vedanā*), and sensations give birth to desire which is the food for “self” (*vedanā-paccaya, taṇhā*)—such product cannot be without past.

Is it not possible for a sensation to arise, for an experience to be watched merely as such, without dependence on psychological conditions without becoming a means to a further end? What is a sensation? And can there be a sensation which is not recognised?

A sensation is a reaction, a response to contact. But when contact is already conditioned by a receptacle which can only admit according to its nature, the sense-reaction, too, will be conditioned accordingly. But is it the sense organ which reacts in receiving, or is it the concept behind the contact, the receptionist, so, to, speak? A mere physical contact will produce a physical reaction, but when this reaction is received with a further view, of usefulness, satisfaction, importance, aggrandisement, it is no

more the sense organ which reacts, but the concept of the receiver, the “I”, who lays hold of the contact to respond to it in his own fashion, the psychological way, which is one of attachment and exploitation, for the purpose of self-continuance.

In understanding the function of sense-reaction in the process of grasping (*upādānakkhandha*), in seeing that this process is the mind’s attitude while creating and projecting and protecting the “I”-concept, such sense-reaction is not “mine” and cannot be used for further projection. Then there is detachment which cannot be brought about by mere renunciation.

224. Deterioration

Wherever there is change (and that includes also growth), there is also the withering of the old, making way for the new. The wearing-out process is but a different aspect of renewal. It is not the individual flower that succeeds in maintaining its colour and fragrance, but in withering, decay, it contributes to the process of growth.

Is only the mind that refuses to be born again and all human effort is directed towards the prevention of deterioration. Man destroys intentionally so that he may live. He protects himself physically by preventing and curing disease. He also wages war so that he, the individual, may be at peace. He refuses to accept the fact of the withering away which opens the gate to the new. And at the same time he wants to bring about progress in change. In that effort there is conflict as part of daily life; for, ambition and striving for success involve the overcoming of opposition. And so, in the effort of bringing about peace there is war; in the desire for security there is isolation; in the ideal of the future there is neglect of the present.

Decline, then, is a mere aspect of the process of change which is universal. But, man's mind refuses to see involution as a part of evolution, because in that process there is no place for individual continuance.

Thus he chooses because he does not want to cease, as in cessation there is no security. But in choice there is preference selection, rejection; and thus there is constant conflict in the mind that chooses. As continuation has become his aim and ambition,

he sees all change as deterioration. In isolation for decay he has built up a "self" in defence of security; and now he is to live in fear, in opposition, in conflict, while making his own image of satisfaction. Thus, in love with himself he can produce only hate; in search for power he loses his individual independence; in search for support he loses his freedom. That which can be sought as an object is not freedom. The object to possess as a concept of freedom is but a quality of an imagining "self". It is the search which has to cease, so that the old concepts may wither. It is only in cessation that there can be renewal, which is not a continued deterioration, but a total withering which is deliverance from the old.

225. Development

Not as a form of ambition, which is idealistic self-worship, the development of the mind is certainly to be encouraged; for, having to deal with the many issues of life as they occur from moment to moment, there must be clarity of mind to understand these issues. A mere effort, however, towards solving a problem is usually not much more than an approach towards an ideal, which is a concept worked out in advance, as a mathematical problem, dealing with principles and unknown quantities.

A developing mind feels the need to understand those principles. It has no room for dogmas and axioms, for ideals and projections. Such a mind is open and receptive in a totally unconditioned way. For, only then it is possible to see and understand things as they are, without a side-glance on their usefulness, their capacity for gratification, their effectiveness in self aggrandisement.

A developing mind is not content with learning, does not depend on memory of experiences, does not go out towards ideal experiences of some future. It is developing when rooted in the soil of the present from where it gets its growth and fertility. Thus, in relationship in the present stands the mind revealed without attachment to the past without desire for the future.

Without thought of “self” which is a reflection and not a new experience of learning, there can be an open attitude without an approach of exploitation and possession. In that openness the truth stands, revealed without opposition, without self-reference.

And that is peace, that is the real, that is life, that is beauty and truth. That is freedom and deliverance.

226. Devotion (1)

The dedication to an ideal, the giving up of oneself to the service or the pursuit of knowledge, of God, of a cause, is called devotion. While one is pursuing such ideal with loyalty, one may feel that all one's actions are utterly selfless; but an intelligent awareness of one's true motives might reveal that such exclusive dedication is but a form of escape from the actual into the ideal.

Whatever is exclusive is also suspicious, for it cannot be integral and complete. Thus concentration of energy, whether applied to physical work, mental activity, or mind-culture, always fails to see the whole, the background, causes, motives, hopes for success, fears of failure. Concentration fails to be meditation, as devotion fails to be understanding. Then, the ideal which is pursued, is but the "self" which it is sought to satisfy, for, the ideal is but a self-chosen idea; and in that choice, in that selection, in that exclusive application, there cannot be anything but self-volition, which is opposition leading to conflict,

The ideal of devotion becomes the property of the "self", it becomes the "self" exclusively, when in trance it is felt that "I am That". In such mystic union it is not the "I" which gets lost in the absolute, but the absolute is seduced to the relative, a reflection of the "I".

Devotion needs a goal, a purpose, in which there is self-fulfilment. But when there is "self-fulfilment", there is the gratification and the satisfaction, which in their very exclusiveness have created an opposition which is excluded, an opposition which causes conflict, and from which the "self" now will seek to escape

in greater devotion, attachment to ideals, renunciation which is rejection.

Through understanding the nature of ideals as extensions of a self-devotion, there will be a freedom from pursuing and a love which is not devotion.

227. Devotion (2)

An attempt at communion and identification with the object, the idea, the person to whom one is devoted, is a selfless service in the sense that the self wants the self to be absorbed and become one with its ideal. Devotion, then, is a kind of self surrender, submission, abnegation, but there is in it the hidden motive of becoming one with greater power, the desire of the individual soul becoming the super-soul, of the relative becoming the absolute, of the creature becoming God. In the surrender in devotion there is also the loss of independence, of freedom and of understanding; but the goal is kept in sight, the surrender is not unconditional, independence is surrendered to gain more power, and power is wanted to be more “self”.

Devotion to a person, be it natural or supernatural, loyalty to an ideology, be its religious or political, is the search for the greater “self”, the concept with which the individual has identified himself losing himself to find himself on a higher plane.

This identification with the greater is bought at the cost of losing one’s individuality which in isolation cannot survive. It becomes, therefore, an attempt to escape, to find refuge, to look for security. But as the shelter itself is an ideal, made by the same thought that tries to escape isolation, there can be no true refuge as long as a “self” tries to escape from “self” into another “self”.

Seeing this clearly, there can be no further escape, there can be no further projection into an ideal, there can be no further search for identity, for security, for devotion to a concept. And when this attempt at identification has ceased, there can be awareness of the

“self” that *is*, that tries to become, and which is merely reacting to conditions in its desire to achieve, to acquire, to expand. In that awareness there is a direct understanding and hence a cessation of all this “self”-activity, “self”-searching, “self”-expression. Then action will not be “self”-centred in emotion and devotion.

228. Disappointment

An unfulfilled expectation, or a frustrated purpose results in distress. At its foundation there is a wish, a desire, an anticipation, which has not come about. To understand this feeling of disappointment one has first to understand the meaning of anticipation, which looking forward to the happening of an event, to the solution of a conflict, the answer to a problem. And in each case it is the answer, the solution the way out which is anticipated; for the solution is a relief from anxiety, an alleviation of pain, a deliverance from distress. Thus, what is anticipated is the satisfaction visualised or mentalised as the end of a problem or a conflict.

This is, of course, only a mental picture, a concept, an ideal, in which there is no more disturbance. If there is any satisfaction, it is that of one's own thought, idea, or imagination, which has completely circumvented the problem itself, the anxiety, the distress, the conflict. When subsequently it is found that the expectation has not been fulfilled, the purpose has not been attained, there is natural frustration of disappointment.

This disappointment, then, has nothing to do with the conflict experienced, but is based on the non-fulfilment of an expectation. An expectation or anticipation is a projection of wishful thinking, while thinking itself is the interdependence on and reference to the past in which the "self" is building up the image of itself in the future, in order to exist and persist.

It is this building up of an image, which cause the conflict between what is and the ideal of what should be. When, therefore the ideal is seen as a mere image, there can be no real conflict

because the image is a mere conceptual projection and has no existence, cannot be experienced and can, therefore, not be the cause of conflict. The conflict is in the expectation, in the anticipation of the future, which is not in the present.

In the understanding of the unreality of disappointment, there can be neither frustration, no distress.

229. Discipline (1)

A word much in use these days, especially by people in authority, is the concept of discipline, for, it is so much easier to control people if they are amenable to discipline. Thus, unfortunately, the concept of discipline is closely linked with that which makes a good disciple. But, although there is an obvious semantic link of both with the root-meaning of discern, to learn, the two terms have diverged from their base in almost opposite directions.

A disciple is one who is learning, that is, one who with an open mind tries to discover and to understand what is new; whereas discipline is a method to control action. But control involves a preconceived plan, an ideal, a goal, which is the very opposite of an open mind, just as much as following is the opposite of understanding.

It is said that discipline is necessary to control misconduct. But mere control means suppression and forced activity, such as drill. And unless that is combined with brain-washing, there will still be the will to break away, to rebel, to flout authority. In that case nothing is gained by discipline apart from a psychological suppression, caused by an artificial enthusiasm of flag-waving, mass-parades, slogan-shouting and vague promises.

Can discipline ever take the place of understanding through learning, which is the true object of discipleship? If help is needed in learning it must be found in the teacher's understanding. Authority can only destroy intelligence; and therefore, learning must be an opening up of the mind so that there can be understanding and intelligence in the disciple. Intelligence can awaken only in

awareness without compulsion. Learning is not only of school-subjects such as history and geography. There must be a learning which is a yearning, a desire to satisfy the need to understand. The teacher must find out why a pupil's mind is not interested, why it is rebellious and why it's not amenable to discipline. The real problem-child is not the naughty one, but the goody-goody one who so easily submits and follows and carries away all the prizes. The lack of discipline may be the need of freedom, the very thing denied by discipline.

230. Discipline (2)

In the true sense discipline is the attitude of a disciple, that is, of learning, not of following, controlling, conforming to a pattern with or without austerity. In learning there is not the accumulation of knowledge, not the storing of experience, not the reliance on memory which is the past. In learning there are no conclusions, no formulas, no ideals. But there must be an open mind, unbiased, unconditioned; for, learning is a free movement which has no centre of action, no goal of striving, no beginning in the past. Without this freedom of perception there can be no learning. Thus, learning has its own discipline of non-attachment to traditions, customs, dogmas, hopes and ideals. There is no discipline first, and learning afterwards.

Discipline which is conforming according to a pattern, a code a system, is the suppression of what is, by living according to the past. It is the conformity of drill, leading to self-denial through austerity. But this self denial is really a search for a higher "self". And such a search for an ideal is not the discipline of learning that which is.

If one is not free, one cannot learn. But one cannot make oneself free through discipline. Freedom is not a goal; but the open mind of learning, of finding out, of discovering, is free. To be open and unconditioned there must be great sensitivity in learning, without prejudice or selection, without screening or colouring. Great discipline is needed not to be enticed by the glamour of an ideal; great courage is needed to break away from the past in tradition, in faith, in hope and desire, not in

condemnation, but in understanding that the past is past, and the future is not yet.

In perceiving all that, there is learning; in that learning there is action, the action of discipline which is understanding, which is free, and which therefore does not lead to conflict.

231. Discontent

When the mind awakens from gratification in gratification with impermanence, it is an experience of discontent; for, any satisfaction which fails to be permanent and lasting fails to be a gratifying solution, And therein lies the conflict which cannot be solved by putting the mind to sleep again in further search for gratification.

The experience of discontent is a pointer and a symptom which cannot be set aside by avoidance and escape. For, the object of escape being self-gratification, under whatever name, and whatever subtlety of sublimation it has always the “self” as its goal of search. The awakening of the mind through discontent is a challenge to the understanding and intelligence. But the mind, in memory, fear and in desire, refuses to accept the challenge. It will merely hide its pain by seeking relief elsewhere. Then, discontent is made into a lever to reach out, beyond the limitations of what is; and thereby it creates the illusions of satisfaction which provide a temporary forgetfulness which puts the mind to sleep again in its pursuit of security and continuity.

When discontent is seen, understood and experienced as an awakening to what is, there will be no attempt at overcoming this discontent; for, when it is seen, understood and experienced as a symptom, it will also be understood that the real problem causing the conflict in mind is much deeper. Then there will be no escape or sublimation, but a mere attention which is the beginning of awakening. Discontent seeking to fill the vacuum of the “self” then turns into awareness. And in that intelligent awakening the

vacuum is seen as a vacuum. This understanding is not conflict, for there is no attempt at filling, no search for escape.

All search is of “self”; and in that understanding all search ceases; and the awakening intelligence, seeing what is not distracted by gratification, discontent and conflict.

232. Discovery

One has to uncover to find out whether there is anything underneath that cover. And so, to discover truth, the truth of religion, of tradition, of anything, one has to take away all that which is covering up, all the decorations, trappings, the whole framework, which are being used to impress, to bring into focus, to guide the mind of the seeker. They are being used to make the seeker, to condition the search, to guide its direction according to a plan. But the result can never be a discovery, for in such a search the goal is always presented, as food on a plate. Then one only has to swallow what is set before him. That is set blind faith, that is the acceptance of authority; but that is not the discovery of what is. Authority itself is one of the trappings; faith is another one of the decorations; the search of the goal is the limiting frame within which the search can never lead to a discovery.

But mostly one does not want to discover; for what one wants is not the insecurity of discovering what is new, but rather, the safety of authority, the security of assistance, the certainty of a fixed goal and destiny.

Without this sense of security the concept of a “self” cannot endure; and so the entire process of searching is a making secure of a “self” in the continuance of self-gratification. Such a search is obviously sterile and uncreative, for the object of the search is there already, camouflaged by self-interest, projected as an ideal, in a striving-to-attain, which endeavours to bring the ideal back to life where it came from. An ideal is only a concept of revival of a dead memory, and has no contents of its own to be discovered.

A discovery can be made only when the mind is open and ready to listen and learn, without prejudice or guidance, when the mind is unconditioned and always ready to uncover what is false, to break the frame which binds, ready to cease searching, and then only see what is: to see the false as false, the search as “self”, the goal as escape. That is not an ideal, for it is always there, new and true, the naked truth!

233. Disease

When we know what disease is, it, ceases to be a problem. We know pain and discomfort, because we are conscious of its friction and limitation. But the pain is not friction; discomfort is not limitation or restriction. The experience of restriction and obstruction sets in only when there is the comparison with the ideal of ease, of happiness, of safety.

In disease there is no ease; but when there is the ideal of ease as a thought, as an idea, then there is a conflict between being in disease and discomfort and wanting to be at ease and in comfort and safe and secure. It is the wanting to be and the wanting to become which causes the conflict with what is, and which then becomes the conflict, the problem.

When there is perfect ease there is no desire to become, there is not even an awareness of "self" being at ease. When one is in love, there is no awareness that "I" am in love, no thought of the beloved as an object of possession, no desire or wish to fall in love. In other words, there is no objectivation in experiencing; that comes only afterwards when there is the desire to retain, to secure for the future, when there is fear of its falling away.

Then, ease and beauty and love and truth have become ideals for which we strive, in which to continue as their owner. And with that comes the friction between being and becoming, between living in the present and life as one would wish it to be, a life of security, of self, which is however also a life of selfishness, of desire, of fear, of opposition, of isolation, of conflict.

And that is the problem: not pain, or discomfort of disease.

When there is no problem and no conflict, there is ease even in disease.

234. Disorder

Confusion in thought and a contradiction in action naturally bring about disorder and conflict. To introduce order for the purpose of overcoming conflict is still action in confusion, because order in that case is made use of as an instrument to obtain a release from conflict, and has, therefore, no significance of its own. Then, this very concept of order is a design, a plan, a projection of thought. Such introduction of a concept of order, resulting from confused thinking, is still disorder.

One dislikes disorder, because in disorder there is no control, no safety of knowing, no security of acting. But in that case, order stands for safety and security; and that is a projection of the mind through which the “self” attempts to continue. There is no security without continuance. Not understanding order and its ultimate goal, the cult of order in politics and in religion is still disordered thinking.

Order is a balanced state of mind in which there is no surplus either way. And this state of mind can only be reached when there is no thought of acquisition of power or of virtue, no desire for the achievement thereof, no fear of loss. This state of balance can arise only when there is no force of weight, no influence, no conditioning in action and in thinking; when there is no “self”-interest.

It is self-interest which brings about confusion in thought and contradiction in action, which are the causes of disorder in conflict. In direct perception there is no loading of scales in favour of an ideal through comparing and judging; but there

is an unconditioned perception which sees things as they are unrelated to “self”, Thus, without desire, hope or fear there is a natural order which is not confused and which does not bring about contradiction, opposition and conflicts Then action follows from understanding what is needful, and not from wanting which is greed, which is “self, in its endeavour to become greater and more secure. Then action will be ordered naturally, because there is no further motive in confusion of thought.

235. Distinction

That which makes a difference between one and another is often a simple mark, a mere name, a property of distinction, but nothing essential. I have a car, but there are thousands of that make on the road, and there must be hundreds with the identical colour-scheme too. But my car has one thing which no other car in the whole world has or ever will have, and that is the number-plate with its registration number. Such an unessential item, apart from the build, the construction, the power of its engine, its chassis, its body shape, gives it yet a distinction all of its own. Without it the car has no legal status; it cannot be insured; it is not allowed on the road. Without that mark it is not an entity, it is non-existent, officially.

Such is the distinction of an individual, who is only legally recognised and recognisable by his registered name. The name itself is not important, it may have no meaning, it has no value; in fact, it has no existence of its own, in itself. Only when superimposed on an individual, both the name and the person become distinct as a separate entity. Without name there is no distinction, no individuality, no entity; and yet that name is but a superimposition, which could have been thus, or quite different without any alteration to the structure or function to the individual.

This name, then, is the “self” which thereby differentiates itself from others, a distinguishing mark, totally unessential in itself and yet absolutely essential for the existence of the individual “ego”. It is then this distinction which causes the opposition between self and others, which causes the conflict, the struggle,

the antagonism, resulting in escapes, sublimation, suppression, which make life the hell it is.

The name may be in property, in achievement, in the colour of skin; but it is always the unessential which divides, which causes conflict and the hate of opposition without which the “self” cannot exist and expand.

236. Distortion (1)

Misrepresentation of motives, of facts and statements, by putting them out of contexts, out of shape, that is distortion, a twisting of what was straight. It is the work of malice, but may be just the work of imagination which is image-making. The mind is always making images; it lives on that; for, it is with those images and ideals that the mind attempts to project the picture of the past into the future. If the mind does not do that, there is no other way for, the continuance of “self”.

In a constant process of selection, the mind has collected satisfactory experiments in memory, which now form together that statue of the “I”, life-like and yet so dead. But those memories have no value if they cannot be continued, And thus the ideal image is projected to live in the future on a pedestal.

An ideal, however, is still only a thought an idea, a desire, a twisting of what was, into something that should be. And that is distortion, a misrepresentation of motives and facts, an image-making process, always harmful and untrue, sometimes maliciously so.

All effort and striving is for attainment of that ideal. And that means that all effort and striving is a distortion of the truth. To continue this “self” delusion (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) the mind has to deceive itself and hence there results a life of distortion which is nothing but hypocrisy. Unfortunately, the mind is so distorted by this image-making that it is rarely aware of its own hypocrisy. It is not so much a double standard of living, one in public and another in private, for the distortion goes on all the time; we are

deceiving the public as well as ourselves, for every thought is image-making.

To cease being a hypocrite cannot be done by becoming honest, for that is another ideal, another image; but in understanding the working of the mind, in seeing its motives, in perceiving the facts. In that there is no new representation, no distortion no hypocrisy; but there is discernment of what is.

237. Distortion (2)

Awareness is distorted by thought. It is thought with its reflection and memory, projection and idealisation, which cultivates the momentary bliss of intelligence, in order to give the experience a duration of time, a continuation in time, a projection of place, a substance in space, a “self”. This distortion is effected by mental discipline, social morality, faith, tradition, conformity, which are all intended to provide stability and security, without which continuation is meaningless.

Thus, it is desire for continuation which lays hold of the moment of bliss in selfless experiencing, with the intention of providing a source of satisfaction, pleasure, gratification to the senses, to be preserved in memory, to be reflected upon by thought, to be idealised for continuation and security. The satisfaction thus provided is then the bondage which prevents the experiencing of freedom, the distortion which prevents the perception of what is, the allurements which draw aside and thus prevent the awakening of intelligence.

The joy of relationship is distorted into the possession; the delight of discovery is distorted into the satisfaction of success; the ecstasy of beauty is distorted into the gratification of the senses. This leads to clinging to possessions, striving for success, indulgence of the senses. But freedom does not lie there. In freedom there is no indulging, for, all that is of thought, of projecting, of “self”.

Freedom is in the bliss of awakening, not in striving for it as an ideal. To be free from “self” can never be an ideal of the

“self”. This freedom is not a goal to be achieved but in awakening there is freedom, for the bondage is in thought; in thought there is distortion, and in the silence of thought there is no reflection, no distortion, but just the bliss of awakening to freedom from “self”.

238. Disturbance

There are the great disturbances of international warfare and interracial riots; there are the quarrels between neighbours across the fence and the misunderstandings within the family. But, ultimately the difference is one of degree, for they are all caused by the mind not being at rest.

In any disturbance there is an individual withdrawal which, of course, on an international scale is more evident: the closure of frontiers, tightening of security measures, calling up of the defence forces. Yet, that same type of activity is found when one's individual security is at stake.

The mind is disturbed when there is thought of loss. It may be merely a loss of prestige or of influence, but such losses affect the individual "self" even more than the loss of possessions. For, then the loss incurred is of oneself; and that is the last thing one can afford to lose. The mind, at the moment of loss, experiences acutely the absence of a desirable factor, or putting it more positively, the mind is experiencing a lack, a void, which it now considers as something to be filled, satisfied. And so, without trying to understand what it is, why it is there, from where it comes, one just tries to fill that void.

The void is experienced, not as something in itself, but as the absence of an expectation, the non-fulfilment of a hope. Hope, desire, expectation are the continuation of thoughts of memory which failed to satisfy in intensity, in duration, something which was considered necessary, for existence and continuation of "self" in its struggle for being and becoming. And so, everything is

brought back to this concept of “self” based on past memory, continued in future ideals, but never seen in its actual presence, because it is not actual, but only a reaction to a failure to understand. If, in understanding this, the mind does not react to past conditioning and ideal reflexes, then the mind is at rest, while seeing the void as a reflection of desire. And seeing that is the end of disturbance.

239. Division (1)

Knowledge is not the cause of division among people, but the appropriation and the withholding of knowledge. For, knowledge gives power of possession and power of action. And so, knowledge is retained, not for the sake of advancement of science, or for the increase of comfort in living, but for the sake of the power it gives over others. Then, knowledge ceases to be of physical benefit, but becomes of psychological importance. This knowledge may be merely technical, or it may be spiritual; it may be actual, or it may be idealistic or ideological. But it is always knowledge which has obtained a psychological importance which divides people because it cannot be shared. Its value exists only in the individual mind. Someone claims that knowledge and others believe him; it is the birth of authority, and also the birth of hope and fear; it is the will to exploit and dominate, and the wish to be secure through domination.

It is this division which causes conflict in society, in the world at large, and also in the individual mind. A mind that wants to be secure has craving and clinging; and the desire to become, to achieve, to possess, can only lead to opposition between self and others, which is domination and exploitation, conflict and war.

When knowledge is as freely available as the air we breathe, as the sunset we admire, then also the necessities of life, as food and clothing, will be within the reach of all. And when easily available without distinction, there will be no privileged classes, no division between haves and have-nots, no desire and no jealousy. Then knowledge will have lost its psychological power; and striving

for power as a means towards security will have lost its meaning. It will be the end of division in the attainment of understanding and of love of one another.

Thus there is no effort needed to bridge the gap which divides people and individuals, as long as there is understanding of the reasons why there is a withholding of knowledge in the technical field, a withholding of understanding in the field of social relationship, a withholding of insight in the field of religion, which encourages superstition, mystery, fear, the things which keep the mind divided.

240. Division (2)

The ultimate division in thought, in action, in existence is the “I” and the “non-I”. All striving to achieve or to avoid is done by and for the “I”. All resistance to that movement is the “non-I”. The source of this division is the desire to survive and to continue, which in its very nature resists all change, movement ending. This desire for continuance is essential to the “I”-concept for in non-continuity it ceases.

Still, for all that, the “I” is merely a concept created through resistance against movement, against time and change, in order to maintain existence. And thus, existence is maintained by resistance. And that, of course, can produce only conflict and confusion.

There is so much confusion that thought, even when it perceives its reliance on memory, divides itself and believes it can analyse and thus lay bare its subconscious layers. But that too will still be within the framework of thought, the concept of of the “I” which maintains and is maintained by the accumulative memory. The “I” thereby becomes the cause as well as the effect of thought. It is necessary for survival.

But then, what is there to survive? Memory? Confusion? Conflict? Can an experience survive? Is not an experience something of the present only? Does not an experience become a memory as soon as it survives? Is not the very essence of experience experiencing? Not in remembering it, or storing it, or adapting it as “mine”! Then, what is the “I” apart from memory, when it is only memory which can survive? Both the “I” and

therefore the “non-I” are concepts, forming an artificial division within an idea which has no continuity, no existence, no reality, And that makes not only the division artificial and unreal, but also the consequence of division, namely, isolation, opposition, conflict.

In experiencing there is no division, because there is no thought about it, or “me”. And when there is no “I”, there is no “non-I”, either, no survival, no memory, no division, no conflict, no thinking; but only living in experiencing, being what is, seeing what is and understanding things as they are in themselves.

241. Division (3)

Observing the “self” in action, dividing its experiences into the “me” and the “not me” is probably the last and most difficult approach to any problem. As long as the question is asked: How can there be observance without such division? the distinction is already made and it is the “me” who wants to observe.

In our divided lives, so full of contradiction and conflict, there is the one fragment which wants to see and understand the other half in action; it is that one fragment which thinks it has the capacity to observe, to introspect, to analyse itself. But the conflict is not in the action of a part, but in the fact that we observe in parts, in the fact that we are divided, and that one part wants to dominate the other.

Even when we reach the conclusion that such fragmentation can only lead to greater conflict, there is an attempt at solving it from the outside, through the grace of God, through mind-control, through higher attainment of a super-soul, whereby an escape is planned. But it is still, that same “self” who wants to escape from what it does not understand, from what cannot be integrated either through yoga or psychoanalysis.

Observing is not controlling, not “wanting to see”, not expecting a result, all of which is division in action. Now, the truth is not to be found as a result of a search, for the search itself is an escape, a division between the searcher and his goal. But the observing of the escape, seeing the contradiction and futility of such action, brings the action to an end. In that shock of observing there is no division, there is no action with purpose, with intention

to achieve, neither “self” nor no-self; there is just the truth of observing what is without an observer. And that is freedom from all division and conflict, from escaping and conditioning, from wanting and becoming.

242. Dogma

The assertion of a principle with the arrogant declaration of its truth is imposed by an authority which not only lays down the law of action, but even formulates the law of thinking. The expressing of such unsupported assertion, however, does not seem to be the prerogative of those who have assumed the ministering of their flock with dogmatic learning; but, paradoxically, it is found equally and sometimes more vociferously among the high-priests of reason. To assume the highest authority for reason and research is as dogmatic as the assumptions in the name of faith and theological truth.

Then, what is the basis for right thinking?

A better question would be: Why does one want a basis for thinking? After all, what is thought but the faculty of reason? And what is reason but the search for conclusions from pre-existing premises? Thus, the basis of thought is the experience of the past; and the purpose of thought is its continuance in the future.

For, what is the value, the meaning, the purpose of existence of the struggle of live, of the urge for progress, if there were no continuance, no ideal? But that future is the same thought continued from the past, the same memory projected as an ideal, the same residue of experience brought forward as balance for reliance and security. It is the assertion of continuance, the pride which says "I am", which is afraid to be what is in the present, and which therefore relies on the past to become in the future.

When there is no basis for thought, there can be an open and

receptive mind, vulnerable and sensitive to the present without arrogance and prejudice, without authority and dogma, open to meet the challenge with understanding and love, and to see the truth in the present which is.

243. Domination (1)

Thought is always dominating, because it is for ever in search of security. This search for what is not, constitutes its unceasing movement, which does not allow it to see what is. Intelligence, on the other hand, wants to see and understand; and thus it does not move away; its interest is not in searching, but in seeing; hence it is quiet, does not want domination, because it is not interested in security in the future; it finds all it needs in understanding, not in possessing.

Thus, thought seeks security; but intelligence *is* secure. Whenever there is searching, there is also activity which leads to conquest. And so it happens that thought dominates intelligence. Intelligence, not being interested in domination or conquest, cannot fight back, so to speak, for it does not recognise opposition, except as a delusion of “self” expanding itself through thought. For intelligence to be unconditioned and free, it need not and cannot suppress thought; but in seeing what is without comparing without justification or condemnation, the thought-process with its self-conscious memory and projection of ideals simply fades away in the full glare of understanding.

There is a purpose in the domination of thought, for, thought has to continue in order to be secure. Thus, thought has invented ideologies and ideals for the “self” (that sum-total of the past, of memories, traditions, beliefs, etc.) to exist and to continue.

But, intelligence does not want to continue; it is the response, not to memory, but to every fresh challenge to be met, to be understood. Its security, so to speak, lies in the ever-fresh supply

of stimuli, which are there every moment, as long as there is life. Not seeking security, it is secure; not seeking movement, it is quiet; not seeking continuation, it is always new; not seeking possession, it is not possessed, and hence unconditioned and free.

244. Domination (2)

Not only the strong dominate the weak in power-politics, when highly developed nations try to lord it over small, developing nations, but also the other way round, when the smaller countries by the sheer weight of their number try to dictate the bigger ones, demanding to the point of black-mailing a share in the profit which is not theirs.

The show of power, one way or the other, gives that satisfaction of self-assertion; the gratification of being somebody. The domination, evidenced in international affairs, is but a reflection of the domination exercised by individuals, by the bully at school, by the elder brother at home, by the father as head of the family, by the spiritual authority of the priest as God's representative, by the leader of the party or the head of the organisation. When one is suppressed somewhere down the line, one gets it back out of some one else still lower down on the ladder. And so we all make use of the shoulders of someone else to get a rise for ourselves.

At the base of all this striving for the top is the feeling of insecurity in being nobody. And so, the gathering of strength, the building up of resistance, the isolation against opposition, begins with the accumulation of knowledge, the securing of property, of position, of authority, with the single aim of making the "self" secure for the future, for continuance, for expansion. Feelings of understanding and loving kindness are suppressed, those below are despised and looked down upon, while we look up to our superiors in flattery and envy, waiting for a chance to take their place.

Such is the rat-race of society, which begins with my self-assertion, my idealising an image projected from the past, with thought as memory trying to become thought as an ideal, while all the time I am still that mentally retarded child, refusing to eat its porridge, while dreaming of a greatness in conflict with the present.

245. Doubt (1)

An uncertainty of mind can produce only a lack of understanding. But, doubt must not be confused with a withholding of judgement, of consent and support, which is the attitude of an open mind. An open mind can be alert and thus be aware of the many influences and conditions which tend to prejudice the mind and make it incline towards, and decide on issues which are not relevant.

A mind in doubt is a mind which is inclined to disbelieve, and this inclination is already an obstacle to understanding. An open mind will be aware of those obstacles and therefore not be inclined or prejudiced.

Whereas investigation of facts (*dhamma-vicaya*) may lead to discovery, mere doubt as perplexity (*vicikiccha*) brings about a wavering state of mind, which cannot decide one way or the other, because of its lack of understanding.

When there is doubt in the mind, it is a symptom of confusion, a lack of understanding of the real issue. The confusion is about certain means or methods which become so important that the object of action is obscured. All political parties promise to help the poor man, but they cannot unite and thus be of actual help, because they are divided as to the means; and thus there is confusion, opposition and conflict. But if the issue is clearly understood, action can follow immediately, and such action is not the result or the reaction to a party manifesto.

Doubt, therefore, seeks a solution without understanding and that leads to perplexity, confusion and conflict without solution. Doubt seeks certainty, safety, security for the mind, and that

brings about prejudice in favour of the “self”. The open mind which does not seek a solution is alert and is thereby able to see clearly without prejudicial doubt, without confusing the issues; and so, through direct investigation it understands with clear insight and without inclination facts as facts, doubts as doubts, false as false; and thus see the truth

246. Doubt (2)

It is not only the feeling of uncertainty, the state of indecision, which makes for uneasiness of insecurity, but also a hesitation to believe or to trust. This kind of doubt which is a lack of trust is not a perplexity of a bewildered mind, but rather a state of self-opinionatedness as a result of a closed or conditioned mind.

This kind of doubt, then, is a real hindrance to understanding, for it refuses to be open, see, investigate and find out. There is a great difference between a doubting mind and an open mind; for, a doubting mind is already more than half convinced of its own views and opinions, and is therefore not sensitive and alert to any other view, or to seeing things as they are with an unprejudiced mind. In a doubting mind the various views are entangled and the mind is confused. Any action taken in such a bewildered state of mind can only complicate matters, for there can be no clear understanding, and hence no free and independent action.

It is not a question or a problem, how to get rid of doubt, for such a question merely betrays an anxiety to escape from the problem, It is this anxiety of solving a problem, which prevents its solution. Facing the issue, there must be an undisturbed quiet to contemplate the issue, which is not somebody's statement whether true or false, but which is the fact and the truth of my mind being in doubt.

When I see my doubt as a refusal to be open, then there is no further search for certainty, for then I begin to see what is, setting aside what I might think that should be. In this direct viewing with an unconditioned mind, without searching for a solution

or an ideal, there is a calm sensitivity without plan or purpose, in which there is an immediate contact of clear perception, in which there is no doubt and hence no choice, and from the clear insight of which springs a direct course of action without doubt, indecision, desire, fear or conflict.

247. Dreams (1)

Dreams are the unconscious continuation of one's effort to solve a problem which has been eluding us in the awakened state. Thus, dreams become hints, trying to express themselves unimpeded in an effort in which rational thought could not succeed. Hence, dreams are not logical, even though they are obviously products of thought. But where logical thinking cannot proceed further along its own made rules, dreams are not guided by logic and appear therefore to be more intuitive. With less inhibition to deal with, a dream may provide a different view to a problem, but it is still product of thought, and, therefore, a symbol and a token of what is going on in the mind.

The unusual and sometimes illogical way of the working of the mind in a dream-state has given to dreams an unrealistic existence, as if a "soul" was being freed from the bondage of the flesh on the astral plane.

It is a mere sublimation of the gross involvement of carnal thought building up a permanent entity, the "I", the "soul" to establish an enduring foundation for the continuation of memory, into the projection of an ideal of permanent existence. It is the same thought process which invented the "self" through the preservation of memory, which now in a more "ethereal" way tries to separate itself from impermanent and material becoming. It is the same separation between a thinker, as observer, and his thought, which is the cause of opposition and conflict. The observer is perpetuating the division without which he cannot

exist. And that is also the perpetuation of imitation, of opposition, of conflict, of confusion, of contradiction.

Only when there is no complex of division and fragmentation, of an observer and a dream, then both have lost their significance. Only then can there be an undivided, unconditioned awareness without prejudices and foregone conclusions. In that total openness of a mind in learning, there is no symbol, no comparison, but direct perception; And that is truth.

248. Dreams (2)

Dreams are the awakening of uncontrolled thoughts during sleeping hours. That does not mean, however, that dreams or dream-thoughts are not conditioned. All thoughts are the reflexes from accumulated experience which have become memories. Such experiences have been accumulated for their collective value; for, it is in those memories that the mind has stored up and built up an image, a reflection, a picture, which can continue as the “self”. Without memory there can be no “self”. But neither can there be the idea of a “self” if there is no continuation of that concept. And thus, dreams are memories brought up, as well as projections of those images for continuation in the future. And that gives to dream that unreality, which is not found in a mind which is aware and awake.

What we may call physical memories, such as the remembrance of the way home, of familiar faces, and so on, are individual experiences collected by the mind, but they are a physical necessity for living, and are found in animals too, in sight or smell or touch. But man, in his developed capacity of thought, is making use of those memories for psychological reasons far beyond physical survival. He wants them for psychological survival and expansion, to support and enlarge that picture of his “ego” beyond his physical needs.

Where physical remembrance is a need for survival, there psychological memory is a greed for continuation, for expansion, for securing, for escaping into the isolation of the “self”. When thought refers to those collected memories (and that is the only

thing that thought can do), there is no new learning, and thus it is always the old which controls and conditions the new experience when it is made an object of thought.

In dreams there is no control over those conditionings and thus dreams reveal the true state of mind, when thoughts are let loose, like dogs let off the chain during the night. Only when an experience is fully lived it is not made an object of reflection, of thought; and then it can be understood and dealt with. Such a complete experience will not recur in a dream, in memory; and cannot become an object of desire, hope, fear, or conflict.

249. Drop-Out

To drop out it is not necessary to sink to the ground from exhaustion. It is much more a relinquishing, a natural shedding of what is not natural, a ceasing to hold on to what is seen as phenomenal, delusive, deceptive. It is, therefore, not a dropping off to sleep, not an escape through drugs, through religious or social activities. It is rather an awakening from a dream in which there was the remembrance of the dream-state its hallucination, and the experiencing of freedom therefrom.

Hence, far from being a mere passive yielding to an unconstrained freedom of individual action with utter disregard to consequences, it is an awareness, an awakening of intelligence, an intense and comprehensive understanding, which is not knowledge but insight, and which is therefore immensely active so that action follows immediately on understanding spontaneously because of it having no purpose.

Such a “drop-out” is then truly a “turn-on” with a completely different approach. When all intention and purpose, will and volition, desire and holding on are understood to be mere functions of a mind which must continue if not perish, which must expand if not wither, which must deceive if not be found out, then the dropping of all that is an ever new revelation, when “what should be” as an ideal is relinquished for “what is”, then the self-seeking thought ceases to hang on to memory and to ideals.

It is this “tuning-in” to what is, that makes a true revolution as the awakening from a dream. “To see things as they are” does not require a new technique. It follows immediately and natu-

rally when deception ceases. But, to see deception as deception, hypocrisy as hypocrisy, the false as false, that requires the relinquishing of “self” and its interests in becoming, in continuation, in projection. When the “self” is seen as “self”, as memory, as thought, as ideal, it can no longer act with purpose. In that understanding there is a drop-out, a turning-on and a tuning-in, which is real because it is now.

250. Drugs

Tranquillizers may be prescribed by a physician in acute pain, to provide rest to the body when this is required in the process of a cure. But some drugs are taken as an escape from mental unrest, for they can provide an abnormal mental excitement. In this latter case drugs are obviously taken as an escape from, one's own dull perception, as an uplift from an otherwise shallow life, as a means to reach a higher dimension of thought and experience.

The difference is clear: physical pain originates in the nerves as toothache is not in the decaying tooth, but in the nerve connected with the brain. Once the tooth is removed or the cavity filled, the nerve is no longer stimulated into reaction. This chilling of pain has no dulling of the mind in view.

Psychological pain, distress, conflict, originate in thought and the stimulation of thought may produce a temporary upliftment, just as the sublimation of the process of thought leads thought to a higher plane; but it still remains thought which in this case is not a new thought born of understanding, but the hunger for a new experience to fill the void of existence as we know it. And that hunger and that void remain as before because a drug is not the appropriate answer to the problem challenging the mind; and the mind escaping from it in a drugged state is still the same shallow mind.

Is not this a false approach, running away from a challenge even without knowing what the problem truly is? The only sane approach to the unknown is to stand still and watch to find out its nature. When the void is seen as the absence of duality, of

opposition, of conflict, there is no reason to escape, there is no possibility of escaping, and no desire for escaping. Understanding of the void then may provide the very peace one was searching in trying to escape through drugs.

251. Duality

Dualism is a theory recognising two independent principles, such as good and evil in the universe, mind and matter in the individual, which find their ramifications in various systems of philosophy, idealism and materialism. When the two principles are recognised as independent at least in their origin, there is bound to arise a conflict in their workings, in their spheres of influence, in their dominance and conditioning.

Life is relationship, but duality in relationship is conflict. It is the understanding and insight into the nature of relationship, which alone can prevent life becoming the conflict, which makes it the terrible actuality of one's daily encounter. Duality in relationship can lead only to opposition, and hence to exploitation, dominance, hate, in which there is no freedom and no love.

But when there is understanding of the nature of this conflict, how it is based on the idealistic foundation of self, against another; when there is understanding of the nature of this self-delusion, how it must expand in order to survive, and therefore can survive only in conflict; when there is understanding of the nature of action without self and without conflict—then there is also understanding of relationship which is not exploitation, but which is action without motive, action through understanding of necessity, of need without greed, action through love which alone can solve the conflict of duality and set the mind free from all opposites.

The will to act, the will to become, is the greed which is causing all hate and antagonism in our private lives, and in the

life of the society at large. The will to act is an act with a purpose; it is the ideal towards which action is directed. But that ideal is the projected “self” carried over from the past. “Self” is then the purpose; and that is the image of the ideal causing the conflict in duality in being and becoming, the actual and the ideal.

In true action there is no will to become; there is no thought of “self”; there is only the understanding of the immediate need of action in which the self has no place. Such action, then, is non-dualistic, and thus cannot produce opposition or conflict, as there is no greed, no will, no “self”.

966. Reaction (4)

To be affected by feelings or sensations is quite natural; it is nature's way of looking after itself. When there is a wound, nature draws our attention to it and we call it pain. If there is no pain, as in the case of leprosy, one might not know that there is a wound, and bleed to death. And thus one reacts to pain, and of course to pleasure also.

But now the mind comes in, when reacting to pain, I do something not only to stop the bleeding, but also to discontinue the pain, even though that is only a symptom. But with regard to pleasure, I do not want to discontinue. I rather have more of it and try to prolong the sensation or call it back from memory.

Now, the operational performance in the functional discharge of reaction is basically the same, whether the reaction is physical or mental: the reaction is to protect; it is an act of resistance. Nature protects itself physically, because on that depends the continuation of life in the process of evolution. And for the same reason, although not biologically of course, I protect myself psychologically, I resist my being pushed around, I react psychologically, because I depend entirely on continuation. In protecting I am resisting, opposing, asserting, quarrelling. About what?

Nature protects its course of evolution with its constitutional qualities of resistance, which is hardness (*paṭhāvi*), off allegiance, which is cohesion (*apo*), of energy, which is radiation (*tejo*), of flexibility, which is movement (*vayo*).

And I protect myself with thoughts, ideas, memories, ideals, resulting in love and hate, attraction and repulsion, in self-defence.

But what is this “self” apart from those reactions? Then what is there to defend, but an idea, a concept, a thought, which it is convenient to maintain for purpose of storing the past and building a future, but which has no existence in the present, no meaning in existence, and which is, therefore, a mere reaction to an image, which is baseless, without being and without continuity.

1.1.1978

About the Author

Henri van Zeyst was born in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in 1905. Educated throughout in Catholic schools and colleges, he spent his final years of studies in philosophy and theology and the first year of his priestly ordination in an Italian monastery near Florence. At the age of 31 he was sent to London to be in charge of a new foundation of his Order, where he was also teaching Dogmatic Theology to the scholastics of Christus Rex Priory in North London. An intensive course of comparative religion brought him in contact with Buddhism. Within a year of his coming to Sri Lanka he was ordained a Buddhist monk there in 1938 under the name of Bhikkhu Dhammapāla. From 1956 to 1968 he worked at the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism at the University of Ceylon in Peradeniya of which he was in the final years of that period the Senior Assistant Editor and Administrative Officer. During the last stages of his life he was residing in a meditation centre at Nilambe, Kandy, giving instructions to those who came to him for guidance on meditation.

He died on September 15th in 1988.

