

## QUESTIONS RAISED IN *THE LIFE DIVINE* BOOK

1, Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God? 6

Ans: The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out superman, the god.

2, What is that work and result, if not a self-involution of Consciousness in form and a self-evolution out of form so as to actualize some mighty possibility in the universe which it has created? 17

Ans: **Science** itself begins to dream of the physical conquest of death, expresses an insatiable thirst for knowledge, is working out some thing like a terrestrial omnipotence for humanity. Space and Time are contracting to the vanishing-point in its works, and it strives in a hundred ways to make man the master of circumstance and so lighten the fetters of causality.

3, And what is its will in Man if not a will to unending Life, to unbounded Knowledge, to unfettered Power? 17

Ans: The idea of limit, of the impossible begins to grow a little shadowy and it appears instead that **whatever man constantly wills, he must in the end be able to do**; for **the consciousness in the race** eventually finds the means. **It is not in the individual that this omnipotence expresses itself, but the collective Will of mankind that works out with the individual as a means.** And yet when we look more deeply, it is not any conscious Will of collectivity, but a **superconscious Might that uses the individual as a centre and means**, the collectivity as a condition and field.

4, What is this but the God in man, the infinite Identity, the multitudinous Unity, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, who having made man in His own image, with the ego as a centre of working, with the race, the collective Narayana, the *visvamanava* as the mould and circumscription, seeks to express in them some image of the unity, omniscience, omnipotence which are the self-conception of the Divine? 17-18

Ans: “That which is immortal in mortals is a God and established inwardly as an energy working out in our divine powers.” It is this vast cosmic impulse which the modern world, without quite knowing its **own aim**, yet serves in all its activities and labours subconsciously to fulfil.’

5, For it raises the question of the reality of cosmic existence and, more important still, the question of the value of human life. 23

Ans: It has been argued in reply that the material universe enjoys an eternal self-existence: it was here before life and mind made their appearance; it will survive after they have disappeared and no longer trouble with their transient strivings and limited thoughts the eternal and inconscient rhythm of the suns. The difference, so metaphysical in appearance, is yet of the utmost practical import, for it determines the whole outlook of man upon life, **the goal that he shall assign** for his efforts and the field in which he shall circumscribe his energies.

6, Then arises the question which first occurred to us, whether this transcendence is necessarily also a rejection. 26-27

Ans: And the mind when it passes those gates (of Transcendent) suddenly, without intermediate transitions, receives a sense of the unreality of the world and the sole reality of the Silence which is one of the **most powerful and convincing experiences** of which human mind is capable. Here, in the perception of this pure Self or of the Non-Being behind it, we have the starting-point for a **second negation**, --parallel at the other pole to the materialistic, but more complete, more final, **more perilous in its effects on the individuals or collectivities** that hear its potent call to the wilderness, --the refusal of the ascetic... Through many centuries a great many of shining witnesses, saints and teachers, names sacred to Indian memory and dominant in Indian Imagination, have borne always the same witness and swelled always the same lofty and distant appeal,--renunciation the sole path of knowledge, acceptance of physical life the act of the ignorant, cessation from birth the right use of human birth, the call of the Spirit, the recoil from Matter.

7, What relation has this universe to the Beyond? 26, 27-28

Ans: We perceive that in the Indian ascetic ideal the great *Vedantic* formula, "One without a second", has not been read sufficiently in the light of that other *formula* equally **imperative**, "All this is the Brahman". The passionate aspiration of man upward to the Divine has not been sufficiently related to the descending movement of the Divine leaning downward to embrace eternally Its manifestation. Its meaning in Matter has not been so well understood as Its truth in the Spirit. The Reality which the *Sannyasin* seeks has been grasped in its full height, but not, as by the ancient *Vedantins*, in its **full extent and comprehensiveness**. But in our completer affirmation we **must not minimise** the part of the pure spiritual impulse. As we have seen how greatly Materialism has served the ends of the Divine, so **we must** acknowledge the still greater service rendered by Asceticism to Life. We shall preserve the truths of **material Science** and its real utilities in the final harmony, even if many or even if all of its existing forms have to be broken or left aside. And even greater scruple of right preservation **must guide us** in our dealing with the legacy, however actually diminished or depreciated, of the *Aryan* past.

8, What then of that silent Self, inactive, pure, self-existent, self-enjoying, which presented itself to us as the abiding justification of the ascetic? 30

Ans: Here also harmony and not irreconcilable opposition **must be** the illuminative truth. The silent and the active Brahman are not different, opposite and irreconcilable entities, the one denying, the other affirming a cosmic illusion; they are one Brahman in two aspects, positive and negative, and each is necessary to the other. It is out of this **Silence that the Word which creates the worlds** for ever proceeds; for the Word expresses that which is self-hidden in the Silence. It is an eternal passivity which makes possible the perfect freedom and omnipotence of an eternal divine activity in innumerable cosmic systems. **For the becomings of**

**that activity derive their energies and their illimitable potency of variation and harmony from the impartial support of the immutable Being, its consent to this infinite fecundity of its own dynamic Nature.**

9, For what was that portentous date in the history of eternal Nothing (Non-Being) on which Being was born out of it or when will come that other date equally formidable on which an unreal all wise relapse into the perpetual void? 32

Ans: Sat and Asat, if they have both to be affirmed, must be conceived as if they obtained simultaneously. They permit each other even though they refuse to mingle. Both, since we must speak in terms of Time, are eternal.

10, And who shall persuade eternal Being that it does not really exist and only eternal Non-Being is? In such a negation of all experience how shall we find the solution that explains all experience? 33

Ans: Pure Being is the affirmation by the Unknowable of Itself as the free base of all cosmic existence. We give the name of Non-Being to a contrary affirmation of Its freedom from all cosmic existence, --freedom, that is to say, from all positive terms of actual existence which consciousness in the universe can formulate to itself, even from the most abstract, even from the most transcendent. It does not deny them as a real expression Itself, but It denies Its limitation by all expression or any expression whatsoever. The Non-Being permits the Being, even as the Silence permits Activity. By this simultaneous negation and affirmation, not mutually destructive, but complementary to each other like all contraries, the simultaneous awareness of conscious Self-being as a reality and the Unknowable beyond as the same Reality becomes realisable to **the awakened human soul.**

11, If we accept the positive basis of our harmony --and on what other can harmony be founded? 35

Ans: --the various conceptual formulations of the Unknowable, each of them representing a truth beyond conception, must be understood as far as possible in their relation to each other and in their effect upon life, not separately, not exclusively, not so affirmed as to destroy or unduly diminish all other affirmations.

12, If **the gold of which the vessel is made is real**, how shall we suppose that the vessel itself is a mirage? 36

Ans: If then the world is a dream or a mistake, it is a dream originated and willed by the Self in its totality and not only originated and willed, but supported and perpetually entertained. Moreover, it is a dream existing in a Reality and the stuff of which it is made is that Reality, for Brahman must be the material of the world as well as its base and continent... We see that these words, dream, illusion, are tricks of speech, **habits of our relative consciousness**; they represent a certain truth, even a great truth, **but they also misrepresent it.** Just as Non-Being turns out to be other than mere nullity, so the cosmic Dream turns out to be other than mere phantasm and hallucination of the mind. Phenomenon is not phantasm; phenomenon is the substantial form of a Truth.

13, But who then profits by this escape (escape from the sense of separateness) of individual salvation? 43

Ans: Not the supreme Self, for it is supposed to be always and inalienably free, still, silent, pure. Not the world, for that remains constantly in the bondage and is not freed by the escape of any individual soul from the universal Illusion. It is the individual soul itself which effects its supreme good by escaping from the sorrow and the division into peace and bliss.

14, And is not this after all the truth that pursues us wherever we cast our eyes, unless seeing we choose not to see? Is not this after all the perfectly natural and simple mystery of Conscious Being that It is bound neither by Its unity nor by Its multiplicity? 44

Ans: It is “absolute” in the sense of being entirely free to include and arrange in Its own way all possible terms of Its self-expression. There is none bound, none freed, none seeking to be free, --for always That is a perfect freedom. It is so free that It is not even bound by Its liberty. It can play at being bound without incurring a real bondage. Its chain is a self-imposed convention, Its limitation in the ego a transitional device that It uses in order to repeat Its transcendence and universality in the scheme of the individual Brahman.

15, Where shall we fix the limit of that extension ([reproduction and multiplication of liberated Divine Souls](#))?

Ans: Is it altogether a legend which says of **the Buddha** that as he stood on the threshold of Nirvana, of the Non-Being, his soul turned back and took the vow never to make the irrevocable crossing so long as there was a single being upon earth undelivered from the knot of suffering, from the bondage of the ego? 45 ([This indicated that Buddha wanted to universalize Nirvana in all humanity and he had all patience of the Avatara to attain this goal.](#))

Ans: But we can attain to the highest without blotting ourselves out from the cosmic extension. Brahman preserves always Its two terms of (1) liberty within and of (2) formation without, (2) of expression and (1) of freedom from the expression. We also, being That, can attain to the same divine self-possession. The harmony of **the two tendencies** is the condition of **all life** that **aims** at being really divine. Liberty pursued by exclusion of the thing exceeded leads along the path of negation to the refusal of that which God has accepted ([Later Vedantic pursuit of liberated Souls](#)). Activity pursued by **absorption in the act** and the energy leads to an inferior affirmation and the denial of the Highest ([Materialist pursuit of bound Souls](#)).

16, But what God combines and synthesizes, wherefore should man insist on divorcing? 46

Ans: To be perfect as He is perfect is the condition of His integral attainment... Through Avidya, the Multiplicity, **lies our path** out of the transitional egoistic self-expression in which death and suffering predominate; through Vidya consenting with Avidya by the perfect sense of oneness even in that multiplicity, we enjoy integrally the immortality and the beatitude. By attaining to the Unborn

beyond all becoming we are liberated from this lower birth and death; by accepting the Becoming freely as the Divine, we **invade mortality** with the immortal beatitude and become **luminous centres** of its conscious self-expression in humanity.

17, Perhaps they (negations) are unfathomable, perhaps they also are really unknowable in their essence? 53

Ans: Or it may be, they have no essential reality, --are an illusion, Asat, non-being. The superior Negation appears to us sometimes as a Nihil, a Non-Existence; this inferior negation may also be, in its essence, a Nihil, a non-existence. But as we have already put away from us this evasion of the difficulty with regard to that higher, so also we discard it for this inferior Astat. To deny entirely its reality or to seek an escape from it as a mere disastrous illusion is to put away from us the problem and to shun our work.

18, Yet how can such contraries pass into each other? By what alchemy shall this lead of mortality be turned into that **gold of Divine Being**? But if they are not in their essence contraries? If they are manifestations of one Reality, identical in substance? 54, 55

Ans: Then indeed a divine transmutation becomes conceivable... To do this ([a sufficient basis in experience for the practice of the divine life](#)) we must dare to go below the clear surfaces of things on which the mind loves to dwell, to tempt the vast and obscure, to penetrate the unfathomable depths of consciousness and identify ourselves with states of being that are not our own. **Human language is a poor** help in such a search, but at least we may find in it some symbols and figures, return with some just expressible hints which will help the light of the soul and throw upon the mind some reflection of the ineffable design.

19, But how shall we conceive of the elimination of pain from nervous sensation or of death from the life of the body? 62

Ans: Yet the rejection of pain is a sovereign instinct of the sensations, the rejection of death a dominant claim inherent in the essence of our vitality. But these things present themselves to our reason as **instinctive aspirations**, not as realizable potentialities.

20, But what then is the working of this Sachchidananda in the world and by what process of things are the relations between itself and the ego which figures it **first formed**, then led to their consummation? 66

Ans: For on those relations and on the process they follow depend the whole philosophy and practice of a **divine life** for man... We arrive at the conception and at the knowledge of a divine existence by exceeding the evidence of the senses and piercing beyond the walls of **physical mind**. So long as we confine ourselves to **sense-evidence and the physical consciousness**, we can conceive nothing and know nothing except the material world and its phenomena. But certain faculties in us enable our mentality to arrive conceptions which we may indeed deduce by ratiocination or by imaginative variation from the facts of the physical world as we

see them, but which are not warranted by any purely physical data or any physical experience. The **first of these instruments is the pure reason.**

21, Even when it begins to philosophise, does it not assert that the world only exists in and by its consciousness? 80

Ans: Its own **state of consciousness** or mental standards are to it the test of reality; all outside its orbit or view tends to become false or non-existent. **This mental self-sufficiency of man creates a system of false accountantship which prevents us from drawing the right and full value from life.** There is a sense in which these pretensions of the **human mind and ego repose on a truth**, but this truth only emerges when the mind has learned its ignorance and the **ego has submitted to the All** and lost in it its separate self-assertion. To recognise that we, or rather the results and appearances we call ourselves, are only **a partial movement of this infinite Movement** and that it is that infinite which we have to know, to be consciously and to fulfil faithfully, is the commencement of true living. To recognise that in our true selves we are **one with the total movement and not minor or subordinate** is the other side of the account, and its expression in the manner of our being, thought, emotion and action is necessary to the culmination of a true **divine living.**

22, But is it equally true that underlying this movement, supporting it, there is nothing that is moveless and immutable? Is it true that existence consists only in action of energy? Or is it not rather that energy is an output of Existence? 81

Ans: We see at once that if such an Existence is, it must be, like the Energy, infinite. Neither reason nor experience nor intuition nor imagination bears witness to us of the possibility of a final terminus. All end and beginning presuppose something beyond the end or beginning. An absolute end, an absolute beginning is not only a contradiction in terms, but a contradiction of the essence of things, a violence, a fiction. Infinity imposes itself upon appearances of the finite by its ineffugable self-existence.

23, But is this a true record? May it not be that Time and Space so disappear merely because the existence we are regarding is a fiction of the intellect, a fantastic Nihil created by speech, which we strive to erect into a conceptual reality? 82

Ans: We regard again that Existence-in-itself and we say, No. There is something behind the phenomenon not only infinite but indefinable. Of no phenomenon, of no totality of phenomena can we say that absolutely it is. Even if we reduce all phenomena to one fundamental, universal irreducible phenomenon of movement or energy, we get only an indefinable phenomenon. The very conception of movement carries with it the potentiality of repose and betrays itself as an activity of some existence; the very idea of energy in action carries with it the idea of abstaining from action; and an absolute energy not in action is simply and purely absolute existence. We have only these two alternatives, either an indefinable pure existence or an indefinable energy in action and, if the latter alone is true, without any stable base or cause, then the energy is a result and phenomenon generated by

the action, the movement which alone is. We have then no Existence, or we have the Nihil of the Buddhists with existence as only an attribute of an eternal phenomenon, of Action, of Karma, of Movement. This, asserts the pure reason, leaves my perceptions unsatisfied, contradicts my fundamental seeing, and therefore cannot be. For it brings us to a last abruptly ceasing stair of an ascent which leaves the whole staircase without support, suspended in the Void.

24, We have seen what pure Reason, intuition and experience have to say about pure Existence, about Sat; what have they to say about Force, about Movement, about Shakti? 86

Ans: And the first thing we have to ask ourselves is whether that Force is simply force, simply an unintelligent energy of movement or whether the consciousness which seems to emerge out of it in this material world we live in, is not merely one of its phenomenal results but rather its own true and secret nature.

25, In Vedantic terms, is Force simply Prakriti, only a movement of action and process, or is Prakriti really power of Chit, in its nature force of creative self-consciousness? 86

26, Movement of Force being admitted as the whole nature of Cosmos, two questions arise. And first, how did this movement come to take place at all in the bosom of existence? ...How then does this movement alien to its eternal repose come to take place in it? by what cause? by what possibility? by what mysterious impulsion? 90

Ans: The answer most approved by the ancient Indian mind was that Force is inherent in Existence. Shiva and Kali, Brahman and Shakti are one and not two are separable. Force inherent in existence may be at rest or it may be in motion, but when it is at rest, it exists none the less and is not abolished, diminished or in any way essentially altered.

27, Why should this possibility of a play of movement of Force translate itself at all? why should not Force of existence remain eternally concentrated in itself, infinite, free from all variation and formation? 91

28, It is then necessary to examine into the relation between Force and Consciousness. But what do we mean by the latter term (consciousness)? 92

Ans: Ordinarily we mean by it (consciousness) our first obvious idea of a **mental waking consciousness** such as is possessed by the human being during the major part of his bodily existence, when he is not asleep, stunned or otherwise deprived of his physical and superficial methods of sensation. In this sense it is plain enough that **consciousness** is the exception and not the rule in the order of the material universe. We ourselves do not always possess it. But this vulgar and shallow idea of the nature **of consciousness**, though it still colours our ordinary thought and associations, **must now definitely disappear** out of philosophical thinking. For we know that there is something in us which is conscious when we sleep, when we are stunned or drugged or in a swoon, in all apparently unconscious states of our physical being. Not only so, but we may now be sure that the old thinkers were right when they declared that even in **our waking**

**consciousness** what we call then **our consciousness is only a small selection from our entire conscious being**. It is a superficies, it is not even the whole of our mentality. Behind it, much vaster than it, there is a subliminal or subconscious mind which is the greater part of ourselves and contains heights and profundities which no man has yet measured or fathomed. This knowledge gives us a starting point for the true science of Force and its workings; it delivers us definitely from circumscription by the material and from the illusion of the obvious.

29, In the first place we may ask whether, since even mental consciousness exists where we see inanimation and inertia, it is not possible that even in material objects a universal subconscious mind is present although unable to act or communicate itself to its surfaces for want of organs. Is the material state an emptiness of consciousness, or is it not rather only a sleep of consciousness –even though from the point of view of evolution an original and not an intermediate sleep? 93

Ans: And by sleep the human example teaches us that we mean not a **suspension of consciousness**, but its gathering inward away from conscious physical response to the impacts of external things.

30, And is not this what all existence is that has not yet developed means of outward communication with the external physical world? Is there not a Conscious Soul, a Purusha who wakes for ever even in all that sleeps? 93

Ans: We may go farther. When we speak of subconscious mind, we should mean by the phrase a thing not different from the outer mentality, but only acting below the surface, unknown to the waking man, in the same sense if perhaps with a deeper plunge and a larger scope. But the phenomena of the subliminal self far exceed the limits of such definition. It includes an action not only immensely superior in capacity, but quite different in kind from what we know as mentality in our waking self. We have therefore a right to suppose that there is a superconscious in us as well as a subconscious, a range of conscious faculties and therefore an **organization of consciousness** which rise high above that psychological stratum to which we give the name of mentality.

31, And since the subliminal self in us thus rises in superconscience above mentality, may it not also sink in subconsciousness below mentality? Are there not in us and in the world forms of consciousness which are submental, to which we can give the name of vital and physical consciousness? 94

Ans: Not only is this possible but, if we consider things dispassionately, it is certain. In ourselves there is such a **vital consciousness** which acts in the cells of the body and the automatic vital functions so that we go through purposeful movements and obey attractions and repulsions to which our mind is a stranger. In animal this vital consciousness is an even more important factor. In plants it is intuitively evident. The seeking and shrinking of the plant, its pleasure and pain, its sleep and its wakefulness and all that strange life whose truth an Indian scientist has brought to light by rigidly scientific methods, are all movements of consciousness, but, as far as we can see, not of mentality. There is then a sub-



mental, a vital consciousness which has precisely the same initial reactions as the mental, but is different in the constitution of its self-experience, even as that which is superconscious is in the constitution of its self-experience different from the mental being.

32, Does the range of what we can call consciousness cease with the plant, with that in which we recognize the existence of a sub-animal life? 94

Ans: If so, we must then suppose that there is a force of life and consciousness originally alien to Matter which has yet entered into and occupied Matter, -- perhaps from another world.

33, for whence, otherwise, can it have come? 95

Ans: The ancient thinkers have believed in the existence of such other worlds, which perhaps sustain life and consciousness in ours or even call it out by their pressure, but do not create it by their entry. Nothing can evolve out of Matter which is not therein already contained.

34, But what right have we to assume consciousness as the just description for this Force? 96

Ans: For **consciousness** implies some kind of intelligence, purposefulness, self-knowledge, even though they may not take the forms habitual to our mentality. Even from this point of view everything supports rather than contradicts the idea of a universal conscious Force. We see, for instance, in the animal, operations of a perfect purposefulness and an exact, indeed a **scientifically minute knowledge** which are quite beyond the capacities of the animal mentality and which man himself can only acquire by **long culture and education** and even then uses with a much less sure rapidity. We are entitled to see in this general fact the proof of a **conscious Force at work in the animal and the insect which is more intelligent, more purposeful, more aware of its intention, its ends, its means, its conditions than the highest mentality yet manifested in any individual form on earth.** And in the operations of inanimate Nature we find the same pervading characteristic of a supreme hidden intelligence, "hidden in the modes of its own workings.

35, "For who could live or breathe if there were not this delight of existence as the ether in which we dwell?... 98

Ans: From Delight all these beings are born, by Delight they exist and grow, to Delight they return.(Taittiriya Upanishad-II-7, III-6)

36, Why should Brahman, perfect, absolute, infinite, needing nothing, desiring nothing, at all throw out force of consciousness to create in itself these worlds of forms? 98

Ans: For we have put aside the solution that it is compelled by its own nature of Force to create, obliged by its own potentiality of movement and formation to move into forms. It is true that it has this potentiality, but it is not limited, bound or compelled by it; it is free. If, then, being free to move or remain eternally still, to throw itself into forms or retain the potentiality of form in itself, it indulges its power of movement and formation, it can be only for one reason, for **delight.**

37, For if the world be an expression of Sachchidananda, not only existence that is conscious-force, --for that can easily be admitted, --but of existence that is also infinite self-delight, how are we to account for the universal presence of grief, of suffering, of pain? 100

Ans: For this world appears to us rather as a world of suffering than as a world of the delight of existence. Certainly, that view of world is an exaggeration, an error of perspective. If we regard it dispassionately and with a sole view to accurate and unemotional appreciation, we shall find that **the sum of the pleasure of existence far exceeds the sum of the pain of existence**, --appearances and individual cases to the contrary notwithstanding, --and that the active and passive, surface and underlying pleasure of existence is the normal state of nature, pain a contrary occurrence temporarily suspending or overlaying that normal state. But for that very reason the lesser sum of pain affects us more intensely and often looms larger than the greater sum of pleasure; precisely because the latter is normal, we do not treasure it, hardly even observe it unless it intensifies into some acuter form of itself, into a wave of happiness, a crest of joy or ecstasy. It is these things that we call delight and seek and the normal satisfaction of existence **which is always there** regardless of event and particular cause or object, affects us as something neutral which is neither pleasure nor pain.

38, All being Sachchidananda, how can pain and suffering at all exist? 101

Ans: This, **the real problem**, is often farther confused by **a false issue** starting from the data of a personal extra-cosmic God and a partial issue, the ethical difficulty.

39, Sachchidananda, it may be reasoned, is God, is a conscious Being who is the author of existence; how then can God have created a world in which he inflicts suffering on His creatures, sanctions pain, permits evil? God being All-Good, who created pain and evil? 101-102

Ans: If we say that pain is a trial and an ordeal, we do not solve the moral problem, we arrive at an immoral or non-moral God, --an excellent world-mechanist perhaps, a cunning psychologist, but not a God of Good and of Love whom we can worship, only a god of Might to whose Law we must submit or whose caprice we may hope to propitiate. For one who invents torture as means of test or ordeal, stands convicted either of deliberate cruelty or of moral insensibility and, if a moral being at all, is inferior to the highest instinct of his own creatures. And if to escape this moral difficulty, we say that pain is an inevitable result and natural punishment of moral evil, --an explanation which will not even square with the facts of life unless we admit the theory of Karma and rebirth by which the soul suffers now for **antenatal** sins in other bodies, --we still do not escape the very root of the ethical problem, --who created or why or whence was created that moral evil which entails the punishment of pain and suffering? And seeing that moral evil is in reality a form of mental disease or ignorance, who or what created this law of inevitable connection which punishes a mental disease or act of ignorance by a recoil so terrible, by tortures often so extreme and monstrous?... In

truth, difficulty thus sharply presented arises only if we assume the existence of an **extra-cosmic personal God**, not Himself the universe, one who has created good and evil, pain and suffering for His creatures, but Himself stands above and unaffected by them, watching, ruling, doing His will with a suffering and struggling world or, if not doing His will, if allowing or inefficiently helped, then not God, not omnipotent, not all-good and all-loving. On no theory of an **extra-cosmic moral God**, can evil and suffering be explained, -- the creation of evil and suffering, --except by an unsatisfactory subterfuge which avoids the question at issue instead of answering it or a plain or implied Manicheanism which practically annuls the Godhead in attempting to justify its ways or excuse its works. But such a God is not *Vedantic Sachchidananda*. *Sachchidananda* of the *Vedanta* is **one existence without a second**; all that is, is He. If then evil and suffering exist, **it is He that bears the evil and suffering in the creature in whom He has embodied Himself**. The problem then changes entirely. The question is no longer how came God to create for His creatures a suffering and evil of which He is Himself incapable and therefore immune, but how came the sole and infinite Existence-Consciousness-Bliss to admit into itself that which is not bliss, that which seems to be its **positive negation**.

40, Still the ethical difficulty may be brought back in a modified form; All-Delight being necessarily all-good and all-love, how can evil and suffering exist in Sachchidananda, since he is not mechanical existence, but free and conscious being, free to condemn and reject evil and suffering? 102-03

Ans: We have to recognize that the issue so stated is also a **false issue** because it applies the terms of a partial statement as if they were applicable to the whole. For the ideas of good and of love which we thus bring into the concept of the All-Delight spring from a **dualistic and divisional conception of things**; they are based entirely on the relations between creature and creature, yet we persist in applying them to a problem which starts, on the contrary, from the assumption of **One who is all**. We have to see first how **the problem appears** or how it can be solved in its original purity, on **the basis of unity in difference**; only then can we safely deal with its parts and its developments, such as relations between creature and creature on the basis of division and duality.

41, How shall we solve it (Problem of pain)? Shall we say that Sachchidananda is not the beginning and end of things, but the beginning and end is Nihil, an impartial void, itself nothing but containing all potentialities of existence or non-existence, consciousness or non-consciousness, delight or undelight? 105-106-107

Ans: In the egoistic human being, the mental person emergent out of the dim shell of matter, delight of existence is neutral, semi latent, still in the shadow of the subconscious, hardly more than a concealed soil of plenty covered by desire with a luxuriant growth of **poisonous weeds** and hardly less poisonous flowers, the pains and pleasures of our egoistic existence. When the divine conscious-force working secretly in us has **devoured** these growths of desire, when in the image of the *Rig Veda* the fire of God has **burnt up** the shoots of earth, that which is concealed at

the roots of these pains and pleasures, their cause and secret being, the sap of delight in them, will emerge in new forms not of desire, but of self-existent satisfaction which will replace mortal pleasure by the Immortal's ecstasy. And this transformation is possible because these growths of sensation and emotion are in their essential being, the pains no less than the pleasures, that delight of existence which they seek but fail to reveal,--**fail** because of division, ignorance of self and egoism.

42, But why should we interpose any special power or faculty between the infinite Consciousness itself and the result of its workings? May not this Self-awareness of the Infinite range freely creating forms which afterwards remain in play so long as there is not the fiat that bids them cease, -- even as the old Semitic revelation tells us, "God said, Let there be Light, and there was Light"? 123

Ans: But when we say, "God said, Let there be Light" we assume the act of a power of consciousness which determines light out of everything else that is not light; and when we say "and there was Light" we presume a directing faculty, an active power corresponding to the original perceptive power, which brings out the phenomenon and, working out Light according to the line of original perception, prevents it from being overpowered by all the infinite possibilities that are other than itself. **Infinite consciousness** in its infinite action can produce only infinite results; to settle upon a **fixed Truth or order of truths** and build a world in conformity with that which is fixed, demands a selective faculty of knowledge commissioned to shape finite appearance out of the infinite Reality.

43, But if we suppose an infinite Mind which would be free from our limitations, that at least might well be the creator of the universe? 126-27

Ans: But such a Mind would be something quite different from the definition of mind as we know it: it would be something beyond mentality; it would be the supramental Truth. An infinite Mind constituted in the terms of mentality as we know it could only create an infinite chaos, a vast clash of chance, accident, vicissitude wandering towards an indeterminate end after which it would be always tentatively groping and aspiring. An infinite, omniscient, omnipotent Mind would not be mind at all, but supramental knowledge.

44, And first we may pause a moment and ask ourselves (the question) whether no light (of Supramental) can be found from the past which will guide us towards these ill explored domains. 132

Ans: We need a name, and we need a starting point. For we have called this **state of consciousness** the Supermind; but the word is ambiguous since it may be taken in the sense of mind itself supereminent and lifted above ordinary mentality but not radically changed, or on the contrary it may bear the sense of all that is beyond mind and therefore assume a too extensive comprehensiveness which would bring in even the Ineffable itself. A **subsidiary description** is required which will **more accurately limit** its significance.

45, And shall we not say that its very existence points back to Something beyond our supreme perception of the ineffable Unity, --Something ineffable and mentally

inconceivable not because of its unity and indivisibility, but because of its freedom from even these formulations of our mind, -- something beyond both unity and multiplicity? 134

Ans: That would be the utter Absolute and Real which yet justifies to us both our knowledge of God and our knowledge of the world.

46, But what then is the origin of mentality and organization of this lower consciousness in the triple terms of Mind, Life and Matter which is our view of universe? 149

Ans: For since all things that exist **must proceed** from the action of the all-efficient Supermind, from its operation in the three original terms of Existence, Conscious-Force and Bliss, there **must be** some faculty of the creative Truth-Consciousness which so operates as to cast them into these **new terms**, into this inferior trio of mentality, vitality and physical substance. This faculty we find in a **secondary** power of the creative knowledge, its power of a projecting, confronting and apprehending consciousness in which knowledge centralizes itself and stands back from its works to observe them. When we speak of centralization, we mean, as distinguished from the **equable concentration of consciousness** of which we have hitherto spoken, **an unequal concentration** in which there is the beginning of self-division – or of its phenomenal appearance.

47, We may now ask with profit and chance of clearer reply how we **must change and what we must become** in order to arrive there in our nature and our life and our relations with others and not only through a solitary and ecstatic realisation in the profundities of our being. 161

Ans: Certainly, there is still a defect in our premisses; for we have so far been striving to define for ourselves what the Divine is in its descent towards limited Nature, whereas what we ourselves actually are is the Divine in the individual ascending back out of limited Nature to its own proper divinity. This difference of movement must involve a difference between the **life of the gods** who have never known the fall and the life of man redeemed, conqueror of the lost godhead and bearing within him the experience and it may be the **new riches gathered by him from his acceptance of the utter descent**. Nevertheless, there can be no difference of essential characteristics, but only of mould and colouring. We can already ascertain on the basis of the conclusions at which we have arrived the essential nature of the **divine life** towards which we aspire.

48, What then would be the existence of a divine soul, not descended into the ignorance by the fall of Spirit into Matter and the eclipse of soul by material Nature? What would be its consciousness, living in the original Truth of things, in the inalienable unity, in the world of its own infinite being, like the Divine Existence itself, but able by the play of the Divine Maya and by the distinction of the comprehending and apprehending Truth-Consciousness to enjoy also difference from **God** at the same time as unity with Him and to embrace difference and yet oneness with other divine souls in the infinite play of the self-multiplied Identical? 162

Ans: Obviously, the existence of such a soul would be always self-contained in the conscious play of Sachchidananda. It would be pure and infinite self-existence in its being; in its becoming it would be a free play of immortal life uninvaded by death and birth and change of body because unclouded by ignorance and not involved in darkness of our material being. It would be a pure and unlimited consciousness in its energy, poised in an eternal and luminous tranquility as its foundation, yet able to play freely with forms of knowledge and forms of conscious power, tranquil, unaffected by stumblings of mental error and the misprisions of our striving will because it never departs from truth and oneness, never falls from the inherent light and the natural harmony of its divine existence. It would be, finally, a pure and inalienable delight in its eternal self-experience and in time a free variation of bliss unaffected by our perversions of dislike, hatred, discontent and suffering because undivided in being, un baffled by erring self-will, unperverted by the ignorant stimulus of desire.

49, But what will be the conditions in which and by which this nature of the life of the divine soul will realize itself? 168

Ans: All experience in relation proceeds through certain forces of being formulating themselves by an instrumentation to which we give the name of properties, qualities, activities, faculties. As, for instance, Mind throws itself into various forms of mind-power, such as judgment, observation, memory, sympathy, proper to its own being, so **must the Truth-consciousness** or supermind effect the relations of soul with soul by forces, faculties, functionings proper to Supramental being; otherwise there would be no play of differentiation. What these functionings are, we shall see when we come to consider the psychological conditions of the **divine Life**; at present we are only considering its metaphysical foundations, its essential nature and principles. Suffice it at present to observe that the **absence or abolition of separatist egoism and of effective division in consciousness** is the **one essential condition** of the **divine Life**, and therefore their presence in us is that which constitutes our mortality and our fall from the Divine.

50, And must not this mean that we abandon all earthly or limited mental existence for something which is its opposite, --either for some pure state of the Spirit or else for some world of the Truth of things, if such exists, or other worlds, if such exist, of divine Bliss, divine Energy, divine Being? 171

Ans: In that case the perfection of humanity is elsewhere than in humanity itself; the summit of its earthly evolution can only be a fine apex of dissolving mentality whence it takes the great leap either into formless being or into worlds beyond the reach of embodied Mind.

51, Whence then does the limiting Avidya, the fall of mind from Supermind and consequent idea of real division originally proceed? exactly from what perversion of the Supramental functioning? 178-79

Ans: It (mind) proceeds from the individualised soul viewing everything from its own standpoint and excluding all others; it proceeds, that is to say, by an **exclusive**

**concentration** of consciousness, an exclusive self-identification of the soul with a particular temporal and spatial action which is only a part of its own play of being; it starts from the **soul's ignoring the fact that all others are also itself, all other action its own action and all other states of being and consciousness equally its own** as well as the action of the one particular moment in Time and one particular standing-point in Space and one particular form it presently occupies. It concentrates on the moment, the field, the form, the movement so as to lose the rest; it has then to recover the rest by linking together the succession of moments, the succession of points of Space, the succession of forms in Time and Space, the succession of movements in Time and Space. **It has thus lost the truth of the indivisibility of Time, the indivisibility of Force and Substance.** It has lost sight even of the obvious fact that **all minds are one Mind** taking many standpoints, all lives one Life developing many currents of activity, all body and form one substance of Force and Consciousness concentrating into many apparent stabilities of force and consciousness; but in truth all these stabilities are really only a constant whorl of movement repeating a form while it modifies it; they are nothing more. For the Mind tries to **clamp everything into rigidly fixed forms and apparently unchanging or unmoving external factors**, because otherwise it cannot act; it then thinks it has got what it wants: **in reality all is a flux of change and renewal and there is no fixed form-in-itself and no unchanging external factor.** Only the eternal Real-Idea is firm and maintains a certain ordered constancy of figures and relations in the flux of things, a constancy which Mind vainly attempts to imitate by attributing fixity to that which is always inconstant. **These truths Mind has to rediscover;** it knows them all the time, but only in the hidden back of its consciousness, in the secret light of its self-being; and **that light is to it a darkness** because it has created the ignorance, because it has lapsed from the dividing into the divided mentality, because it has become involved in its own workings and in its own creations.

52, What then is Life? 188

Ans: When we study the Life as it manifests itself upon earth with Matter as its basis, we observe that essentially it is a form of the one cosmic Energy, a dynamic movement or current of it positive and negative, a constant act or play of the Force which builds up forms, energises them by a continual stream of stimulation and maintains them by an **unceasing process of disintegration and renewal of their substance.** This would tend to show that the natural opposition we make between **death and life is an error** of our mentality, one of those false oppositions—false to inner truth though valid in surface practical experience—which, deceived by appearances, it is constantly bringing into the universal unity. Death has no reality except as a process of life. Disintegration of substance and renewal of substance, **maintenance of form and change of form** are the constant process of life; **death is merely a rapid disintegration subservient to life's necessity of change and variation of formal experience.** Even in the death of body there is no cessation of Life, only the material of one form of life is broken up to serve as material for

other forms of life. Similarly we may be sure, in the uniform law of Nature, that if there is in the bodily form a mental or psychic energy, that also is not destroyed but only breaks out from one form to assume others by some process of metempsychosis or new ensouling of body. **All renews itself, nothing perishes.**

53, and what relation has it (life) to Supermind, to this supreme trinity of Sachchidananda active in creation by means of the Real-Idea or Truth-consciousness? From what principle in the Trinity does it takes its birth? or by what necessity, divine or undivine, or the Truth or the illusion, does it come into being? Life is an evil, rings down the centuries the ancient cry, a delusion, a delirium, an insanity from which we have to flee into the repose of eternal being. Is it so? and why then is it so? Why has the Eternal wantonly inflicted this evil, brought this delirium or insanity upon Himself or upon the creatures brought into being by His terrible all-deluding Maya? Or is it rather some divine principle that thus expresses itself, some power of the Delight of eternal being that had to express and has thus thrown itself into Time and Space in this constant outburst of million and million forms of life which people the countless worlds of the universe? 188

54, We must, therefore, in order to be sure of our ground, examine in what precisely consists this particular result of the play of Force which we call life and how it differs from that other result of the play of Force in inanimate things which, we say, is not life. 189

55, How does life in ourselves differ from the life of the plant, and the life of the plant from the not-life, say, of the metal, the mineral kingdom of the old phraseology, or that new chemical kingdom which science has discovered? 189

56, It is difficult to suppose that there is a distinct entity called life which has gone entirely out of the body and gets into it again when it feels – how, since there is nothing to connect it with the body? 192

57, Is there any justification for elevating this distinction into an essential difference? What, for instance, is the difference between life in ourselves and life in the plant? 194

58, What happens when the conscious becomes subconscious in the body or the subconscious becomes conscious? 195

59, For from where else can it (life) emerge? 197

60, But where in us is the principle of Delight? 232

61, Through what term our being does it manifest and fulfil itself in the action of the cosmos as the principle of Conscious-Force manifests and uses Life for its cosmic term and the principle of Supermind manifests and uses Mind? 232

62, But still the question remains why Energy should take the form of Matter and not of mere force-currents or why that which is really Spirit should admit the phenomenon of Matter and not rest in states, velleities and joys of the spirit. 248-49

Ans: This, it is said, is the work of Mind or else, since evidently Thought does not directly create or even perceive the material form of things, it is the work of Sense;



the sense-mind creates the forms which it seems to perceive and the thought-mind works upon the forms which the sense-mind presents to it. But, evidently, the individual embodied mind is not the creator of the phenomenon of Matter; earth-existence cannot be the result of the human mind which is itself the result of earth-existence. If we say that the world exists only in our own minds, we express a non-fact and a confusion; for the material world existed before man was upon the earth and it will go on existing if man disappears from the earth or even if our individual mind abolishes itself in the Infinite. We **must conclude** then that there is a universal Mind, subconscious to us in the form of the universe or superconscious in its spirit, which has created that form for its habitation. And since the creator **must** have preceded and must exceed its creation, this really implies a superconscient Mind which by the instrumentality of a universal sense creates in itself the relation of form with form and constitutes the rhythm of the material universe. But this also is no complete solution; it tells us that Matter is a creation of Consciousness, but it does not explain how Consciousness came to create Matter as the basis of its cosmic workings.

63, But why this phenomenal and pragmatic division of an indivisible Existence?  
250

Ans: It is because Mind has to carry the principle of multiplicity to its extreme potential which can only be done by separateness and division.

64, Being manifest as substance, force of Being cast into form, into a figured self-representation of the secret self-consciousness, delight offering itself to its own consciousness as an object, --what is this but Sachchidananda? 253

Ans: Matter is Sachchidananda represented to His own mental experience as a formal basis of objective knowledge, action and delight of existence.

65, But what after all, behind appearances, is this seeming mystery? 258

Ans: We can see that it is the Consciousness which had lost itself returning again to itself, emerging out of its giant self-forgetfulness, slowly, painfully, as a Life that is would-be sentient, half-sentient, dimly sentient, wholly sentient and finally struggles to be more than sentient, to be again divinely self-conscious, free, infinite, immortal.

66, Is there any reason why he should not also liberate the bodily existence from the present law of death, division and mutual devouring and use individualisation of body as merely a useful subordinate term of the one divine Conscious-Existence made serviceable for the joy of the Infinite in the finite? or why this spirit should not be free in a sovereign occupation of form, consciously immortal even in the changing of his robe of Matter, possessed of his self-delight in a world subjected to the law of unity and love and beauty? And if man be the inhabitant of terrestrial existence through that transformation of the mental into the supramental can at last be operated, is it not possible that he may develop, as well as a divine mind and a **divine life**, also a divine body? or, if the phrase seem to be too startling to our present limited conceptions of human potentiality, may he not in his development of his true being and its light and joy and power arrive at a divine use of mind and

life and body by which the descent of Spirit into form shall be at once humanly and divinely justified? 264-65

Ans: The one thing that can stand in the way of that **ultimate terrestrial possibility** is if our present view of Matter and its laws represent the only possible relation between sense and substance, between the divine as knower and the Divine as **object**, or if, other relations being possible, they are yet not in any way possible here, but must be sought on higher planes of existence. In that case, it is in heavens beyond that we must seek our entire divine fulfillment, as **religions** assert, and their other assertion of the kingdom of God or the kingdom of the perfect upon earth must be put aside as delusion. Here we can only pursue or attain an internal preparation or victory and, having liberated the mind and life and soul within, must turn from the unconquered and unconquerable material principle, from an unregenerated and intractable earth to find elsewhere our divine substance. There is, however, no reason why we should **accept this limiting conclusion**. There are, quite certainly, other states of Matter itself; there is undoubtedly an **ascending series of the divine gradations of substance**; there is the possibility of the material being transfiguring itself through the **acceptation of a higher law** than its own which is yet its own because it is always there latent and potential in its own secrecies.

67, What is it that most represents to us the materiality of Matter? 266

Ans: We shall see that the Matter is its aspects of solidity, tangibility, increasing resistance, firm response to the touch of Sense.

68, Where we reach the highest term of that series, the most supra-ethereal subtlety of material substance or formulation of Force, what lies beyond? 269

Ans: Not a Nihil, not a void; for there is no such thing as absolute void or real nullity and what we call by that name is simply something beyond the grasp of our sense, our mind or our most subtle consciousness. Nor is it true that there is nothing beyond, or that some ethereal substance of Matter is the eternal beginning; for we know that Matter and material Force are only a last result of a pure Substance and pure Force in which consciousness is luminously self-aware and self-possessing and not as in Matter lost to itself in an Inconscient sleep and an inert motion.

69, What then is there between this material substance and that pure substance? 269

Ans: For we do not leap from one to the other, we do not pass at once from the Inconscient to absolute consciousness. There must be and there are grades between inconscient substance and utterly self-conscious self-extension, as between the principle of Matter and the principle of Spirit.

70, But how does this ascending series affect the possibilities of our material existence? 272

Ans: It would not affect them at all if each plane of consciousness, each world of existence, each grade of substance, each degree of cosmic force were cut off entirely from that which precedes and that which follows it. But the opposite is the

truth; the manifestation of the Spirit is a complex weft and in the design and pattern of one principle all the others enter as elements of the spiritual whole. Our material world is the result of **all the others**, for other principles have all descended into Matter to create the physical universe, and every particle of what we call Matter contains **all of them** implicit in itself; their secret action, as we have seen, is involved in every moment of its existence and every movement of its activity. And as Matter is the last word of the descent, so it is also the first word of the ascent; as the powers of all these planes, worlds, grades, degrees are involved in the material existence, so are they all capable of evolution out of it.

71, The **only question** is whether the earth is to be a scene of that emergence or the human creation on this or any other material scene, in this or any other cycle of the large wheelings of Time, its instrument and vehicle. 284

Ans: The *ancient seers* believed in this possibility for man (the evolution of sevenfold power) and held it to be his **divine destiny**; the modern thinker does not even conceive of it or, if he conceived, would deny or doubt. If he sees a vision of the Superman, it is in the figure of increased degrees of mentality or vitality; he admits no other emergence, sees nothing beyond these principles, for these have traced for us up till now our limit and circle.

72, A necessity of immutable sameness at the base, of free and accountable variations on the surface seems to be the law; but who or what necessitate or determines? What is the rationale of the determination, what is its original truth or its significance? What compels or impels this exuberant play of varying possibilities which seem to have no aim or meaning unless it be the beauty or delight of creation? 314

Ans: A Mind, a seeking and curious inventive Thought, a hidden determining Will might be there, but there is no trace of it in the first and fundamental appearance of material Nature.

73, A play? But why this stamp of so many undivine elements and characters in the play of One whose nature must be supposed to be divine? 317

Ans: To the suggestion that what we see worked out in the world is the thoughts of God, the retort can be made that God could well have had better thoughts and the best thought of all would have been to refrain from the creation of an unhappy and unintelligible universe. All **theistic explanations** of existence starting from **an extra-cosmic Deity** stumble over this difficulty and can only evade it; it would disappear if **the Creator** were, even though exceeding the creation, **yet immanent in it**, himself in some sort both the player and the play, an Infinite casting infinite possibilities into the form of an evolutionary cosmic order.

74, But still, in view of these complexities, the question remains entire whether all this evolution and action is a phenomenal creation by some universal Energy presented to the mental being or an activity imposed by Mind-Energy on the Purusha's indeterminate, perhaps indeterminable existence, or whether the whole is something predetermined by some dynamic truth of Self within and only manifested on the mind surface. 323

Ans: To know that we would have to touch or to enter into a cosmic state of being and consciousness to which the totality of things and their integral principle would be better manifest than to our limited mind experience.

75, But the **original question** set out for us by the phenomenon of the universe is not solved by the Overmind knowledge, --the question, in this case, (1) whether the building of thought, experience, world of perceptions of the mental Person, the mind Purusha, is truly a self-expression, a self-determination proceeding from some truth of his own spiritual being, a manifestation of that truth's dynamic possibilities, or (2) whether it is not rather a creation or construction presented to him by Nature, by Prakriti, and only in the sense of being individualized in his personal formation of that Nature can it be said to be his own or dependent on him; or, (3) again, it might be a play of a cosmic Imagination, a fantasia of the Infinite existence. 324

Ans: These are the **three views** of creation that seem to have an equal chance of being right, and mind is incapable of definitely deciding between them; for each view is armed with its own mental logic and its appeal to intuition and experience. Overmind seems to add to the perplexity, for the overmental view of things allows each possibility to formulate itself in its own independent right and realize its own existence in cognition.

76, But what can that be of which such opposites (*Saguna* and *Nirguna*) are equal truths, unless it be an original indeterminable Mystery of which any knowledge, any understanding by mind is impossible? 325

Ans: We can know indeed to some degree, in some kind of experience or realization, by its aspects, powers, constant series of fundamental negatives and positives through which we have to pursue it, independently in either or integrally in both together; but in the last resort it seems it seems to escape even from the highest mentality and remain unknowable.

77, What then is it (Supreme Absolute or pure Indeterminable and determination) that creates this contradiction, is able to effect the impossible, bring this insoluble riddle of self-division into existence? 326

Ans: A Power of some kind it must be, and since the Absolute is the sole reality, the one origin of all things, this Power must proceed from it, must have some relation with it, a connection, a dependence... For even if all things are illusory creations, they must have at least a subjective existence and they can exist nowhere except in the consciousness of the Sole Existence; they are then subjective determinations of the Indeterminable.

78, If, on the contrary, the determinations of this Power are real creations, out of what are they determined, what is their substance? 326

Ans: It is perfectly understandable that the Absolute is and must be indeterminable in the sense that it cannot be limited by any determination or any sum of possible determinations, but not in the sense that it is incapable of self-determination. The Supreme Existence cannot be incapable of creating true self-determinations of its

being, incapable of unfolding a real self-creation or manifestation in its self-existent infinite.

79, And since the spirit and essence of things is one, we are obliged to admit that all these many must be that One, and it follows that the One is or has become many; but how can the limited or relative be the Absolute and how can man or beast or bird be the Divine Being? 350

Ans: But in erecting this apparent contradiction the mind makes a double error. (1) It is thinking in the terms of the mathematical finite unit which is sole in limitation, the one which is less than two and can become two only by division and fragmentation or by addition and multiplication; but this is an infinite Oneness which can contain the hundred and the thousand and the million and billion and trillion. (2) Whatever astronomic figures you heap and multiply, they cannot overpass or exceed that Oneness; for in the language of the (Isha) Upanishad, it moves not, yet is always far in front when you would pursue and seize it. It can be said of it that it would not be the Infinite Oneness if it were not capable of an infinite multiplicity; but that does not mean that the One is plural or can be limited or described as the sum of the Many: on the contrary, it can be the infinite Many because it exceeds all limitation or description by multiplicity and exceeds at the same time all limitation by finite conceptual oneness. Pluralism is an error because, though there is the spiritual plurality, the many souls are dependent and interdependent existences; their sum also is not the One nor is it the cosmic totality; they depend on the One and exist by its Oneness: yet the plurality is not unreal, it is the One Soul that dwells as the individual in these many souls and they are eternal in the One and by the one Eternal. **This is difficult for the mental reason** which makes an opposition between the Infinite and the finite and associates finiteness with plurality and infinity with oneness; but in the logic of the Infinite there is no such opposition and the eternity of the Many in the One is a thing that is perfectly natural and possible.

80, But what is this strongly separative self-experience that we call ego? 382

Ans: It is nothing fundamentally real in itself but only a practical construction of our consciousness devised to centralize the activities of Nature in us.

81, But is all truth of individuality and individualization abolished? Does the Purusha cease to exist or does he become the world-Purusha and live intimately in innumerable minds and bodies? 384

Ans: We do not find it to be so. He still individualises and it is still he who exists and embraces this wider consciousness while he individualises: but the mind no longer thinks of a limited temporary individualization as all ourselves but only as a wave of becoming thrown up from the sea of its being or else a form or **centre of universality**. The soul still makes the world-becoming the material for individual experience, but instead of regarding it as something outside and larger than itself on which it has to draw, by which it is affected, with which it has to make accommodations, it is aware of its subjectivity as within itself; it embraces both its world-material and its individualized experience of spatial and temporal activities

in a free and enlarged consciousness. In this new consciousness the spiritual individual perceives its true self to be one in being with the Transcendence and seated and dwelling within it, and no longer takes its **constructed individuality** as anything more than a formation for world-experience.

82, If then we arrive at unity with that, if we even become entirely and in every way that being, why should the power of its being be excised and why at all should we desire or labour to excise it? 385

Ans: We should then only diminish the scope of our unity with it by an **exclusive concentration** accepting the divine being but not accepting our part in the power and consciousness and infinite delight of the Divine. It would in fact be the individual seeking peace and rest of union in a motionless identity, but rejecting delight and various joy of union in the nature and act and power of the divine Existence. That is possible, but there is no necessity to uphold it as the **ultimate aim** of our being or as our ultimate perfection. Or the one possible reason would be that in the power, the act of consciousness there is not real union and that only in the status of consciousness is there perfect undifferentiated union.

83, Now we may get rid of this differentiation by plunging into the absorption of an exclusive unity, but to what end? For perfect union? 386

Ans: But we do not forfeit that by accepting the differentiation any more than the Divine forfeits His oneness by accepting it. We have the perfect union in His being and can absorb ourselves in it at any time, but we have also this other differentiated unity and can emerge into it and act freely in it at any time without losing oneness: for we have merged the ego and are absolved from the exclusive stresses of our mentality.

84, Then for peace and rest? 386

Ans: But we have the peace and rest by virtue of our unity with Him, even as the Divine possesses for ever His eternal calm in the midst of His eternal action.

85, Then for the mere joy of getting rid of all differentiation? 386

Ans: But that differentiation has its divine purpose: it is a means to greater unity, not as in the egoistic life a means of division; for we enjoy by it our unity with our other selves and with God in all, which we exclude by our rejection of His multiple being. In either experience it is the Divine in the individual possessing and enjoying in one case the Divine in His pure unity or in the other the Divine in that and in the unity of the cosmos; it is not the absolute Divine recovering after having lost His unity. Certainly, we may prefer the absorption in a pure exclusive unity or a departure in a supracosmic transcendence, but there is in the spiritual truth of the Divine Existence no compelling reason why we should not participate in this large possession and bliss of His universal being which is the fulfillment of our individuality.

86, The only question is the reason why this kind of progressive manifestation was itself necessary; that is the sole point left obscure to the intelligence. 426

Ans: A manifestation of this kind, self-creation or *Lila*, would not seem justifiable if it were imposed on the unwilling creature; but it will be evident that the assent

of the embodied spirit **must** be there already, for *Prakriti* cannot act without the assent of the *Purusha*. There **must** have been not only the will of the Divine *Purusha* to make the cosmic creation possible, but the assent of the individual *Purusha* to make the individual manifestation possible. But it may be said that the reason for the Divine Will and delight in such a difficult and tormented progressive manifestation and the reason for the soul's assent to it is still a mystery. But it is not altogether a mystery if we look at our own nature and can suppose some kindred movement of being in the beginning as its cosmic origin. On the contrary, a play of self-concealing and self-finding is one of the **most strenuous joys** that conscious being can give to itself, a play of extreme attractiveness.

87, But it may be questioned whether our dreams are indeed totally unreal and without significance, whether they are not a figure, an image-record or a symbolic transcript or representation of things that are real. 438-39

Ans: For that we have to examine, however summarily, the nature of sleep and of dream phenomena, their process of origination and their provenance. What happens in sleep **is that our consciousness withdraws from the field of its waking experiences**; it is supposed to be resting, suspended or in abeyance, but that is a superficial view of the matter. What is in the abeyance is the waking activities, what is at rest is the surface mind and the normal conscious action of the bodily part of us; but the inner consciousness is not suspended, it enters **into new inner activities**, only a part of which, a part happening or recorded in something of us that is **near to the surface, we remember**. There is maintained in sleep, thus near the surface, an obscure subconscious element which is a receptacle or passage for our dream experiences and itself also a dream builder; but behind it is the depth and mass of the subliminal, the totality of our concealed inner being and consciousness which is of quite another order. Normally it is a subconscious part in us, intermediate between consciousness and pure inconscience, that sends up through this surface layer its formations in the shape of dreams, constructions marked by an apparent inconsequence and incoherence. Many of these are fugitive structures built upon circumstances of our present life selected apparently at random and surrounded with a phantasy of variation; others call back the past, or rather selected circumstances and persons of the past, as a starting-point for similar fleeting edifices. There are other dreams of the subconscious which seem to be pure phantasy without any such initiation or basis, but the new method of **psycho-analysis**, trying to look for the first time into our dreams with some kind of **scientific understanding**, has established in them a system of meanings, a key to things in us which need to be known and handled by the waking consciousness; this of itself changes the whole character and value of our dream-experience. It begins to look as if there were something real behind it and as if too that something were an element of no mean practical importance.

88, If all three ((1) the **percipient (Individual and his perceptive consciousness)**, (2) the **perception (mental construction)** and (3) the **thing perceived or percept**

(of the objective universe) are rejected as instruments of a cosmic Illusion, the farther and consequent question arises, is there then a reality outside them and, if so, what is the relation between the Reality and the Illusion? 456

89, But what then is the relation between the Reality and the Illusion? By what miracle or mystery does the Illusion come to be or how does it manage to appear or to abide in Time for ever? 457-58

90, But what then is this mystery, or is it insoluble? How come this illusion to intervene in Brahman-existence? What is the nature of this unreal reality of Maya? 458-59

91, **the question arises** whose is the consciousness that so suffers in this fictitious existence,... 465

Ans: --for there can be no real consciousness except that of the One Existence; so that once more there is established a **dual consciousness** for Brahman, (1) a consciousness or superconscience free from the illusion and (2) a consciousness subject to the illusion, and we have again substantiated a certain reality of our existence and experience in Maya.

92, For if our being is that of the Brahman, our consciousness something of the consciousness of the Brahman, with whatever qualification, it is to that extent real, --and if our being, why not the being of the universe? 465

Ans: It may finally be put forward as a solution that **the percipient individual** and **the percept universe** are unreal, but *Maya* by imposing itself on *Brahman* acquires a certain reality, and that reality lends itself to the individual and to its experience in the cosmic Illusion which endures so long as it is subject to the illusion.

93, But, again, for whom is the experience valid, the reality acquired while it endures, and for whom does it cease by liberation, extinction or withdrawal? 465

Ans: For an illusory unreal being cannot put on reality and suffer from a real bondage or escape from it by a real act of evasion or self-extinction; it can only seem to some real self or being to exist, but in that case this real self must in some way or in some degree have become subject to *Maya*. It **must** either be the consciousness of *Brahman* that projects itself into a world of *Maya* and issues from *Maya* or it **must** be the being of *Brahman* that puts forth something of itself, its reality, into *Maya* and withdraws it again from *Maya*.

94, Or what again is this *Maya* that imposes itself on *Brahman*? From where does it come if it is not already in *Brahman*, an action of the **eternal Consciousness** or the eternal Superconscience? 466

Ans: It is only if a being or a consciousness of the Reality undergoes the consequences of the Illusion that the cycles of the Illusion can put on any reality or have any importance except as a dance of phantasmagoric marionettes with which the Eternal amuses himself, a puppet-show in Time. We are driven back to the dual being of the Brahman, **the dual consciousness of Brahman** (1) involved in the Illusion and (2) free from the Illusion, and a certain phenomenal truth of being for *Maya*: there can be no solution of our existence in the universe if that existence



and the universe itself have no reality, -- even though the reality be only partial, restricted, derivative.

95, But what can be the reality of an original universal and fundamentally baseless Illusion? 466

Ans: The only possible answer is that it is a suprarational mystery, inexplicable and ineffable, --*anirvacaniya*.'

96, For if all other experiences of the individual consciousness in the universe are illusions, then what guarantee is there that its spiritual experiences are not illusions, including even its absorbed self-experience of the supreme Self which is conceded to us as utterly real? 483

Ans: For if cosmos is untrue, our experience of the cosmic consciousness, of the universal Self, of Brahman as all these beings or as the self of all these beings, the One in all, all in the One has no secure foundation, since it reposes in one of its terms on an illusion, on a construction of Maya.

97, That term, the cosmic term, has to crumble, for all these beings which we saw as the Brahman were illusions; then what is our assurance of our experience of the other term, the pure Self, the silent, static of the absolute Reality, since that too comes to us in a mind moulded of delusion and formed in a body created by an Illusion? 484

Ans: An overwhelming self-evident convincingness, an experience of absolute authenticity in the realization or experience is not an unanswerable proof of sole reality or sole finality: for other spiritual experiences such as that of the omnipresent Divine Person, Lord of a real Universe, have the same convincing, authentic and final character. It is open to the intellect which has once arrived at the conversion of the unreality of all other things, to take a farther step and deny the reality of Self and of all existence. The *Buddhists* took this last step and refused reality to the Self on the ground that **it was as much as the rest a construction of the mind**; they cut not only God but the eternal Self and impersonal Brahman out of the picture.

98, Is then this realization of passing into a pure immobile self-existence or this *Nirvana* of the individual and the universe one among these penultimates, or is itself the final and absolute realization which is at the end of every journey and transcends and eliminates all lesser experience? 487

Ans: It claims to stand behind and supersede, to sublimate and to eliminate every other knowledge; if that is really so, then its finality **must** be accepted as conclusive. But against **this pretension**, it has been claimed that it is possible to travel beyond by a greater negation or greater affirmation, --to extinguish self in Non-Being or to pass through the double experience of (1) cosmic consciousness and (2) *Nirvana* of world consciousness in the One Existence to a greater Divine Union and Unity which holds both these realizations in its vast integral Reality. It is said that beyond the duality and non-duality there is That in which both are held together and find their truth in a Truth which is beyond them. A consummating experience which proceeds by the exceeding and elimination of all other possible

but lesser experiences is, as a step towards the Absolute, admissible. A supreme experience which affirms and includes **the truth of all spiritual experience**, gives to each its own absolute, integralises all knowledge and experience in a supreme reality, might be the **one step** farther that is at once a largest illuminating and transforming Truth of all things and a highest infinite Transcendence. The *Brahman*, the supreme Reality, is **That which being known all is known**; but in the illusionist solution it is That, **which being known, all becomes unreal and an incomprehensible mystery**: in this other experience, the Reality being known, all assumes its true significance, its truth to the Eternal and Absolute.

99, If the unreal is not a fact of being, it **must** be an act or a formation of consciousness, and is there not then a status or degree of consciousness in which its acts and formations are wholly or partly unreal? 495-96

Ans: If this unreality cannot be attributed to an original cosmic Illusion, to Maya, there is still in the universe itself a power of illusion of Ignorance. It is in the power of the Mind to conceive things that are not real, it is in its power even to create things that are not real or not wholly real; its very view of itself and universe is a construction that is not wholly real or wholly unreal.

100, Where does this element of unreality begin and where does it stop, and what is its cause and what ensues on the removal of both the cause and the consequence? Even if all cosmic existence is not in itself unreal, cannot that description be applied to the world of Ignorance in which we live, this world of constant change and birth and death and frustration and suffering, and does not the removal of the Ignorance abolish for us the reality of the world which it creates, or is not a departure out of it the natural and only issue? 496-97

Ans: This would be valid, if our ignorance were a pure ignorance without any element of truth or knowledge in it. But in fact our consciousness is a mixture of the true and the false; its acts and creations are not a pure invention, a baseless structure. The structure it builds, its form of things or form of the universe, is not a mixture of reality and the unreal so much as a half comprehension, a half expression of the real, and, since **all consciousness** is force and therefore potentially creative, our ignorance has the result of **wrong creation, wrong manifestation**, wrong action or misconceived and misdirected energy of the being. All world existence is manifestation, but our ignorance is the agent of a partial, limited and ignorant manifestation, -- in part an expression but in part also a disguise of the original being, consciousness and delight of existence. If this state of things is permanent and unalterable, if our world **must** always move in this circle, if some Ignorance is the cause of all things and all action here and not a condition and circumstance, then indeed the cessation of individual ignorance could only come by an escape of the individual from world-being, and a cessation of the cosmic ignorance would be the destruction of world-being. But if this world has at its root an **evolutionary principle**, if our **ignorance is a half-knowledge evolving towards knowledge**, another account and another issue and spiritual

result of our existence in material Nature, a greater manifestation here becomes possible.

101, How did an **illimitable consciousness** and force of integral being enter into this limitation and separateness? How could this be possible and, if its possibility has to be admitted, what is its justification in the Real and its significance? 498

Ans: It is the mystery not of an original Illusion, but of the origin of the Ignorance and Inconscience and of the relations of Knowledge and Ignorance to the original Consciousness or Superconsciousness.

102, How is it that the Ignorance exists? How has any principle or power in the infinite self-awareness been able to put self-knowledge behind it and exclude all but its own characteristic limited action? 504

Ans: Certain thinkers (*Buddha*) have declared that the **problem is insoluble**, it is an original mystery and is intrinsically incapable of explanation; only the fact and the process can be stated: or else the question of the nature of the supreme original existence or Non-existence is put aside as either unanswerable or unnecessary to answer. One can say that Maya with its fundamental principle of Ignorance or illusion simply is, and this power of Brahman has the double force of Knowledge and Ignorance inherently potential in it; all we have to do is to recognize the fact and find a means of escape out of the Ignorance—through the Knowledge, but into what is beyond both Knowledge and Ignorance – by renunciation of life, by recognition of the universal impermanency of things and the vanity of cosmic existence.

103, But what are its (subliminal self's) limits? How far does it extend? What is its fundamental nature? 577-78

Ans: Ordinarily, we speak of a subconscious existence and include in this term all that is not on the waking surface. But the whole or the greater part of the inner or subliminal self can hardly be characterized by that epithet; for when we say subconscious, we think readily of an obscure unconsciousness or half-consciousness or else a submerged consciousness below and in a way inferior to and less than organized waking awareness or, at least, less in possession of itself. But we find, when we go within, that some where in our subliminal part, --though not co-extensive with it since it has also obscure and ignorant regions, --**there is a consciousness much wider, more luminous, more in possession of itself and things than that which wakes upon our inner being**, and it is this which we must regard as **our subliminal self** and set apart the subconscious as an inferior, **a lowest occult province of our nature**. In the same way there is a superconscious part of our total existence, in which there is what we discover to be our highest self, and this too we can set apart as a **higher occult province of our nature**.

104, But what then is the **subconscious** and where does it begin and how is it related to our surface being or to the subliminal of which it would seem more properly to be a province? 578-79

Ans: We are aware of our body and know that we have a physical existence, even very largely identify ourselves with it, and yet most of its operations are really **subconscious to our mental being**; not only does the mind take no part in them but, as we suppose, our most physical being has no awareness of its own hidden operations or, by itself, of its own existence; it knows or rather feels only so much of itself as is enlightened by mind-sense and observable by intelligence. We are aware of a vitality working in this bodily form and structure as in the plant or lower animal, a vital existence which is also for the most part subconscious to us, for we only observe some of its movements and reactions. We are partly aware of its operations, but not by any means of all or most of them, and rather of those which are abnormal than those which are normal; its wants impress themselves more forcibly upon us than its satisfactions, its diseases and disorders than its health and its regular rhythm, its death is more poignant to us than its life is vivid: we know as much of it as we can consciously observe and use other sensations or as a cause of nervous or physical reaction and disturbance, but no more. Accordingly, we suppose that this vital-physical part of us also is not conscious of its own operations or has only a suppressed consciousness or no-consciousness like the plant or an inchoate consciousness like the incipient animal; it becomes conscious only so far as it is enlightened by mind and observable by intelligence.

105, How could this manifold ignorance or this narrowly self-limiting and separative knowledge arise and come into action or maintain itself in action in an absolute Being who must be absolute consciousness and therefore cannot be subject of ignorance? How is even an apparent division effectively operated and kept in continuance in the Indivisible? 586-87

Ans: The Being, integrally one, cannot be ignorant of itself; and since all things are itself, conscious modifications, determinations of its being, it cannot either be ignorant of things, of their true nature, of their true action. But though we say that we are That, that the *Jivatman* or individual self is no other than the *Paramatman*, no other than the Absolute, yet we are certainly ignorant both of ourselves and things, from which this contradiction results that what must be in its very grain incapable of ignorance is yet capable of it, and has plunged itself into it by some will of its being or some necessity or possibility of its nature. We do not ease the difficulty if we plead that Mind, which is the seat of ignorance, is a thing of Maya, non-existent, not-Brahman, and that Brahman, the Absolute, the sole Existence cannot in any way be touched by the ignorance of mind which is part of the illusory being, Asat, the non-existence. This is an escape which is not open to us if we admit an integral Oneness: for then it is evident that, in making so radical a distinction and at the same time cancelling it by terming it illusory, we are using the magic or Maya of thought and word in order to conceal from ourselves the fact that we are dividing and denying the unity of the Brahman; for we have erected two opposite powers, Brahman incapable of illusion and self-illusory Maya, and pitchforked them into an impossible unity.

106, But here a question may arise, since there is a passivity in Existence and in Nature as well as an activity, immobile status as well as kinesis, what is the place and role of this Force, this power and its concentration in regard to a status where there is no play of energy, where all is immobile. 592

Ans: In ourselves we habitually associate our *Tapas*, our conscious force, with **active consciousness**, with energy in play and in internal and external act and motion. That which is passive in us produces no action or only an involuntary or mechanical action, and we do not associate it with our will or conscious force; still, since there too there is possibility of action or the emergence of an automatic activity, it must have at least a passively responsive or automatic conscious force in it; or there is in it either a secretly positive or a negative and *inverse Tapas*. It may also be that there is a larger conscious force, power or will in our being unknown to us which is behind this involuntary action, --if not a will, at least a force of some kind which itself initiates action or else responds to the contacts, suggestions, stimulations of the universal Energy. In Nature also we know that things stable, inert or passive are yet maintained in their energy by a secret and unceasing motion, an energy in action upholding the apparent immobility.

107, Is the apparent absence of *Tapas* in this state real, or is there such an effective distinction in *Sachchidananda*? 593

Ans: It is affirmed that there is: the dual status of Brahman, quiescent and creative, is indeed one of the most important and fruitful distinctions in Indian philosophy; it is besides a fact of spiritual experience.

108, Is it (Ignorance) then something inherent in the multiplicity of souls? Does it come into being immediately *Brahman* views himself in the multiplicity, and does that multiplicity consist of a sum of souls each in its very nature fractional and divided from all others in consciousness, unable to become aware of them at all except as things external to it, linked at most by communication from body to body or mind to mind, but incapable of unity? 598-99

Ans: But we have seen that this (Ignorance) is **only** what we seem to be in our **most superficial** layer of consciousness, the external mind and the physical; when we get back into a subtler, deeper, larger action of our consciousness, we find the walls of division becoming thinner and in the end there is left no wall of division, no Ignorance.

109, But what is the form? 600

Ans: It is, at least as we see it here, a formation of concentrated energy, a knot of the force of consciousness in its movement, a knot maintained in being by a constant whirl of action; but whatever transcendent truth or reality it proceeds from or expresses, it is not in any part of itself in manifestation durable or eternal. It is not eternal in its integrality, nor in its constituting atoms; for they can be disintegrated by dissolving the knot of energy in constant concentrated action which is the sole thing that maintains their apparent stability. It is a concentration of *Tapas* in movement of force on the form maintaining it in being which **sets up** the physical basis of division.

110, We have to **ask ourselves** what is the nature of this absorbing, this separating, this self-forgetful concentration which is the obscure miracle of the universe. 601

Ans: Since *Brahman* is in the essentiality of its universal being a unity and a multiplicity aware of each other and in each other and since in its reality it is something beyond the One and the Many, containing both, aware of both, Ignorance can only come about as a **subordinate phenomenon** by some concentration of consciousness **absorbed in a part knowledge** or a part action of the being and excluding the rest from its awareness. (1) there may be either a concentration of the One in itself to the exclusion of the Many (**third exclusive concentration or reverse of first exclusive concentration**) or (2) of the Many in their own action to the exclusion of the all-awareness of the One, (**first exclusive concentration**) (3) or of the individual being in himself to the exclusion of both of the One and the rest of the Many who are then to him separated units not included in his direct awareness (**second exclusive concentration**). (4) Or again there may be or there may intervene at a certain point some general rule of **exclusive concentration**, operative in all these **three directions**, (**fusion of all the three exclusive concentration**) a concentration of separative active consciousness in a separative movement; but this takes place not in true self, but in the force of active being, in *Prakriti*.

111, This being the root-nature of the Ignorance, a practical truth of phenomenally but not really dividing, of a limiting and separative conscious energy absorbed in its works to the apparent forgetfulness of its integral and real self, we may answer the **questions that arise of the why, the where and the how of this movement**. 611-12

Ans: The reason for the Ignorance, its necessity, becomes clear enough once we have seen that without it **the object of the manifestation** of our world would be impossible, could not be done at all, or not completely, or not in the way in which it should be and is done. Each side of the manifold ignorance has its justification, which is only a part of the one general necessity. Man, living in his timeless being, could not have thrown himself into the stream of Time with that movement of subjection to its flux from moment to moment which is the nature of his present living. Living in his superconscious or subliminal self, he could not have worked out from the knot of his individual mentality the relations which he has to ravel and unravel with the world about him, or would have to do it in a radically different fashion. Living in the universal self and not in the egoistic separative consciousness, he could not evolve that separate action, personality, outlook from himself as the sole or **initial centre** and point of reference which is **the contribution of ego-sense to the world-workings**. He has to put on the **temporal, the psychological, the egoistic ignorance** in order to **protect himself against** the light of the infinite and the largeness of the universal, so as to develop behind this defence his **temporal individuality** in the cosmos. He has to live as if in this one life and put on the ignorance of his infinite past and future: for

otherwise, if the past were present to him, **he could not work out** his present selected relations with his environment in the way intended; his knowledge would be too great for him, it would necessarily alter the whole spirit and **balance** and form of his action. He **has to live in** the mind absorbed by his bodily life and not in the supermind; for otherwise all these protecting walls of ignorance created by the limiting, dividing, differentiating power of mind would not be built or would become too thin and transparent for his purpose.

112, If **Ignorance** is in its nature a self-limiting knowledge oblivious of the integral self-awareness and confined to **an exclusive concentration** in a single field or upon a concealing surface of cosmic movement, what, in this view, are we to make of the problem which **most poignantly preoccupies** the mind of man when it is turned on the mystery of his own existence and of cosmic existence, **the problem of evil?** 619

Ans: A limited knowledge supported by a secret All-Wisdom as an instrument for working out within the necessary limitations a restricted world-order may be admitted as intelligible process of universal Consciousness and Energy; but **the necessity of wrong and or evil or their utility** in the workings of the omnipresent Divine reality is less easily admissible. And yet if that Reality is what we have supposed it to be, there **must** be some necessary for the appearance of these contrary phenomena, some significance, some function that they had to serve in the economy of universe. For in the complete and inalienable self-knowledge of the Brahman which is necessarily all-knowledge, since all this that is is the Brahman, such phenomena cannot have come in as a chance, an intervening accident, an involuntary forgetfulness of confusion of the Consciousness-force of the All-Wise in the cosmos or an ugly contretemps for which the indwelling Spirit was not prepared and of which it is the prisoner erring in a labyrinth with the utmost difficulty of escape. Nor can it be an inexplicable mystery of being, original and eternal, of which the divine All-Teacher is incapable of giving an account to himself or to us. There must be behind it a significance of the All-Wisdom itself, a power of the All-Consciousness which permits and uses it for some **indispensable function** in the present workings of our self-experience and world-experience. This aspect of existence **needs** now to be examined **more directly** and determined in its origins and the limits of its reality and its place in Nature.

113, The question is that at what junction of cosmic manifestation the opposites (falsehood and evil) enter in; for it may be either at some stage of the increasing involution of consciousness in separative mind and life or only after the plunge into Inconscience. This resolves itself into the question whether falsehood, error, wrong and evil exist originally in the mental and vital planes and are native to mind and life or are proper only to the material manifestation because inflicted on mind and life there by the obscurity arising from the Inconscience. It may be questioned too whether, if they do exist in supraphysical mind and life, they were original and inevitable there; for they may rather have entered in as a consequence or a

supraphysical extension from the material manifestation. Or, if that is untenable, it may be that they arose as an enabling supraphysical affirmation in the universal Mind and Life, a precedent necessity for their appearance in that manifestation to which they more naturally belong as an inevitable outcome of the **creative Inconscience**. 624-25

Ans: It was for a long time held by human mind as a traditional knowledge that when we go beyond the material plane, these things are found to exist there also in worlds beyond us. There are in these planes of supraphysical experience powers and forms of vital mind and life that seem to be the prephysical foundation of the discordant, defective or perverse forms and powers of life-mind and life-force which we find in the terrestrial existence. There are forces, and subliminal experience seems to show that there are supraphysical beings embodying those forces, that are attached in their root nature to ignorance, to darkness of consciousness, to misuse of force, to perversity of delight, to all the causes and consequences of the things that we call evil. These powers, beings or forces are active to impose their adverse constructions upon terrestrial creatures; eager to maintain their reign in the manifestation, they oppose the increase of light and truth and good and, still more, are **antagonistic to the progress of the soul towards a divine consciousness and divine existence**. It is this feature of existence that we see figured in the tradition of the conflict between the Powers of light and Darkness, Good and Evil, cosmic Harmony and cosmic Anarchy, a tradition universal in ancient myth and in religion and common to all systems of occult knowledge.

114, It may then be **questioned** whether it is not a mistake to deny the absoluteness to evil; for as there is a drive, an aspiration, a yearning in man towards an absolute truth, good, beauty, so these movements –as also the transcending intensities attainable by pain and suffering – seem to indicate the attempt at self-realisation of an absolute evil. 627-28

Ans: But immeasurable is not the sign of absoluteness: for the absolute is not in itself a thing of magnitude, it is beyond measure, not in the sole sense of vastness, but in the freedom of its essential being; it can manifest itself in the infinitesimal as well as in the infinite. It is true that as **we pass from the mental to the spiritual**, --and that is a passage towards the absolute, a subtle wideness and increasing intensity of light, of power, of peace, of ecstasy mark our passing out of our limitations: but this is **at first** only a sign of freedom, of height, of universality, not yet an inward absoluteness of self-existence which is the essence of the matter. To this absoluteness pain and evil cannot attain, they are bound to limitation and they are derivative. If pain becomes immeasurable, it ends itself or ends that in which it manifests, or collapses into insensibility or, in rare circumstances, it may turn into an ecstasy of Ananda. If evil became sole and immeasurable, it would destroy the world or destroy that which bore and supported it; it would bring things and itself back by disintegration into non-existence. No doubt the Powers that support darkness and evil attempt by the



magnitude of their self-aggrandisement to reach an appearance of infinity, but immensity is all they can achieve and not infinity; or at most, they are able to represent their element as a kind of abysmal infinite, commensurate with the Inconscient, but it is a false infinite. Self-existence, in essence or by an eternal inherence in the Self-existent, is the condition of absoluteness: **error, falsehood and evil are cosmic powers, but relative in their nature**, not absolute, since they depend **for existence on the perversion or contradiction of their opposites** and are not like truth and good self-existent absolutes, inherent aspects of the supreme Self-existent.

115, ‘**A second point of questioning** emerges from the evidence given for the supraphysical and prephysical existence of these dark opposites: for that suggests that they may be after all original cosmic principles. 628-29

Ans: But it is to be noted that their appearance does not extend higher than the lower supraphysical life-planes; they are “powers of the Prince of Air”, --air being in the ancient symbolism the principle of life and therefore of the mid-worlds where the vital principle is predominant and essential. The adverse opposites are **not, then, primal powers of the cosmos**, but creations of Life or of Mind in life. Their supraphysical aspects and influences on earth-nature can be explained by the coexistence of worlds of a descending involution with parallel worlds of an ascending evolution, not precisely created by earth existence, but created as an annexe to the descending world-order and a prepared support for the evolutionary terrestrial formations; here evil may appear, not as inherent in **all life**, but as a possibility and pre-formation that **makes inevitable** its formation in the evolutionary emergence of consciousness out of the Inconscient. However this may be, it is an **outcome of Inconscience** that we can best watch and understand **the origin of falsehood, error, wrong and evil**, for it is in the return of Inconscience towards Consciousness that they can be seen **taking their formation** and it is there that they seem to be normal and even inevitable.

116, But from what then does this (duality) awakening proceed? What is it in the human being that originates and gives its power and place to the sense of good and evil? 631-32

Ans: If we regard only the process, we may agree that it is the vital mind that makes distinction. Its first valuation is sensational and individual, --all that is pleasant, helpful, beneficial to the life-ego is good, all that is unpleasant, malefic, injurious or destructive is evil. Its next valuation is utilitarian and social: all that is considered helpful and associated life, all that it demands from the individual in order to remain in association and to regulate association for the best maintenance, satisfaction, development, good order of the associated life and its units, is good; all that has in the view of the society a contrary effect or tendency is evil.

117, What then is this spiritual or psychic witness or what is to it the value of the sense of good and evil? 632-33

Ans: It may be maintained that the one use of the sense of sin and evil is that the embodied being may become aware of the nature of this world of Inconscience

and ignorance, awake to a knowledge of its evil and suffering and the relative nature of its good and happiness and turn away from it to that which is absolute. Or else **its spiritual use** may be to purify the nature by the pursuit of good and the negation of evil until it is ready to perceive the supreme good and turn from the world towards God, or, as in the *Buddhistic* ethical insistence, it may serve to prepare the dissolution of the ignorant ego-complex and the escape from personality and suffering. But also it may be that this awakening is a spiritual necessity of the evolution itself, a step towards the growth of the being out of the Ignorance into the truth of the divine unity and the evolution of a divine consciousness and a divine being. For much more than the mind or life which can turn either to good or to evil, it is the soul-personality, the psychic being, which insists on the distinction, though in a larger sense than the mere moral difference. It is the soul in us which **turns always** towards Truth, Good and Beauty; because it is by these things that it itself grows in stature; the rest, their opposites, are a necessary part of experience, but have to be **outgrown in the spiritual increase of the being**. The fundamental psychic entity in us has the delight of life and all experience as part of the **progressive manifestation of the spirit**, but the very principle of its delight of life is to gather out of all contacts and happenings their **secret divine sense and essence**, a divine use and purpose so that by experience our mind and life may grow out of the Inconscience towards a supreme consciousness, out of the divisions of the Ignorance towards an integralising consciousness and knowledge. It is there for that and it pursues from **life to life** its ever-increasing upward tendency and insistence; the growth of the soul is a growth out of darkness into light, out of falsehood into truth, out of suffering into its own supreme and universal Ananda. The soul's perception of good and evil may not coincide with the mind's artificial standards, but it has a deeper sense, a sure discrimination of what points to the higher Light and what points away from it. It is true that as the inferior light is below good and evil, so the superior spiritual light is beyond good and evil; but this is not in the sense of admitting all things with an impartial neutrality or of obeying equally the impulses of good and evil, but in the sense that a higher law of being intervenes in which there is no longer any place or utility for these values.

118, If, then, evil and falsehood are natural products of the Inconscience, automatic results of the evolution of life and mind from it in the process of the Ignorance, we have to see how they arise, on what they depend for their existence and what is the remedy or escape. 633-34

Ans: In the surface emergence of mental and vital consciousness from the Inconscience is to be found the process by which these phenomena come into being. Here there are **two** determining factors, --and it is these that are the **efficient cause** of the simultaneous emergence of falsehood and evil. (1) **First**, there is an underlying, a still **occult consciousness** and power of inherent knowledge, and there is also an overlying layer of what might be called indeterminate or else ill-formed stuff of vital and physical consciousness; through

this obscure difficult medium the emerging mentality has to force its way and has to impose itself on it by a constructed and no longer an inherent knowledge, because this stuff is still full of nescience, heavily burdened and enveloped with the inconscience of Matter, (2) **Next**, the emergence takes place in a **separated form** of life which has to affirm itself against a principle of inanimate material inertia and a constant pull of that material inertia towards disintegration and a relapse into the original inanimate Inconscience. This separated life-form has also to affirm itself, supported only by a limited principle of association, against **an outside world** which is, if not hostile to its existence, yet **full of dangers** and on which it has to impose itself, conquer life-room, arrive at expression and propagation, if it wishes to survive. The result of an emergence of consciousness in these conditions is the growth of a self-affirming vital and physical individual, a construction of Nature of life and matter with a concealed psychic or spiritual true individual behind it **for which Nature is creating** this outward means of expression.

119, But how is this evolutionary intention in Nature to fulfil itself, by what power, means, impulsion, what principle and process of selection and harmonization? 648

Ans: The **method adopted by the mind of man** through the ages has been always a principle of selection and rejection, and this has taken the forms of a religious sanction, a social or moral rule of life or an ethical ideal. But this is an empirical means which does not touch the root of the problem because it has **no vision of the cause and origin of the malady** it attempts to cure; it deals with symptoms, but deals with perfunctorily, not knowing what function they serve in the purpose of Nature and what it is in the mind and life that supports them and keeps them in being. Moreover, human good and evil are relative and the standards erected by ethics are uncertain as well as relative: what is forbidden by one **religion** or another, what is regarded as good or bad by social opinion, what is thought useful to society or noxious to it, what some temporary law of man allows or disallows, what is or is considered helpful or harmful to self or others, what accords with this or that ideal, what is prompted or discouraged by an instinct which we call conscience, --an amalgam of all these view-points is the determining heterogeneous idea, constitutes the complex substance, of morality; in all of them there is the constant mixture of truth and half-truth and error which pursues all the activities of our limiting mental Knowledge-Ignorance. A mental control over our personal and social action, over our dealings with others is **indispensable** to us as human beings, and morality creates a standard by which we can guide ourselves and establish a **customary control**; but the control is always imperfect and **it is an expedient, not a solution**: man remains always what he is and has ever been, a mixture of good and evil, **sin and virtue**, a mental ego with an imperfect command over his mental, vital and physical nature.

120, But what then is the character, the origin and the end of this deviation (from a celestial and spiritual into a material existence)? 698-99

Ans: (1) There is first the idea of **certain religions**, long persistent but now greatly shaken and discredited, that man is a being primarily created as a material living body upon earth into which a newly born divine soul is breathed or else with which it is associated by that fiat of almighty Creator. A solitary episode, this life is his one opportunity from which he departs to a world of eternal bliss or to a world of eternal misery either according as the general or preponderant balance of his acts is good or evil or according as he accepts or rejects, knows or ignores a particular creed, **mode of worship**, divine mediator, or else according to the arbitrary predestining caprice of his Creator. But that is the supraterritorial theory of life in its least rational form of questionable creed or dogma. (2) Taking the idea of the creation of a soul by physical birth as our starting-point, we may still suppose that by a natural law, common to all, the rest of its existence has to be pursued beyond in a supraterritorial plane, when the soul has shaken off from it its original matrix of matter like a butterfly escaped from the chrysalis and disporting itself in the air on its light and coloured wings. (3) Or we may suppose preferably a preterrestrial existence of the soul, a fall or descent into matter and a reascension into celestial being. (4) If we admit the soul's pre-existence, there is no reason to exclude this last possibility as an occasional spiritual occurrence, --a being belonging to another plane of existence may, conceivably, assume for some purpose the human body and nature: but this is not likely to be the universal principle of earth-existence or a sufficient rationale for the creation of the material universe.

121, Who can say what victories of the kind may have been achieved in our past cycles and how near may be the next ascension? 752

Ans: It is not **indeed necessary** or possible that the whole race should transform itself from mental into spiritual beings, but a **general admission of the ideal, a widespread endeavour, a conscious concentration** are needed to carry the stream of tendency to its definitive achievement. Otherwise what will be ultimately accomplished is an achievement by the **few initiating** a new order of beings, while humanity will have passed sentence of **unfitness** on itself and may fall back into an evolutionary decline or a stationary immobility; for it is the **constant upward effort** that has kept humanity alive and maintained for it its place in the front of creation.

122, But why a succession of human births and not one alone? 792-93

Ans: For the same reason that has made the human birth itself a culminating point of the past succession, the previous upward series, --it must be so by the very necessity of the spiritual evolution. For the soul has not finished what it has to do by merely developing into humanity; it has still to develop that humanity into its higher possibilities. Obviously, the soul that lodges in a Caribbee or an untaught primitive or an Apache of Paris or an American gangster, has not yet exhausted the necessity of human birth, has not developed all its possibilities or the whole meaning of humanity, has not worked out all the sense of *Sachchidananda* in the universal Man; neither has the soul lodged in a vitalistic European occupied with

dynamic production and vital pleasure or in an Asiatic peasant engrossed in the ignorant round of the domestic and economic life. We may reasonably doubt whether even a Plato or a Shankara marks the crown and therefore the end of the outflowering of the spirit in man. We are apt to suppose that these may be the limit, because these and others like them seem to us the highest point which the mind and soul of man can reach, but that may be the illusion of our present possibility. There may be a higher or at least a larger possibility which **the Divine intends** yet to realise in man, and, if so, it is the way up to it and to open the gates. At any rate this present highest point at least must be reached before we can write *finis* on the recurrence of the human birth for the individual. Man is there to move from the ignorance and from the little life which he is in his mind and body to the knowledge and the large divine life which he can compass by the unfolding of the spirit. At least the opening out of the spirit in him, the knowledge of his real self and the leading of the spiritual life must be attained before he can go definitively and for ever otherwise. There may too be beyond this initial culmination **a greater flowering of the spirit** in the human life of which we have as yet only the first intimations; the human life of which we have as yet only the first intimations; the imperfection of Man is not the last word of Nature, but his perfection too is not the last peak of the Spirit.

123, Three questions then arise, interrelated or interdependent: --(1) whether there is any evidence or any true intimation of the existence of such other worlds; (2) whether, if they exist, they are of the nature we have indicated, arising or descending in the order and within the rationale of a hierarchical series between Matter and Spirit; (3) if that is their scale of being, are they otherwise quite independent and unconnected, or is there a relation and interaction of the higher worlds on the world of Matter? 801-02

Ans: It is a fact that mankind almost from the beginning of its existence or so far back as history or tradition can go, has believed in the existence of other worlds and in the possibility of communication between their powers and beings and the human race. In the last rationalistic period of human thought from which we are emerging, this belief has been swept aside as an age-long superstition; all evidence or intimations of its truth have been rejected *a priori* as fundamentally false and undeserving of inquiry because incompatible with the axiomatic truth that only Matter and the material world and its experiences are real; all other experience purporting to be real must be either a hallucination or an imposture or a subjective result of superstitious credulity and imagination or else, if a fact, then other than what it purported to be and explicable by a physical cause: no evidence could be accepted of such a fact unless it is objective and physical in its character; even if the fact be a very apparently supraphysical, it cannot be accepted as such unless it is totally unexplainable by any other imaginable hypothesis or conceivable conjecture.

124, What exact value are we to put upon these persistent beliefs or upon this mass of supernormal experience? 807

Ans: It is not possible for anyone who has had these contacts with any intimacy and not only by scattered abnormal accidents, to put them aside as mere superstition or hallucination; for they are too insistent, real, effective, organic in their pressure, too constantly confirmed by their action and results to be so flung aside: an appreciation, an interpretation, a mental organisation of this side of our capacity of **experience is indispensable**.

125, But how then were these other worlds created, by what force, by what instrumentality? 810

Ans: It might be the Life and Mind developing out of the Inconscient which have at the same time developed these other worlds or planes in **the subliminal consciousness** of the living beings who appear in it. To the subliminal being in life and after death, --for it is the inner being that survives the death of the body, -- these worlds might be real because sensible to its wider range of consciousness; it would move in them with that sense of reality, derivative perhaps but convincing, and it would send up its experience of them as belief and imagination to the surface being. This is a possible account, if we accept **Consciousness as the real creative Power** or agent and **all things as formations of consciousness**; but it would not give to the supraphysical planes of being the unsubstantiality or less palpable reality which the **physical mind** would like to attach to them; they would have the same reality in themselves as the physical world or plane of physical experience has in its own order.

126, There arises (1) first the question of the process of rebirth; if that process is not quickly successive, birth immediately following death of the body so as to maintain an uninterrupted series of lives of the same person, if there are intervals, that in its turn raises the question of (2) the principle and process of the passage to other worlds, which must be the scene of these intervals, and the return to earth-life. (3) A third question is the process of the spiritual evolution itself and the mutations which the soul undergoes in its passage from birth to birth through the stages of its adventure. 824

127, Where then would the temporary dwelling in the supraphysical take place? What would be the Soul's other habitat? 829-30

Ans: It might seem that it ought to be on a mental plane, in mental worlds, both because on man the mental being the attraction of that plane, already active in life, must prevail when there is not the obstacle of the attachment to the body, and because the mental plane should be, evidently, the native and proper habitat of a mental being. But this does not automatically follow, because of the complexity of man's being; he has a vital as well as mental existence,--his vital part often more powerful and prominent than the mental,--and behind the mental being is a soul of which it is the representative. There are, besides, many planes of levels of world-existence and the soul has to pass through them to reach its natural home. In the physical plane itself or close to it there are believed to be layers of greater and greater subtlety which may be regarded as sub-planes of the physical with a vital and a mental character; these are at once surrounding and penetrating strata

through which the interchange between the higher worlds and the physical world takes place. It might then be possible for the mental being, so long as its mentality is not sufficiently developed, so long as it is restricted mainly to the more physical forms of mind and life activity, to be caught and delayed in these media. It might even be obliged to rest there entirely between birth and birth; but this is not probable and could only happen if and in so far as its attachment to the earth-forms of its activity was so great as to preclude or hamper the completion of the natural upward movement. For the post-mortal state of the soul must correspond in some way to the development of the being on earth, since this after-life is not a free upward return from a temporary downward deviation into mortality, but a normal recurrent circumstance which intervenes to help out the process of a difficult spiritual evolution in the physical existence. There is a relation which the human being in his evolution on earth develops with higher planes of existence, and that must have a predominant effect on his **internatal** dwelling in these planes, it must determine his direction after death and determine too the place, period and character of his self-experience there.

128, But if this (evolution of fully conscious being or Spiritual man) is to be accepted as the intention in Nature, there are two questions that put themselves at once and call for a definitive answer, (1) --first, the exact nature of the transition from mental to spiritual being and, (2) when that is given, the process and method of the evolution of the spiritual out of the mental man. 884

Ans: It would at first sight seem evident that as each gradation emerges in matter and is largely limited and determined in its self-expression by its material conditions, as mind emerges in life-in-matter and is similarly limited and determined in its self-expression by life conditions and material conditions, so spirit too must emerge in a mind embodied in life-in-matter and must be largely limited and determined by the mental conditions in which it has its roots as well as the life conditions, the material conditions of its existence here. It might even be maintained that, if there has been any evolution of spiritual in us, it is only as a part of the mental evolution, a special operation of man's mentality; the spiritual element is not a distinct or separate entity and cannot have an independent emergence or a Supramental future. The mental being can develop a spiritual interest or preoccupation and may evolve perhaps in consequence a spiritual as well as an intellectual mentality, a fine soul flower of his mental life. The spiritual may become a predominant trend in some men just as in others there is a predominant artistic or pragmatic trend; but there can be no such thing as a spiritual being taking up and transforming the mental into the spiritual nature. There is no evolution of the spiritual man; there is only an evolution of a new and possibly a finer and rarer element in a mental being. This then is what has to be brought out, --the clear distinction between the spiritual and the mental, the nature of this evolution and the factors which make it possible and inevitable that there should be this emergence of the spirit in its true distinct character, not remaining, as it now for the most part is in its process or seems to be in its way of appearance,

a subordinate or a dominating feature of our mentality, but defining itself as a new power which will finally overtop the mental part and replace it as the leader of the life and nature.

129, But if there is to be not only a perfection of the inner existence, of the consciousness, of an inner delight of existence, but a perfection of life and action, **two other questions** present themselves from our mental view-point which have to our human thought about our life and its dynamisms a considerable, even a premier importance. (1) First, there is the place of **personality** in the gnostic being, --whether the status, the building of being will be quite other than what we experience as the form and life of the person or similar. If there is a **personality** and it is in any way responsible for its actions, there intervenes, next, (2) the question of the place of the ethical element and its perfection and fulfillment in the Gnostic nature. 1027-28

Ans: Ordinarily, in the common notion, the separative ego is our self and, if ego has to disappear in a transcendental or universal Consciousness, personal life and action must cease; for, the individual disappearing, there can only be an impersonal consciousness, a cosmic self: but if the individual is altogether extinguished, then no further question of **personality** or responsibility or ethical perfection can arise. According to another line of ideas the spiritual person remains, but liberated, purified, perfected in nature in a celestial existence. But here we are still on earth, and yet it is supposed that the **ego personality** is extinguished and replaced by a **universalised spiritual individual** who is a centre and power of the transcendent Being. It might be deduced that this Gnostic or Supramental individual is a self without **personality**, an impersonal Purusha. There could be many Gnostic individuals but there would be no **personality**, all would be the same in being and nature. This, again, would create the idea of a void or blank of pure being from which an action and function of experiencing consciousness would arise, but without a construction of **differentiated personality** such as that which we now observe and regard as ourselves on our surface. But this would be a mental rather than a Supramental solution of the problem of a spiritual individuality surviving ego and persisting in experience. In the Supermind consciousness **personality** and impersonality are not opposite principles; they are inseparable aspects of one and the same reality. This reality is not the ego but the being, who is impersonal and universal in his stuff of nature, but forms out of it an **expressive personality** which is his form of self in the changes of Nature.

130, A question might arise whether the Gnostic reversal, the passage into a Gnostic evolution and beyond it would not mean sooner or later the cessation of the evolution from the Inconscience, since the reason for that obscure beginning of things here would cease. This depends on the farther question whether the movement between the Superconscience and the Inconscience as the two poles of existence is an abiding law of the material manifestation or only a provisional circumstance. 1049



## Questions and Answers:

( For Familiarization of different basic terminology of *The Life Divine*)

1: What is consciousness? 95

Ans: It is ...**a self-aware force of existence** of which mentality is a middle term; below mentality it sinks into vital and material movements which are for us subconscient; above, it rises into the supramental which is for us superconscient. But in all it is one and the same thing organizing itself differently. This is, once more, the Indian conception of *Chit* which, as energy, creates the worlds...

2, What is surface consciousness? 530, 560, 1065, 644-45

Ans: The **surface consciousness** is constantly adding to its experience or rejecting from its experience, and by every addition it is modified and by every rejection also it is modified; although that deeper self which supports and contains this mutation remains unmodified, the outer or superficial self is constantly developing its experience so that it can never say of itself absolutely, "I am the same that I was a moment ago... In the **surface consciousness** knowledge represents itself as a truth seen from outside, thrown on us from the object, or as a response to its touch on the sense, a perceptive reproduction of its objective actuality....for in our **surface consciousness** we are bound to separation of consciousness from others and wear the fetters of the ego... **the surface consciousness develops the habit of ignoring, misunderstanding or rejecting the suggestions to action or against action that come from the secret inmost consciousness, the psychic entity; it answers instead to unenlightened mental and vital suggestions, or acts in accordance with the demands and impulses of the vital ego.**

3, What is superficial consciousness? 600

Ans: Our superficial consciousness, identified with body and with divided life and dividing mind, is ignorant; but that also can be illumined and made aware.

4, What is observing consciousness? 535-36

Ans: All experience or substance of becoming in Time is a flowing stream or sea not divided in itself, but only divided in the **observing consciousness** by the limited movement of the Ignorance which has to leap from moment to moment like a dragon-fly darting about on the surface of the stream: so too all substance of being in Space is a flowing sea not divided in itself, but only divided in the **observing consciousness** because our sense faculty is limited in its grasp, can see only a part and is therefore bound to observe forms of substance as if they were separate things in themselves, independent of the one substance.

5, What is active consciousness? 592

Ans: ...active consciousness in which consciousness works as an energy throwing up knowledge and activity out of itself and of which therefore Tapas is the character...

6, What is passive consciousness? 592

Ans: ...a passive consciousness in which consciousness does not act as an energy, but only exists as a status and of which therefore absence of Tapas or force in action is the character.

7: What is true subconscious? 579-80

Ans: The **true subconscious** is other than this vital or physical substratum; it is the Inconscient vibrating on the **borders of** consciousness, sending up its motions **to be changed into conscious stuff**, swallowing into its depths impressions of past experience as seeds of unconscious habit and returning them constantly but often chaotically to the surface consciousness, **missioning** upwards much futile or perilous stuff of which the origin is obscure to us, in dream, in mechanical repetitions of all kinds, in untraceable impulsions and motives, in mental, vital, physical perturbations and upheavals, in dumb automatic necessities of our obscurest parts of nature.

8, What is physical consciousness? 1023, 1063

Ans: Apart from the obscurity, frailties and limitations, which this change will overcome, **the body-consciousness** is a **patient servant** and can be in its large reserve of possibilities a potent instrument of the individual life, and it asks for little on its own account: what it craves for is duration, health, strength, physical perfection, bodily happiness, liberation from suffering, ease. These demands are not in themselves unacceptable, mean or illegitimate, for they render into the terms of Matter the perfection of form and substance, the power and delight which should be the natural outflowing, the expressive manifestation of the Spirit. When the gnostic Force can act in the body, these things can be established; for their opposites come from a pressure of external forces on the **physical mind**, on the nervous and material life, on the body—organism, from an ignorance that does not know how to meet these forces or is not able to meet them rightly or with power, and from some obscurity, pervading the stuff of **the physical consciousness** and distorting its responses, that reacts to them in a wrong way... the outer consciousness is a **physical consciousness** bound to its individual limits by the triple cord of mind, life and body...

9, What is vital consciousness? 94

Ans: In ourselves there is such a **vital consciousness** which acts in the cells of the body and the automatic vital functions so that we go through purposeful movements and obey attractions and repulsions to which our mind is a stranger.

10: What is mental Consciousness? 585, 173, 1052

Ans: A many-sided Ignorance striving to become an all-embracing Knowledge is the definition of the consciousness of man the mental being, --or, a limited separative awareness of things striving to become an integral consciousness and an integral Knowledge... Mind in its essence is a consciousness which measures,

limits, cuts out forms of things from the indivisible whole and contains them as if each were a separate integer... In us consciousness is Mind, and our mind is ignorant and imperfect, an intermediate power that has grown and is still growing towards something beyond itself: there were **lower levels of consciousness** that came before it and out of which it arose, there **must** very evidently be higher levels to which it is itself arising.

11, What is mental waking consciousness? 92

Ans: A mental waking consciousness such as is possessed by the human being during the major part of his bodily existence, when he is not asleep, stunned or otherwise deprived of his physical and superficial methods of sensation... our waking consciousness what we call then our consciousness is only a small selection from our entire conscious being.

12: What is apprehensive Consciousness, *Prajnana*? 195, 149, 199

A: It is a mentality which quite ceases to act consciously, yet the work of the body and the nerves and the sense-mind goes on unnoticed but constant and perfect; it has all become subconscious and only in one activity or chain of activities is the mind luminously active... apprehending consciousness in which knowledge centralizes itself and stands back from its works to observe them... it (life) supports and liberates into action the apprehensive consciousness of existence called mind and gives it a dynamic instrumentation so that it can work not only on its own forms but on forms of life and matter; it connects, too, and supports, as a middle term between them, the mutual commerce between them, mind and matter.

13, What is subliminal consciousness? 803-04

Ans: The **subliminal consciousness**, when rightly interrogated, is a witness to truth and its testimony is confirmed again and again even in the physical and the objective field; that testimony cannot, then, be disregarded when it calls our attention to things within us or to things that belong to planes or worlds of a supraphysical experience.

14, What is Soul consciousness? 599

Ans: When we get back to **soul-consciousness**, the obstacles to unity lessen and finally cease to exist altogether. The soul can in its consciousness **identify itself** with other souls, can contain them and enter into and be contained by them, can realise its unity with them; and this can take place, not in a featureless and indistinguishable sleep, not in a *Nirvana* in which all distinctions and individualities of soul and mind and body are lost, but in a **perfect waking** which observes and takes account of all distinctions but exceeds them.

15, What is psychic consciousness? 942

Ans: These experiences are the result of an opening outward of the inner and inmost being and nature; for then there comes into play the soul's power of **unerring inherent consciousness**, its vision, its touch on things which is superior to any mental cognition; there is there, native to the **psychic consciousness** in its pure working, an immediate sense of the world and its beings, a direct inner contact with them and a direct contact with the Self and with the Divine, -- a direct

knowledge, a direct sight of Truth and of all truths, a direct penetrating spiritual emotion and feeling, a direct intuition of right will and right action, a power to rule and to create an order of the being not by the gropings of the superficial self, but from within from the inner truth of self and things and the occult realities of Nature.

16, What is spiritual consciousness? 705, 935, 888, 1066

Ans: Such a larger and greater consciousness is spiritual, for the **spiritual consciousness** is not only higher than the rest but more embracing. Universal as well as transcendent, it can take up mind and life into its light and give them the true and utmost realisation of all for which they are seeking: for it has a greater instrumentality of knowledge, a fountain of deeper power and will, an unlimited reach and intensity of love and joy and beauty... A spiritualized consciousness is achieved and the life falls quiet, the body ceases to need and to clamour, the soul itself merges into to the spiritual silence...but it (spiritual consciousness) may also and usually does exercise a certain authority, governance, influence on thought, life movement, physical action, a purifying uplifting control compelling them to move in a higher and purer truth of themselves, to obey or be an instrumentation of an influx of some diviner Power or a luminous direction which is not mental but spiritual and can be recognized as having a certain divine character... The **spiritual consciousness**, the spiritual life reverses this principle of (conflict of mind, heart and body) building; it bases its action in the collective life upon an inner experience and inclusion of others in our own being, an inner sense and reality of oneness.

17, What is the action of integral spiritual consciousness? 660

Ans: An **integral spiritual consciousness** carries in it a knowledge of all the terms of being; it links the highest to the lowest through all the mediating terms and achieves an indivisible whole. At the highest summit of things it opens to the reality, ineffable because superconscient to all but its own self-awareness, of the Absolute. At the lowest end of our being it perceives the Inconscience from which our evolution begins; but at the same time it is aware of the One and the All self-involved in those depths, it unveils the secret Consciousness in the Inconscience. Interpretative, revelatory, moving between **these two extremes**, its vision discovers the manifestation of the One in the Many, the identity of the Infinite in the disparity of things finite, the presence of the timeless Eternal in eternal Time; it is this seeing illumines for it the meaning of the universe. **This consciousness does not abolish the universe; it takes it up and transforms it by giving to it its hidden significance.** It does not abolish the individual existence; it transforms the individual being and nature by revealing to them their true significance and enabling them to overcome their separateness from the Divine Reality and the Divine Nature.

18, What is Overmental consciousness? 295

Ans: **Overmind Consciousness** is global in its cognition and can hold any number of seemingly fundamental differences together **in a reconciling vision.**

19, What is original and ultimate consciousness? 491

Ans: An **original and ultimate consciousness** would be a consciousness of the Infinite and necessarily Unitarian in its view of diversity, integral, all-accepting, all-embracing, all-discriminating because all-determining, an indivisible whole-vision.

20: What is the function of the Supramental Consciousness? 142, 327, 1040

Ans: The Truth-Consciousness is everywhere present in the universe as an ordering self-knowledge by which the One manifests the harmonies of its infinite potential multiplicity. Without this ordering self-knowledge the manifestation would be merely a shifting chaos... A Supramental Truth-consciousness is at once the self-awareness of the Infinite and Eternal and a power of self-determination inherent in that self-awareness... A Supramental consciousness must be fundamentally a Truth-consciousness, a direct and inherent awareness of the truth of being and the truth of things; it is a power of the Infinite knowing and working out of its finites, a power of the Universal knowing and working out its oneness and detail, its cosmicity and its individualities; self-possessed of Truth, it would not have to seek for the Truth or suffer from the liability to miss it as does the mind of the Ignorance.

21, What is Gnostic consciousness? 1102, 1040

Ans: The gnostic consciousness is a consciousness in which **all contradictions are cancelled or fused** into each other in higher light of seeing and being, in a unified self-knowledge and world-knowledge... For in the Gnostic Truth-consciousness of a Supramental being there must necessarily be a truth of relation of all the parts and movements of the being, --whether the being of the individual or the being of and Gnostic collectivity, --a spontaneous and luminous oneness and wholeness in all the movements of the consciousness and all the action of the life. There could be no strife of the members; for not only the knowledge and will consciousness but the heart consciousness and life consciousness and body consciousness, what are in us the emotional, vital or physical parts of nature, would be included in this integrated harmony of wholeness and oneness.

22: How consciousness is related with Ignorance? 286

A: It has been shown indeed that division of consciousness is the basis of the Ignorance, a division of individual consciousness from the cosmic and the transcendent of which yet it (Ignorance) is an intimate part, in essence inseparable, a division of Mind from the Supramental Truth of which it (Ignorance) should be a subordinate action, of Life from the original Force of which it (Ignorance) is one energism, of Matter from the original existence of which it (Ignorance) is one form of substance... All that is necessary to note at present is that it (Ignorance) must be in its essential character an exclusive concentration on one movement and status of Conscious Being, which puts all the rest of consciousness and being behind and veils it (Ignorance) from that one movement's now partial knowledge.

23, What is Consciousness in Knowledge? 523

Ans: Consciousness as Knowledge knows its timeless self and sees Time within itself.

24, What is Consciousness in Ignorance? 523

Ans: Consciousness as Ignorance is a partial and superficial action of the same Knowledge which sees rather itself in Time, veiling itself in its own conception of temporal being, and can only by the removal of the veil return to eternal self-knowledge.

25, How Consciousness and Time are related? 377

Ans: Each state of consciousness has its own Time.

26, What is all consciousness? 496, 619

Ans: ...**all consciousness** is force and therefore potentially creative... a power of the **All-Consciousness** which permits and uses it for some **indispensable function** in the present workings of our self-experience and world-experience.

27, What is perfect Truth-Consciousness? 671

Ans: A consciousness possessing the essential and integral knowledge, proceeding from the essence to the whole and from the whole to the parts, would be no longer Mind, but a perfect Truth-Consciousness automatically possessed of inherent self-knowledge and world-knowledge.

28, What is absolute consciousness? 591

Ans: Absolute consciousness is in its nature absolute power; the nature of *Chit* is *Shakti*: Force or *Shakti* concentrated and energized for cognition or for action in a realizing power effective or creative, the power of conscious being dwelling upon itself and bringing out, as it were, by the heat of incubation the seed and development of all that is within it or, to use a language convenient to our minds, of all its truths and potentialities, has created the universe.

29, What are the seven gradations of manifesting Consciousness and their mode of working? 689-90

Ans: 'The manifestation of the Being in our universe takes the shape of an involution which is the starting-point of an evolution, --Matter the nethermost stage, Spirit the summit. In the descent into involution there can be distinguished seven principles of manifested being, **seven gradations of the manifesting Consciousness** of which we can get a perception or a concrete realisation of their presence and immanence here or a reflected experience. The **first three** are the original and fundamental principles and they form **universal states of consciousness** to which we can rise; when we do so, we can become aware of supreme planes or levels of fundamental manifestation or self-formulation of the spiritual reality which is put in front the unity of the Divine Existence, the power of the Divine Consciousness, the bliss of the Divine Delight of existence, -- not concealed or disguised as here, for we can possess them in their full independent reality. A **fourth principle** of supramental truth-consciousness is associated with them; manifesting unity in infinite multiplicity, it is the characteristic power of self-determination of the Infinite. This **quadruple power** of supreme existence, consciousness and delight (and Supermind) constitutes an

upper hemisphere of manifestation based on the Spirit's eternal self-knowledge. If we enter into these principles or into any plane of being in which there is the pure presence of the Reality, we find in them a complete freedom and knowledge. The other **three powers** and planes of being, of which we are even at present aware, from a lower hemisphere of the manifestation, a hemisphere of Mind, Life and Matter. These are in themselves powers of the **superior principles**; but wherever they manifest in a **separation from their spiritual sources**, they undergo as a result a **phenomenal lapse** into a divided in place of the true undivided existence: **this lapse, this separation** creates a state of limited knowledge **exclusively concentrated** on its own limited world-order and **oblivious of all that is behind it** and of the underlying unity, a state therefore of cosmic and individual Ignorance.

30: What is *Tapas*? 593, 605, 591

Ans: *Tapas* is the concentration of power of consciousness... there is power of play of knowledge and action, and that is *Tapas*... a concentration of consciousness in immobility and a self-realisation, and that too is *Tapas* ...*Tapas* is the being's dynamic force of consciousness... ...*Tapas* means literally heat, afterwards any kind of energism, askesis, austerity of conscious force acting upon itself or its object.

31, What is the *inverse Tapas*? 592-93

Ans: It is the passive power of consciousness.

32, What is integral *Tapas*? 592

Ans: *Tapas* is the nature of action of his consciousness as of ours, but it (Sachchidananda) is the integral *Tapas* of an integral consciousness in an indivisible Existence.

33: What is Evolution? 6, 1053, 710, 886

Ans: Evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature ... the destiny of evolving consciousness must be, then, to become perfect in its awareness, entirely aware of self and all-aware... **the evolution must** then be an emergence of this Existence, Consciousness, Delight of Existence, not at first in its essence or totality but in evolutionary forms that express or disguise it... Evolution is an inverse action of involution...

34: What is all evolution? 754

Ans: **All evolution** is in essence **a heightening of the force of consciousness in the manifest being** so that it may be raised into the greater intensity of what is still unmanifest, from matter into life, from life into mind, from the mind into the spirit.

35: What is Ignorance? 619, 497, 506, 598, 599

A: Ignorance is in its nature a self-limiting knowledge oblivious of the integral self-awareness and confined to an exclusive concentration in a single field or upon a concealing surface of cosmic movement... our **ignorance is a half-knowledge evolving towards knowledge**... ignorance is an unconsciousness, *achitti*, of the Truth and Right, an opposition of its workings and a creation of false or adverse workings. Ignorance is the absence of the divine eye of perception which gives us

the sight of the supramental Truth, it is the non-perceiving principle of our consciousness as opposed to the truth-perceiving conscious vision and knowledge... it (Ignorance) belongs only to a partial action of the being with which we identify ourselves... But we have seen that this (Ignorance) is **only** what we seem to be in our **most superficial** layer of consciousness, the external mind and the physical; when we get back into a subtler, deeper, larger action of our consciousness, we find the walls of division becoming thinner and in the end there is left no wall of division, no Ignorance.

36: What is Vidya? 508, 524, 506

Ans: Vidya, Knowledge in its highest spiritual sense, came to mean purely and trenchantly the knowledge of the One ... Knowledge is the inherent power of consciousness of the timeless, spaceless, unconditioned Self which shows itself in its essence as a unity of being; it is this consciousness that alone is real and complete knowledge because it is an eternal transcendence which is not only self-aware but holds in itself, manifests, originates, determines, knows the temporally eternal successions of the universe... Here knowledge appears to signify a consciousness of the Truth, the Right, *satyam rutam*, and of all that is the order of the Truth and Right...

37, What is Avidya? 508, 524

Ans: Avidya, Ignorance, purely and trenchantly the knowledge of the divided Many divorced, as in our world it is divorced, from the unifying consciousness of the One Reality... Ignorance is the consciousness of being in the successions of Time, divided in its knowledge by dwelling in the moment, divided in its conception of self-being by dwelling in the divisions of Space and the relations of circumstance, self-prisoned in the multiple working of the unity. It is called the Ignorance because it has put behind it the knowledge of unity and by that very fact is unable to know truly or completely either itself or the world, either the transcendent or the universal reality.

38: What is the difference between Avidya and Mind? 177

Ans: A new factor, a new action of conscious force is therefore needed to create the operation of a helplessly limited as opposed to a freely limiting mind,--that is to say, of mind subject to its own play and deceived by it as opposed to mind master of its own play and viewing it in its truth, the creature mind as opposed to the divine. That new factor is *Avidya*, the self-ignoring, faculty **which separates the action of mind from the action of the supermind** that originated and still governs it from behind the veil.

39: What is Science? 678

A: Science itself is in its own way an occultism; for it brings to light the formulas which Nature has hidden and it uses its knowledge to set free operations of her energies which she has not included in her ordinary operations and to organise and place at the service of man her occult powers and processes, a vast system of physical magic, --for there is and can be no other magic than the utilisation of secret truths of being, secret powers and processes of Nature.



40: What is Mind? 126

A: Mind is not a faculty of knowledge nor an instrument of omniscience; it is a faculty for seeking of knowledge. For Mind is that which does not know, which tries to know and which never knows except as in glass darkly. It is the power which interprets truth of universal existence for the practical uses of a certain order of things; it is not the power which knows and guides that existence and therefore it cannot be the power which created or manifested it.

41, What is the action of intellect? 911

Ans: For the action of our intellect is primarily the (1) function of understanding, (2) but secondarily critical and (3) finally organising, controlling and formative.

42: What is the (mental) Maya of the later Vedantic teaching? 126, 109, 507

A: The lower, present and deluding mental Maya has first to be embraced, then to be overcome; for it (Maya) is God's play with division and darkness and limitation, desire and strife and suffering in which He subjects Himself to the Force that has come out of Himself and by her obscure suffers Himself to be obscured... Its literal meaning is cunning, fraud or illusion... an *undivine Maya*, that which creates false mental forms and appearances, -- and hence the later significance of this word which seems to have meant originally **a formative power of knowledge**, the true magic of the supreme Mage, the divine Magician, but was also for adverse formative power of a lower knowledge, the deceit, illusion and deluding magic of the *Rakshasa*.

43: What is the (Supramental) Maya of the ancient Vedic Seers? 126, 109, 356, 507, 598

A: Maya meant for them the power of infinite consciousness to comprehend, contain in itself and measure out, that is to say, to form --for form is delimitation -- Name and Shape out of the vast illimitable Truth of infinite existence. It is by Maya that static truth of essential being becomes ordered truth of active being... *Maya* in its original sense meant a comprehending and containing consciousness capable of embracing, measuring and limiting and therefore formative... Its literal meaning is knowledge, skill, intelligence... Maya is the supreme and universal consciousness and force of the Eternal and Infinite and, being by its very nature unbound and illimitable, it can put forth many states of consciousness at a time, many dispositions of its Force, without ceasing to be the same consciousness-force for ever... The *divine Maya* is the knowledge of the Truth of things, its essence, law, operation, which the gods possess and on which they found their own eternal action and creation and their building of their powers in the human being... *Maya*, if it be the original power of the consciousness of the Eternal, cannot itself be an ignorance or in any way akin to the nature of ignorance, but **must** be a transcendent and universal power of self-knowledge and all-knowledge...

44: How the gulf between the Matter and Spirit can be bridged?

Ans: We have found already in the cosmic consciousness a meeting place where Matter becomes real to Spirit, Spirit becomes real to Matter. For in the cosmic consciousness Mind and Life are intermediaries and no longer, as they seem in the

ordinary egoistic mentality, agents of separation, formenters of an artificial quarrel between positive and negative principles of the same unknowable Reality.

45: What is our approach towards Gods? 166-167, 294

Ans: In essence the gods are one existence which the sages call by different names; but in their action founded in and proceeding from the large Truth and Right Agni or another is said to be all the other gods, he is the One that becomes all; at the same time he is said to contain all the gods in himself as the nave of a wheel contains the spokes, he is the One that contains all; and yet as Agni he is described as a separate deity, one who helps all the others, exceeds them in force and knowledge, yet is inferior to them in cosmic position and is employed by them as messenger, priest and worker,-- the creator of the world and father, he is yet the son born of our works, he is, that is to say, the original and the manifested indwelling Self or Divine, the One that inhabits all... There are in the Veda different formulations of the nature of the gods: it is said they are all one Existence to which the sages give different name; yet each god is worshipped as if he by himself is that Existence, one who is all the other Gods together or contains them in his being; and yet again each is a separate Deity acting sometimes in unison with companion deities, sometimes separately, sometimes even in apparent opposition to other Godheads of same Existence.

46: Why error and falsehood are necessary? 301-302

Ans: But when by an exclusive concentration on Force and Form Consciousness-Force seems phenomenally to separate Consciousness from Force, or when it absorbs Consciousness in a blind sleep lost in Form and Force, then Consciousness has to struggle back to itself by a fragmentary evolution which necessitates error and makes falsehood inevitable.

47: Why we do not freely determine our thinking according to the truth of things? 322

Ans: It is determined for us by our nature.

48: What is Supramental cognition? 330

Ans: The supramental cognition of things which sees the one Truth everywhere and would so arrange its account to us of our existence, its report of secret creation and the significance of the universe.' 330

49, What is *Brahman*? 586

Ans: Energism of consciousness is *Brahman*.

50: What is *Nirguna Brahman*? 331

Ans: The *Nirguna Brahman* is the Eternal without qualities, the pure featureless One Existence, the Impersonal, the Silence void of activities, the Non-being, the Ineffable and the Unknowable.

51: What is *Saguna Brahman*? 331

Ans: It is the Self that becomes all things, the *Saguna Brahman*, the eternal with infinite qualities, the One who is the Many, the infinite Person who is the source and foundation of all persons and personalities, the Lord of creation, the Word, the Master of all works and action; it is that which being known all is known.

52: What are the three Hindu negations towards existence?

Ans: (1) The chain of Karma, (2) escape from the wheel of rebirth, (3) Maya.

53: What is real monism or true Adwaita? 35

A: The real *Monism*, the true *Adwaita*, is that which admits all things as the one *Brahman* and does not seek to bisect Its existence into two incompatible entities, an eternal Truth and an eternal Falsehood, *Brahman* and not-*Brahman*, Self and not-Self, a real Self and an unreal yet perpetual Maya..

54, What is Tantra? 910, 909

Ans: Occult science is, essentially, the science of the subliminal, the subliminal in ourselves and the subliminal in world-nature, and of all that is in connection with the subliminal, including the subconscious and the superconscious, and the use of it as part of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and for the right dynamisation of that knowledge... For the **highest occultism** is that which discovers the secret movements and dynamic supernormal possibilities of mind and life and spirit and uses them in their native force or by an applied process for the greater effectivity of our mental, vital and spiritual being.

55: What is the Buddhist Nirvana? 480, 504

Ans: The Buddha applied his penetrating rational intellect supported by an intuitive vision to the world as our mind and sense see it and discovered the principle of its construction and the way of release from all constructions... to get rid of Karma, individuality and suffering must be our one objective; by that elimination we shall pass into whatever may be free from these things, permanent, real: the way of liberation alone matters.

56, What is Buddhist concept of God? 484, 505

Ans: The Buddhists took this last step and refused reality to the Self on the ground that it was as much as the rest a construction of the mind; they cut not only God but the eternal Self and impersonal Brahman out of the picture... or else the question of the nature of the supreme original existence or Non-existence is put aside as either unanswerable or unnecessary to answer.

57: What is the gist of Buddha's teaching? 34

A: This possibility of an entire motionless impersonality and void Calm within doing outwardly the works of eternal varieties, Love, Truth and Righteousness, was perhaps the real gist of the Buddha's teaching.

58, What is the *Pantheistic* view? 688

Ans: The pantheistic view of the identity of the Divine and the Universe is a truth, for all this that is the Brahman: but it stops short of the whole truth when it misses and omits the supracosmic Reality.

59: What is Shankara's Illusion? 481

Ans: Shankara, standing between the world and the eternal Reality, saw the mystery of the world must be ultimately suprarational, not conceivable or expressible by our reason, *anirvacaniya*; but he maintained the world as seen by the reason and sense as valid and had therefore to posit an unreal reality...

60, What is Catholic and Protestant Christianity? 904

Ans: This development has led farther to a division into two tendencies, catholic and protestant, (1) one a tendency towards some conversion of original plastic character of religion, its many-sidedness and appeal to the whole nature of the human being, (2) the other disruptive of this catholicity and insistent on a pure reliance on belief, worship and conduct simplified so as to make a quick and ready appeal to the common reason, heart and ethical will. This turn has tended to create an excessive rationalization, a discrediting and condemnation of most of the occult elements which seek to establish a communication with what is invisible, a reliance on the surface mind as the sufficient vehicle of the spiritual endeavour; a certain dryness and a narrowness and paucity of the spiritual life have been a frequent consequence.

61, What is error? 525

Ans: Living within the Ignorance, from moment to moment, from field to field, from relation to relation, the conscious soul stumbles on in the error of a fragmentary knowledge.

62, What is the aim of religion and Yoga? 755

Ans: A change into a higher consciousness or a state of being is not only the whole aim and process of religion, of all higher askesis, of Yoga, but it is also the very trend of our life itself, the secret purpose found in the sum of its labour.

63, How Ignorance is valuable? 528

Ans: Ignorance is a utilization of the Being's self knowledge in such a way as to make it valuable for Time-experience and valid for Time-activity.

64, What is the interrelation between the Buddhist and Vedantic thought? 695

Ans: This ideal of self-extinction which is boldly and clearly proclaimed by the *Buddhists*, is in *Vedantic* thought a self-finding: but the self-finding of the individual by his growth into his true being in the Absolute would only be possible if both are interrelated realities; it could not apply to the final world-abolishing self-affirmation of the Absolute in an unreal or temporary individual by the annulment of the false personal being and by the destruction of all individual and cosmic existence for that individual consciousness, --however much these errors may go on, helplessly inevitable, in the world of Ignorance permitted by the Absolute, in a universal, eternal and indestructible *Avidya*.

65, What is the nature of ego? 63

Ans: the nature of the ego is a self-limitation of consciousness by a willed ignorance of the rest of its play and its exclusive absorption in one form, one combination of tendencies, one field of the movement of energies. Ego is a factor which determines the reactions of error, sorrow, pain, evil, death; for it gives these values to movements which would otherwise be represented in their right relation to the one Existence, Bliss, Truth and Good.

66, How can right relation with the existence be recovered? 63

Ans: By recovering the right relation we may eliminate the ego-determined reactions, reducing them eventually to their true values; and this recovery can be

effected by the right participation of the individual in the consciousness of the totality and in the consciousness of the transcendent which the totality represents.

67, What is true ethics? 103

Ans: Self-blame and self-condemnation, are the beginning of true ethics.

68, What is good and evil? 104

Ans: Disapproval of that which threatens and hurts us, approval of that which flatters and satisfies refine into conception of good and evil to oneself, to the community, to others than ourselves, to other communities than ours, and finally into the general approval of good, the general disapproval of evil.

69, What is pain? 115

Ans: Pain is in the nature of a nervous and physical recoil from a dangerous or harmful contact; it is a part of what the Upanishad calls *jugupsa*, the shrinking of the limited being from that which is not himself and not sympathetic or in harmony with himself, its impulse of self-defence against "others".

70, What is physical mind? 180

Ans: This corporeal mentality is merely our surface of mind, merely the front which it presents to the physical experience.

71, What are the limitation of physical and vital mind? 181

Ans: As our physical instrumental mind has the illusion of the body, so this subconscious dynamic mind has the illusion of life. In that it is absorbed and concentrated, by that it is limited, with that it identifies its being. Here we do not yet get back to the meeting-place of the mind and supermind and the point at which they originally separated.

72, What are the fundamental opposition the Matter presents to Spirit? 260

Ans: They are Ignorance, Inertia and Division.

73, What are the fundamental opposition the Life and Mind presents to Spirit? 225-227

Ans: (1) He is aware of only of a small part of his own being: his surface mentality, his surface life, his surface physical being is all that he knows and he does not know even all of that; below is the occult surge of his subconscious and his subliminal mind, his subconscious, and his subliminal life-impulses, his subconscious corporeality, all that large part of himself. (2) The second difficulty is that man is separated in his mind, his life, his body from the universal. (3) The third difficulty is the division between force and consciousness in the evolutionary existence.

74: Why error and falsehood are necessary? 301

Ans: Consciousness has to struggle back to itself by a fragmentary evolution which necessitates error and makes falsehood inevitable.

75, What are the source of error, falsity and evil? 646

Ans: This then is the origin and nature of error, falsehood, wrong and evil in the consciousness and will of the individual; a limited consciousness growing out of nescience is the source of error, a personal attachment to the limitation and the

error born of it the source of falsity, a wrong consciousness governed by the life-ego the source of evil.

76, What is desire? 800

Ans: Desire is the result of incompleteness, of insufficiency, of something that is not possessed or enjoyed and which the being seeks for the possession or enjoyment.

77, What is conscience? 632

Ans: The **traditional account** of this inner witness is conscience, a power of perception in us half mental, half intuitive; but this is something superficial, constructed, unreliable: there is certainly within us, though less easily active, more masked by surface elements, a deeper spiritual sense, the soul's discernment, an inborn light within our nature.

78, What is Intuition? 292, 981

Ans: Intuition is only one special movement of self-existent knowledge... **Intuition** is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity; for it is always something that leaps out direct from a concealed identity.

79, What are the fourfold power of Intuition? 983-84

Ans: Intuition has fourfold power. (1) A power of revelatory truth-seeing, (2) a power of inspiration or truth-hearing, (3) a power of truth touch or immediate seizing of significance, which is akin to the ordinary nature of its intervention in our mental intelligence, (4) a power of true and automatic discrimination of the orderly and exact relation of truth to truth, these are the fourfold potencies of Intuition.

80, What are the four cognitive method of Nature? 544

Ans: (1) A knowledge by identity, (2) a knowledge by intimate direct contact, (3) a knowledge by separative direct contact, (4) a wholly separative knowledge by indirect contact are the four cognitive methods of Nature.

81, What is personality in ordinary sense? 367-68, 764, 848

Ans: But what we thus call personality is only a formation of superficial consciousness... our **personality**, is the outcome, the amalgamated formulations of powers, influences, motives proceeding from this potent intraconscient secrecy... Personality is only a temporary mental, vital, physical formation which the being, the real Person, the psychic entity, puts forward on the surface, --it is not the self in its abiding reality...

82, What is physical personality? 931-32

Ans: In some human beings it is the physical Purusha, the being of the body, who dominates the mind, will and action; there is then created the physical man mainly occupied with his corporeal life and habitual needs, impulses, life habits, mind habits, body habits, looking very little or not at all beyond that, subordinating and restricting all his other tendencies and possibilities to that narrow formation. But even in the physical man there are other elements and he cannot live altogether as the human animal concerned with birth and death and procreation and the

satisfaction of common impulses and desires and the maintenance of the life and the body: this is his normal type of **personality**, but it is crossed, however feebly, with influences by which he can proceed, if they are developed, to a higher human evolution. If the inner subtle-physical Purusha insists, he can arrive at the idea of a finer, more beautiful and perfect physical life and hope or attempt to realize it in his own or in the collective or group existence.

83, What is vital personality? 644, 645, 646

Ans: It is here that **the surface vital personality of life-self** asserts its dominance, and this dominance of the ignorant vital being is the **principal active source of discord and disharmony**, a cause of inner and outer perturbations of life, **a mainspring of wrong-doing and evil**. The **natural vital element** in us, in so far as it is unchecked or untrained or retains its primitive character, **is not concerned with truth or right consciousness or right action**; it is concerned with self-affirmation, with life-growth, with possession, with satisfaction of impulse, with all satisfactions of desire... It does not follow that this is all that **the vital personality** is in its native composition or that evil is its very nature. It is not primarily concerned with truth and good, but it can have the passion for truth and good as it has, more spontaneously, the passion for joy and beauty. In all that is developed by the life-force there is developed at the same time a secret delight somewhere in the being, a delight in good and a delight in evil, a delight in truth and a delight in falsehood, a delight in life and an attraction to death, a delight in pleasure and a delight in pain, in one's own suffering and the suffering of others, but also in one's own joy and happiness and good and the joy and happiness and good of others... It is **only** if the inner or **true vital** being replaces the **outer life-personality** that the drive of the **vital ego** can be wholly overcome and the life-force become the servant of the soul and a powerful instrumentation for the action of our true spiritual being.

84, What is mental personality? 531-32

Ans: Therefore there is, as well as a shifting or change of Time-point and Space-field, a constant modifying change of the sum of circumstances experienced in Time and Space and as the result a constant modification of **mental personality** which is the form of our superficial or apparent self. All this change of circumstance is summed up in philosophical language as causality; for in this stream of the cosmic movement the antecedent state seems to be the cause of a subsequent state, or else this subsequent state seems to be the result of a previous action of persons, objects or forces: yet in fact what we call cause may very well be only circumstance. Thus the mind has over and above its direct self-consciousness a more or less indirect mutable self-experience which it divides into **two** parts, (1) its subjective experience of the ever-modified **mental states of its personality** and (2) its objective experience of the ever-changing environment which seems partly or wholly to cause and is yet at the same time itself affected by the workings of that **personality**. But all this experience is at bottom subjective;

for even the objective and external is only known to mind in the form of subjective impressions.

85, What is Subliminal or inner personality? 553-54

Ans: Moreover, we find in this inner or subliminal being the means of **directly distinguishing** between what rises from within and what comes to us from outside, from others or from universal Nature, and it becomes possible to exercise a control, a choice, a power of willed reception, **rejection** and selection, a clear power of self-building and harmonisation which we **do not possess** or can operate very imperfectly in our composed **surface personality** but which is the **prerogative of** our inner Person. For by this entry into the depths the inner being, no longer quite veiled, no longer obliged to exercise a fragmentary influence on its outer instrumental consciousness, is able to formulate itself more luminously in our life in the physical universe.

86, What is Soul personality? 559, 632

Ans: There is indeed a **soul personality**, representative of this entity, already built up within us, which puts forward a fine psychic element in our natural being: but this finer factor in our normal make-up is not yet dominant and has only a limited action. Our soul is not the overt guide and master of our thought and acts; it has to rely on the mental, vital, physical instruments for self-expression and is constantly overpowered by our mind and life-force: but if once it can succeed in remaining in **constant communion** with its own larger **occult reality**, --and this can **only** happen when we go **deep** into our subliminal parts, --it is no longer dependent, it can become powerful and sovereign, armed with an intrinsic spiritual perception of the truth of things and a **spontaneous discernment** which separates that truth from the falsehood of the Ignorance and Inconscience, distinguishes the divine and the undivine in the manifestation and so can be the **luminous leader** of our other parts of nature. It is indeed when this happens that there can be the **turning-point** towards an integral transformation and an integral knowledge... For much more than the mind or life which can turn either to good or to evil, it is **the soul-personality**, the psychic being, which insists on the distinction, though in a larger sense than the mere moral difference. It is the soul in us which **turns always** towards Truth, Good and Beauty; because it is by these things that it itself grows in stature; the rest, their opposites, are a necessary part of experience, but have to be **outgrown in the spiritual increase of the being**.

87, What is Psychic personality? 928-29, 877, 944, 967

Ans: As the **psychic personality** grows stronger, it begins to increase its communion with the psychic entity behind it and improve its communications with the surface: it can transmit its intimations to the mind and heart and life with a greater purity and force; for it is more able to exercise a strong control and react against false mixture; now more and more it makes itself distinctly felt as a power in the nature. But even so this evolution would be slow and long if left solely to the difficult automatic action of the evolutionary Energy; it is only when man awakes to the knowledge of the soul and **feels a need to bring it to the front** and



make it the master of his life and action that a quicker **conscious method of evolution** intervenes and a psychic transformation becomes possible... But in man the **psychic part of the personality** is able to develop with a much greater rapidity than in the inferior creation, and a time can arrive when the soul entity is close to the point at which it will emerge from behind the veil into the open and become the master of its instrumentation in Nature... This may happen long before the psycho-spiritual change is complete or even before it as well begun or proceeded far, because **the psychic personality** has become aware and has an eager concentration towards the superconscience... This (transformation of Nature) can be done from **within by an invisible action** through the psychic entity and **the psychic personality**; a consciously felt descent from above is not **indispensable**.

88, What are the double Psychic and Spiritual personality in man? 788-89

**Ans:** The human birth in this world is on its spiritual side a complex of **two elements**, (1) a spiritual Person and (2) a soul of personality; the former is man's eternal being, the latter is his cosmic and mutable-being. (1) As the spiritual impersonal person he is one in his nature and being with freedom of *Sachchidananda* who has here consented to or willed his involution in the Nescience for a certain round of soul-experience, impossible otherwise, and presides secretly over its evolution. (2) As the soul of personality he is himself part of that long development of the soul-experience in the forms of Nature; his own evolution must follow the **laws and the lines of the universal evolution**. (1) As a spirit he is one with the Transcendence which is immanent in the world and comprehensive of it; (2) as a soul he is at once one with and part of the universality of *Sachchidananda* self-expressed in the world: his self expression must go through the stages of the cosmic expression, his soul experience follow the revolutions of the wheel of *Brahman* in the universe.

89, What is the personality of a **very advanced stage of the individual's evolution**? 848-49

**Ans:** The greater the variety of formations that have existed in the past and can be utilized, the more rich and multitudinous the accumulated buildings of experience, the more their essential result of capacity for knowledge, power, action, character, manifold response to the universe can be brought forward and harmonised in the new birth, the more numerous the veiled personalities mental, vital, subtle-physical that combine to enrich the new personality on the surface, the greater and more opulent will be that personality and the nearer to the possible transition out of the completed mental stage of evolution to something beyond it. Such a complexity and gathering up of many personalities in one person can be a sign of a **very advanced stage of the individual's evolution** when there is a **strong central being** that holds all together and works towards harmonization and integration of the whole many-sided movement of the nature. But this opulent taking up of the past would not be a repetition of personality; it would be a new formation and large consummation. It is not as a machinery for the persistent

renewal or prolongation of an unchanging personality that rebirth exists, but as a means for the **evolution of the spiritual being in Nature**.

90, What is the law of existence? 368-69, 128

Ans: The Divine is free and not bound by **laws** of any making, but still he acts by **laws and processes** because **they are expression or the truth of things**,--not their mechanical, mathematical or other outward truth alone, but the spiritual reality of what they are, what they have become and have yet to become, what they have it within themselves to realise... For everywhere we see Law founded in self-being and, when we penetrate within into rationale of its process, we find that **Law is a process of an innate knowledge**, a knowledge inherent in the existence which is expressing itself and implied in the force that expresses it; and Law developed by Knowledge so as to allow of progression implies a divinely seen **goal** towards which the motion is directed.

91, What is the Power of the Being? 385

Ans: It is an act of consciousness.

92, What is the Being? 385

Ans: It is the (static) status of consciousness.

93, What is the function of Knowledge, Truth and Evil? 654

Ans: It is knowledge that purifies, it is truth that liberates: evil is the fruit of a spiritual ignorance and it will disappear only by the growth of a spiritual consciousness and the light of spiritual knowledge.

94, What is *Sankhya* Philosophy? 363

Ans: The *Sankhya* philosophy stresses this personal aspect, makes the *Purusha* many, plural, and assigns universality to Nature; in this view each soul is an independent existence although all souls experience a common universal Nature.

95, What is Subconscient? 763

Ans: For the subconscient is the Inconscient **in the process of becoming conscious**; it is a support and even a root of our inferior parts of being and their movements. It sustains and reinforces all in us that clings most and refuses to change, our mechanical recurrences of unintelligent thought, our persistent obstinacies of feeling, sensation, impulse, propensity, our uncontrolled fixities of character. The animal in us,--the infernal also,--has its lair of retreat in the dense jungle of the subconscience. To **penetrate there, to bring light and establish a control, is indispensable** for the completeness of any higher life, for any integral transformation of the nature.

96, What is intraconscient and circumconscient? 763-64

Ans: The part of us that we have characterized as intraconscient and circumconscient is a still more potent and much more valuable element in the constitution of our being. It includes the large action of an inner intelligence and inner sense-mind, of an inner vital, even of an inner subtle-physical being which upholds and embraces our waking consciousness, which is not brought to the front, which is subliminal, in the modern phrase. But when we can enter and explore this hidden self, we find that our waking sense and intelligence are for the

most part a selection from what we secretly are or can be, an exteriorized and much mutilated and vulgarized edition of our real, our hidden being or an upthrow from its depths. Our surface being has been formed with this subliminal help by an evolution out of the Inconscient for the utility of our present mental and physical life on earth; this that is behind is a formation mediating between the Inconscient and the larger planes of Life and Mind which have been created by involutory descent and whose pressure has helped to bring about the evolution of mind and life in Matter. Our surface responses to physical existence have at their back the support of an activity in these veiled parts, are often responses from them modified by a surface mental rendering. But also that large part of our mentality and vitality which is not a response to the outside world but lives for itself or throws itself out on material existence to use and possess it, **our personality**, is the outcome, the amalgamated formulation of powers, influences, motives proceeding from this potent intraconscient secrecy.

97, What is subliminal self? 578

Ans: --**there is a consciousness much wider, more luminous, more in possession of itself and things than that which wakes upon our inner being**, and it is this which we must regard as **our subliminal self** and set apart the subconscious as an inferior, **a lowest occult province of our nature**.

98, What is Matter? 375, 586

Ans: Matter is a creation of Energy in movement... By energism of consciousness Brahman is massed; from that Matter is born and from Matter Life and Mind and the worlds.

99, Why Matter is created? 668

Ans: Matter, --substance itself, subtle or dense, mental or material, --is form and body of Spirit and **would never have been created if it could not be made a basis for the self-expression of the Spirit**.

100, What is life? 189

Ans: In that case **Life is nothing else than the Force** that builds and maintains and destroys forms in the world; it is Life that manifests itself in the form of the earth as much as in the plant that grows upon the earth and the animals that support their existence by devouring the life-force of the plant or of each other.

101, What is Death? 188-89

Ans: Death has no reality except as a process of life. Disintegration of substance and renewal of substance, **maintenance of form and change of form** are the constant process of life; **death is merely a rapid disintegration subservient to life's necessity of change and variation of formal experience**. Even in the death of body there is no cessation of Life, only the material of one form of life is broken up to serve as material for other forms of life. Similarly we may be sure, in the uniform law of Nature, that if there is in the bodily form a mental or psychic energy, that also is not destroyed but only breaks out from one form to assume others by some process of metempsychosis or new ensouling of body. **All renews itself, nothing perishes**.

102, How the Death is imposed on the individual? 204

Ans: Death is imposed on the individual life both by the **conditions of its own existence** and by **its relation to All-Force** which manifests itself in the universe. For the individual life is a particular play of energy specialised to constitute, maintain, energise and finally to dissolve, **when its utility is over**, one of myriad forms which all serve, each in its own place, time and scope, the whole play of the universe. The energy of life in the body has to support the attack of the energies external to it in the universe; it has to draw them in and feed upon them and is itself being constantly devoured by them.

#### THE DESCENT

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