

ABHISHIKTANANDA
***ASCENT TO THE DEPTH
OF THE HEART***

The **Spiritual Diary** (1948-1973) of
Swami Abhishiktananda (Dom H.Le Saux)
A selection, edited with introduction and notes, by
RAIMON PANIKKAR

English translation by
DAVID FLEMING and JAMES STUART

I•S•P•C•K

ASCENT TO THE DEPTH OF THE HEART

translated (with some revision according to the original MS)
from *La montée au fond du coeur* (OEIL, Paris, 1986)

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Preface to the English Translation

SARA GRANT

In introducing Henri Le Saux' *Indian Journal* to English-speaking readers, there is little to add to Raimon Panikkar's comprehensive Preface to the French edition, which appears in a revised and slightly abridged form as the Introduction to the present volume.

Eleven years after its publication, the Diary has lost nothing of its contemporary relevance. The Benedictine monk from a middle-class French background painfully transformed into Swami Abhishiktananda, the Hindu Christian sannyasi, by his unswerving fidelity to truth shining through two apparently irreconcilable traditions—his Christian faith and the Upanishadic experience of non-duality, initially mediated to him through Ramana Maharshi and the holy mountain of Arunachala—still offers both challenge and reassurance to many who find themselves in a similar position today.

More and more people, caught in the confluence of two or more religious and cultural traditions, seem to be faced by the often potentially agonizing necessity of either abandoning their own roots altogether and yielding to the powerful attraction of an apparently alien but insidiously alluring alternative, or settling for a superficial and therefore ultimately unsatisfying compromise.

The Diary of Abhishiktananda presents a third possibility, and in doing so utters a stark challenge to what a recent writer has called “the great modern fallacy, the delusion of our time, that we can extract a glittering ‘spiritual high’ from here and there, and add to it what we already have to complete the whole: Jackdaw Man” (Clifford Longley in *The Tablet*, 21-28 December 1996, p.1674).

Abhishiktananda expressed his own understanding of his message towards the end of his life in terms of the encounter of the boy Naciketas with Yama, the Lord of the dead, described in the Katha Upanishad:

I have only one message, the message of the Absolute. It is the same message that Jesus and all the seers have taught: the face-to-face with death, with Yama, with God. The total nakedness of this face-to-face—*na papa na punyam* (no longer any evil or any good). No merit, pure mercy, as a Christian would put it. But all the religions diversify this message by their own gloss and gnosis, and so the ego recovers its feeding-ground, and we become once more the food of death. (...) God is this Absolute, this death. No one can see him and live. The sight of him snatches away every protective covering, mental or sociological. As long as God is for us a god (*deva*) who pets and punishes, He is not God.

We need to accept ourselves in the eschatological context of death. Death, the Absolute, God, finally puts an end to all alienation. What the Church and all the dharmas and the whole of humanity need today is monks, priests and others who are witnesses of the *eschaton* (the ultimate end), seared by the encounter with Yama-*mrityu* (death).

You want the message of the Absolute to be wrapped up in the poetry of the remote Himalayas or the sleep-inducing or intoxicating gnosis of India or Greek theosophy. *Predico tantum crucem Domini*—I preach only the mystery of the Cross of the Lord, the encounter of the Lord with his cross and death, of Naciketas with *mrityu* (Diary, 25.7.71).

Naciketas had been despatched to the realm of Yama by his father, who was annoyed by his critical reflections on the sacrifices he was offering in the hope of attaining heaven and a better life in his next incarnation. Yama was absent from home, and the boy was kept waiting for three days without food or water. In reparation for this deplorable lack of hospitality, Yama offered him three boons. The first two were granted without difficulty, but when Naciketas asked for the key to the mystery of human existence, Yama at first refused point-blank. Naciketas however would accept no substitute; though Yama offered him everything the heart could desire, he steadfastly refused it. He had only one desire—to know the secret of *amritam*, that dimension of our being which is not touched by death (Kath.U., II.1.1: “The Self is not to be sought through the senses. The Self-caused pierced the holes of the senses outwards; therefore one looks without. Some wise man, however, desiring immortality (*amritam*), looked within and found the Self”). It was his willingness to be stripped of everything else which finally moved Yama to grant his desire.

For Abhishiktananda himself this stripping certainly demanded “a living death as to sense and spirit”, in the energetic phrase of John of the Cross. The Diary makes it clear that this involved a radical experience of his human weakness, an entering into the Lord’s death so completely as to make it truly his own, and in and through that death, even on this earth, an awakening to “uncircumscribable glory” (cp., Maitri U., VII.11). But first the stripping.

Too often perhaps Christians think of the sharing in the “emptying” or “stripping” of himself demanded of the Christ by the incarnation, described in Philippians 2:5-11, in terms of physical privation, hostility, ridicule, non-acceptance, failure, physical death. There is also a poverty, a stripping, a scandal of the cross of a different kind, operating on a different level of our being. It lies in the stripping of habitual thought-forms, patterns of concept, symbol and imagery to which we have been accustomed since childhood, and in which our deepest convictions and longings have been expressed, in so far as they could be expressed at all. The very foundations of a Christian’s faith and vocation can suddenly appear threatened when he or she encounters for the first time the impact of the Vedic experience of non-duality through an obviously saintly man or woman who may never have heard of Christ, or who regards him as a great teacher, but considers

any claim that he is the unique saviour as evidence of an intolerable narrowness incompatible with the spirit of Christ’s own Gospel.

This may not be too difficult to deal with on the merely intellectual level; it becomes far worse when one discovers a hidden enemy within the citadel, in the form of an irresistible pull towards this experience which transcends all concepts, responding to a secret longing of our inmost being which we have never fully understood, and even half-guiltily tried to ignore, as there seemed to be nothing in our Christian upbringing to legitimize it. It may well appear impossible to reconcile adherence to Christ as the only way to salvation with this sudden widening of horizons with people of obvious holiness (“the fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness”; Gal. 5:22) who make the same claim for other manifestations of the supreme mystery—for example in the Svetasvatara Upanishad III.8:

I know that great Person, shining like the sun, beyond darkness,
knowing whom a man passes beyond death.

There is no other way to the Abode.

Today, it is true, many more people are much less firmly attached to their Christian roots than was the case even 25 years ago, and for them a change of spiritual allegiance will naturally be less dramatic than it was for Abhishiktananda, whose faith in Christ was the *raison d’être* of his whole existence. Nevertheless there still has to be the radical stripping and death of the ego for anyone who sincerely seeks a rebirth in spirit, even if this only takes the form of a rebirth of their original faith. Human beings cannot live without the security of some absolute, and are therefore incapable of letting their own pseudo-absolutes go unless they are touched—seared—by the Absolute itself in the guise of Yama-*mrityu*. Abhishiktananda’s message therefore has relevance for every human being who, like Naciketas, is looking for the ultimate meaning of life, whatever their faith or lack of faith, as they “suffer hunger like dogs”, in the graphic image of the Psalmist, and “wander through the cities” and desert places of the world.

It is also extremely relevant for the Christian Church, which so often seems unable to understand their predicament and what precisely it is that they are seeking. But let Swamiji speak for himself.

Whether I want it or not, I am deeply attached to Christ Jesus and therefore to the *koinonia* of the Church. It was in him that the “mystery” revealed itself to me from my first awakening to myself and to the world. It was under his image, his symbol, that I came to know God and the world of men. When I awoke here in India to new depths (of the Self, the Atman) within myself, this symbol became marvellously expanded. Christian theology had already revealed to me the eternal dimension of the mystery of Jesus *in sinu Patris*. Later India showed me the cosmic fulness of this mystery, this revelation, the total manifestation of the mystery within which the Judaic revelation took its place; the immeasurable Christ, higher than the heavens and also infinitely close, as in the vision of P. (a Hindu guru and friend who had had an extraordinarily powerful “showing” of the cosmic Christ, as he himself

insisted, though he was quite unable to account for it). Moreover I recognize this mystery, which I have always adored under the symbol of Christ, in the myths of Narayana, Prajapati, Shiva, Purusha, Krishna, Rama, etc. This same mystery. But for me Jesus is my Sadguru. It is in him that God has appeared to me; it is in his *mirror* that I have recognized myself, in adoring him, loving him, consecrating myself to him. Jesus, not the founder-head of a religion, that comes later. Jesus as the guru who makes known the mystery. (Diary, 24.7.71)

It is not doing violence to this text, or to the Gospel, to point out its affinities with the Prologue of St John's Gospel, which speaks of the Word, the self-communication of the Eternal, who is the Light that illumines everyone born into this world, and yet paradoxically became man within the limitations of a particular culture and religious tradition. The full implications of this paradox are only now beginning to be painfully explored as the great contemporary migration of peoples combines with the technological revolution to give men and women of different faiths unprecedented opportunities for interaction and cross-fertilization. As Abhishiktananda himself realized, if his insights were taken seriously, the whole orientation of Christian theological reflection would be revolutionized and the way would be open for a totally new relationship between religions. But this is in fact the essential message of the Diary:

This staggering discovery, new each time, after the manner of a dream, always the same and always new!—that what I had projected outside myself into a sphere that was divine, eternal etc., and had adored, loved, and so on, is the mystery of my own being—*sa eshah purusha so'ham, so'ham asmi!* That Person yonder (in the sun)—I am he! (Iśa. Up.16) (Diary, 22.7.71)

For centuries the Churches, in interpreting the mystery of transcendence-in-immanence revealed in the Gospels, have tended to stress transcendence at the expense of immanence. Perhaps the time has now come for them to open themselves more fully to the complementary perspective of Eastern experience, inviting her members, and indeed the whole human race, to "look within and find the Self". A more silent and contemplative Church would be better able to recognize the light shining in the heart of every man, woman and child, and in the symbols, images and myths in which they seek to express the deepest truth of their being, as refractions of one and the same eternal light whom she herself knows and cherishes in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth, who is called Christ. The recognition would surely be mutual. But for that the Church herself will have to face the encounter with *Yama-mrityu*. This too is the message of the Diary. And perhaps it is happening even now, in our own time...

But Swamiji himself must have the last word:

I do not have to teach either Hindu ideas or Christian ideas or gnostic ideas or Vedantin ideas; my task is only to awaken, by deepening what the disciple already knows. (Diary, 11.12.71)

May something of that awakening be experienced by everyone who

Translators' Note

The work on the English version was shared between the two translators in this way. David Fleming undertook the main task of translating the entire Diary from the French text (*La montée au fond du coeur*, Paris, 1986). This he accomplished between 1990 and 1994, first in Kathmandu and Ranchi, and finally in Bangalore, while carrying a heavy work-load for his congregation, the Marianists (of which he is now the Superior-General).

The translation was then passed on (already composed on a computer) to James Stuart in Delhi for editing and preparing for press. In the French text on which the translation was based there were a considerable number of points where Abhishiktananda's meaning was in various ways obscure. The editor therefore drew up lists of these problems which he circulated and discussed with his colleague and with various members of the Abhishiktananda Society, especially Bettina Bäumer, Odette Baumer, George Gispert-Sauch and Raphael M. Salen. Thanks to their expertise most of the problems could be solved!

Many problems however remained which were clearly insoluble without reference to the original manuscript. This had not been available when the French edition was published, as it was being carefully preserved in a bank vault in Switzerland in view of its very personal nature and its fragility. But in October 1996 its faithful guardian, Odette Baumer, responded to our appeal and herself came to Delhi to entrust it to the Abhishiktananda Society, which accepted the charge with joy and gratitude. Since then, although there has not been enough time to compare the whole text with the original, it solved most of the outstanding problems which had arisen from the difficulty of reading Swamiji's handwriting and from the inevitable slips and omissions in the transcript on which the French edition had been based. At this stage various Tamil words which had been omitted were inserted with the help of Leonard Fennell.

In addition to the above, we are most grateful to those who kindly gave their valuable time for making a careful reading of the text before it was printed—Bettina Bäumer, Jacques Gispert-Sauch, George Gispert-Sauch. The latter's detailed scrutiny of the text has brought to light many small (and some major) slips which have now been corrected.

We should also thank those who have helped us to be reproduced in this book, and especially those who have helped in production.

The translators have been most grateful to the Society of Abhishiktananda for the facilities which have been made available to them and will draw from it

In scendi Venticostis

20 oct 1952, 1-6-52 G. Panikkar

Le Christ n'est pas seulement pour nous un maître à imiter.
Il est aussi la fin. Mais il l'est d'abord. C'est une première approche.
C'est l'entrée (première) de l'Évangile.
Le Christ ne s'est pas contenté de nous fixer des règles de conduite.
Il nous a laissés son propre génie (A. 22, 10, son esprit). Ce qui nous fait
être la fin, et un peu davantage encore. L'Esprit qui est à l'œuvre
dans son œuvre est venu à nous, le Christ, un message de sa vie et de son
esprit qui de règles et de exemples. Il nous a laissés son propre
génie d'artiste. Nos fondateurs, nous le génie du Christ. La loi de la
Parole d'Allah est l'Esprit au cœur, le Christ de l'Évangile le Seigneur
du Christ lui-même.

L'Esprit au cœur, le Seigneur

1952, 1-6-52, 20 oct 1952, 1-6-52, 20 oct 1952, 1-6-52
L'Esprit au cœur, le Seigneur, le Christ de l'Évangile le Seigneur
du Christ lui-même.

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du Christ lui-même.

Facsimile of a page of the Diary

Introduction

R. PANIKKAR

1. The Author

This Diary was not written with a view to publication. The whole of Abhishiktananda's earthly life remained hidden from the sight of the general public. Feeling the attraction of silence and recollection—the *guhā* (cave) of his Indian years—he entered at nineteen the Benedictine abbey of Kergonan in Brittany. Over a long period he was fascinated by India and felt drawn to it; to him it seemed to represent the very symbol of interiority, but he only succeeded in reaching India at the age of 38. There he put down his roots and there he remained until his death in 1973 aged 63.

After his death the influence of Swamiji, as we used to call him, began to spread beyond the narrow circle of those who had known him. In recent years much has been written about him: books, articles, and even doctoral theses. Various works, not previously published, have appeared posthumously. Some of his friends in India founded the *Abhishiktananda Society* in order to elaborate the themes broached in his thought, to try to discern the fundamental direction of his life as a *sannyāsī* (renouncer, ascetic, monk), and to make a critical study of the problems which he raised. The life he lived meant following a long, painful and crisis-ridden path, but with a sustained 'reaching forward' (*epektasis*), and a fierce loyalty to his spiritual experience. Abhishiktananda's ideal was to be a *sannyāsī* at once Christian and Hindu, as his Diary reveals.

And now twelve years after his *mahāprasthāna* (Great Departure), his *samādhi* (state of final absorption, beyond time), his private diary is being published. Is this not highly indiscreet, a kind of profanation of what, out of respect for the experience of a spiritual man, ought to remain hidden? In making this diary, the companion of an ascetic's solitude, available to the public, would we not be victims of an age that is enslaved to the mass media? Pages written in the raw flesh of his being—the outpourings of his thought, the expression of his doubts and his seeking, the stammerings or the poetical flights of his ecstasies.

I admit that if Swamiji had clearly stated such a desire, this document would never have emerged from the silence in which it was written; but Abhishiktananda himself often used extracts from it in his writings and revised others with a view to their being published. Long before becoming a recognized spiritual author, he had noted in his Diary (October 1952):

insisted, though he was quite unable to account for it). Moreover I recognize this mystery, which I have always adored under the symbol of Christ, in the myths of Nārāyana, Prajāpati, Shiva, Puruṣha, Krishna, Rāma, etc. This same mystery. But for me Jesus is my Sadguru. It is in him that God has appeared to me; it is in his *mirror* that I have recognized myself, in adoring him, loving him, consecrating myself to him. Jesus, not the founder-head of a religion, that comes later. Jesus as the guru who makes known the mystery. (Diary, 24.7.71)

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We should also thank those who allowed their photographs to be reproduced in this book, and finally the I.S.P.C.K for their care and help in production.

The translators hope that their work will be found a faithful rendering of Abhishiktananda's record of his unique spiritual journey and that many will draw from it strength and inspiration.

"Theologians who by chance may read these pages should please regard all these "statements" as only working hypotheses."

On 23 December 1970 he enlarged on this in a letter to Madame Odette Baumer: "In fact, I have often written down my thoughts on different theological topics, and I have some files full of rough and illegible notes, mixed with Greek and Sanskrit. Even to write "drafts" on this subject—I admit that I do not feel strong enough at present. (...) Later on we shall see." This "later on" has perhaps now arrived.

Swamiji was aware that he was the bearer of a message. Admittedly, it is essential to understand clearly what he has tried to transmit, and to do that, we have to be on his wave-length. This is where the difficulty comes. It is not a matter either of simple well-wishing or mere sympathy. Swamiji invites us to hear his words at the same depth as that from which they have sprung: from the depth of the *aham*, of the I stripped of the *ego*. And if we have not yet reached this stage, then he asks us to listen to his stammerings, to follow his experimental method, and go together in search of the Grail, which at the end of his life he affirmed that he had found (*Diary*, 11 September 1973).

"I am always frightened", he wrote from his bed at Indore to his disciple Marc on 20 October 1973, six weeks before his death, "of people stopping at the negative aspect of my message (no institutions, etc.), whereas all negations—liberations—only have meaning in this break-through to the depth of the I."

We cannot insist too much on the fact that this *Diary*, which only follows his Indian journey, embodies for Swamiji his personal monologue: he examines himself, sometimes absolutely ruthlessly, clarifies his ideas, and also challenges them. These pages reflect the central preoccupation of his whole life, on which all the others converge: the Mystery of the Absolute from the perspective of *advaita* (non-duality) as explained in certain Upanishads, which he sees as the equivalent of the intuition of Moses in Exodus and of Jesus: *I am*.

The difference between the *Diary* and his published writings is not only a matter of their form and finish. It is also one of perspective. In his books he is aware of his role as a Christian mystic who writes chiefly for Christians (and westerners) in order to open their minds to Hindu wisdom. In his *Diary* he is more and more the Hindu monk who is faced with the Christian mystery and is trying desperately to reconcile it with Vedanta. In the above-mentioned letter of 23 December 1970 he said exactly this: "The whole subject should be taken up again, starting from the Vedantin experience, and not—as I have so far done, or rather written—from the "Christian faith" and its "symbolization" [in Creeds] by the Councils; like a kind of hypothesis which one follows through to the end."

The text of the *Diary* is not written in a polished style, nor is it very often the fruit of sustained thought. It gushes up from the author's being, as he lets his pen run freely. This *Diary* is, so to speak, the laboratory of an alchemist; the forerunner of something unknown. The author is feeling his

way, searching for himself, following endless meanders as experience at every level invades his life. Sometimes it is not himself that speaks, but his opponent, like the *purvapakshin* of Indian tradition (one who raises objections for pedagogic reasons). We are dealing here with a very special literary type. The violence with which Le Saux treats grammar, his indifference to style—apart from moments of poetic inspiration—, his frequent use of words drawn from different languages (English, Greek, Sanskrit, Latin, Tamil, Hindi) usually without any explanation of their meaning, are the signs of the private murmurings of a solitary. The hermit's language is often a confusion before becoming a revelation—like the gentle breeze that heralds the divine word with certain prophets.

In our presentation of this text we have in no way sought to interpret or even explain the author's expressions. We have to approach this text, which witnesses to a life and is not the reflection of a thought, with a special hermeneutic respect. Nevertheless it should be firmly stated that the hermeneutic rules that relate to a *written* text are not the same as those which apply to a text that has been murmured or shouted, one that has burst out as a defence, a reply or even as an attack. We are faced with a text that has not been previously thought out. Anyone interested in depth-psychology can compare it with the other published works of Abhishiktananda. I can understand people who have committed their manuscripts to the flames.

For myself I have been tempted to resist the publication of this *Diary*, and thus to allow him to make his impact at another level; but I came to feel that I did not have the right to do this.

I would like once more to stress the fact that the author, apart from the passages which he revised for publication, has probably not re-read, and has certainly not corrected the pages in his notebooks. Hence the hurried and faulty style, and also some far too unqualified assertions and generalizations and one-sided judgments. We do not exclude the possibility that sometimes he went far beyond what he was trying to express. It is therefore important to approach this text with the same factor of uncertainty with which we have tried to present it. The *Diary* should be assessed only in the context of the author's life and of his published work.

In view of the fact that most of the ideas expressed by Abhishiktananda in his *Diary* have been restated with nuances and further developed in his books, is there anything to be gained by publishing these pages? Apart from the intrinsic value of the ideas they present and the intuitions they set forth, their significance for the meeting of religions, or rather spiritualities, and especially for the Hindu-Christian dialogue, I consider that this publication can also be justified for a threefold reason:

1. These pages offer a fascinating example of the evolution of a thought-process. They enable us to witness the coming to birth of a conviction, the fruit not of theory but of practice. The intellectual experiments with his ideas, the monk does so with his life. Life itself, and not reflection, is the source of his thoughts and convictions, which are born from and develop out of his lived experience. It was not the reading of the

classical texts—apart from those in the Upanishads on which he meditated—nor the frequenting of schools of Hindu thought that led this Benedictine monk to embrace *sannyāsa* (renunciation). One could almost say that this Diary frees us from the pre-mental and brings us to the supra-mental.

2. The Diary shows us the transformation, through powerful experience and strong praxis, of the ideas based on the deepest convictions of a human being. We are present at the relentless and moving struggle of a Christian at grips with himself, who in order to be faithful to the truth is overwhelmed by it. Having come to India to bear witness to Christ, he finds himself, like so many others before and after him, converted by those whom he sought to convert—in the deepest sense of the word. “I came here to make you known to my Hindu brothers. But it is you who have made yourself known to me thanks to them, in the intoxicating features of Arunachala!”, as he wrote in November 1956. From this dilemma he escaped because of his faith that it was Christ himself, in his heart, showing him the truth of the *advaitin* intuition of Vedānta. To move from a traditional Christian experience to a Vedāntin experience is not done without pain, without lacerating the mind and the heart. That this process of conversion should take place without causing a complete break does indeed seem to me to have a major exemplary value. Humanity in these days can only be saved if it is capable of a profound conversion—all human culture today is in need of a radical *metanoia*—without becoming the victim of a destructive alienation. The triviality of technocratic civilization and the superficiality of so-called “modern” life perhaps portray humanity’s automatic defence against the threat of a fatal schizophrenia—when it lacks the courage for a conversion without repudiation or discontinuity. This Diary gives us the striking testimony of a contemporary who, without breaking with his past, without rejecting it, has been able to transform it, thanks to his faith and his fidelity. Among the numerous westerners who have sincerely been converted to Hinduism or Buddhism, for example, there have been very few who after their conversion have not forsworn their previous convictions, but have remained faithful to them. Not to renounce one’s original faith and to effect a synthesis of two traditions is something that affects deep strata both of human beings and of religious traditions.

3. The value of the private diary of this monk lies neither in the ideas that it contains (they are expressed better in his books), nor in the evidence of a life (this would better emerge in a biography), but in its revelation of the depths of a human being, in his subconscious levels. We witness the development of a soul’s archetypes under the influence of two different cultures. To live at the meeting point of several traditions is the destiny of a large portion of the human race. For very many people it is hardly possible any longer to feel at home in a single culture. To camp out in the workshops of technology does not answer to human aspirations. A new insight is required. This where Abhishiktananda’s experience seems to me to be of great importance. I do not say that he offers us a model to be copied

uncritically, but I think he symbolizes a life lived in depth in the midst of a world that has fallen apart.

* * *

Here we are not concerned to make a study of Abhishiktananda’s thought, or to sketch his personality, but only to present his Diary, to identify its roots, the intense and often contradictory forces that were at work in him. The object of this introduction is above all to help the reader to discern the invisible vectors of this life in search of itself and of the Absolute. In his Diary is revealed in their first effervescence the power of the life and the mind of this *swāmī* who wanted to be embodied in two religious traditions and who paradoxically succeeded to the very extent that he failed.

We can clearly distinguish, in his personal notes often written in haste, one part that expresses his experience and another that is more concerned with ideas. During the first years of his Indian life, perhaps until the disappearance of Fr Monchanin, his first guru (master), the immediacy of his experience is more striking than it became later. He lived fully, spontaneously, the novelty of this experience without developing a systematic consideration of it. Abhishiktananda could plunge into the experience all the more directly because its theological interpretation was rather the business of his companion. This does not mean to say—far from it, as is shown by his first book, *Les ermites du Saccidānanda*, written in collaboration with Fr Monchanin—that he attached little importance to theological questions. What we are trying to do here is to reach the deepest levels of his spirit. At that level we can only be guided by our sensitivity, not by a mathematical mind. It was when his companion was no longer present—and he felt his absence—that Le Saux’ intellectual side became more and more apparent. He felt all the burden of his intuitions and realized the importance of expressing them accurately. He could not cease to be a Christian in the sense of being a man of the West—Greek, Mediterranean, and also Breton. He could not stop himself from thinking, forming theories, vindicating himself. Since Monchanin was no more, Abhishiktananda felt unconsciously that it was incumbent on himself to continue his work, even though he lacked the intellectual capacity of Swami Parama Arubi Ananda (Fr Monchanin’s name in religion). The second part of the Diary is full of theological considerations and also of reflections on his role in the Church, which he wants to serve, even if it is through his criticisms.

It is not for us to study here the relationship between the two “founders” of Shantivanam. The abbé Monchanin wrote in a letter of 20 April 1939 from Lyons, after a long conversation with Fr de Lubac, S.J.: “He (de Lubac) thinks that it is in colliding with India that I should be able to rethink theology, far better than in exploring theological problems in isolation.” I imagine that Monchanin gave the same advice to Le Saux, but when he saw that the latter had sufficiently collided, the Abbé, theologian as he was, would have recommended a wise caution. Nevertheless they were always united in spirit, even though sometimes this was a dialectical

unity, chiefly because of the effort they had to make in order to overcome their difference in character.

I said above that his failure proved to be his great success. He was unable—or unwilling—to integrate the two traditions into a single system of thought; he felt crushed under the weight of the problem. Thus fortunately he did not create any new system. At the mental level he remained torn between the two world-views. In his heart he kept two loves: this double belonging seemed to him like a betrayal, a kind of adultery. But he was unable to decide between them and choose one of the two traditions. It was too much for him. In his naked existence, during the last period of his life he succeeded in becoming himself. In the unfolding of his life he testifies to the genuineness of his double experience. And it is this experience that counts. The meeting of spiritualities does not aim at the setting up of a universal religion or of a single system of thought. The *ekam advitīyam*, the One-without-a-second of Vedānta, like the *hen*, or rather the *hyper-hen*, the Super-One of the Platonists, does not belong to the order of thought and therefore not also to that of language (there is no *lingua universalis*). Swamiji carried on a dialogue between spiritualities which finds its justification in itself, and does not need to aim at becoming a monologue.

* * *

A relentless struggle, sometimes hardly realized, to discover his identity—such was to be the drama of Henri Le Saux' life. A struggle marked by times of doubt and anguish, and also of illumination and joy, which he carried on upheld by an unfailing inner strength. The drama of his life might be compared to a play in three acts, namely, his search

- (a) for a psychological identity,
- (b) for a religious-cultural identity, and
- (c) finally for a mystical identity.

1. As a pupil in the minor seminary from the age of ten, with a fiery temperament and outstanding intelligence, he very soon felt himself to be ahead of those around him. Having become a Benedictine, his monastic formation impelled him to take a lowly place, which he interpreted as a call to a greater ontological depth. But he retained, more or less consciously, the feeling that his talents had remained buried. Even if the call of India appeared to him as a call to carry a message, it was also for him the opportunity to find his identity. This he was to discover little by little, and it was his contact with what one might call classical India that helped him to become himself. His colleagues had already sensed this, and his Indian friends found that he was not an ordinary missionary, but one who was in search (of the Absolute) because he was in search of himself. They might not agree with Abhishiktananda, but they could not question his fierce loyalty to the truth. He was genuine. Little Henri became someone to whom people listened because he had something to say. And if he was sometimes difficult to approach, this was because he was uncomfortable in situations where he was not in control. He felt himself different from other people. He had to get a grip on his personality.

2. And then it happened that the holy mountain of Arunachala, which for him was the supreme symbol of Indian spirituality, played a trick on him, as he himself was to say, without perhaps realizing the scope of the transformation. As soon as he reached India he suffered a shock. He was torn between Christian India and Hindu India, between the India of sannyasis and modern India, between the India of his ideal and the India of daily life. He could only become himself through finding his true religious identity. He then felt the need to justify himself and explain himself, in spite of all his diatribes against "the mind". Only by going back to a vision like that of Aurobindo or of Teilhard de Chardin could he find his place in the world. The Church—his great (undeclared) love, as he liked to put it—represented the spirituality of Neolithic man, and he saw himself as a herald of the "passing over" (*pesah, pascha*) to another epoch of which India is the symbol.

Abhishiktananda won the battle with his historical identity, we may say, by sheer effort. He formed no theories. He wrote no treatise on Hinduism and Christianity. He felt himself to be a prophet, and knew in his own flesh the agony of this vocation which demanded the transfiguration of the Church, the purification of Hinduism and the elimination of his own *ego*.

Basically, in India he discovered his Christian roots at the same time as the superstructures which were attached to them. Or, better still, he came to discriminate between the deep level of his "pre-Christian" Christianity and the sociological level of most Christians. But he could not get rid of what he "understood" to be a superimposition. At the same time the summit of Hinduism, which like the snowy peaks of the Himalaya rise up out of this world, attracted and fascinated him. This summit was his place, and he soared up to it without following any of the more or less tortuous paths from the valley (though he had followed those of Christianity). From this summit Hinduism appeared to him as a challenge to his Christian faith, sometimes even as something that surpassed Christianity. But he was never touched by the temptation to apostasy. He succeeded in finding his place in the cosmos and in history. The Breton monk became Abhishiktesvarananda (of which Abhishiktananda is an abbreviated form), "He whose joy is the Lord's Anointed", in order to play his part in a mission—that of helping to make the human person aware of his place in the universe.

3. But after all, who was he? He asked himself this question over and over again. The child born in 1910? The Benedictine monk? The *sannyasi*? Who am I? An object, even if an object of thought? Who thinks the thinker? Who knows the knower?—as says the Upanishad, and as Swamiji repeats. He searches for the identity of the I, and not the little subject of "myself". To be a prophet is fine, but it is very little; to feel oneself called to dispel the misunderstanding between Hinduism and Christianity is magnificent, but it is equally incomplete and open to question. What is frightening, what is decisive, is to discover oneself (an) I, *the I*, the *aham*, and to be able to realize *ahamasmi*, I am, *ego eimi*, as he often repeats. Only the I can truthfully say I. Thus Abhishiktananda discovered his identity in experiencing the Trinity. The I utters its Thou, and it is the Thou which permits the I to be.

Here Swamiji found his place. History ranks second, religious traditions are minor matters, manifestations of the *lila* (the divine play). Henri Le Saux is no more. He has won his true identity.

I say "won", and in truth his diary witnesses to a fight to the death between Man and (his) God. To Swamiji, soaked as he was in scholastic theology, this struggle might be said to have presented itself as the clash, the distinction between and the eventual identification of essence and existence—which is only realized in God, as Fr Le Saux, the good thomist, knew.

The essence refers to his convictions and even his Christian faith, which he regarded as belonging to the sphere of the intellect. The essence is his "mind", the *manas* as he called it. Yet Henri was an intellectual despite himself and despite his mistrust of "intellectuals". He felt torn in two when he visited libraries (at Pune or Shembaganur, for example). He read Camus, Heidegger, Congar, Lavelle, Küng, Rahner, Mouroux, Schillebeeckx, von Balthasar, Bulgakov, Husserl, Sartre and even novels. During his last years he devoured *Informations catholiques internationales*. He studied the Upanishads, he read Shankarācharya and various modern books on Indian philosophy. This kind of eagerness was scarcely compatible with *sannyāsa*. He was shaken and even filled with shame when a Hindu *sannyāsī* who visited him in his hermitage at Uttarkashi in the Himalayas, noted with astonishment the number of books that he had collected. He was persuaded that this, in itself, was an obstacle to "realization". Worse still, there was a striking contrast between the number of modern western theologians and philosophers whom he read and studied, and the insignificant number of classical and modern writers in the Hindu tradition that he read and studied in Sanskrit. Despite the importance and influence of this reading which certainly had an effect on his *manas*, he rebelled against it all. His existence, his praxis, his life as a *sādhu* (monk, ascetic) was elsewhere. It propelled him towards the road to hell (from the point of view of the essence), towards nothingness, the void, total transcendence of the order of essence. His existence had an irresistible karmic weight. He was a monk, a *sannyāsī*, one whose ideal is acosmic: without birth, with no place, no goal, nothing. For Swamiji it was a relative acosmism as regards place and dwelling; he had his hermitage at Shantivanm and later another at Uttarkashi. He had had the blazing revelation of the "I am" and could not repeat it in words without betraying it. His essence is not his existence, but he sought desperately to reconcile them. And towards the end of his life, he became more and more Christian in becoming more and more Hindu and in going beyond all the *dvandvas* which had tormented him. "His" identity was no longer "his own". It was identity, nothing more. The cost of victory was death. No one can see God and live, as he often repeated, quoting the Bible. Henri Le Saux was no more. Abhishiktananda is only a name. He is the one who murmurs *Om, abba pater*; but the one that he is is the one who is: I (am). Essence has been identified with existence. We can add that according to the Indian tradition of *advaita*, the *jīvanmukta*, the one who has passed

beyond the *dvandva*, may continue to live. Abhishiktananda also might very well have continued to live on after having found his identity. But the "I" lives for ever.

* * *

The title of this book (*Ascent to the Depth of the Heart*) is meant to suggest going beyond all the *dvandva*, all the dualities, by using the paradox of "the ascent to the depth". In November 1956, during his silent retreat for thirty-two days at Kumbakonam, Abhishiktananda spoke of an ascent to the summit as an "ascent to the depth". Such an ascent to the depth takes place when anyone experiences the immanence of real transcendence. It would be impossible to speak of transcendence if it were not in some sense immanent. One "descends" to the summit in discovering that immanence is transcendent. Immanence would be merely the tautology of the common place identity of ourselves with ourselves, if it did not transcend it in the mystery of a being which itself is always transcendent. We ascend when we strip ourselves of everything. We reach the depth when we take responsibility for the weight of the universe. We ascend to the depth when we have found the centre. And this centre, as the title suggests, is the heart. The heart of Swamiji who, despite his theoretical acosmism, remained convinced of the importance of his mission in time. He possessed a humanity—in the sense of earth, *humus*, so humility—which counterbalanced all his flights of acosmism. But this centre is also the human heart, according to the two traditions held most dear by Henri: the biblical and the upanishadic. And still more, this centre is the heart of the universe. For Henri the heart is the symbol, not only of his own centre, but of his blood, of his body, of his love—and basically of that Life which passes through the heart of all human beings and of all Reality!

This title was also intended to recall a central, but often overlooked, aspect of Dom Le Saux' spirituality—his Eucharistic devotion, that is to say, his rootedness in the earth, his ascent to the depth of matter—matter transfigured, divinized. It was the Mass that linked him to the Church whose function, as he said, was to preserve the Eucharist. The Eucharist was what gave him the sense—and the proof—of the reality of this world. Otherwise everything would collapse into *māya* (illusion). We have to ascend as high as possible in order to find the highest reality down below, in matter. We ascend to the abyss, because the greatest is found in what is least: *annam brahman* (food is *brahman*), but also *brahman* is food. There is no need to remind Christians that in the Eucharist it is not so much the bread and wine which is changed into Christ, but it is Christ who changes himself into bread and wine to be the full food of humanity.

2. The environment

The interpretation of any text requires knowledge of its context. The story told in the Diary speaks of the experiments, the feelings, the ideas and the intuitions of one who was formed in a French Benedictine monastery during the first half of the century: a formation that was marked by the movement

of monastic and catholic renewal which followed the first World War. This monk left the enclosed life of the monastery and immediately found himself all at once plunged into the world of India whose religious complexity he very soon discovered. We cannot now embark on a history of Indian monasticism and asceticism. But to provide the reader with a general idea of the religious context, both Christian and Hindu, which profoundly affected the life of Abhishiktananda, here is a brief survey.

India consists of a mosaic of religions. The aboriginal Indians, called *adivasī* in the North, *adidravida* in the South, and *tribals* in English, have their own original forms of religion. Into this original stratum have been implanted the other religious traditions. Swamiji himself, being strongly attracted by brahminical culture and having scarcely any interest in the aborigines, later discovered the value of their spirituality and revised his opinion during the last years of his life, when he stayed with the Carmelites in Ranchi district, most of whom were *adivasī*.

During the second millennium, say, fifteen centuries before the coming of Christ, the religion known as Vedic began to develop, as the fruit of the meeting between and the mutual fertilization of the religions of the original inhabitants and that of the Aryans who came from outside, probably from Iran. Thus was formed the "Hindu" stratum which was the basis of the different religions, which are given the generic title of Hinduism: Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Tantrism, etc.

Sannyasis (renouncers) are attached to the various philosophical schools of Vedānta. Some do not belong to any organized monastic family and are ascetics (*sādhu*) who after their initiation by a guru lead a wandering or a hermit life, often both alternately, according to their inclination. For the most part they follow an oral tradition which they interpret somewhat freely, and usually retain a spiritual link with their guru. Others, gathered round a guru, lead a stable life, but without a rigid enclosure, in a monastery (*matha*) or an ashram. Among the latter the most important monastic family is that which is linked with the great sage and philosopher of the eighth century, Shankarāchārya. Most of these monastic orders only admit brahmins. It was to this world of renouncers that Abhishiktananda attached himself, and by his own life-style to that of the solitary ascetics who from time to time leave their hermitage and take to a wandering life. We may add that Abhishiktananda did not initially choose the life of a hermit; for many years he longed to have companions, until circumstances led him to a more solitary life.

Abhishiktananda's contacts were restricted to the world of Vedantin monks. He had the opportunity of knowing the contemporary movements started by spiritual masters, especially Sri Ramana Maharshi, the great sage in our time of advaitin mysticism, who was born in 1879; at the age of seventeen, having heard the overwhelming call of the Absolute, he retired to the mountain of Arunāchala where he remained until his *samādhi* in 1950. It was certainly he whose influence on Abhishiktananda was the most powerful.

Swamiji also stayed with his guru Śrī Gñānānanda. He had a sustained relationship with H.W.L.Poonja (disciple of Ramana Maharshi), and with Dr D.Mehta (a Parsee, founder of the *Society of the Servants of God*); he met Ma Ananda Mayi (Bengali mystic) and also disciples of Śrī Aurobindo (founder of the Pondicherry ashram), and of Swāmī Rāmdas (a contemporary saint and great devotee of Rāma). In addition, he had contacts, at once profound and superficial, with the sadhus who can be found in temples, *dharmasāla* (shelters for pilgrims) and ashrams and on the Indian roads. I say "profound", because Abhishiktananda was able to get behind appearances, to penetrate to the depth of things and to observe—not without humour and a critical mind—these sadhus who are still numbered in millions, and who taught him much. And I add, often "superficial", because at times he projected his ideal and his dreams on people who were not always all that he imagined them to be. But he had soon learnt that in India it is the disciple who "creates" the master by recognizing him as such.

In the sphere of philosophy it was with Shankara's understanding of *advaita* that he wrestled. When in his Diary he speaks of *māyā*, *ātman*, *brahman* and other concepts, it is their use by the followers of Sankara that he has in mind. In fact, his understanding of *advaita* was much closer to that of Kashmir Saivism than to that of Shankara. But it was only towards the end of his life, when he understood the importance of the *śakti* with its positive role, as contrasted with the negative function of Vedantin *māyā*, that he discovered this form of Shaivism. The dialogue which Swamiji pursued without respite was limited to one particular form of Vedānta, one which set him many philosophical and theological problems.

* * *

After Independence and the incorporation into India of the colonial trading posts of France and Portugal, the various Churches have become less and less dependent on foreigners. We can thus follow a development in the Churches' perceptions. In this development three phases can be distinguished:

1. residual colonialism,
2. theological independence,
3. studies and reflection on the possibility of a religious pluralism.

Here we are speaking especially of the development in the Roman Catholic Church, to which Abhishiktananda belonged, while his spirit was ecumenical.

We could regard this development as typical of *avant-garde* Christians, of whatever Church, but with differences according to denomination and regional connection. These pioneers even now represent only a minority. Most Christians, immersed in the vast Hindu majority, have always tended to be conservative in order to safeguard their identity; besides, numbers of them who live thinly scattered in the villages have until now scarcely been aware of what is called "acculturation", even though popular Christianity is obviously grafted onto pre-Christian religiosity.

1. When Henri Le Saux arrived in India, the atmosphere in general was one of complete theological disorientation. On the one hand, the nation exulted in the proclamation of independence in 1947; and despite the "partition" between Hindustan and Pakistan and the two million dead which this division had cost the sub-continent, people rejoiced in their political independence and in the victory of Mahatma Gandhi, the national hero and saint. On the other hand, since Christianity had until then been closely tied to the British authority (especially as regards the Anglicans) and to the West, Christian leaders were wondering, not without anxiety, what would happen to the Churches in the future when deprived of official support. The situation was ambiguous: Christians, who had unreservedly welcomed independence, soon began to wonder whether it would not increase their insecurity and even in the long run contribute to the disintegration of the Churches. Those who gave thought to this ambiguity saw in it a conflict between two loyalties: loyalty to their Indian identity (more or less nationalistic), and loyalty to their Christian identity (more or less tied to the West). People sensed an incompatibility which they tried hard to negate by certain "concessions" to *adaptation* (that of Christianity to Indian culture). (But we should note one striking exception: the Christianity of the Syrian rite in Kerala, whose origins go back to the beginning of the Christian era and, according to tradition, to the Apostle St Thomas. This is deeply rooted in the local culture.)

The mass of the faithful react in a very "Indian" fashion, one which originates at the level of the collective unconscious. Their double loyalty allows them to play a double game vis-a-vis the authorities, civil and religious (Christian). They are indeed Indian, and proud of it. But when difficulties crop up, either with the civil authorities or with their Hindu, Muslim or militantly Communist fellow-citizens, they always enjoy the certainty of belonging to a community that is "elect" and in some sense superior. And even if they no longer enjoy certain Christian privileges, their identity as a group is reinforced. But these people are not always "saintly" in accordance with the norms laid down by ecclesiastical authority, and so—quite unconsciously indeed—they fall back on their Indianness, and feel that they are safe when dark clouds appear on the horizon (suspicions and distrust of the Christian Churches, and particularly of the missionaries).

In this period the clergy were composed of almost equal numbers of secular and of religious priests. There was, depending on locality and circumstance, a certain underlying tension between Indian priests and others. This tension sometimes showed itself in a heightened nationalism, but in general it originated at a deeper level: it was like a current whose flow depended on the age of the believer and especially of the theologian, and affected their faith. May one give up believing in the superiority of Christianity? It is hardly possible to reply that Christian superiority does not mean a cultural superiority, and therefore that to respect Hindu culture does not thereby make one a Hindu, because in the sociological context of India it is impossible to make a clear-cut separation between religion and

culture. Christians felt uncomfortable. Can we adapt a culture (Indian) that is so closely tied to a religion (Hinduism) regarded as "inferior"? With the passage of thirty years which have seen a vast change, it is possible to speak of this matter with a certain serenity, despite the complexity of the situation, but at an earlier period one had to grope one's way in the darkness. When Henri Le Saux arrived in India, to show sympathy for and interest in the "polytheism" and the spirituality of Hindus seemed highly surprising, if not suspicious. It was when this was the position of the Church that he set out on his spiritual pilgrimage in India. He did not dare to reveal his most private thoughts. He was very hesitant, and sought most of the time and to the end of his life to tone down the content of his thought. At any rate, he had to make it understood that his indianization would be to the Church's advantage. Straightaway he came up against difficulties in the use of language. How explain that the veneration or "adoration" of the Hindu *mūrti* (image or statue of God) is not necessarily idolatry? How could one say in those days that Hinduism contains within itself genuine spiritual values without at the same time saying that these are a *praeparatio evangelica* (preparation for the reception of the Gospel), or that the Hindu has a spirit *naturaliter christiana* (that is naturally Christian)?

These were agonizing years for Henri Le Saux. He was certainly not alone in his efforts at reconciliation, but Church circles regarded this newcomer with some apprehension when he was not satisfied with merely putting forward his theories but also had the audacity to practise them. What then is left of Christian superiority? asked the critics. How does this affect the uniqueness of Christianity? Where shall we end up, if we fall into "syncretism"? This word, despite its history and its multiple significance, became over a period of twenty years the expression at the same time of fear towards something unknown which was felt to be dangerous, and of a threat of condemnation levelled at those who were venturing upon a path flanked by precipices. Some years later, in the World Council of Churches, people again sheltered behind this word in order to sound an alarm against the danger of inter-religious dialogue.

During this period Abhishiktananda lived through the drama of his life. The Church had been his first love, but he now discovered that he had another. He was torn apart to the very depth of his being. What should he do? He could not agree to a compromise. He was perfectly aware that the Church could not approve of his deepest convictions, and he could not renounce them. The theological explanations which friends offered him to justify his views he regarded as their personal opinions—and so, as having no authority. He enthused, he argued, he suffered, he sought. He turned sometimes this way, sometimes that.

2. Until the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), Christian India, particularly in ecclesiastical circles, lived in expectation and fear. The Council gave a hope and pointed to a way forward. But it was only in 1969 that we heard it said aloud at the "All-India Seminar on the Church in India Today" that Hinduism is a genuine religion, and therefore a means of

salvation, and that the meeting of the two religions could lead to a positive and beneficial relationship. Abhishiktananda felt himself confirmed in his vocation as a *sannyasi* within the Church. At the Seminar he was regarded as a master.

Constraints were relaxed, fear gave place to confidence, to optimism, a wind of freedom was blowing. People began to believe that other religions are also ways of salvation, that the monks of other religions are just as much monks as the Christian ones, that toleration is not a last resort, that religion is not an obstacle to collaboration among human beings—here, between Indians of all religious traditions and Christians. Inter-religious meetings were organized, limited at first to a restricted circle of Hindus and Christians; later on they increased in number, and the circle was enlarged to include Muslims and members of other religions. We must remember that the ground had been prepared by meetings between theologians and prayerful people of different Christian confessions who were interested in a dialogue in depth between Hinduism and Christianity. Abhishiktananda had taken an active part in several such meetings (Almora 1961, Rajpur 1962, Nagpur 1963). He had published his book *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point* (1969), in which, after setting out the basis of this dialogue, he gave an account of the exchanges, the discussions and the meditations on the Upanishads at Nagpur.

Some young priests, secular and religious, were studying Hindu philosophy or Sanskrit at university. Young theologians—Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant—waxed enthusiastic over the elaboration of an Indian theology and the indigenization of Christianity. But the euphoria was short-lived. An adequate language was lacking. The foundations needed for an Indian theology, and still more for a Hindu-Christian theology, did not exist. The use of certain expressions and of certain gestures (in the liturgy, for example) alarmed the Roman authorities as well as Protestant theologians in the West. We now enter a new phase.

3. Rome reined in attempts at liturgical adaptation which were thought to have gone too far, and the World Council of Churches cautiously revised its terms of reference. If they were to open up too much and indiscriminately, they feared that their Christian identity might be lost. But the movement had started and no one could stop it. The dimensions of this movement were beyond the grasp of most of those who had launched it. Discussions on adaptation often concealed a concept of Christianity and of religion that was very different from that of the religious bodies. It is also clear that a section of Indian Christians feared that too much was being made of an "indianization" which the younger generation of Hindus themselves seemed to repudiate.

These were the last years of Swamiji. His stress was on interiorization and on conversion—even the conversion of the Church.

When the authorities made their call for caution, many of those who had embarked on this colossal task were discouraged; but this pause has led to a deeper study of the problems while going beyond the psychological

level. If people had gone ahead too fast, they would have ended with a Christianity limited to an elite who would have been cut off from the mass of the faithful. Symbiosis must above all be personal, and the meeting has to take place, as they say, in the depth of the heart. In the face of such a complex situation the chief question is not in the first place whether Hinduism can or cannot lead to salvation, or whether Christianity ought to be adapted to the cultures and religions of India, but rather, what is the basic structure of reality and what is a human being? Swamiji's message becomes increasingly important.

* * *

Abhishiktananda's environment was at first among the ecclesiastics of the Catholic Church: presbyteries, religious houses, episcopal residences. In 1950 he so to speak emerged from the ecclesiastical environment, while still retaining contact with it, when he and Fr Monchanin went to live at Shantivanam. From this time until Fr Monchanin's death his environment was that of the ashram where he and his companion lived a mainly hermit life, and also that of the Hindu ashrams which he often visited, and that of the hermits in the caves of Arunachala where he stayed from time to time. When in 1957 he found himself all alone, his wandering life as a *sannyasi* put him in touch with almost every side of Indian life: in towns, in the countryside, in the mountains, on the railways, among sadhus, among pilgrims. Little by little, as interest in what was close to his heart awoke among Catholics, Protestants and Hindus, and as his writings became known, a network of deep friendships grew up around his person. Finally, he found a disciple, and with him the human fulfilment of fatherhood.

He who had dreamed of being a solitary, an acosmic, but without attaining to it, and therefore was tormented with guilt—this *sannyasi* discovered all the human warmth of a personal, concrete and living relationship. All his abstract theories collapsed and were reborn afresh in the concrete. The stress of his experiences with Marc so affected his physical organism, already worn out by his ascetic life and the strain of much travel, that it ended his life. He was struck down by a heart-attack from which he emerged with a new lucidity; apart from a few letters he wrote nothing more, and died a few months later.

This fatherhood, this love for his spiritual son, which I would call profoundly human, was what in his last stage fulfilled him. We know that the Christian centre of his spirituality was the *Abba*, *Father* of Christ. He had made it his own, passing over the theological distinctions between the Sonship by nature (Christ's) and the sonship by adoption (of all humanity). The experience of the divine fatherhood was lived in all its power and depth. But in this experience there was always an element of the abstract. The experience of the I is impossible. The I cannot experience Itself in a logical identity: the I (subject) of the experience becomes the myself (object). The Myself implies already the Thou, the Logos, the Son, the *advitīyam*. There has to be an other, *alius* not *aliud*, namely the Son, who "causes the

birth” of the Father, as we might say in a paradox, “when” the Father gives birth to the Son. All that, more or less clearly, Swamiji had lived. But he lacked the Incarnation, the experience of Fatherhood in bringing forth the Son, the experience of being a guru in time and space, ultimately in flesh and blood. Hence the importance of Marc for Henri (as Marc used to call him), and also—in my view—the key that enables us to understand the human side of Swamiji, as the (unpublished) diary of Marc (Ajatananda) goes to prove.

It is significant that all traces of Swamiji’s earthly pilgrimage have disappeared. His hermitage on the bank of the Ganges at Gyansu (Uttarkashi) was carried away by the river during the flood of 1978. His dreams of making a foundation came to nothing one after another. But what is most charged with meaning—and with ambiguity—is that his two “official” disciples also disappeared one after the other without leaving the slightest trace. Sister Têrèse, the Carmelite who after long years of waiting had received permission to lead the life of a hermit in the Himalaya, one day disappeared from her hut. And the beloved disciple, who had received from the master the advice to remain in the Himalaya for a ten-year period of silence and solitude, he too one fine day disappeared from his place beside the Ganges. Some suggested that he might have performed the rite of *jala-samādhi*, as Swāmi Rāma Tīrtha may have done in 1906, and many others have done, by allowing his body to be carried away by the Ganges in order to release his *ātman*. The bodies of Sister Têrèse and of Marc have never been found. And as regards the fate of each of them, one can only speculate.

3. The notebooks

Among the numerous papers left by Swamiji there were a number of manuscripts—two complete books (“Guhāntara” and “Guhāja”) and various essays and unfinished notes—some of which have been published posthumously. There was also a collection of notebooks, of the kind used by school children, containing his Diary from 1948 to Nov. 1966, almost 2000 pages in all (the remainder until 1973 had been entrusted to Marc Chaduc, on which see below).

To publish the Diary in its entirety would have been impracticable on account of its length, and was probably unnecessary in view of the amount of repetition. There had to be a selection. The following are the principles by which we were guided:

(a) In the first place, it has to be said that the task was extremely difficult. In all these pages there is a mystery which eludes us, the mystery of a life. We have approached these dialogues of the author with himself in his solitude with great respect, refraining from adding any interpretations or interpolations, whether kindly meant or critical. This point must be underlined: we have not tried to present this person either according to some pre-conceived idea or from any special perspective. We have no desire to present either a Christian monk or a *sannyāsī*, or both together. We are

not concerned about his orthodoxy (or about his “orthology”, as Fr Paul Henry S.J., one of his critics, wrote on 10 March 1954); we have not desired to see in him a theologian, a saint or an anarchist, a clear thinker or a confused genius. We have avoided any toning down or weakening either of the content of his thoughts or of the harshness of his language; no more have we sought to hide or underline the anti-establishment aspect of some of his ideas.

(b) We have usually omitted passages which were subsequently rewritten with a view to publication, especially in *Guhāntara* and *The Secret of Arunachala* (references in footnotes), and in the unpublished “Guhāja” (references to the MS).

(c) We have also omitted some repetitions, sometimes almost word for word, which add nothing to the text and indeed overload it. However—in order to show the difference between the language of experience and that of thought—we have retained certain of these repetitions. Is anyone ever content to say to his beloved “I love you” once for all? When you have only one thing to say, one experience to communicate, how can you help talking about it *ad nauseam* (for the outsider)? Other repetitions also result from his doubts and uncertainties. If he had not been shaken in his convictions, and had not, almost throughout his life, been besieged in his very being, while searching for his identity, he would not have repeated himself so often.

(d) We have omitted some words and phrases that were illegible or unintelligible, indicating this by [...].

(e) Likewise we have omitted certain remarks that are more or less theoretical, and incomplete sketches, some of which have been worked up in his published works.

(f) When we have thought that we could guess a word, we have included it within square brackets.

(g) Out of discretion we have left only the initials of certain people.

(h) Words in other languages are printed in italics; so that the text may be understood, a translation is given in square brackets. [*To help non-specialist readers the English version often reverses the order, giving the translation in the text and the author’s Sanskrit, Tamil etc. within square brackets. Swamiji’s frequent use of English is indicated by printing such words in italics within single quotes; see, for example, page 1, under December 13. Italics without quotes, of course, are the author’s own emphasis,—Ed.*]

(i) Words and expressions in Sanskrit are translated when they first appear in the Diary, and they are often translated again as an aid to understanding the text, and also when they carry a different meaning. The glossary containing all Sanskrit words used in the Diary can also be consulted.

(j) A number of Tamil words could not be deciphered, and so could not be translated. [*These have now been deciphered.—Ed.*]

(k) Here and there we have corrected the grammar and punctuation, when we have supposed that the author would certainly have done this

himself, if he had re-read the text. But we have not "improved" the text. Once more we emphasize the fact that here we are dealing with rough drafts made to capture ideas, with notes for later elaboration.

(l) In the same way we have corrected spelling mistakes in the various languages used.

(m) The transliteration of the Sanskrit words in the *Diary* has been made consistent.

(n) We have printed all Sanskrit words in italics. However some terms which occur very frequently or have passed into current usage, like *advaita*, *guru*, *sadhu*, *yogi*, are sometimes italicized and sometimes in plain type, as in the original manuscript.

(o) We have preferred to omit some days in their entirety, rather than to omit some passages from such days, even though they contain repetitions. The association of ideas is sometimes more revealing than the logical coherence of the thought. Swamiji would ponder a theme throughout a whole day, and often for several days. He wrote freely. If he jumps from one theme to another, it is because there is, at least in his subconscious, some connection—a hidden *upanishad*—which it is important to realize.

In order to make the *Diary* more easy to understand, at the beginning of each year a brief sketch has been provided detailing the chief events of the year and pointing out the places where Abhishiktananda was staying. This enables the reader to have in advance a bird's-eye view of that year before starting on the text. Sometimes details are given which are not mentioned in the *Diary*; some of these have been told by eye-witnesses, others are mentioned in Swamiji's correspondence.

We have also provided some textual references and, as briefly as possible, some notes containing information about people and places and Indian culture.

Finally, it is worth while to mention the deplorable state of the notebooks. Some have been damaged by water, thus making them even more difficult to read—Swamiji's handwriting was anyhow almost indecipherable and betrayed a certain haste. As for the conditions in which he wrote his notes, they were scarcely helpful for producing a polished text: seated on the ground or with the notebook on his knees, in a cramped cell, sometimes in a cave, using a ball-point, most of the time without electric light, in the heat, besieged by mosquitoes and other insects when in the plains, or in the damp and cold of the monsoon and winter seasons when in the mountains; writing after long hours of meditation or when he had some spare moments.

The last part of the *Diary* (from November 1966 to 1973) had a specially significant fate. Marc Chaduc, after copying extracts from these last years into a single exercise book, threw the originals into the Ganges. He allowed certain friends of Swamiji to read this selection. Later he stated that he had no objection to its being made generally available. In any case, he wanted the extracts to be handed over to Fr Dominique van Rollegem O.S.B., as their guardian. In his selection it is probable that he deliberately omitted

most of the personal details connected with the guru-disciple relationship. We should add that he wrote a note to affirm that Swamiji had given him a completely free hand to do as he wished with these writings. The fascinating correspondence between himself and Swamiji which throws light on the last period of Swamiji's life has been preserved.

Before his Great Departure Abhishiktananda asked that his notebooks (1948-1966) should be left with Fr Dominique, who had been his close friend and his confessor for many years. Since coming to India in 1951, Fr Dominique had often visited Shantivanam, and lived there for most of 1967. After Swamiji's death he was allowed to follow his call to the hermit life in Gujarat, where he lived in the greatest austerity between 1975 and 1985, until health compelled him to return to his monastery. In 1990 he was sent to Belgium and remained there until his death in 1995. He had entrusted the notebooks to Madame Odette Baumer-Despeigne who kindly made her typed copy available to the Abhishiktananda Society with a view to their publication. With a courage and determination worthy of their author she had already given several years to deciphering the manuscript and making the typed copy, which has been the basis of the present work.

In 1979 the Abhishiktananda Society appointed a committee, with myself as its president, to prepare a selection from the *Diary*. Putting aside other work and activities, I accepted this responsibility in token of my friendship with Swamiji, and perhaps also to confirm in my own life the dimension which he represented, J.Stuart, J.Dupuis, Bettina Bäumer and N.Shanta have been collaborators in this difficult task; without their dedication this publication would not have seen the light of day, and I wish to thank them most heartily. We have made the final selection with the help above all of Odette Baumer's typed copy, and have written the notes. N.Shanta has helped me in writing this Preface and the sketches at the beginning of each year; she has kindly typed out the manuscript of this selection and has also revised the notes and the final text of the *Diary*. We also thank Fr Ignatius Hirudayam S.J., who knew Swamiji from the time of his arrival in Tamilnadu, for his kindness in deciphering the Tamil. Finally, we wish to express our deep gratitude to Madame Marie-Madeleine Davy for her invaluable cooperation. She was graciously prepared to review the text and worked with the publishers on the production of this *Diary*.

I could have wished to have made a further comparison with Swamiji's original, as I am convinced that this selection could have been further improved and also some mistakes corrected. But that work would have considerably delayed its publication, and certain practical difficulties made it impossible. The text which we are offering is genuine, and the desire for greater precision should not hinder us from making known this moving expression of contemporary spirituality.

It is time for the reader to meditate on these pages.

R.Panikkar

Kodaikkanal, 2 February 1982

Tavertet, 6 August 1985

Chronology of Fr Le Saux until his arrival in India

30 August 1910 1920	Born at St-Briac (Brittany), France First Communion. Entered Minor Seminary at Chateaugiron
1925	After his mother's illness, made a private vow to go wherever the Lord might send him. Entered Major Seminary at Rennes.
1926	Called to the Benedictine life after a friend's death.
15 October 1929	Entered the abbey of Ste-Anne de Kergonan, Brittany.
1930	Birth of Marie-Thérèse, his youngest sister.
17 May 1935	Professed in simple vows. Military service.
1934	Heard the call of India as his life's vocation (letter to his family of 24.9.50; etc.)
30 May 1935	Solemn Profession on Ascension Day.
21 December 1935	Ordained priest at Vannes.
September 1939	Called up at the beginning of World War 2.
1940	Made prisoner, but managed to escape and make his way back to his abbey; this was commandeered in 1942.
1942	Wrote <i>Amour et sagesse</i> for his mother.
1944	Death of his mother.
1945	Return of the monks to Kergonan.
15 May 1947	Made contact with Mgr J. Mendonça, Bishop of Tiruchchirappalli (<i>Swami Abhishiktananda: his life told through his letters</i> , p.12). His letter was answered by Fr Monchanin on behalf of the Bishop.
18 August 1947	Wrote at length to Fr Monchanin, expressing his great desire to join him and explaining his idea of monastic life in India (<i>ditto</i> , p.15).
15 May 1948	Indult of exclaustation, allowing him to leave for India.
26 July 1948	Sailed from Marseilles.
15 August 1948	Landed at Colombo (Sri Lanka).

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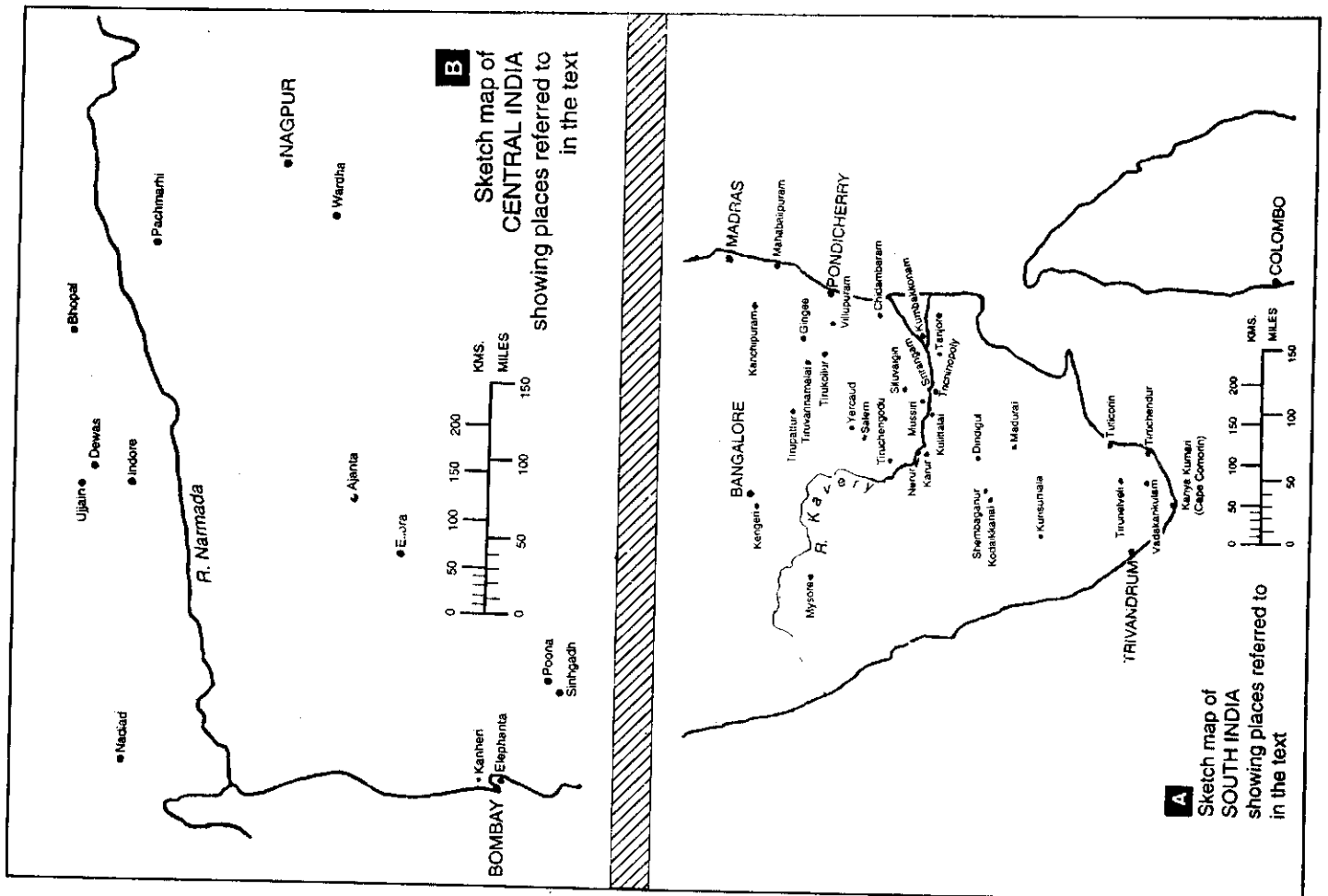
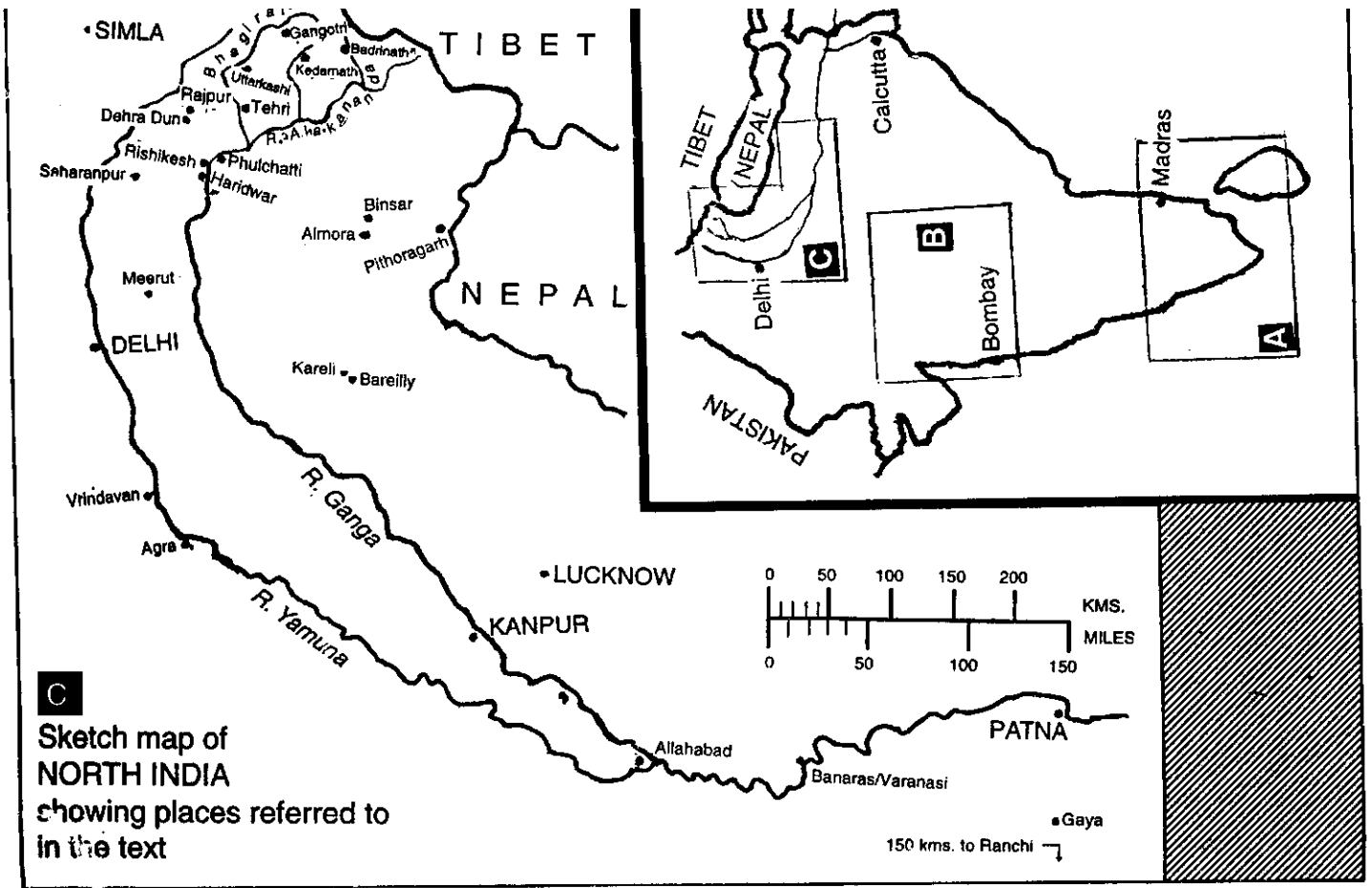
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Various Notes

TRANSLITERATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

These are usually printed in italics with a simplified system of diacritical marks, as follows:

Long vowels are indicated by *ā, ī, ū*.

The semi-vowel (*r*) is transliterated as *ri*, as in *drishti*.

The palatal sibilant is indicated by *ś*, as in *śānti*, pronounced "shanti".

The cerebral sibilant is indicated by *sh*, as in "Purusha".

The other cerebral consonants (*t, th, d, dh, n*), the *anusvara (m)*, and the *visarga (h)* have not been indicated.

The Sanskrit *c* is pronounced *ch*, as in *cakra*, pronounced "chakra"; Sanskrit *ch* is the same, aspirated.

ABBREVIATIONS

AU	Aitareya Upanishad
AV	Atharva Veda
BG	Bhagavad Gīta
BU	Brihadāranyaka Upanishad
CU	Chāndogya Upanishad
ĪśaU	Īśa Upanishad
KathU	Katha Upanishad
KenU	Kena Upanishad
MahanārU	Mahānārāyana Upanishad
MaitU	Maitri Upanishad
MāndU	Māndūkya Upanishad
MundU	Mundaka Upanishad
RV	Rig Veda
SU	Śvetāśvatara Upanishad
TU	Taittirīya Upanishad
YS	Yoga Sutra

OTHER SIGNS

... at the *end* of a sentence belongs to the original.

... at the *beginning* of a paragraph indicates matter omitted by Marc Chaduc in making his selection from the *Diary* (pages 287 to the end).

(...) indicates that matter has been omitted from this selection.

[...] indicates an omission on account of illegibility.

Where Sanskrit, Tamil, Greek, Latin or Hebrew words are placed within brackets [], this indicates that these words are what the author originally wrote, although in this edition they have been replaced with an English translation to aid the reader. Occasionally the author's Sanskrit (etc.) has been kept in the text and the translation is added within brackets. This corresponds with his usual custom when writing for publication.

1948

Arrival in India : a Dream Fulfilled

DOM Henri Le Saux arrived in India, having overcome all the obstacles that stood in the way of responding to his call. On August 16, he made contact with the clergy of Tiruchchirappalli (Trichy), an ancient city of Tamil Nadu famous for its temples, especially that of Srīrangam on a small island in the Kāveri. With the sensitivity of an artist he discovered the richness of South India. He was taken with the beauty of the Kāveri, the sacred river, and struck by the power emanating from its waters; he thought already of his new name: Kāveryānanda.

No note survives about the beginning of his stay in India, but a letter written on August 21 has been preserved in the collection of letters to his family (which were addressed first to his father and later to his eldest sister). He hesitated to write down his first impressions. His *Diary*, a faithful companion, is a collection of reflections, notes, reminders.

Some important dates:

16 August	Arrival in Tiruchchirappalli (Trichinopoly).
17 August	Reached Kulittalai.
16 September	Visited the Sri Ramakrishna Ashram with Fr Monchanin.
November	First visit to the members of the community at Siluvaigiri.
25 December	Heard his first confessions at Sinnandipatti and preached a sermon in Tamil.

* * *

Trichy

December 13

Happy coincidence. Fr Gathier, S.J., strikes one as a venerable old man¹, treats those who talk to him as his audience, gives you a 'lecture about some personal experiences in India'. Disappointed by the Hindu circle in which he moves. A circle of academics, don't live as they talk, curious

1. Father Émile Gathier was professor of philosophy at the Jesuit college of Shembaganur; later he taught Indian philosophy at the Gregorian University of Rome. When sent to Rome in 1949 by his Vice-Provincial, he wrote to Father Monchanin: "As a religious and a soldier, I obey, but I find the reasons for my departure somewhat inadequate." Fr Monchanin was upset by his departure. A wind of conservatism was blowing in the Church and rudely halted the work of one who, in Fr Monchanin's opinion as expressed in a letter of 21 May 1940, was the only Jesuit Indologist. Cp. Jules Monchanin, *Mystique de l'Inde, mystère chrétien*, ed. S. Siauve (Paris: Fayard, 1974).

anecdotes about Hindu lack of logic. A professor of medicine, 'Oxford man,' when sick takes magic treatment from a Brahmin, who is also a scientist; a physics lecturer sees his astrologer every morning and tells his students the auspicious hour for starting exams. Brahmins coming to Shembaganur in order to eat beef, etc. Stresses the Indian's lack of taste for research into the past, people content themselves with holding forth about the greatness of India. He seems to me to have mainly intellectual contacts, perhaps too purely intellectual. His sympathy for India is too theoretical. Invited once to a Hindu family, *rarissime*, "they collected for me all the forks and plates in the village. But the mother tore off the chicken leg with her fingers to give it to me." All that to me is a matter of indifference. One who was an Indian at heart would have said "What was strange about that?" He also reminds me that the Indian finds it very hard to leave the seminary or novitiate. Avoid causing offence, the resentment or at least the wound festers for a long time, for years. (...)

Bishop's House. See Sw. Arokiam² at length, he talks of attempts at an ashram at Gosavapatti, more or less gnostic. Twelve disciples with symbolic names. The meeting in darkness from 8 to 9. Yoga exercises. Seven unmarried persons, [studied up to the] 'fifth standard only.' *Lux in tenebris lucet* [the light shines in the darkness, John 1:5]. I think he is thinking of our future monastery, but we did not explicitly raise the subject; he shows signs of sympathy for me. [Considers] *kāvī*³ necessary. Shares my view about choosing a site on the [bank of the] Kaveri. *Kaveryānanda!* [the joy of the sacred river Kaveri]. Hindu environment. Gives some examples of *kāvī*: Christian pilgrims who wear *kāvī*. At Gosavapatti at the adoration of the cross on Good Friday they [...] in *kāvī*.

Meet Father Le Guen, S.J., Vice-Rector of Loyola [College] in Madras, preaching retreat at Trichy. Hurried conversation, recommends prudence because of this cold winter season...general sympathy for my idea; reticence at the beginning.

December 14

Interesting meeting with young Hindus here. John brings me one, who brings me a second, and the latter brings a third. This evening I find five waiting for me. (...)

December 19

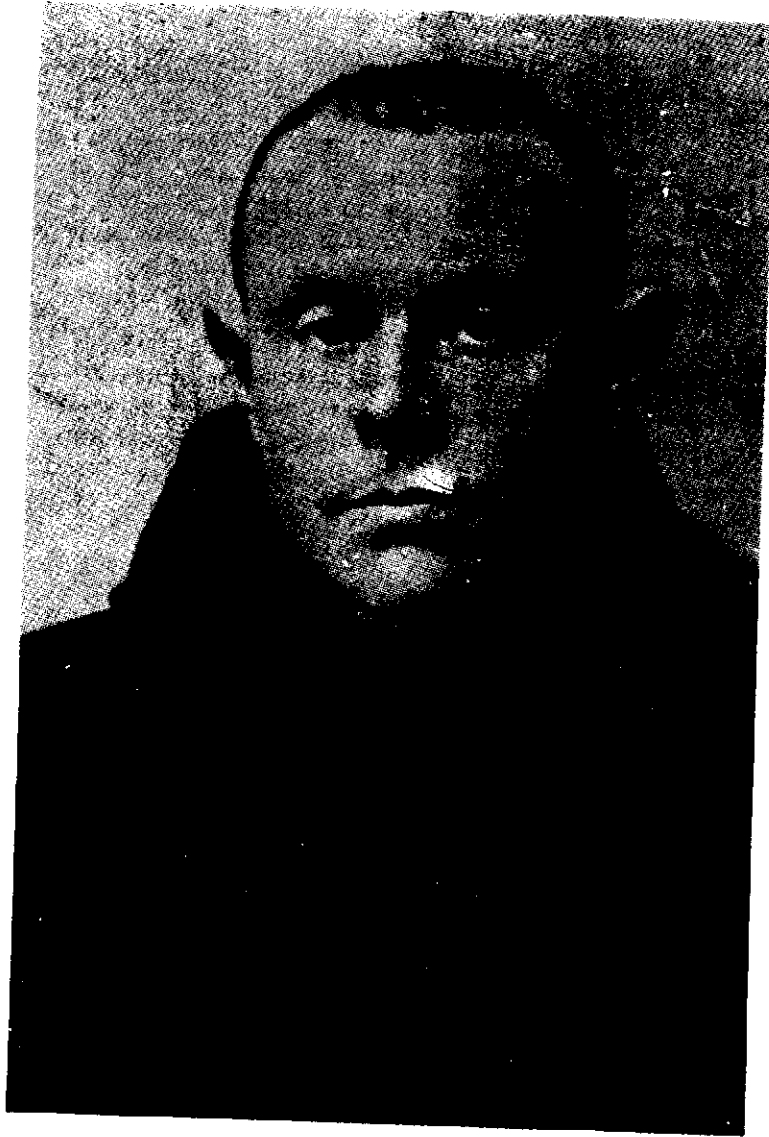
The mystery of Christmas, great here! Respond in the name of my people to the Father's call! As Jesus came to respond in the name of the

2. Swami Arokianadar, known as Arokiam, was parish priest of Kosavapatti (diocese of Trichinopoly) and a friend of Father Monchanin. He had translated some books from French into Tamil. Swamiji stayed three times with him in 1949, and wrote in a letter to his father (13 February 1949): "...a Tamil priest I know... He is a priest who is very interested in monastic life (he knows French) and I have some hopes that he will join us."
3. *kāvī*: the orange-coloured habit of Hindu monks.

world to the Father's call to the world... Be the summit through which my people 'reaches, catches God' [attains, holds God].

Stupefied to realize that even cultivated Tamils speak to one another in 'colloquial Tamil, even at school', except in classes on the Tamil language itself... So I have to learn to speak a language that no one around me speaks, and understand a language that I am not 'allowed to speak' myself. Acute feeling of the difficulty, the quasi-impossibility of finding a place among my people, of being one of my people. Here the Swami (especially if he is a European, even if he is passionately in love with India), is always the "solitary" of A. de Vigny (see the last stanza of his *Moses*)! Who would give me the chance of living two years clad in *veshti*⁴ in the midst of my people so as to be finally in fact one of them and to be recognized as such! [...] makes one wonder if anything is to be gained from living in an Indian style: I will always be, whatever I do, the *vellaikaran* [the white man, foreigner], despite (and also because of) all the 'kindness' people show me...

4. A strip of cotton, fastened round the waist and falling to the ankles; also called *dhōti*.



Passport photo of Dom Le Saux (about 1948)

1949

Immersion in Tamil Nadu

IN the small city of Tiruvannamalai, at the foot of Arunachala, the Holy Mountain, Father Le Saux visited the ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Father Monchanin, who had already spent some time at this ashram, invited his companion to join him for the *darśana* ("vision" or audience) of this great advaitin sage. For Fr Le Saux the influence of this encounter was to prove profound and decisive. It became more and more significant, as he himself penetrated to the heart of the experience of *advaita*. Sri Ramana became for him the perfect symbol of spiritual realization. The sage seemed to him the model to follow in the encounter between Christianity and Hinduism: this should take place on a level that transcends the intellectual and should spring out of mystical experience. In his Diary after this visit, he noted down reflections and descriptions which were later repeated in his book *The Secret of Arunachala*.

Pondicherry was at this time a French city and possession. Fr Le Saux described his interview with the bishop, his visit to the parish and his talks with various persons. He wanted above all to interest all he met in the project which was so dear to Fr Monchanin and himself: the foundation of an ashram where they would be hermits of *Saccidananda* (the Trinity). But his enthusiasm was not widely shared. Increasingly he realized the gulf between the two cultures and religions.

Kulittalai is a small town where Fr Monchanin had been exercising his ministry; near it the ashram was eventually built.

Fr Le Saux tried to be prudent so as not to scandalize the different sections of Indian Christianity, that of the French, and especially that of the ecclesiastics; but he was not very successful. Yet we must mention one very important exception. Bishop J. Mendonça of Tiruchchirappalli, to whose diocese the two priests belonged, proved to be very understanding. He wrote a very supportive preface for the little book *An Indian Benedictine Ashram* (which later appeared in Britain under the title *A Benedictine Ashram*; for—as is said in the preface to the new edition—"Indian Ashram" was a tautology). For most of the clergy, H. Le Saux was an "eccentric", but was respected for his sincerity and his exemplary ascetical life. He had a very inquiring mind and was as eager to learn as an adolescent.

The pilgrimage of Fr Le Saux was not purely interior, for he was impatient to get to know the Tamil country. Here are a few landmarks in his pilgrimage:

1 January	At Lalapet.
10-14 January	Visit to Siluvaigiri.
24 January	Met Fr Monchanin at Tiruvannamalai; next day had fever and after three days returned to Kulittalai.
Early February	Rested at Tiruchchirappalli; visited Dindigul.
11-18 February	Stayed with Fr Arokiam at the village of Kosavapatti, near Dindigul.
20-26 February	At Pondicherry. Spoke of his ashram project with Bishop Colas.
20-27 June	Tour of one week with Fr Monchanin: Tuticorin, Tirunelveli, visiting Rosarians at Vadakankulam (Cape Comorin).
28 June	At the temple of Tiruchchendur; at Manapar (St Francis Xavier's cave). Then stayed at Shembaganur (Jesuit scholasticate in the Palni hills).
13 July	Arrived at Kosavapatti for a long stay.
15 August	Returned to Kulittalai.
End of August	A week at Tiruvannamalai. Conversation with the disciples of Sri Ramana; discovery of the caves and hermits.
29 August	At Tiruchchirappalli. Plans for three months' study of Tamil. Visited Palani, an important pilgrimage centre of the god Murugan.
8 October	Returned to Kulittalai.
16 October	With Fr Monchanin on a tour of temples: Thanjavur (Tanjore), Kumbakonam, Chidambaram.
1-10(?) November	At Kosavapatti
December	At Kulittalai; Fr Monchanin ill. Choice of Tannirpalli for the ashram site.
25 December	At Perūr.

* * *

Arunachala¹

January 24, Monday

(...) Pilgrim at Arunachala. (...) Uneventful night-time journey to Villupuram, 22.50-3.30. No contact with neighbours in my compartment. Each one settles down in Indian style, some on the luggage-rack, some on the floor. I try to sleep in my corner, wrapped up in my raincoat. I made the foolish mistake of not taking a [...] at Trichy. Economy? No, rather ineradicable shyness.

At Villupuram I start looking for the train to Tiruvannamalai. (...) Brother Monchanin should have been there for some hours, coming from Pondicherry. He is not on the platform. Several times I search in every

1. The following notes of this pilgrimage and stay at the ashram of Sri Ramana provide the basis of his account in *The Secret of Arunachala: a Christian Hermit on Shiva's Holy Mountain*, pp.1-9.

compartment of the train to Tiruvannamalai. I am rather anxious, because 'agreements' [appointments] in India are always subject to alteration... In due time I settle into the train for Tiru, dozing more or less till 6.11.

On the platform at the station I find Brother Monchanin with great relief. Ten cart-drivers [vandikaran] fight to take us. They ask for 2 Rs.[rupees]. We agree (not knowing that the standard fare is one rupee, six annas) and our vandikaran urges on his pony at top speed.

Tiruvannamalai lies at the foot of the sacred hill whose name it bears. This mountain was made of fire in the first age, rubies in the second, and became stone only in the *kali-yuga*. But this mountain is Shiva himself in the form of a *linga*, the holiest place in the world. There is an important temple in the centre of the town. I will visit it some other time (...).

I drag my companion out of his contemplation of the joy of the morning to bring him up to date on affairs at Kulittalai. He had written to me some days before: All that is *māya* [illusion]! (...).

During this time we reach the ashram. Sri Ramanasramam in big letters over the entrance gate. (...) But the first impression is of a construction-site: right at the entrance they are building a temple in honour of the mother of the Maharshi, to be inaugurated "with Vedic rites" on March 17. (...) This once passed, we meet the first 'inmates' [of the ashram]; very friendly greetings [*namaskāram*]. Brother Monchanin is recognized, he introduces me, we are taken to the "Guest House" (a simple shed with mud walls, roofed with leaves), given a mat, we set down our belongings. They invite us to take a bath before breakfast, which will be at 7.00.

As for us, we are thinking only of our Mass. I have brought along the Mass kit. Our hope is to be allowed a room to ourselves. We apply to the administrative office headed by the Maharshi's own brother, Swami Niranjanānanda, the administrator [*sarvādhikārī*]. I have been told that this service was managed with much 'cleverness'...here devotion would not be the only quality brought into play. (...) At any rate the administration of the ashram seems to be first-class... But that is another matter. The *sarvādhikārī* is out, (...), his son substitutes for him, but will only come about 8.00, Indian time of course. So we have to wait.

They urge us to go to breakfast. To escape from their insistence,² we are obliged to tell them we have already performed this morning rite... . But at least we should introduce ourselves to Bhagavān [Ramana Maharshi].

In the half-hour since I had arrived, this word Bhagavān is on everyone's lips, it bothers me. I knew about it, as I knew about the prostrations that are constantly made to him. I had come with fullest sympathy. But here, I hardly know how, my Christian sense revolts against it. I feel ill at ease.

We enter the refectory. Bhagavān is seated with his legs crossed in front of his banana leaf and his *ittli* [cake of rice flour]. We greet him with a profound *namaskāra*. Brother Monchanin introduces himself, recalls his

2. At that time Catholics could only receive Communion, and priests could only celebrate Mass, if they had fasted since midnight.

previous two visits, introduces me. My ignorance of Tamil allows me to keep silent. The Maharshi responds with some gestures with his hands, some inarticulate mumbles, and above all with a smile so full of kindness as to be unforgettable.

But our Mass... While waiting I finish my update on Kulittalai. I consider this stay at Tiru as a genuine retreat as well as an introduction to Hindu monastic life. I intend to finish with all profane matters before entering into the great silence and the great peace which, as I have read and as people have told me, characterize the ashram.

I suggest to Brother Monchanin that we should look up some of the people met on previous visits here, the Osbornes, devoted admirers and disciples of the Maharshi, who had a bungalow in the vicinity of the ashram. But we had first to find the bungalow. It's this one... that one... We ask a young Tamilian if there are any English people nearby, and he leads us to a house where we come across a young Englishman taking his bath who informs us that for the time being the Osbornes are at Madras (...). We were soon after to observe that he himself is one of the most fervent at the *darśana*.

We return to the ashram. At the office the son of the *sarvādhikārī* has still not come back. The best thing is to go to the *darśana*.

The *darśana* is the "public appearance", the "showing" of the Maharshi. Unlike Aurobindo Ghose, the Maharshi lives in public. From 8 a.m. until 12 and from 2.30 until 7.30 p.m. he takes his place on the couch and shows himself to the crowds who want to see him. Previously the *darśana* took place in the hall, the simple hall of which Lanza speaks. It seems that this was much more homely. Now they have built near the hall a huge shed, open with mud walls.

At the back there is a kind of stone couch, covered with a carpet and an embroidered cloth. Cushions are piled at the head of the couch. In front of the couch, to the Maharshi's left, are the men, and to the side of the couch, facing the Maharshi, are the women. Between the couch and the women there is a railing which is removed in the evening when after the *pūjā* at 6 p.m. they have to withdraw from the ashram. The couch is set on a dais. Hanging from the supports of the shed are garlands of imitation flowers and multi-coloured bulbs which will be lit in the evening. Just beside the couch is a burner which a disciple keeps supplied with incense. Ramana has disappeared, there is only Bhagavān beside some sticks of sandal (incense), as someone said to me. One or two disciples are always seated at the side of the couch, interposed between the crowd and the Maharshi, also engaged in serving the Maharshi.

In this setting, on this couch, a little old man is seated practically naked, his beard and hair roughly shaved, his legs sometimes crossed, sometimes outstretched, and sometimes folded under him in various positions. This is because Bhagavān suffers from rheumatism. This little old man (aged less than 70) spends his days here, unconcerned with the setting, unconcerned with the *namaskāram* and the prostrations. At first I

looked in vain for the halo. I would call him a kindly grandfather, tied to his bed, freed from all the cares of life, happy, peaceful and smiling in the midst of his small children.

When I come in, Bhagavān is reading his mail. If I had hoped to meet a perfect inhabitant of the other world, I would have been greatly disappointed. I could see for myself and was also told that Bhagavān has passed the stage of ecstasy. Henceforth he is able to attend to the details of daily life without the concentration of his thought on the Self being impaired to the slightest extent. He concerned himself with all the details of the house, especially perhaps with those of the kitchen. We later saw him eating with an excellent appetite and lightly discussing the quality of the buttermilk [Tamil, *mor*] with the man who served him. Not long ago he could be seen in the kitchen in the early morning cleaning the vegetables. He keeps an eye on the work of the ashram, insisting on attention to details and the completion of a job, for example, in the bindery. Thus we saw him reading his mail, correcting the proofs of books, telling what answers to give, reading a newspaper—*The Hindu*, if I am not mistaken. (For Bhagavān can understand and read English very well, even though he only speaks in Tamil.) In the afternoon he was even to enjoy listening to the radio for some time (that day it was broadcasting Tamil songs).

But there is nothing to watch apart from Bhagavān; I witnessed a greater number of *namaskāram* than could be seen in any Hindu temple. For myself it was enough to join and raise my hands. But all the others prostrate themselves, touching the ground with forehead, with nostrils, with ears, etc., then straightening up, give the greeting on their knees and again standing up, often repeating it three times before taking their seat. The most devout come up close to the couch when paying their respects. There are sadhus in *kāvī*, people in *veshti*, people in trousers. There are youths, adults and old people. Every face shows reverence, adoration. The great sign of respect, the towel [*tundu*³] tied round the waist, is lovingly⁴ given.

Having performed the prostration each one sits down—on the ground of course. (There cannot be in the whole ashram a single table or chair.) And there everyone meditates...or just looks. I had read so much about the peace emanating from this place that I am frankly disappointed. (Certainly recollection doesn't come by itself.) How many Christian grandfathers in India as well as in France seem to me more appealing than the Maharshi. Among the visitors few in fact are recollected, some were frankly reading their newspapers. But some are taken by it. I won't soon forget that tall teenager, perhaps 17 years old, remaining motionless for hours, with his eyes closed. And others besides. The Anglo-Saxons are not among those who have been least "caught". I shall be speaking later of Miss Merstone. Another woman has been there for the last thirteen years. No wish to leave: "With Bhagavān I have everything." One young man in a *kāvī* gown catches our notice. Not a Tamilian certainly, his skin is slightly bronzed, his mouth

3. *tundu*: a long strip of cotton, folded lengthwise, usually carried on one shoulder.

4. For this the author used the Tamil word *anbu* (love) with a French adverbial ending.

European. We make all sorts of guesses. The style of his dress makes us think that he is a Buddhist. Next day Brother Monchanin asks him if he is a Buddhist, and he makes a sign to show that he is keeping silence [*munivār*]. Later we learn that he is an Englishman who, after spending some time with Ramdas, in Kerala I imagine, has come to sit at the feet of Ramana.

Wednesday afternoon, meeting with Miss Merstone, who is vaguely Christian. No problem about linking Christ and Ramana. My scepticism shocks her. "You are not receptive; you must be receptive before Bhagavan."

I catch cold the first night, fever in the morning. In the evening a profound impression at the *darsana*, borne on the rhythm of what were said to be Vedic recitations.

Very hard night in the train. All my dreams about Ramana.

January 27, Thursday

Immediately to bed. 40 degrees fever. No Mass for three days. Looked after.

January 30, Sunday

Mass. Then a week at Trichy, in a deck-chair. Very weak. (...).

February

Gosavapatti. Very pleasant stay, about 10th-18th. (...)

Pondicherry

February 21

Sunday the 20th, evening, left Kulittalai. Tiring journey. Little sleep. Arrived at Pondy Monday the 21st at 5.30. Archbishop's House rickshaw waiting for me. What I didn't want to accept at Colombo I must take here, it's the only convenient mode of transport and the only practical way to get about in a city you don't know, so I'll ride around here the whole day. I am inevitably cheated once, paying a rupee to go from the mission (=Archbishop's house) to Notre-Dame-des-Anges (the parish), then I shall know. At the mission, a bath to restore me, Mass at the cathedral adjacent to the house. Breakfast: *appam* [rice-flour cakes] with bread. Coffee (condensed and cold) is served in bottles... Meet Father Caillaux, the procurator, who had sent the rickshaw for me to the station.

Towards 8.00 go by rickshaw to the parish to see Mr Umwala⁵. Very happy to meet one another. Conversation somewhat desultory. He is anxious to know exactly what I am planning to do, doesn't have a very clear idea of the necessary adaptation. I especially learn the reason for his coming to Pondicherry, he is somewhat the spiritual(?) son of Bishop Colas, who confirmed him 4 and a half years ago, and also of the Mother Provincial of the Cluny Sisters. He spoke to Bishop Colas about our projects, and the Bishop was rather non-committal. The situation is becoming delicate.

Introduced to the parish priest, Fr Hougard from Jeumont on the border between France and Belgium. A strong and generous man, very

5. A Parsi convert to Christianity. At the time of the foundation of Shantivanam, he planned to join the hermits.

approachable. We chat for a long time at noon at table, he is a specialist in killing snakes and scorpions. Thinks adaptation is good, but after a few years you are happy to get back to a little comfort. In fact I eat at noon at his table a purely French meal, my first without rice in six months, soup, salad, hors-d'oeuvre, fried fish, bacon and eggs, banana, cake, coffee. Extraordinary almsgiver, his door is a regular rogues' gallery. Several hundred come on Monday mornings, then return on other days. Mr Umwala himself is pestered and does not know how to refuse.

For Pondy I have become civilized. I wear topi, shoes and socks... In fact the sun is very strong here and I realize that in town I should wear shoes. Even the little daughter of M. Simonel⁶ (19 months old) has to wear sandals indoors. I admit that, Indian as I am at heart, I find joy and repose in discovering here a corner of France. Children shout "Bonjour mon Père" at me in the streets, people dress in the French manner, you see the tricolour fluttering, they speak a language you know...

With Mr Umwala I return to the Archbishop's House to see Bishop Colas. In the parlour an excellent conversation for two hours. The Bishop expresses his thought rather bluntly. I don't regret his openness. He reminds me of his letters and tells me his idea; he expected that I would come to India for 6 months to study the situation, then return to Europe and that a monastery would send 6 monks here to give an example of Benedictine life. Then Tamils would come little by little to join them. For a monk to work alone is utopian. Gently I show him that it is rather his own idea that really is utopian, a monastery doesn't strip itself like that. Money is lacking. The monk is a creature of habit... The order of the Pope himself, if not absolutely explicit, would have no effect. There has been no response to the appeal of 1926. I present to him the plan approved by the Bishop of Trichy, the ashram with three members, one being an Indian. I allow the Benedictine monastery to be glimpsed on the distant horizon. I am at present looking round, I want a very modest start, a trial run before any formal constitution. I speak to him of the adaptation that is essential in India (the main points cannot be contradicted, but I don't mention eating with one's fingers), impossible for a group, and unity of outlook impossible for a group... Little by little he understands.

But will this be on Benedictine lines? The Carmelites had nothing Carmelite about them when he came. For me this is secondary, but I mustn't say that. In fact this very evening I will explain to Mr Umwala that my foundation will be closer to the letter of the Benedictine Rule than the present-day constitutions in Europe, and that when the time comes we will ask to be adopted into the Benedictine Order. Requires that I back him up against Hinduizers in France and ashram-enthusiasts.

Much talk of Fr Monchanin. He objects that he is too much of an intellectual to deal with reality. He is worried, says he is too optimistic [...]; I answer that the opposite is true. He fears that he is too dispersed; (I say that) he only has his lectures at Pondy, so no fears about monastic life. Also

6. A Tamil employed by the judicial branch of the French government at Pondicherry.

too optimistic about the value of Hinduism; I told him about the appeal he has had from Paris to put straight the crazy people in France. A conversation that was extremely interesting and useful. It was really necessary for me to come to Pondy. Very accurate evaluation of the Indian clergy, some perfect, fewer very good ones than among the French clergy, more who are mediocre or harmful, he told this to Pius XI. (...)

(He) insists that Mr Umwala should see Fr Monchanin and Bishop Mendonça. He needs to see something else besides Pondy.

French dinner at the presbytery. (...) at 2.00 appear at the home, 35 rue Dumas, of M. and Mme Adicéam⁷, very surprised, conversation somewhat by fits and starts. On Arunachala, Mme Ad. had the same impression as I did (exteriorly nothing, but later fascinating). Today had the *darsana* of Aurobindo⁸. I prefer to play my cards close to the chest and not cause Bp Colas to gain a bad impression of me⁹.

Then to M. Simonel, 24 rue Suffren. Extremely interesting conversation. I am astonished to learn that I had had typhoid (as Father Gathier told me last night after his lectures). I am caught by his two little ones, M. Yvonne, 16 months old, and Jean-Philippe (4?) months. Charming. The little girl wouldn't leave me.

Buy a few small items, French bookstore of M. Babbilone. Walk round the harbour. Return to M. Simonel at 5.00. He takes me to M. Pujos, 2bis rue de l'Évêché, teacher of philo at the college. (Meet M. Fleury on the way. Appointment for Wednesday around 3.00.) Welcomed by his wife, tea, meet Mme Legué. This M. Pujos is quite taken with my plan. We'll meet again Tuesday or Wednesday evening after his classes about 5.00. It is a matter of meeting M. d'Outremer, director of the Banque d'Indochine. Mgr Hertz also, to have an opportunity to bring up the ashram indirectly and discreetly.

At 6.30 discover Mr Umwala at prayer at N.D.-des-Anges. Explain my idea of the 3 founders, contributing the monastic spirit, the Indian theoretical sense, the Indian practical sense, required by our plans for Tannirpalli. What (*Quid*) if 'no success'? One could give it to the diocese. The question of Mr Umwala's entry is posed more and more clearly.

Supper at the Bishop's House. Soup, rice colombo, fish, potatoes, fruit. (This morning I tasted custard-apple [*sItapalam*], good, but not easy to eat.) Recreation in common. Conversation with my neighbour at table, Fr X. who wants to de-Europeanize the church. After recreation, rosary in common while walking.

February 22

Morning at the Bishop's house. Visited the depository (former major

7. Mme Marguerite Prost Adicéam was a French woman married to an Indian. She and her husband were both lecturers at the French College in Pondicherry. She was very close to Fr Monchanin and corresponded regularly with him.
8. Sri Aurobindo (Aurobindo Ghosh, 1872-1950), thinker and mystic, founder, with the "Mother", of the Ashram in Pondicherry.
9. At that time the Catholic clergy were not allowed to visit the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo.

seminary), headed by Fr X. Bought medals and *vishamarundu* [medicine against snake-bite]. Then visited Fr Charbonnier, ten years in China, sent here after the war. After one year put to work in the press (...). No linotype, ancient presses, is waiting for new machines, deplores the waste of men and money on so many diocesan presses. A little bitter. His baby--a new building. Has a Tamilian priest as helper. Buy some books.

Saw Mr Umwala between 11 and 12.00. Continued our conversation. Put off till later the explanation of his conversion. There must be one of God's secrets in it. We start studying the difficulties awaiting him if he enters our ashram. What keeps him from becoming a monk in France is the cold. We start studying in detail all that we will need, land, house, church furnishings. I think he intends to provide for us whatever is necessary. Asks if, to start with, we couldn't take over something already built, a priest's house? Impossible. I stress the importance of starting this year.

12.30, lunch with M. and Mme Adicéam, completely French. Extremely pleasant. Chat till three o'clock, completely open. Mme Ad. is overjoyed to see that my thought is in complete agreement with Fr Monchanin's. Chat about Fr Monchanin's health, his unforgiveable carelessness on this point. Everything is *māya* [illusion]! Also, he should write. At Lyons it was thanks to her that a few lectures could be collected (roneo). We make plans for when there are 3 of us with Arokiam.

3.30-5.00 with Mr Umwala. But Fr Hougard appears(?) and we chat over tea. Amusing story by Fr Hougard on how he taught his people not to wipe their fingers on the church wall and to come on time.

In Pondy, clergy and bishops are unanimous in complaining about Aurobindo's ashram because the Catholics let themselves get caught by it.

5.00 is the time for his adoration. I go to Rue Dupleix to buy a few things, padlock and batteries. The [...] of silk 8 Rs. a yard, and of *kavi*...

Dinner at home with M. Simonel, his wife and younger brother. Excellent dinner with white port at the beginning and Benedictine at the end. Completely French atmosphere. Really a charming evening. Met two officials of the judiciary who arrived by the "Chantilly" last week. One from the Midi and another, both very pleasant. Strange information about leprosy in the West Indies, you never talk about it but are always at risk of infection. Back at 10.00. This evening my bed has a mosquito-net, no luxury in Pondy.

I had rejoiced to feel the French atmosphere of Pondy, but how I felt "at home" in the Rue Dupleix, the Indian quarter, the familiar shops [*kada*], the crowds, etc. I have two loves...

February 23

Wednesday. Renée [his sister], 30 years old. Very lengthy conversation with M. [...] after common-places:

(1) The French Union for the Accession [of Pondicherry to the Indian Union]. Openly in favour of Accession, if we must suffer, let's suffer with our brothers. Many integrists in Pondy are "against". The clergy remains silent, that's best. The Church has nothing to lose by Accession; rather,

advantages for the schools, the free secondary school cannot compete. Bad example of officials.

(2) Castes, problems he himself has met. Hope for conversion of India when the fever of Independence [*sudhandiram*] has passed. In 40/50 years. Tells me about the conversion of his first Christian ancestor, his search for the truth, his dream of a Roman *sannyasi*, the arrival of the *sannyasi* that very evening, dream...

(3) Little by little, monastic life. I summarize my conversation with Bp Colas for him, the impossibility of importing a large number of monks; there needs to be an obedience, a vocation from the heart, unity of viewpoints... Very understanding about the habit of nuns; here the two Indian congregations wore the sari at the beginning. They had to have the European religious habit and "boxes" on their heads, cardboard on their chests. The little office which is so hard to say in Latin but *religious*. It is the language of the Aryans... he tried unsuccessfully to have it said in Tamil. He will soon provide them with a bilingual edition, and he hopes that after some years it will be the Tamil version that will last. Then shows me some photos with evident satisfaction.

Then return to rue Duplex, to buy some *kavi*...

At 3.00 interview arranged by M. Simonel with Dr Bigot, chief physician of the colonial Hospital. Very interesting, preparing a monograph on the relics of Portuguese in the language and the family names of Pondy. Concerning the French policy at Pondy, it is lamentable. If there is a referendum, we get nothing for giving nothing; to keep anything, we must negotiate. Political affairs in the colonies are deplorable. The new Governor says: If the referendum is held, then we shall tame them. Colonial doctors are badly regarded by the administration because they are closer to the people than the other officials. Failure of France to set up at Pondy a school of medicine and a French university. The secondary school not up to the mark.

At tea, explain at length to Fr Hougard what I have already explained to Bishop Colas and my Bishop [Mendonça]. Mr Umwala will be able to understand my precise plans and the reasons for them.

Then show Mr Umwala this: (he is) called to live a life of prayer and penance in or in the shadow of a place of prayer (monastery). Against the French monastery there is the winter, and [...] is no solution. In the ashram he will find peace and prayer, but 1) there will not be a solemn office, 2) no vows of religion, 3) adapting to the food? language? I advise him at least at the beginning to build a small bungalow for himself close to the ashram. (...)

February 24

Thursday. Mr Umwala has to go with the Reverend Mother of Cluny to Villatur...? pilgrimage. He is to see the Bishop about 10.00, so I wait for him here, but pointlessly. Good talk for an hour with Bp Colas, approves my suggestion of making Mr U. an oblate, but advises Lerins in southern

France. At the end I think he is truly sympathetic with my project. Basically he is very good.

- Mail from Saint-Briac.

3.00 M. Fleury, 40 rue Suffren, one who has renounced Indian citizenship, 7 years in France, 13 in Algeria as a soldier, married a Frenchwoman at Lyons, surprised at his difficult situation here. He is not well received either by Indians or by Europeans. Likes to talk with an affected accent, his wife realizes this. Four children. (...) Two twins died when he arrived in India. Understand his situation, advise him to gain the confidence of the Indians. Insist on the language. (...) Question of union with France. In favour of the *status quo*. Help him to see the dangers of a referendum and a hasty solution, radical either in one direction or the other. Dr Bigot seemed to me really wise on this subject yesterday. (...)

M. Simonel had arranged a meeting with the d'Outremers, director of the Banque d'Indochine (on the right in rue Suffren when you enter it from the main square). Their son Gerard just entered Solesmes in January. Studied law 2 years at Aix. Suddenly decided to enter Sol[esmes]. (...) The name of Fr Monchanin comes up, I learn he is in disgrace here, since he dared to say during his lecture on Gandhi that French India should join the Indian Union. Scandal. It was still a subject of talk yesterday in Pondy. This man is no longer a Frenchman. Besides they say he has taken Indian citizenship, if he is no longer French, let him at least be polite when he is invited on French territory. All the same we are not going to abandon any territories when our ancestors have poured out their blood to conquer them for France... Very interested by all these reactions to the burning question of Pondy.

At any rate, this trip is deeply interesting. I must learn not to be shy any longer and to show myself in the immense and luxurious drawing-rooms of the Banque d'Indochine...

February 25

Friday, visit with Mr Umwala to St Joseph of Cluny, rue Suffren, Reverend Mother Marie the Provincial. Visit all the classes. Songs in all the classes. Mixture of creoles, French, Indians (Hindus and Muslims) (...)

Lunch at the presbytery with Fr Hougard. (...)

At 2.00 by cycle-rickshaw, then in M. Gordant's car with the Mother Superior of Cluny, visit Bon-Secours near the Bishop's House, nursery and orphanage (abandoned children, artificial flowers, knitting-machine). Home for women, laundry work, making lace and church vestments. Home even includes old men and women in little cells. Leprosarium outside the city. (Highly interesting.) (...)

Went to say goodbye to M. Simonel, who urges me to revisit M. Pujos. (...) M. Pujos had been disappointed that I did not go. We discuss philosophy (...) He takes me to the hospital to see M. Pradol (suffering from two carbuncles). Also met Mme Pradol. Arrange to meet tomorrow, 8 a.m.

Appointment for dinner at 8.00. Charming evening with the d'Outremers. Father, Mother, Gerard at Solesmes, 3 girls, liveried servants.

One glass of red wine (*Pelure d'Oignon*). Port, cognac. Talk at length about Solesmes, taking the habit, my own plans, very well understood. My material-financial plan pronounced sensible. Ideas purely colonial, superiority of the white race. The Church has moved too fast for the native churches. Fr Lebbe? no reactions about his monastery of the Beatitudes. (Nor any reaction about the works of Cluny here). (...) Very, very free conversation. While leaving I look at the time: 11.45! I enter the house barefoot...

February 26

Saturday, Mass at the parish of Notre-Dame-des-Anges. Breakfast. Visit Mr L. Pradol. Not baptized, son of a defrocked seminarian, brought up to hate Christianity. Solitary and cruel death of his father ("between the bridge and the water"¹⁰, I say). Youthful unsettledness. Catholic wife, practising up to marriage, civil wedding. Goes to Mass, but neither confession nor communion, yet keeps faith intact. Anxious when his wife was sick. [...] Then forgot it all. Now more and more burdened with anxiety. Finds peace in the Gospel. I would like this to be true. Man is too poor. I remind him of Pascal and Sartre. Christ the completion of man. Spinoza: the revelation of God already presupposes the knowledge of God. Does my state of soul qualify for entering the church? "You would not be seeking me [if you had not found me]"¹¹, I should have answered. Really moved, reminds his wife in my presence of his anxiety when she was sick, asks her if she believes. He needs no more now than Christian instruction. We plan the baptism and wedding at Kulittalai at Easter time.

1.00 with Mr Umwala. Very intimate lunch with the Pujos family. 3 children: aged 6, 5, 3 1/2, the last two boys; waiting for a 4th. Leaves for France on holiday at the end of the year (2/3 years in India). Too many classes. 9 hrs philosophy, 3hrs Latin and 4 hrs French in 3rd form! He would like to be able to think for himself.

Tea with the Prigut family. (...) From Dinan! M. Prigut talks to me about St Briac. For the first time I meet someone who talks to me about St B. We leaf through Dupereux' album on Brittany. From a distance how characteristic Breton architecture appears to me. (...) A contact to keep up. Night. Leave Pondy 9.30. [...]

Kulittalai

February 27

Arrive at 6.45. (...) Visit in the evening from a Christian from Vadian south of Ummachipuram. The only Christian family. Gave him a little catechism to teach prayers to his children.

March (undated)

On returning to Kullitalai took up Tamil course again with Subramania Pillai. At each absence I think of dropping him and each time I return he comes practically begging me(...)

10. Probably refers to a story about the Curé d'Ars, who consoled a lady, whose husband had drowned himself, by telling her not to worry about his salvation: "Between the bridge and the water, your husband repented and made an act of contrition."

11. Cf. Pascal, *Pensees*, no. 553. See also John 6, 44.

March 1

Fr Monchanin has been at Punaipatti since Saturday. I haven't seen him since February 5. He wrote me at Pondy to return if possible for Sunday the 27th.

At midday, saw an 18 year-old boy from Mussiri, Rajgopal, who is waiting for Baptism. His mother at T., 75 years old, asks him to wait for her death before becoming Christian. Mother and sister. Stays with sister at Mussiri. "4th form" in the Board School at Mussiri, I think. Has already met Fr Monchanin (...)

Another visit, a Christian named Rajan [...] of A. near Trichendur who has gone over to Protestantism, has studied at the Protestant seminary in Trichy (Bishop Heber College). For past 6 months at P. with the Protestant pastor of this village. Bishop Heiler is supposed to come on Saturday to ordain him. He is more and more troubled. Extraordinary dreams. In correspondence with his parish priest in A. Terse letter: "You must die...". Decided to escape from P. even though it meant going by foot to T. Asks me for some money. Offered only a little consolation; I was sorry for him. I suggest 5 rupees, then finally lend him 15 rupees. There is nothing more like a cheat than a holy man...

Melakattalai train 4.30. About thirty young Hindus from the high school surround me as I leave. A good number climb onto my *vandi*. Conversation with them [...], 3 brahmins, 3 vellalas. Especially with the oldest, 4th Form, Radhakrishna, a brahmin who speaks excellent English. (...) Charming children. (...) I felt their total ignorance about Christianity, catholic and protestant.

March 2

[...] Melakattalai. Charming people, don't allow me a minute for myself, old and young. Ten Christian families, about 30 communions. [...]

March 4

Visit to the *cheri* [outcaste hamlet] to invite the people to come to Mass. Attendance at Mass is pitifully irregular, they work on Sundays. The Kandapillai [elder, catechist] invites me to go there, Saturday evening, 6 p.m., with him, Lourdusamy [...], John.

I feel there how much the A-D. [Adi-Dravida]¹² are excluded from the society of other Indians. No road for going there, crossed fords by [...], dangerous. Struck by the cleanliness of the place and of their huts, even though very poor. You feel that the priest is hardly known here. The children barely know how to greet the *swami*. One of them, 10 years old, calls me "Sir". I remind them of their Sunday duty. V.S. and K. translate my Tamil and fill it out. Everyone promises to come tomorrow. But the men are generally not there. 22 Christian families here.

March 5

I have about 80 persons at Mass without counting the [...]. Only the

12. Original inhabitants of Tamil Nadu.

men did not come. I so much wanted to speak to them. I prepare something between 6.00 and 7.00, but don't even have time to reread my notes. I hesitate till after the Gospel, but finally move on [...] to the Creed. About 40 communions.

In the evening visit other Christians around G. at the far end of this forest of Kadambukoil. Eight A-D families who never come to Mass but have their children baptized. Two children, 10 years old, don't even know how to make the sign of the cross correctly.

The *swami* is still more unknown than over there. These visits should be repeated. Unfortunately the men are also in the fields. There is also a family of an A-D 'policeman', not practising, but all absent. Visit a family in the *cheri*: father, mother, 10-month-old child (Michael [...] the father; "you shall not say" [*solla koodadhu*] 'says the mother'), practising, what a different reception. (...)

Tiruchchirapalli

March 8

Trichy, monthly day of recollection. Write some notes on the Holy Spirit. Conversation with Bp Mendonça, still enthusiastic. Buy some *pottiram* [vessels] for kitchen and refectory.

April

Notes of Masses, Passion Sunday (Lalapet and Kulittalai), Palm Sunday (Melakattalai), Holy Thursday (Lalapet).

April 16, 17

Good Friday, Holy Saturday.
Baptism of Mr Pradol. (...)

April 17

Easter Lalapettai.
Evening, Punaipatti with Michael for two weeks.

April 17-30

Very pleasant stay. Michael. Arokiasamy. [...] Poor parish. No one at mass on weekdays. (...) Primary school teachers not up to their job. Headmaster [...] against the parish priest.

Feast of Mariamman. Very poor impression.

June 4, Saturday

Periyamani. With Michael to see the [...] *sami* met at the hermitage of Thamam 1st October. Difficulties with headmaster. Swamiji withdrew here. Admire (his) calm and absence of all complaints against Thamam.

June 5, Pentecost

Joy of a baptism on this holy day. (...)

[No further entry in 1949.]

1950

The Ashram of the Trinity

ON March 21, the feast of Saint Benedict, patriarch of the monks of the West, the two Catholic priests J. Monchanin and H. Le Saux moved into two huts on the banks of the Kaveri; this marked the birth of Saccidananda Ashram in the place which they called Shantivanam (Forest of Peace). Concerning the interpretation of *Saccidananda* and its relation to the Trinity, H. Le Saux gave his views at length in Part Three of his work *Saccidananda: a Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience*. Fr Monchanin took the name *Parama Arubi Ananda* (he whose joy is the Supreme Formless One, the Holy Spirit: *Paramarūpananda*), and Fr Le Saux took the name *Abhishiktesvarananda* (he whose joy is the Lord's anointed, Christ); later on, he used the abridged form *Abhishiktananda*. They dressed in *kāvi*, the saffron robe of Hindu *sannyasis* and celebrated their first Mass in the ashram.

Together they prepared an essay on the theological significance and the working out of their ideal, which appeared in 1951, entitled *An Indian Benedictine Ashram*. This book was the precursor, as Dom Le Saux described it, of their French work *Ermites du Saccidananda*, published in 1956.

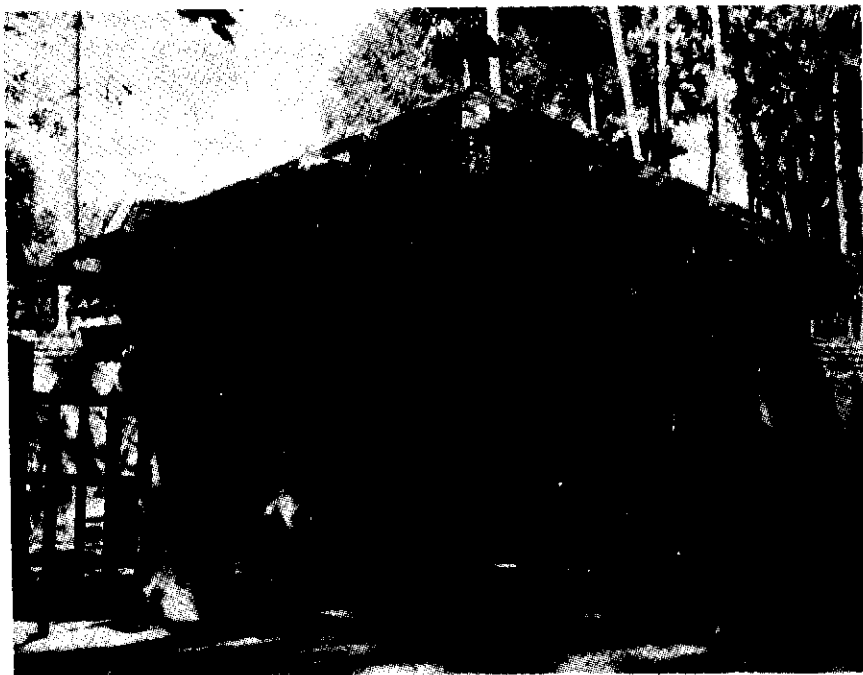
Abhishiktananda was very much taken up with his practical activities. His attitude was a kind of permanent ecstasy, indeed one of never reflecting upon the meaning of his activities and his life. He built, prayed, spoke and wrote, but he did not ask himself critical questions, as he was to do later on. Of course he continued to write in his letters about "how to present Christ to the Hindus." His ideas and his life-style were not always understood by those around him and provoked adverse reactions. It was a year that saw the foundation both of the ashram and of his personal vocation. In his correspondence, he described the ashram and spoke of his goal and of his hopes—hopes which were never to be fulfilled in the way he had dreamed.

No notebook of this year has been found.

The following dates are of special interest:

January 1	At Sinnandipatti. Later stayed for one week at Siluvaigiri.
February	Hard work: construction of huts for the hermits at Tannirpalli. Visited SrIrangam.
21 March	Inauguration of Shantivanam.

3-9 April	Holy Week and Easter at Pondicherry.
14 April	Death of Sri Ramana.
May-June	Preparation and sending of a memorandum on the Ashram for the Bishop.
End of July	Visit of the Bishop; the memorandum approved.
July-August	Kaivalyananda, a Hindu monk, stayed several times at Shantivanam.
September	Enlargement of the memorandum by Abhishiktananda.
December	A week with a Hindu swami on the other side of the Kaveri; lessons in yoga and chanting.
End of December	Preached a ten-day retreat in Bangalore and celebrated Christmas there.
31 December	At Kanchipuram; found an extraordinary religious feeling in the architecture.



The Chapel at the ashram of Shantivanam

1951

Crystallization of a Vocation

THE two swamis had a small temple built at Shantivanam in the architectural style of the South. This became the centre of liturgical life for the hermits. The chapel was dedicated on October 11, and the book *An Indian Benedictine Ashram* appeared on the same day. Abhishiktananda dreamt of being the "holy man" who should be the kernel of every ashram, as he wrote in his preface to the English edition of 1964. Already in November he was thinking of publishing *Ermites du Saccidananda* and seriously envisaged *sannyasa* for himself.

In October, he toured ashrams and temples with two Belgian Benedictines sent from the abbey of Saint-André to make a foundation at Siluvaigiri: Fr de Meester, who became for twenty-five years its prior, first at Siluvaigiri and later at Asirvanam; and Fr Dominique, who became Abhishiktananda's confidant.

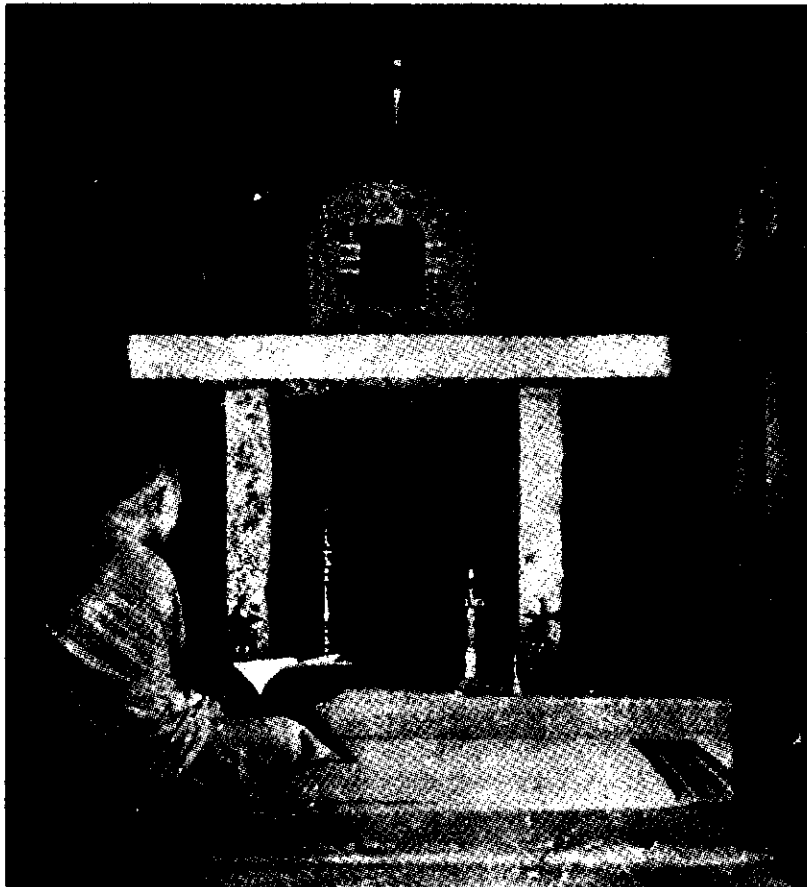
He was alone at Shantivanam for Christmas and wrote to his family on December 26 that on this feast he had particularly felt his separation from his Hindu brothers.

Again for this year none of his notes survive. It is quite difficult to know whether or not Swamiji made any notes; perhaps the dialogue of his letters was enough for him. This was the time when his vocation ripened and took shape.

We note a few significant dates:

1 January	At Mahabalipuram (temples and sculptures on the seashore, near Madras); he fell in love with the place.
2-5 January	At Pondicherry. Returning to Shantivanam, made preparations for the building of the chapel.
End of March	Two weeks of vacation at the Rosarian monastery.
April	Finished writing the memorandum which was to become <i>An Indian Benedictine Ashram</i> .
June-July	Swamiji very busy with the building of the chapel. Financial worries.
August	Corrected proofs of the book.
End of September	Stayed at Siluvaigiri waiting for the two Belgian monks.
11 October	Dedication of the chapel. Publication of <i>An Indian Benedictine Ashram</i> .

October-November Met the two Belgian monks at Siluvaigiri. After a week at Shantivanam, Abhishiktananda accompanied them on a tour of temples and ashrams, including Tiruvannamalai. He planned to live as a hermit at Arunachala; but would he receive permission?



Altar & tabernacle at Shantivanam

1952

In the Caves of Arunachala

BETWEEN March 24 and August 10, Swamiji stayed for long periods in the caves of the most holy Mountain of Arunachala. It was a crucial year for him. In his solitude, like a snake shedding its skin, he shed his “western Christian” doctrinal skin and began to glimpse a new, yet old, identity—already long before his ordination he had felt certain of his “vocation to incarnate himself” in India. He wrestled with himself at every level. In his life as a solitary he was beset by many practical questions, but he was above all beset and tormented by his own reflections on *advaita*. In his Diary we find drafts of texts which he later collected under the title *Guhāntara*, selections from which have been published in two posthumous works: *Initiation à la spiritualité des Upanishads* (1979) and *Intériorité et révélation* (1982). In addition, ten pages from the preface to *Guhāntara* were published in 1963 by *Contacts*, the review of French Orthodoxy. (The Abhishiktananda Society hopes to publish at least some of these texts in English.)

Abhishiktananda was keenly aware of the advaitin experience beyond the sphere of mind: it is an experience that kills or gives life. Until the end of his life he thought that very few are called to this experience. “One can only allow very strong people to undertake it,” he wrote to his disciple Marc on October 26, 1973; “but some are capable of it,” he added in the same letter. He never again left the bed from which he wrote these lines. We should not interpret this as the product of a voluntaristic attitude or of a type of spirituality that is acquired by one’s own efforts. In the same letter he admits that the “vedantic experience just as much drains people and is just as dangerous as drugs [and he adds] or psychoanalysis.” To have this experience, there has to be a call from being. One does not have to take advice or orders from outside. One may learn, listen, ask advice, but this remains still at the surface of being. The great sages, like Ramana Maharshi, responded directly to a powerful interior force (grace) without going through any intermediary.

This was a decisive year for Swamiji. His *sannyāsa* was for him truly a kind of baptism—or initiation—of fire. In the years that followed certain theologians expressed serious reservations about the first manuscript of *Guhāntara*. At the time Abhishiktananda was deeply hurt by this, for in this manuscript he was only recording his meditations in the course of his experience in the caves, an “appeal”, as Father Monchanin

described it, and not a theology. For many years his *Guhāntara* was to remain in him as a thorn that caused piercing pain and as a seed that slowly germinated. We will come back to this again.

After the stripping experienced in his life of solitude, he began to work out of a kind of personal synthesis between the Christian tradition and his Hindu experiences. We witness the beginning of a "drama" which was to tear him apart for many years but which bears witness to his unwavering concern to remain faithful both to his faith and to his new insights.

People set him thorny questions like that of conversion. Swamiji had an inner conflict. In the environment in which he was brought up and formed, the absolute superiority of Christianity was taken for granted, as a settled, deep, unshakable conviction. He could not manage to rid himself of this conviction by intellectual efforts. He held on to this superiority until it faded away in his personal experience. He was equally consistent in his thought. Later on he came to a measure of harmony.

This was also a year of the Hindu deepening of his Christian faith: Christ became for him the *sadguru*, the true *guru*, the Master of the universe, along the lines of the Hindu tradition.

Arunachala always remained a fundamental experience for Swamiji. He had come to a stage in his life from which no turning back was possible. Without abandoning his Christianity, he believed in his Hinduism. The most disparate thoughts and doctrines revolved about a centre which enabled him to maintain his balance: his monastic vocation. Before all else he was a monk, a seeker of the Absolute. All "isms" are secondary.

We have omitted long passages (written in the caves) on the Eucharist, Hell, Sin, the Blessed Virgin, the Supernatural, the Trinity, Creation, Angels, the Resurrection, the Mass... They represent his interpretations of Christian dogmas using Indian categories. He repeated a considerable part of this in his later books, in a more precise fashion.

The following are the most important events of this year:

January-March	Father Monchanin visiting North India.
23 March	Fr M. returned to Shantivanam.
25(?) March	Abhishiktananda left for Tiruvannamalai.
29 March	Settled in the cave of Vanatti.
10-20 April	Holy Week and Easter at Siluvaigiri. His youngest sister entered the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Michel, becoming Sister Marie-Thérèse.
20 April-10 May	Busy month at Shantivanam. The bishop of Pondicherry will not give official permission for visits to Arunachala, but will "ignore" the matter.
19 May-10 August	At Arunachala: three weeks of silence in the cave of Vanatti; after the end of July in the cave of Arutpal Tirtham. Permission to enter the temple of Annāmalaiyār. First drafts of <i>Guhāntara</i> .

August	Visited Siluvaigiri and Rosarians.
Mid-September-October	Visited the "Adventist" Hindu-Muslim ashram of Meivazhi.
November	Vacation at Yercaud (small city in the Shevaroy hills near Salem).
25 December	Christmas in a pariah village near Salem. Hope for two or three more monks to come from Europe to Shantivanam.

* * *

March 20

The grace of India¹ is essentially a grace of interiority. You understand India and are understood by India to the extent that you yourself live within. (...)

Arunachala²

March 29, Evening

Recollection of my first day. *Shānti anandam!* [peace, joy; Tamil] OM. Deep joy, deep peace. Not even any reading possible, the *antaram* [the interior] is too "busy." Hunger itself hardly even intrudes, even though since last evening I have eaten nothing but bananas.

Are the following intimations from Providence?

1. The insistence by people around me on my "deciding" that I should stay here "for ever". In the dilettantism of my *sannyāsa*, I had never thought of such a possibility, even apart from the ecclesiastical questions involved.

Despite what I may have written, Hindu *sannyasa* has not really been for me, in fact, an end in itself, but a means, the means to an apostolate, at least indirectly.

It is time for me to understand and accept *sannyāsa* in itself, that is to say, consecration to God *sine addito* [without addition, integral]—by God—more deeply, recollection in God.

2. The circumstances, which seem to be leading me to a quasi-*munivar* [silent] state. That too I had never foreseen. For once again, in fact, I had never really taken my *sannyāsa* seriously. Last evening I still was thinking of ways to use the visits of older boys for their spiritual formation (Hindu? Christian?). As for yesterday morning...I was dreaming of conversations in Hindi or English. I envisaged a few years of silent preparation, but always what would come after—a more or less direct witness—dominated my thought.

Now I have *accepted*, if it pleases the Lord, to be for ever quite simply a genuine Christian *sannyāsī*, a Hindu-Christian monk, the Christian successor of Kalai Maharshi, my predecessor here, of Ramana and so many

1. This text was later rewritten to form the opening of *Guhāntara*, chapter 3 ("Au dedans"). A further revision of the text survives, which was published in *Initiation*, 41-47.

2. A full account is given in *The Secret of Arunachala*.

others who left all things to consecrate themselves to the Unique at Arunachala. Be willing to remain *for ever* in my cave, keeping silence, without any concern for giving witness. To be the first Christian for God at the Holy Mountain of Arunachala.

I have penetrated into the very flank, the heart of Arunachala, the *linga* of fire [*tejo-linga*]³...How could I not feel its flame, the love of Anbu Śiva [Shiva who is love]. And that is so easy to translate in Christian terms.

3. And finally, the invitation to total poverty. This afternoon's experience (the owner of the house where I was to eat was not at home...) has made me consider it quite simple hereafter to present myself at this door and at others without any false shame, bowl in hand...like a real *sannyāsī*...

In the peace and grace of *sānta-śiva-advaita*...⁴

March 31

The problem of conversion. This word is detested by Hindus. I felt that strongly the other day in the case of Dr Cohen⁵. Does not the blame for this fall mainly on the "missionaries"? Gandhi said that for many conversion means: "trousers, topi, beef", and unfortunately there is some truth in the witticism. And here lies the answer to Cohen's problem about reconciling in myself Hinduism and Christianity.

Christianity and Hinduism are not two religions on the same level and thus in conflict, one being true and the other false; in which case there would exist between them only two alternatives, either total opposition or a fusion that would water down both one and the other. (...) In reality, for the Christian, Christianity and Hinduism are not two parallel cults, both leading (as the Hindus say) to summits which are beyond them, at which the great Seers meet in total communion.

For Christians, Christianity is the definitive, eschatological religion, the one to which all the others tend. (...) Once we admit that Christianity is the final religion, that of the last times, it is impossible for one who believes in Providence to think that the development of the various religions was due to chance. (...)

Now why has the Lord allowed India to remain so long outside the Christian Faith? Here again all can be explained both by human reasons and by Providence.

Start with the great question already posed in the Epistle to Diognetus: Why did the Word become incarnate so late? Humanity had to be ready to receive the Word. A long preparation from the anthropoid ape to Neanderthal man, to *homo sapiens*, to the epoch of civilization which hardly goes back

3. The mountain itself is adored as an immense *linga*, the primordial manifestation of Siva as a pillar of fire and light (*jyotirlinga* or *tejo-linga*), according to the Puranic myth. The archetypal experience of Arunachala as a pillar of fire, symbolizing interior fire, was a "leitmotiv" in Swamiji's life, even up to the experience of illumination that accompanied his heart attack.

4. Peace, grace (benevolence), non-duality: the three transcendental categories of Shaivism.

5. Dr S.S. Cohen, Jewish disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

more than six millennia, to the age of thought, which flourished only in the millennium preceding the Incarnation.

Then each individual, each race has the providential mission to develop some particular aspect of Humanity. Each being should contribute to the perfection of the body of Christ, of Humanity divinized in Christ. Of course Christ was a particular person, born a Semite, a Jew, in a Roman-Greek environment. The Semitic race and the Mediterranean world were certainly the object of divine predestination, the cradle of Christianity, by which Christianity will always be marked through the millennia. Nonetheless, it is a mistake to remain imprisoned in the perspective of the womb (Jewish) and the cradle (Greco-Roman).

Circumstances have caused the Church to expand only little by little beyond the confines of the Mediterranean world. (...) Why? Very probably because of the fact that Christianity has always worn Judaeo-Greek clothing. (...)

The providential reason can also be sought. China and India for example were not prepared by God to produce *Christians*, but to become Christian *churches*, a distinctive contribution to the Mystical Body. It was in some way necessary that these peoples should freely develop their own possibilities, as if in a sealed vessel, should release the initial pre-Christian outline of their intellectual and religious values, in a pre-Christian climate, in complete liberty; and on the other hand that the "Roman" church should be ready to receive into itself not isolated individuals, but India. One particular aspect of the mystery and the scandal of the "break-aways". If it had not ultimately been useful for the holy Church of God, the Lord would never have permitted the Greek then the Anglo-German schism, nor Islam, nor humanism, nor rationalism, nor communism. The faults of churchmen have so to say forced God to permit the development next door of spiritual values which the Church was not yet able to integrate. How explain otherwise the graces, often of a very precious order, granted by God outside the visible Church? The saints of the Russian Church, for example, the mystical theologians of the Greek schism, the commitment of communists...and here in our India the unutterably profound mystical insights of the *rishis* [seers] of the Upanishads, of the Gita, the persistent monastic thrust, the thrust towards the life of prayer, meditation, penance, austerity, the saints—or sages (which means more here)—who have never been lacking in India. The scandal, or mystery, that at the very moment when the Church was making every effort to make Christ known in India, the Lord allowed spiritual people of the very first order to appear in India—although each of them might individually be contested, the whole cannot be denied, Gandhi, Ramakrishna, Ramalinga, Ramana, Aurobindo, etc.—who make all Christian apologetics to evaporate. (...)

(What the Church of India urgently needs are authentic Christian *rishis*. God cannot fail to raise up such vocations. Who will have the courage to respond and let himself be led by the Spirit of God?)

And now I can answer Dr Cohen's question. How reconcile my Christianity and my Hinduism? In my way of acting there is absolutely nothing of a trick or a dodge. I am not a Hindu monk in order to bring about conversions. For me the Indo-Christian monastic life is an end in itself, not a means. The monastic life is essentially disinterested. It is *for God alone*, not for human beings. It is useful to human beings only insofar as it is ordered to God. The monk is one consecrated to God, and the Indian monk is one consecrated in the Indian fashion.

But first to answer the question about conversion. I would not be a genuine Christian, if I did not wish with all my heart for my people to receive the full enlightenment of the Gospel. But I have no desire for individual conversions. Let others make these individual conversions the goal of their lives, that is up to them, I am not concerned with it.

My dream is to christianize my race. For me there is no question of using all kinds of methods to get hold of weaker or defenceless souls... It is a question of preparing for a Christian India, of preparing for it not by using various ways and means, but by myself being among the first-fruits; by opening a path. Not just for the sake of opening it, but entering it without an ulterior motive, simply because I feel myself profoundly Christian and profoundly Hindu at the same time.

I dream of a Christian India because I think that then only will India find its spiritual fulfilment. Hinduism '*will merge into Christianity*' without losing the least of its positive values; there its contradictions will be resolved, its symbols will attain to truth, and perhaps they will even remain with a deeper meaning.

So there is no question, in my life any more than in my dream, of an impossible reconciliation of contradictory elements, or of a mystical transcendence of these divergent elements. The reality is much deeper and more beautiful.

It is a matter of incorporating into my Christianity all the positive values of Hinduism, thought, worship, devotion, while rejecting only what is clearly and surely incompatible, and of reinterpreting in Christian terms whatever cannot enter just as it is. Not forgetting besides, the polymorphism of Hinduism and the room it allows within itself for *darsanas* [perspectives] as divergent as those of Shankara and Madhva⁶ not to mention Sankhya atheism⁷. So would a reinterpretation of Hinduism be no longer permitted? Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Aurobindo have tried to do this quite recently.

The question of doctrines would be too lengthy to discuss in depth. The first question asked by Dr Cohen: "Are you an advaitin?" The absolute advaita of Shankara is only one of the Indian *darsanas* (and moreover does it not falsify Shankara and do we not make him much more angular than

6. Shankara (eighth century) was the great philosopher of *advaita* (the doctrine of non-duality); Madhva (thirteenth century) was the philosopher of the *dvaita* (dualistic) doctrine, according to which the soul is not totally absorbed in God and maintains its identity.

7. A *darsana* in which God plays no role.

he was in reality, when we interpret him with western logic. Cp. Otto, Eckhart-Shankara... the commentary on the Gita by Shankara.)⁸

I hold by the viewpoint of the old *rishis* of the Upanishads. He [God] is not-two, he is not-one, how to reconcile these escapes me. We must deny in God the human one and the human two. The Trinity will provide a solution for whoever has his eyes opened by faith, the *Saccidananda*. But the Church will also have learned from India how to purify in depth and in practice its own concept of number in God.

(...) Of course the crucial point is the entry of Christ into Hinduism, the transition from a cosmic religion to an historical religion, Christ, the unique *avatara* [descent of the divine] and at the same time the real Son of God, Saviour of the human race.

What is most immediately useful is to christianize Hinduism and to hinduize Christianity as regards external forms: worship, symbol, various practices.

Kavi is linked to Hinduism, Dr Cohen told me, and *tiru niru* [sacred ashes] as well, and OM, etc.

In fact the distinction between Hindu and Indian is forced. Upadhyaya⁹ did not accept it. Originally, Indian=Hindu. Everyone born in India is normally Hindu. From temperament, circumstances, etc. there arise forms of life inseparably social and religious. How determine what is Indian, what is Hindu, what has a purely social value, what has a sectarian religious value, what is the Indian expression of a universal religious value? A problem which Nobili had resolved in a way that Benedict XIV destroyed, to the great detriment of the Church. The disastrous Cardinal de Tourmon.

Sitting in the lotus position can thus be considered "pagan" and likewise the *anjali* [greeting with joined hands] and why not also the *veshti* [piece of cotton tied around the waist and falling down to the ankles], or eating with one's fingers off a banana-leaf? Some have wanted to compel Christians to eat beef, or at least meat...

From the sacrifice of cocks or goats to the wearing of the *veshti* instead of pants stretches a wide spectrum including the cult of the *linga*, the use of coconuts, the wearing of ashes, etc.

There can be and undoubtedly are in Hinduism some things absolutely bad in themselves, such as sacred prostitution, which can be excused only by invincible ignorance. There are rites which are suited to stages now normally left behind in the history of humanity. Which might have had their value at given times and places, but which in the view of the best Hindus should be rejected: sacrifice of the cock, etc

There is the magic, superstition, astrology practised as a matter of course by each and every Hindu. That is unworthy of God (to be developed) and has no other excuse than invincible ignorance. There are the unworthy

8. He is thinking of the standard work of Rudolf Otto, *Mysticism, East and West*.

9. He is referring to Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya (1861-1907), a Bengali brahmin convert to Catholicism, author of a Sanskrit hymn to the Trinity which Swamiji often incorporated into his liturgy.

cults, which are only the release of repressions (tantric, [...]). But once you have removed what is evil in itself, you realize that you have hardly touched the main structure. The rest is not evil in itself. Never forget that the *human* act is either virtuous or sinful. Nothing intermediate.

Going to the temple, prostrating oneself before the *tiru lingam* [the holy *lingam* (Shiva)], placing ashes on one's forehead, etc. are good acts, inasmuch as they are symbols—emanating from a given people—of their religious sense.

I will always encourage a Hindu—at least theoretically (the circumstances may in practice sometimes advise against, e.g., when in his soul there is a doubt about the validity of such an act, as with a new convert)—to go to the temple, put on the ash, read the Gita, etc.

Among these things, distinguish two categories:

1. those which are sectarian (not in a pejorative sense),
2. those which are simply the Indian expression of a universal religious attitude.

Among the latter, note:

- *sannyāsa*, with its rules and its dress, the OM,
- wearing ash on the forehead,
- marks of respect in the temple,
- ablutions (at table).

It seems to me that in this latter case nothing, at least in themselves, stands in the way of their adoption by Christianity.

For in fact, India is at present open to other religious expressions than traditional Hinduism—at least if it is not a question of a “national” religion: such as [...], of a “foreign mission”, a religious colonialism. Catholicism is universal in fact and by right, and so has an immediate right to incorporate all that is good.

In the worship itself there are some lovely general forms to be incorporated: if the peasants of our villages have christianized the often crude practices of processional cars, why not with all the more reason christianize the essential and so very lovely elements of *pūjā*, the offering of water, flowers, incense, light. Have just read *The Light of Christ [lumen Christi]* of Holy Saturday.

Refuse what is the practice of particular Hindu sects; e.g., wearing the *nāman* [Tamil], and also the three lines of ash (on the forehead),¹⁰ is an absolutely sectarian sign. It makes you belong to a particular sect; unacceptable.

There remains the simple sharing in Hindu worship. I said that for the Hindus that was an excellent act. Is it that for me? (apart from causing scandal, of course). I would take part in the manner of Bhagavān [Sri Ramana] offering *pūjā* or of Shankara performing the funeral rites for his mother¹¹. For me it is less a question of taking part in worship that is

10. The *nāman* is Vaishnavite; the three horizontal lines on the forehead is Shaivite.

11. Both were advaitins who, though beyond rituals and theoretically denying their value, did not hesitate to celebrate rites for others—Shankara, already a *sannyasi*, himself celebrated the funeral rites for his mother.

symbolic and incomplete, than of taking part with my people as they offer this worship, and of fulfilling it in myself, and then in my Mass.

April 3

Christ the Sad-Guru [True Master]

The Hindu goes to God through a guru. As a rule people only find the way to God with the help of someone who has already trodden it, who knows it, not by hearsay, but by personal experience. Direct calls of Grace, as in the case of Ramana Maharshi, remain the exception. The Hindu will explain such cases by going back to the sage's previous life: he had then come to such a stage that no further preparation was necessary in the present life.

The Vedas themselves and all the writings of the Masters are only approaches. The first task of the guru was traditionally to recite them to his disciple. Thanks to writing, the aspirant himself is now capable of reading them for himself. But reading is not enough, hearing is mandatory. Cp. the Christian faith.

In both cases it is a matter of a *śruti*, something heard from the One who reveals, and passed on by word of mouth, from generation to generation. One who aspires to the Christian priesthood according to Canon Law must receive the sacred doctrine from a Master and may not content himself with learning it from books. Cp. the *Upadeśa Sahasri* of Shankara, chap.I.

So the guru must first recite the Veda, then explain the Veda and especially the *mahāvākyas*¹². But that is only the external work of the guru. The true guru, precisely because he has “realized”, is able to penetrate the soul of his disciple. The whispering of the sacred *mantra* into the ear of the disciple on the day of his initiation is the symbol of a mysterious and effective whispering from heart to heart. The disciple is connected to God by his guru, not in the sense that the guru would be an intermediary between the disciple and God. It is in the person of the guru that God appears to the disciple.

The guru is for the disciple a genuine divine revelation; so the only true guru is one who has “realized”.

Worship is even offered to the guru. The *pūjā* itself is offered before the image, or better the *lotus feet*¹³ of the guru (the guru should be SHROTRIYA BRAHMA NISHTHA [proficient in sacred knowledge, firmly established in the Absolute], Mund. Up. 1.2.12,13—the qualities of the guru).

My *sadguru* is Christ Abhishiktesvara. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the gate of the sheep. No one has seen the Father but the one who came down from the Bosom of the Father¹⁴. No one has “realized” God

12. The “great words” or central phrases of the Upanishads, such as: “I am Brahman”, “That art thou”, etc.

13. “The lotus feet”: common expression in the scriptures and religious language, expressing veneration for a god or a saint. The disciple or the devotee touches the sacred feet of the guru or his image as a sign of devotion and surrender. The lotus is the symbol of purity and holiness.

14. Cp. John 14.6; 10.7; 1.18.

as he did. No one has ever been able to have like him the sense of the divine Consciousness. "The Father and I are one" [*Ego et Pater unum sumus*]¹⁵, regarded at the same time as in *dvaita* and in *advaita*¹⁶. Christ is the Master Guru. Like every true guru he feels an infinite compassion for his disciples. Cp. "I feel pity for the multitude" [*misereor super turbam*, Mark 8:2], in John 6, and cp. especially John 13-17.

He lives only for his disciples: "on their behalf I consecrate myself" [*pro eis sanctifico meipsum*]¹⁷.

I give myself to Christ as to my *sadguru*. I "believe" in him, *śraddhā* [total confidence in the guru, faith]; I believe in his worth as Guru and I surrender myself absolutely to him.

How shall I receive his teaching? Two ways:

- the external way of the word,
- the internal way of the Spirit.

His teaching has been handed down to me by successive generations of his disciples. I read it in the Gospel, not to speak of Christian tradition. "He who hears you hears me." [Luke 10:16]

In a deeper sense my guru lives in me by his Spirit. His Spirit he has handed on to me, his *paramātman*, my guru's *ātman* is mine. But first take the theme "Spirit" in the western sense, spirit of sonship, of piety, wisdom, etc. He is in me in that he passes on to me his "way" of living, of understanding God, realizing God, etc. He is in me in that he shares with me his peace, grace, non-duality [*śāntam, śivam, advaitam*]. He has kept for himself nothing of what the Father gave him, he has repeated it all, given it all. And finally he has given himself.

He has made us share in his own *tavam*¹⁸, in his Sonship, in which everything has its origin. He has given us his Spirit. His disciples have issued from the water and the Spirit.

They have really come back from the great abyss, and received a new heart, a new spirit [*cor novum, spiritum novum*]. And in Him as in them the whole world is saved from the great abyss, the great waters of death.

My guru's death has freed him in a sense from his own *ahamkāra*¹⁹; in his Resurrection he is reborn as the "*aham*" of all creation.

My *Sad-Guru* is also present to me in a more mysterious way in the sacrament that resulted from his death and Resurrection.

By means of the sacramental rite, those of his disciples who have received authority for it in the name of the community make him present in the midst of the community.

A presence in the form of food, bread and wine. In the form of what can be absorbed, in the form of pure gift, of what is totally, essentially given, handed over.

15. Cp. John 10:30.

16. That is, under the aspects of duality and of non-duality.

17. Cp. John 17:19.

18. *Tavam* (Tamil), asceticism (*tapas* in Sanskrit) and the merit acquired by asceticism.

19. *Ahamkāra*: egotism, the individual, limited ego; *aham*: myself, the true "I".

For my guru is essentially one who is "Given". By giving himself he realized God. And the essence of his teaching will also be about giving oneself, about loving. "There is no greater love than to give one's life for one's friends" [*Majorem caritatem nemo habet...*; John 15:13]. "Love one another as I have loved you". "By this all will know..." [*In hoc cognoscent omnes...*; John 13:35].

So I make him present in the form of a gift, and I receive him who is pure Gift; in the form of what is absorbed, and I absorb him; in the form of food, and I eat him.

And this rite at the same time realizes my union with him and is the supreme act of praise offered to the Father and to Him.

April 4

Hindu sannyāsa

My present experience would lead me simply to sum it up in three points: Solitude-Silence-Poverty. So far I have practised all these in a dilettante fashion. Here I am confronted with the reality and realize what I still lack for my experience to be complete.

The *sannyāsī* [renouncer] is a solitary. He does not look to others for any support for his life (moral support); it is true that he waits to receive his handful of food from others, but without impatience or anxiety; this is anyhow normal in a society in which the *sannyāsī* occupies a necessary place. Not indeed that he "lays claim" to this place. If society is "bound" to the *sannyāsī*, the *sannyāsī* himself is not "bound" to society. Cp. analogically the relationship between God and his creation²⁰.

The *sannyāsī* has no friends in the proper sense of the word. He has effectively renounced all affections, familial and other. Ramana had understood this when he wrote his farewell note to his mother and brother. (...) Insofar as the mind of the *sannyāsī* dwells on the pleasures and comforts of life, he is unfaithful to his vocation. And that is why the *Shastras* [scriptures] forbid the *sannyāsī* to stay more than a few days in the same place. His heart should not be caught by any snare. At least he should be "indifferent" to these affections and concerns. That is, be ready to see them disappear without the least distress arising in his mind.

This makes me understand the insistence of the *Upanishads* and the *Gita* on equanimity. *Sama*, indifference in the face of the *dvandvas* [the pairs of opposites], cold, heat, hunger, thirst or...; that is only a beginning, the real thing is indifference to success or [non-]success, to affection or hatred, to honour or scorn, etc.

I will not be a genuine *sannyāsī* until the day when I am able, without the least distress or fear, to see the loss, in a strange if not downright hostile environment, of all help, all affection, all respect. And that too, on the supposition that I could no longer return to my other life (with its friendships, the priesthood and financial and moral support).

20. He refers here to the Thomist doctrine of the *relatio rationis*, the relation of reason, i.e. not real, of God to the creation, although there is a *relatio quaedam*, a certain kind of real relationship, of creation of God. *Sum.Theol.* 1, q.45, a.3.

I will be a genuine *sannyāsi* on the day when there is no longer anyone to be concerned about me, when I shall be obliged to beg for my handful of rice, given with kindness here, with coldness there, choosing by preference those doors where I shall not find the welcome of a smiling face—when I do not have an *anna*²¹ in my pocket...

Solitude, total stripping.

And naturally, silence. If the *sannyāsi* is not completely silent, his words should be infrequent, brief, never used for worldly or unnecessary matters. Saint Benedict is to be followed to the letter. He indeed got the point of this, his sons have lost it. The *sannyāsi* is not normally a “studite”; books, like people, are a “distraction”. He is allowed only that reading which leads him to realize *Brahman*. (...) Before all else, he is one who contemplates. Solitude is in the last analysis a spiritual solitude. Alone with the Alone, or rather alone in the Alone. Divine solitude. Freed from images and from the religious sentimentality that is so restful.

The most effective and absolute material and spiritual stripping that can be imagined.

Be ready to live in my cave to the end of my life, with no one taking any special care for me, no one taking any special interest in me or showering me with marks of esteem and honour, obliged to beg each midday for my handful of rice.

That will then be joy and supreme peace. *Pater noster*.

The *sannyāsi*'s silence is hard. There are days when it is very delightful, when the Lord speaks to our heart, or at least when nothing comes to break the “spell”. For example, the telegram that came yesterday.²² I am not yet master of myself. [...] That telegram carried me back to a distant world, the world left only eight days ago, but already so distant, as distant as the European world seemed to me once I set my foot on Indian soil. I have to protect myself carefully from invasions of my “old” self... And then the other day such an interesting visitor came, that Dutchman from Indonesia. I then felt the weight of my *mauna* [silence]. And then again yesterday at the ashram, when the Doctor wanted to talk to me and also that Gujarati who was passing through. (...) Such sacrifices are necessary in order to understand the fundamental importance of *mauna*.

The *sannyāsi* no longer needs to speak, either to express himself or to get information. He can only hear or speak about *brahmavidyā*²³... Only one thing is interesting, one thing useful, one thing good, *brahmavidyā*. And *brahmavidyā* is not communicated much by human words, by audible sounds.

In silence, you taught me silence,

O Arunachala!

You who never leave your silence.²⁴

21. One-sixteenth of a rupee.

22. Summoning him back to Shantivanam.

23. Science of the Absolute.

24. Cf. Ramana Maharshi, “The Marital Garland in Letters” (Hymn to Arunachala), v.36, *Collected Works*, p.89. See also the hymns to Arunachala in *The Secret of Arunachala*.

The communication of thought by words is only necessary when there is a sense of duality.

For anyone who *feels* himself living in other beings and who has realized the unity of the *ātman* (in a Christian as well as a Hindu sense), what need is there to speak? Do I need speech to communicate my own thought to myself? One who has attained realization communicates with himself (whatever may be the *nāma-rūpa* [names and forms] of this Self) without any words or distinct thoughts.

April 5

*Seeing (one's) Self in all beings*²⁵

This also is essential to Hindu *sannyāsa*. The *nirmamo nirahamkāra* [no “I”, no “mine”] to be genuine must go as far as that.

Dive down into myself, to the greatest depth of myself. Forget my own “*aham*”, lose myself in the “*aham*” of the divine *Ātman* who is at the origin of my being, of my consciousness of being. And in this unique—or primordial—*Aham* feel all beings to be oneself. There you have the source of *ahimsā*, *karuṇā*, etc.²⁶

Christ, my *sadguru*, in his human soul felt and still feels himself mysteriously living in each of his creatures. In the universal consciousness of my *sadguru* let me lose myself and feel myself in All. “That they all may be one” [ut omnes unum sint...]²⁷. God cannot feel created beings as “other” than himself, since (he is) one without a second [*ekam eva advitīyam*, CU VI, 2, 1]. God is conscious of all creatures within Himself. He is truly the Self of each creature and of them all.

Descend to the greatest depth of myself, into the divine Self, ground of my own self, and embrace all beings in non-duality. To feel all beings as mine, to “feel” myself the Self of all beings, does not mean feeling them as belonging to the individual born in Brittany on 30-8-1910 and currently seated in a cave at Arunachala. This superficial I, all illusion [*māyā*], in this case has no importance.

It is only when once I have risen up to—or dived down to—my true Self, my divine Self, that I can thus dive into the heart of every creature, in the way that God himself plunges into them.

(...) Henceforth see other beings only as God sees them. And to this end, be already seeing God only as God sees Himself. Is that not in any case the essence of the eternal life defined by Christianity: “To know God as he knows Himself”? The *sannyāsi* is the one who has centred his life on *brahmavidyā*, on the unutterable consciousness which God has of himself; and which the human being is only capable of attaining once he is freed from all super-impositions... The human being frees himself from the *vrittis*²⁸, he aims at reducing his mental activity to nothing but consciousness of

25. This theme is developed in *Guhāntara*, in chapter 4: “Cheminements intérieurs.” It has been published in *Intériorité et révélation* (pp. 44-47).

26. Non-violence, compassion; virtues essential in yoga, Buddhism, Jainism.

27. Cp. John 17:22-23.

28. Mental activities, distractions; cp. YS I, 1.

himself; and in the infinity of his own consciousness he can finally plunge into the supreme Consciousness and the supreme Self.

This presupposes discrimination [*viveka*], detachment [*vairāgya*], equanimity, and finally an ardent desire. Grace is not distinct from this. Grace is the call to *mumukshā*²⁹, to *vairāgya*, etc. Grace is *mumukshutva* itself.

God is pure Consciousness. "*Suddha Caitanya*."³⁰

To feel myself (to be) the others does not mean *imagining* that I am the "others" (...). No imaginative transposition. A reality that wells up.

Not to feel oneself to be the others as if one was God. (...)

Enter into beings from within as God himself does. God enters into creatures as

Śāntam Sivam Advaitam, [Peace, Grace, Non-duality]

*Satyam Jñānam Anantam*³¹, [Truth, Wisdom, Infinitude]

Sat Cit Ānandam, [Being, Consciousness, Bliss].

(In all that through Christ, my *sadguru*, who [...] gives "my" peace, my joy etc [...].)

April 6

O Arunachala

Śiva, the beneficent and 'gracious,

Śānta, the peaceful,

Advaita, the One without a second,

Pūrṇa, fullness,

Ānanda, bliss.

You have not rested until you brought me also

to your lotus feet,

and have made me enter the cave of your heart.

From how much already—and since how long?—

have you not thus ravished my heart?

Like a moth, I have let myself be deceived by your flame

and in it you have consumed me.

Consume me, burn up in me all that is not You.

O pillar of Fire, O pillar of Love.

O *Tejo-Linga*, O fiery Sperm,

From your Fire, let me be reborn as You.

A first time I thought I had left all,

and a second time again;

Your imperious call has shown me what it is to leave all for you,

29. Ardent desire for liberation, a condition for salvation (also called *mumukshutva*). On these four preconditions for the study of Vedānta see, e.g., Shankara, *Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya*, introduction.

30. Cp. Shankara, *Upadeśasahasri* II, 1, 1.

31. Cp. TU II, 1.

until that day I had not truly left anything!

Keep me at your lotus feet,

keep me in the crypt of your heart.

This world which I have left once, a second time,

and once again, finally and for good, for you—

erase it from my being,

so that for ever in You, Yourself, I may remain naked, alone, wordless.

In silence you teach me silence, O Arunachala,

You who never depart from your silence³².

May I not have entered Your cave in vain;

of 'mine' and 'me' may nothing any longer remain.

May I pass into You, may I become You

yet now no longer "in You, Yourself,"

for even that would no longer satisfy me.

For to say "You" is to say "I",

and of *myself* you have burnt up every trace.

Your "I" alone remains, O supreme Self,

In You 'I say', I am Brahman [*Brahma aham asmi*]

and I am absorbed.

* * *

Since long ago your whisper was calling me,

you have made me cross the seas,

and having entered Your heart, I have felt a peace

which I had never even imagined,

peace, fullness, joy—

śānti, pūrṇam, ānandam.

Yet your peace is not enough,

Yet your joy is not enough.

If I feel the peace, if I feel the joy,

it means that I have not yet reached the inmost depth,

where, alone and without a second, *advaita*, You are.

You shine in the form of Self,

You are "I".

Forgetfulness of all is what I want,

what I need is only the remembrance of You,

only the consciousness of You,

Your own eternal consciousness,

in a peace and a joy that are then too pure

to be felt as mine, in the one essential thing.

* * *

The Lord has chosen places where his grace would be tangible,

where his love would pour out more abundantly.

32. Cp. "The Marital Garland in Letters," v. 36 (note 24).

Zealously he prepared them when he laid the foundations of the earth,
and established the mountains above the abyss³³
The sages have sensed them and hidden away in them,
there to be flooded with Your Light, set ablaze with Your Fire.
There the people felt Your presence
and translated it into myths—
Pillar of Fire, Pillar of Love,
Home of the "Spirit"
In Your sacred Heart I take refuge,
in the cave on your flank,
where I am reborn from the Water and the Fire.
O Jesus, radiant Dawn, red with your Blood and your Love, Aruna,
Dawn Mountain, Arunachala!
Jesus the Advaita, the Only Son of the Father,
to whom we are not second,
but in whom we are all the only Son,
and in whose Spirit we are One with the Father.
Jesus the Grace, Jesus the Peace, Jesus the [...]
Jesus Brahman!

* * *

April 8, evening

Sri Bhagavan-Ramana Maharshi has often been criticized for allowing himself to be "adored" by the crowd, for letting people prostrate before him, etc. I only had to enter a cave and remain there in silence, to become the object of similar acts of devotion!

We must understand our people, their deep sense of the divine. Westerners have established minutely detailed classifications: God in himself, God in his spiritual manifestations, etc. Hence they carefully and pedantically distinguish between *latría*, *dulia*³⁴ and the various forms of religious respect. What interests my people is not the extent to which one being or another (legendary or puranic being, statue, temple, "holy man," etc.) shares in the divine, but the fact of this sharing itself. Srinivasa Ayengar, the Vaishnavite Brahmin of Tannirpalli, told me one day in the bus: It is not to Swamiji as a separate individual that my *anjali* [greeting with joined hands] is directed, but to the Lord present in Swamiji. My people care little about speculation, "God is there, it does not matter how or by what right he is there, but he is there, so I prostrate and adore." The vast number of names and forms [*nāma-rūpa*] under which the Hindu adores the one God embarrasses only a Westerner. (...) In his images [*mūrtis*] the Hindu sees only God. For here God alone is real.

33. Cp. Prov. 8:23ff.

34. *latría*: supreme honour given to God; *dulia*: honour accorded to saints.**What India contributes to Christianity**

(...) India's contribution will above all show itself in what seems most to distance it from Christianity³⁵ (...).

June 1st

In sacro die Pentecostes [Pentecost Day] Vanatti Kugai [Vanatti Cave—literally Laundry Cave]. Arunachala.

Christ is for us not only a master to imitate. (...) Christ was not satisfied with laying down rules for our behaviour. He left us his own 'genius' (A. Watts), that is, his Spirit. What I have done, you will do and you will do still more.³⁶ The Spirit who is at work in me will also be at work in you.³⁷ Bach or Mozart could only leave rules and examples. They could not leave behind their own artistic genius. But we possess the "genius" of Christ. The law of the New Covenant is the Spirit in us, the Holy Spirit [in Tamil]³⁸, the *daimon* of Christ himself.

The Spirit is Fire, Wind, Water. Spring of living water within us. Not coming from elsewhere but from our own inmost depths. (...).

Westerners cannot get it into their heads that it is the Lord who acts in all they do. It is *Īśvara* who takes delight in eating, as the eater, and who takes delight in being eaten, as the food. This is the deep meaning of the *Aitareya Upanishad*.

(...) There is no act of a human being or of any creature whatever, no matter how private or how ordinary it may be, that does not involve the Lord, that is not the work of *Īśvara* still more really than it is of the creature which performs it.

(...) The Spirit freely displays his *līla* [play] in me as in every creature. The Spirit, the mysterious impersonal Person, in whom my ego is lost. Accept the reality, that is, the fact that my ego is immersed in the Spirit! (...) And the Spirit in his own time will cause to arise in the dawning of my soul, the Supreme Ego, the "I am Brahma" [*Brahma aham asmi*], the true I [*aham*].

It is a mistake to say THOU to the Spirit, for the Spirit is not other than myself. The *aham* that will rise up in me will be the *aham* of the Son. And the dialogue will continue—continues eternally—back and forth between the Son and the Father.

I am Brahman [*Aham Brahma asmi*]. You are That [*Tat tvam asi*]. Each says to the other each of these phrases.

But human beings cannot penetrate the divine You [*tvam*]. They have no knowledge of a You which would still be an I. For the Son and the Father are One. And in this duality [*dvaita*] of Father and Son beyond the *advaita* of the Spirit, neither the Son nor the Father address each other as an other. "The Father and I are one" [*Ego et pater unum sumus*, John 10, 30].

35. There follow some pages on this theme, which he has taken up in other writings, for example *Saccidananda: a Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience*.

36. Cp. John 14:12.

37. Cp. John 14:26.

38. The Tamil word used here and in other passages (meaning "a possessing spirit") is not the one normally used for the Holy Spirit.

(...) We try to pin down the Spirit in a "temporal" *nunc* [now]; we might as well try to grasp the current of air, water or electricity. The Spirit is both in the eternal *nunc* and in each succeeding moment of time. Let us not confuse things. Either let ourselves go in the (temporal) current of the Spirit, carried off by him, changing with him who is multiform because formless. Or transcend the realm of space-time and deny the progression of time, not in favour of one of the fleeting instants of this progression, but in favour of non-succession, non-temporality, eternity.

Or better still in the divine way, the way of the Spirit itself. Time and eternity are not mutually exclusive, any more than God and the creature, the Absolute and the relative. To be mutually exclusive, things have to be of the same order. Be at once in the eternal *nunc* [now] and in the sequence of time. In the *nunc* of being and in the moment of its manifestation. For the manifestation is *really* nothing other than Being itself.

There is as much Spirit in the act of cooking a potato or brewing tea as in the arduous study of *Pratyabhijñā* or the *Summa*³⁹. God is no less God, the Spirit is no less Spirit when he gives movement to a fly's wing than when he "breathes" the divine generation.

For it is we human beings who have fabricated categories and we want to fit God into them. We do not succeed in accepting the fact that God transcends our categories. (...) Yet the Incarnation was a hard lesson. What sovereign disdain for our conventions, proletarian as well as bourgeois. God is not a problem. God presents no problem. It is we, myopic and complicated, who make God a problem.

Life would be so simple and so beautiful. Human beings want neither simplicity nor true beauty. We have to stick our nose in and leave our smell everywhere. We are sorry for those poor people who have everything they need to be happy and yet unnecessarily make life difficult for themselves. Happiness is simple, as Peter the Hermit said. So it is that each of us is deserving even less of pity than of laughter. For human beings are so very stupid.

Every act that I perform is a divine act. Every act performed by any creature, every movement of unconscious or inanimate creatures is a divine act, as much as the divine generation itself. God is completely and totally present in each of his manifestations (just as Christ is in every host and in every particle of the host). It is a moment in the ceaseless play [*līlā*] of the divine Wisdom playing upon the earth [*ludens in orbe terrarum*, Prov. 8:31]. For every temporal "moment" is eternity. Eternity is entirely present in every moment of time, the absolute in every aspect, every phase of the relative. But the moment that lasts is no longer eternity, for eternity has no "duration," it is just "is." The moment that lasts is unreal, it has no meaning.

(...) The world is a divine game. We take it much too seriously in our human way, and at the same time not seriously enough in God's way. We apply to it our categories, our value judgements, made by the short-sighted

39. *Pratyabhijñā*: system of Kashmir Saivism; the *Summa Theologica* of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

for the short-sighted. And we forget that in every act, in every being whatever it may be, God is totally present. For the divine game is a serious game. The child at play takes himself seriously; completely seriously. Sovereign detachment and at the same time sovereign interest, such are the characteristics of the divine Player in regard to his *līlā*.

(...) Today a loud-speaker, no doubt installed for weddings, irritates me with its unbearable noise. "Others" are delighted to hear it; the supreme Lord hearing it rejoices in them. And so how can I, *aḥam*, not rejoice in them, rejoicing in "Him", in "Myself"? It is not a question of abstracting oneself from the world but on the contrary of entering fully into the world.

(...) The Spirit has been poured out inwardly since the beginning of the worlds. The Spirit is not bound to any form. God is not bound by any limit. Even the Incarnation itself does not exhaust the creative capacity of God. "Fullness comes forth from fullness, the fullness remains intact"⁴⁰

(...)

June 2

It is not a matter of attaining union with God, but of enjoying it.

The knowledge of God is to know that there is only He. That he is himself the Knower and the Enjoyer which my ego pretends to be, and at the same time the Known and the object of enjoyment to this pseudo-subject. It is not a matter of attaining to the knowledge of God or the presence of God, but of recognizing, of realizing that this presence is, and ultimately that this knowledge is, the origin of all particular knowledge.

The yogi: [...] "The one who cries out: Ah!" (Kena Up. 4, 29).

There are two ways of being at peace: in mastering one's responsibility, and in being ignorant of one's responsibility. Those who are ignorant of theirs find it hard to understand the impatience of the others who know their responsibility but do not succeed in mastering it. However, when all has been done from our side, why be anxious about tomorrow?

Total non-desire, living the Presence from the fullness of the eternal. The *sannyāsī* has no need either of things or of people, or of their interest, or their love, or their hate, for the *ātman* in which he lives is fullness. A fullness that overcomes time, being eternity. A fullness that overcomes the varieties of thought, etc.

June 3

Idhu—this is that which eats, drinks, breathes, grows, hears, [...] and so on, which knows, inclines (me?) in one or other direction, etc.

[There follows a long passage in Tamil. We give here a literal translation. Certain words are not those generally used in this kind of context; Swamiji sometimes invented words and adapted others to his ideas.]

I am not this.

I am below or above this.

I am its source.

I should not have—could not have—any anxiety or desire about this.

40. A *mantra* of invocation or of peace (BU).

I am not this. I am at a deeper level.

I am sunk in the depths of the source.

Below this at its centre, feeling nothing, I see everything in peace.

I should not allow any [noise]. I want to break up this depth and penetrate within it.

Attain *sat cit ananda* [being, consciousness, bliss], sink into them, and realize my real I.

I am farther away, under, deeper than the self that is speaking, eating, looking, listening, walking, thinking, desiring.

When I am asleep I have no desire, no thought, I do not move.

Yet I am.

I can break down the fortress of this body and seek my proper dwelling.

Though I say my proper dwelling, it is not a dwelling. *Aham* has no body, no name.

In breaking down the fortress of the body, in penetrating within, I am beyond place and time.

Saying "here," without location.

Saying "now," without time.

I honour my *ahamtvam* [state of the essential "I"].⁴¹

The Holy Spirit teaches some to perform miracles, others to speak in tongues, others to teach, and so forth. To those who have the grace [for it], he shows the way of *ahamtvam* [...]. The Father and I are one.

Even if I do not totally live the life of a *sannyāsi*, I am a *sannyāsi*.

Sannyāsa without the spirit is a body without life. It appears under an external form. It is a false appearance. A lifeless *sannyāsi* may wear the saffron robe, eat food received as alms, live alone and in silence. All these are only external signs. They [these *sannyāsis*] conform to the observances of *sannyāsis* with difficulty [...].

For a false *sannyāsi* silence is difficult.

For a true *sannyāsi*, speaking is difficult, it is an irritation.⁴²

I should not think of my superficial ego [*ahamkāram*] as different from the *ātman*, but the former should disappear in order to leave all the space in my consciousness for the latter. My superficial ego is not other than the *ātman* itself. (Indeed, is there anything else than the *ātman*, one without a second [*ekam eva advitīyam*]?). It [the superficial ego] is the *ātman* in a limited form. To reach the *ātman* precisely within this ego is simply to remove the limits of the ego, to release the ego from its connection with the *deha* [body]—including, of course, the *manas* [mind] and the *buddhi* [intellect]. For the one who has realized the Self, this *deha* is no more interesting than all the other *dehas* that people the universe. It is simply one among the others. The *aham* is the superficial ego liberated from the *upādhis* [superimposed limitations] of *idam* and *kālam*, of space-time. This means regarding one's own "deha" from the viewpoint of eternity [*sub specie aeternitatis*], of the eternal *Nunc* [Now].

41. Here and below Swamiji by mistake wrote *ahamtvam*.

42. End of the passage in Tamil.

June 6

A fundamental virtue of the *sannyāsi*: *samatvam* [equanimity, inner harmony]. I am far from having it. Writing this, I think especially of my Kadirvel⁴³ whom Providence has even so placed right beside me... (...)

June 8

In *sanctissima Trinitatis* [Feast of the Most Holy Trinity]

The liturgy of this day is extremely poor. It presents the Trinity as something totally external to us, before which we prostrate, repeating, alas, not the faltering words of wondering children, but unassimilated scholastic formulas.

I could only celebrate the Trinity inwardly, within the Trinity. As being in the Son in whom I have my real *aham* [I], in the Father inasmuch as in Him and from Him I call for my eternal generation, in the Spirit inasmuch as in Him I call for my own consummation. Present. As being, living, in the mystery of the unfathomable Deity—beyond the names of Father, Son and Spirit, beyond the numbers one and three.

(...)

I don't know how to adore the Trinity, for I am within it, and I do not know which way to turn to make the *sashtāgam* [prostration with the body flat on the ground]. I am at the very centre in the centre [*madhya*] who is the Son.

We have, thanks be to God, started again preaching on the Presence of the Trinity within us. When will we preach on our presence within the Trinity? The Presence of the Son in the Father is as real as the Presence of the Father in the Son.

Mystical experience

(...) Westerners have always been very concerned about the "discerning of spirits." The prophetism of the first century imposed it as an obligation from the very first years of the Church: Corinth, the Didache, etc.

We are surprised in India to see that people worry very little about distinguishing what is the work of God and what is human work. All is generously attributed to the divine Spirit. The devotee who walks on fire, the yogi who sees mystical lights, etc. There is some danger, I admit—and yet it is only the distortion of a great truth: that there is no knowledge which does not have its source in our deep mystical knowledge of God. There is in us no enjoyment which does not have its source at the core of our being in the divine *anandam*, the joy that God takes in himself, and therefore in us, and in which we mystically participate in the Spirit of Wisdom. For our present enjoyment, however small and poor it may seem to us, is in the first place enjoyed in us by God, in its particularity, in detail, totally and eternally; for if he first of all was not rejoicing, we could not rejoice, just as if he did not first of all know, we could not know.

And there is in us no action, however ordinary it may seem, which is not derived from and identified with the divine play [*līlā*], and the divine

43. Kadirvel was the name of the cave's watchman; cp. *The Secret of Arunachala*, pp.25ff.

Ila is nothing else than God. India has had the marvellous insight of the essential divine Presence.

Not only is God more present to our soul than our soul itself is to our essence; but also to our whole activity, knowledge, enjoyment, our different actions.

Eternity is in the passing moment; but to want to remain in the moment that has passed or to go ahead to the moment that is coming is to abandon eternity for time. Eternity is not in the time that lasts but in the indivisible moment.

Offer to God the eternal offering of the eternal moment, just as it is in me, in my body, and in my consciousness, in the creation around me, in the entire creation, in the birds that sing, in the flowers that open and close, and the water that flows down the hillsides, and the wind that plays in the trees and the clouds that float across the sky, the sun that gives light and warmth, and the people who work and struggle, who suffer and rejoice, who love and give themselves, those whom this moment causes to live as one with me, and all people of all times...

Make the offering of this moment and receive the gift of this moment. The gift of this moment to me is in reality no other than the gift to the Son of the eternity springing up from the heart of the Father.

To accept it is to offer it.

To know it is to rejoice with the Bliss of the Spirit.

To accept it: faith;

To know it, rejoice in it, is to love with the Spirit's love.

It is to be fulfilled, to let oneself be fulfilled in the inbreathing of the Spirit,

and to be fulfilled in the Spirit is to fulfil God,
who without fulfilment through us at this moment in the Spirit
could not be fulfilled in himself in eternity, in his Spirit.

For my moment is God's eternity.

Hear the laughter of humans and birds, hear their loves and their songs, and in the passing moment abide in the eternity that abides.

As the child plays in the moments that follow one after the other, and as he plays in the eternity that abides.

And he draws me into his game; and if I do not let myself be drawn into his game,

if I act like a sulky child who says: I don't want to play, not I!—
then from eternity I fall into time,
from Spirit I fall into flesh.

I eat the apple, the fruit of the tree of knowledge,

I know how to choose good and evil,

I know—I think I know—how to decide for myself, how I could decide for God.

The prayer of the yogi at the back of his cave who has closed his heart, his ears and his eyes to everything that comes from creatures, and

remains unified in the divine *kevala*⁴⁴. For Ramana Maharshi "the sun no longer rose, no longer set"⁴⁵, there was no longer either new moon or full moon, no solstice, no equinox, for him who had returned within the supreme *kevala*.

But the yogi comes out of his cave, looks at the city and the temple, hears laughter and singing, and his heart sings with the songs brought to him by the loudspeaker, and with the bird song and the temple bells, and with the noise of motors—that is God, isn't it? How would the locomotive go forward if the divine Act did not "manifest itself" in it? And his heart sings of what his ears hear, and his heart sings of what his eyes see, the sun that rises in the morning, the clouds that turn crimson at its setting in the evening, people and things, the hermitages on the mountain, the towers of the temple, the roofs of the houses, the distant mystery of the hills and of roads along which in the evening lights are moving. And his heart sings of the breath of wind that caresses his face, of the earth that upholds him and is felt by his feet.

And the song that every moment is new, and the eternal song which is sung in the Spirit by the "Word of the Father"...

And the yogi is as much with God in the song of the *Ila*⁴⁶ as in the song of the *kevala* [total solitude]. But who would ever sing the varied songs of the *Ila*, if he has not first sung in the solitude of his heart and soul the unique song of the *kevala*? For it is from his *kevala* that the *Ila* wells up. There is no sorrow nor suffering which, at its own deepest centre, in its own most essential point, does not contain the deep divine joy and the divine *Ila* which is its origin and fulfilment.

It is only in the austerity of meditating on the *kevala* that we learn the joy of contemplating the *Ila*. For it is the *kevala* which causes us to discover, at the essential origin of the passing moment, the eternity which abides.

Anyone who has not immersed himself in the solitude of the *kevala* regards the moment as a fraction of time. He does not yet know what eternity is. It is through the *kevala* that we penetrate into eternity. And one who has penetrated into eternity thereafter has no knowledge of time. Then only can he in full reality rejoice in the Spirit, with the *Ila* of the Spirit.

(...)

June 9

(...) I have written these past few days: There is no grief so profound nor sorrow so piercing nor suffering so acute that it does not include—and to the very extent to which it is most acute, most piercing, most profound—at its deepest centre, as its source and its culmination, as its existential ground, the infinite divine Bliss, the inexhaustible happiness, the indescribable joy

44. *kevala*: "the Alone, the Unique, the Solitary," applies to the Divine as well as to the *sannyāsi* who shares the divine solitude.

45. "In him the sun does not shine, nor the moon and the stars, lightning does not flash, and even less the fire: everything shines as a reflection of his shining, all this [universe] is bright with his light." Katha U. V.15.

46. Creation as divine play.

of the Wisdom of the Spirit playing in the world—the primordial mystery of Joy, of Love. (Here follow considerations on sin and hell.)

June 12

In solemnitate Corporis Christi [On the Feast of Corpus Christi]

I do not go to the Eucharist as to something necessary for the greater good of my life, nor even for its preservation, but as to the very source of my life. It is by the same act that God creates me and preserves me. The Eucharist allows me to reach, so far as it is in me, the creative act itself. For in the Eucharist I reach not only the source of my natural life but the source of my life as such. For there is only one life. The Eucharist is the sacramental point of contact between God's love and my own love.

God in his eternity mysteriously 'issues' [projects] me from his *śūnyatā* [emptiness, void]. It is also from his Love that I have issued. His love in creating me seeks me, and in seeking me seeks himself. He seeks to encounter himself. For Love is an embrace; and Love creates, wills, 'issues' [projects] Love, one with Himself, yet other than himself, and which he [...] to crown in the Fullness of the Threefold [*Ternaire*]. It is from the Love of the Father that the Son and the whole of creation has issued forth.

(...) What matters to God is not that I exist but that I love in return, that in turning towards Him who created me, I "smile" in response to his eternal "smile". (...)

The human being is also spirit, but he is flesh at the same time. It is impossible for him to isolate himself from his fundamental, essential connection with the universe. He is a being ontologically woven on the categories of space and time. He cannot escape from the law of the flesh, from his condition as an incarnate spirit. And supposing that the individual might at least momentarily escape from these and live the life of a *vijñānavādin*⁴⁷, his incarnate condition has made him a social being, and his condition as a social being, even more than his condition as a person, is essentially linked to his flesh and thus to the universe. That is why there is so to speak a twofold way by which God comes to encounter the Human Being, by which the Love of God seeks itself in Human Love. And that brings us to the very depth of the crucial problem of mysticism and the sacrament, of salvation and of the Church.

Since the human being is spirit, God is in his depth—to be found, to be met. It is enough for the human being to turn back to himself, to come back to his own Self, to find God at the very centre of this Self. And at this place outside space (see the Upanishads), at this moment outside time, there takes place the mysterious, creative and vital encounter, the analogue of, the participation in, the originating encounter of the Father and the Spirit, of God and the angel, the very culmination in which the material universe is created. Then the Spirit springs forth, and in the eternally present springing forth of the Spirit, the Father himself, the Source, is—and the Son whom he 'issues' from Himself—coming forth from the unthinkable *śūnyatā*.

47. One for whom only the mind or thought are real; an idealist school of Buddhist philosophy.

But since the human spirit is at the same time united to flesh, is the supreme fruit of the earth [*fructus terrae*], the divine Wisdom and Love can not but come to it also by the way of earth, by the way of flesh; reaching from end to end, disposing of all gently and powerfully, filling the whole world, penetrating everything [*atingens a fine in finem, disponens omnia suaviter, fortiter, replens orbem terrarum...*⁴⁸]. The purpose of the universe being the meeting of Love in the depth of the human heart, the meeting in itself of the divine Love in "quest" of its fulfilment, it is impossible that the evolution of the universe, matter and history themselves, should not be marked essentially, ontologically with the seal of Wisdom and of Love. That is why divine Love was incarnated, materialized, temporalized, historicized in one portion of space, matter, flesh, time and history in the humanity of a member of the human race (...). A portion of space (of matter, flesh) and of time (of history) was assumed in all its fullness by the divine Wisdom and Love.

(...) The Incarnation is the essential sacrament following necessarily and absolutely from the material condition of the human world. The Eucharist is the sacrament of the Incarnation transposed into space and time, and (of) the Incarnation reaching by the way of space and time every point of space and time which calls for it and is willing to receive it. The Church is essentially the Vehicle of the Incarnation in the Eucharist.

The acceptance of *his salvation in Christ* is actually the acceptance by the human being of his humanity.

When I eat the Eucharist, I create the worlds. When I eat the Eucharist, I 'issue' [send forth] the Son from the Father and am at the origin of the springing forth of the Spirit who fulfils God.

For the eating of the Eucharist is for me the means, wholly suited to my whole nature, of responding to the Father's request for Love, of accepting to be, that is, to be loved by the Father—and thus consequently that the Father may love me, that is, Himself, and that the Threefold Pleroma may burst forth in the eternal Present of the divine *śūnyatā* [emptiness, void].

For I am not pure spirit. It is through the intermediacy of the senses that I know, and in knowing I love. And likewise I need to manifest my love through my senses. Only by manifesting it through my senses do I normally bring it to its full intensity. And therefore it is by means of my senses, of that by which I am linked to this world and live in this world of space-time, that I have to receive, to hear God's call of love for me and to respond to it.

The Incarnation, the Church, the Eucharist are essentially and indivisibly at one and the same time the manifestation of God's Love for me and the manifestation of God's request to be loved in return by me. (...)

The Incarnation, which is prolonged in Mary-the Church, is fulfilled as far as I am concerned in the Host placed upon my tongue. An

48. He is quoting from memory from the Vulgate (Wisdom 8:1): *Attingit ergo a fine usque ad finem et disponit omnia suaviter*; and (Wisdom 1:7): *Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum*.

ever-deepening abyss, which more and more speaks to my psychology about the divine love that seeks me, that seeks itself in me.

(...)

The Eucharist places the whole of the Incarnation at my disposal. Not only the Passion and the Resurrection, but also the Ascension and the descent of the Spirit. (...) In Christ I respond to the call communicated to me in and through Christ.

(...)

The Mass is the life of Christ reaching us.

(...)

June 13

(Continuation of the theme of the Eucharist)

(...)

The Eucharist is truly the "summary" of the Incarnation, containing it "totally", making it "totally" available to us. Mary continuing in the Church to impart Jesus to the world.

(...) The Virgin was the link between God and the race of Adam; it is in the Virgin that God joins himself to flesh and matter, to space and time.

(...) The Virgin is truly the Great goddess Terra, the Alma Mater whom God makes fruitful so that she may give birth to God, (and) the world to Divinity, to eternal Sonship.

(...)

July 15

The deep joy, the deep peace experienced here. '*Hints of the primordial state. Bits of it.*' I cannot make up my mind to leave it [the cave] without some external reason. My nerves have been calmed here. Here I have learned everything—"learned" in all senses of the word—by experience, by conversation, etc., in my days of silence and in my days of speaking.⁴⁹ Now I should have a long period of recollection, of pure solitude, as in the enchanting solitude of the *Kattu sāmīyār* ["swami of the jungle" in Tamil].

Deep joy, "my" joy. But it is not mine. It is the essential joy in which, freed from the limitation of my ego, I am henceforth immersed, if I may put it this way. Freed from the limits of the impure [*aśuddha*] "I," the pure [*suddha*] "I," a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis, flies to its heart's content in the depth, the abyss, the void of the divine and essential *aham*.

"My" joy cannot be full. Only "the" joy is full, that joy which transcends all feeling, all experience, and thus all attribution even to myself. Passing beyond joy is one of the degrees of Buddhist meditation [*dhyāna*]. When "my" joy becomes full, it has ceased to be mine, and that is precisely why it is full, it is *the* joy, *the* Peace, primordial, essential, the very same as God enjoys in himself, in "me," in every being...

The primordial duality that I must pass beyond is this: myself and everything else, not that between God and "me." As long as there are these

49. He had spent three weeks in silence when he returned to Arunachala in May.

"others"—outside myself, God and the world will be jumbled up in them, even though they may be distinguished and defined in a second look. As long as the world remains other [*aliud*] for me, God can never be perceived by me within myself.

Do away with that "centre" which I call "myself" and round which I draw concentric circles, which are my mind, my body, the world which basically I see in relation to myself, and finally God who, unfortunately, is no less "related" to myself.

Satori [enlightenment] is attained when I have realized that the centre is as truly everywhere as it is in "myself." And God himself is not this centre, for God is without place [*a-deśā*], as he is without time [*a-kāla*]; this God is as really in his *lilas* as in himself, if we venture to make the distinction.

Feel "myself" in the tree, in the stone, in the rat, [...], in the ass, in what is hateful, in what is indifferent, as really as in this body and this mind [*manas*] which I have up to now considered as a centre of supreme interest. Transfer the "centre" to everywhere... which is to "make it vanish"... The essential interdependence.

Sin is the monstrous hypertrophy of this particularity or particularization of matter in a body, in which there moves, or which is animated by, a *manas* [...].

July 17

Realization, enlightenment (*buddhatvam*), *satori*, is "a" passing beyond, is "the" passing beyond. Not surrender to another—to the Other—no, not even love for him. Love that is felt is not total love, it reeks of attachment to self, to the lower self. The love which is beyond all feeling, the peace which is beyond all feeling, the joy which is beyond all feeling. Beyond love, peace, joy.

A state of being beyond, in which we sink...

What is it that sinks? I do not know, but there is a "sinking", as when we say that we sink into sleep, sink into our mother's arms. A "surrender" of self, but a surrender to no one and to no thing, but just a surrender.

And yet we feel that this "ego" which limits, which impedes the fullness of being, cuts us off from the "All", while being at the same time the means of reaching the All; while being the origin of 'cosmic consciousness', it prevents the expansion of the consciousness to the cosmos and to God himself—this ego has not yet sunk. But can it long resist the successive sinkings of the lower *savikalpa samādhi*⁵⁰?

(...)

Satori is the true Baptism, that new vision of oneself and of the world, a not-knowing intellectually, but a deep, abyssal, cataclysmic transformation of being—and not just the pouring of a little water over the head, claiming to be the baptism of fire in the Spirit.

50. Absorption (*samādhi*) at the level of thought, of imagination (*vikalpa*), which should be transcended in the *samādhi* that is beyond all mental activity (*nirvikalpa*).

The realization of *a-dvaita*—I do not say monism—could not free me from my Christian duties, for my *prārabdha*⁵¹ is linked with that of all my brothers. My baptism is a true vow of *bodhisattva*⁵², for it obliges me not only to be saved in Christ, but in and through Christ to save all my brothers, and to attain my fullness only on the last day. There is no absolute liberation [*mukti*] except in the universal *mukti*. (...)

July 18

Who always detects the stench of obscenity in the words and actions even of the pure? Only the impure.

Who always and everywhere detects foul smells of error and heresy? Those with pure hearts and sound sense perceive only the perfume of what is pure and true, they recognize it instinctively in the very midst of impurity and error...

July 19

One who has attained *satori*, anyone who has been enlightened, continues to see grass as green and the sky as blue, to consider rice as something to eat and cloth as something to wear, and the train as a means of transport. What he is liberated from is the relationship to “himself” that until then he projected onto these things. Things are seen in themselves, and no longer in dependence on “himself.” Dear ones are no less loved, but there is no longer the least attachment, the least turning back on “himself.”

God is then known, loved, in himself and no longer in the self of the knower. But this liberation of “himself” and the others and everything else has as its essential, paramount condition the liberation of himself into the Self in itself... It is only when the *self* sinks into the *Self* that the world is likewise freed from this self which gives it a cloak as appallingly ugly as the bits of cloth hung on images of Nataraja⁵³.

(...)

July 21

Transference of self in God—transference of self to God. God freed from the clothing made “to our taste” that we impose on him. In the glorious nudity of the risen Christ.

- Our ‘*mind*’, a pure mirror which distorts neither God nor things.

- Total commitment to the very least of our actions: ‘every minute *Zen*.’ The most complete commitment in the most absolute freedom. Total detachment.

I give myself. I give myself, I do not give to myself [Ego me do, ego mihi non do, followed by the same in Sanskrit and Tamil].

Love without being attached.

Love for God himself is a bond to be severed.

51. That portion of *karma*, acts accumulated in the past, which we inherit at our birth and which must be taken up and transformed, and cannot be ‘renounced’.
52. The vow of the *bodhisattva* consists in refusing individual salvation in order to contribute to the salvation of all beings—a concept of Mahāyāna Buddhism.
53. Natarāja: the God Shiva as Lord of the (cosmic) Dance; his statues in temples are clothed and decorated for different feasts and carried in procession.

Love God without attachment. “God-in-relation-to-us” is an obstacle to God-in-himself—to God-in-himself-for-us, as to simply God-in-himself, which is all one. (...)

July 24

‘Inconcernedness’ [sic, in English] in relation to material things—the body, food, medicine, poverty, dwelling—can be simply the result of a particularly intense *concernedness* in relation to intellectual things. The disinterestedness of the ‘*scholar*’ goes together with the disinterestedness of Harpagon⁵⁴.

This is neither Christian holiness nor Hindu realization. The body should not be sacrificed to the intellect—but in company with the intellect itself, to the *ātman*.

The poverty of the idealist philosopher [*vijñānavādin*] has nothing spiritual about it as long as it has not been transformed, and as long as books are not placed on the same level as rice and potatoes...

The newness of viewpoint to be attained is not to see bodily things from the viewpoint of certain other bodily things, nor from the viewpoint of intellectual things, but from the viewpoint of the supreme Reality, the Self.

Get free from your body and the needs of your body: eating, sleeping, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, feeling, all needs that enslave. Dominate them from above.

Get free from your ‘*mind*’ and its need to know, to read, to learn, to understand.

Body and intellect function and obtain their satisfaction only with the help of “things” from outside and are therefore constantly a call to the outside to come within and a call to the within to go outside.

The sage is one who finds his own fullness in himself. Anyone who is not capable of finding his own fullness in himself is incapable of acquiring peace [*śānti*]. To this is directed and from this flows the silence of *munis* [silent ascetics] and the seclusion of hermits.

The peaceful one [*śānta*] takes refuge in the centre of himself and closes the circle round himself, leaving outside both his intellectus, the *antahkarana* [internal organ which includes all the intellectual and psychic faculties], and his body, the external organ [*bahirkarana*]. Closing the circle round himself, he lives in himself, living *secum*⁵⁵, *ātmanishtha*⁵⁶.

But at this summit—or in this centre—where one discovers oneself as Absolute, it is truly God who is encountered in the form of Self—God “cleansed” of all the picturesque and abstract rags with which one had first

54. Allusion to Molière’s *L’Avare*.

55. St Gregory the Great, in his *Life of Saint Benedict*, thus describes the saint’s stay in the solitude of Subiaco: “Benedict then returned to his place of beloved solitude, and alone, under the eye of the sovereign Judge, he dwelt with himself” (*solus in supernis Inspectoris oculis habitavit secum*), *Dialogues* II, chap. III. Cp. below, 21 March 1953 and 28 November 1956.

56. “Firmly established, fixed, in the Self,” the qualification of the true guru in the Upanishads.

of all decked him out. God in the clarity and bareness of his Absolute, which alone is able to reveal to us the way to enter our own Absoluteness.

Not that we then feel ourselves face to face with God...not that we there feel ourselves God... All conceptualization will come later and will bear the mark of various categories—mental, ethical, hereditary and acquired.

One simply IS. And this fundamental experience is at the same time that of the unique and single EXISTENCE.

From this summit, or this centre, of BEING, of ABSOLUTENESS, life is renewed in its essence. What until then one called “oneself”, what until then one called “the others”, what until then one called “God”.

Wednesday July 30⁵⁷

Came to the cave north of Muleippal Tirtham near Lakshmi Amma, the *muni* [silent one].⁵⁸ But unfortunately her visitors, men and women, *sadhus* and laypeople alike, have nothing silent about them. How much worse than the radio and the cinema at (the cave of) Vanatti. Were it not for the complication and the cost of moving, by the next morning I would have already left...

August 2

In principio, at that time which has nothing to do with duration, at a place which has nothing to do with space, the Logos alone was, the non-dual *cit* [consciousness, mind]. There and then there was no distinction between object and subject. The *cit* in his Transcendence is alone. *Kevala*. He who is self-sufficient. Not a subject. For in saying Subject, we include object, the complement of the Subject. The Subject is “one who” is incapable of being self-sufficient, of self-fulfillment, and needs something else... (...)

August 3

Nothingness does not exist, that is a truism. Ultimately is not *sūnyatā* [the void] the abyss of the Deity? *Sūnyatā* is the “potentiality” of which God is the act, if we may risk this crude analogy.

(...)

I do not feel any special desire for an eternal individual life—do not these two adjectives in any case seem mutually contradictory?

(...)

“Worldly” people absolutely and divinely, need to eat, drink, perform the sexual act, read and reflect, speak, etc. For at their stage, on their “level,” these are the means by which the Self in them goes to the Self. But that is only a stage. The one who has heard the “next” call of the Self, at the end of an innumerable series of lives, as our Hindu brothers say, no longer has the obligation to nourish the self either “stomachally” or intellectually.

When finally *mumukshā*, the desire for liberation [*mukṭi*], arises in the depth of the soul, then it is the sign that the time has come, that there is no longer any need to provide the belly and the intellect with the

57. Cf. *The Secret of Arunachala*, ch.2.

58. Cf. *The Secret of Arunachala* ch.3.

sustenance needed for their survival, and that the normal state is the *kevala*, in silence with human beings, silence with books, silence with oneself, the absolute silence of that which is non-dual...

(...)

August 5

The Mass itself, in obtaining its fruit, destroys itself, disappears. The Mass is what immerses time in eternity. In thus immersing time, it immerses itself and loses its reason for existing, loses the reason for its repetition... A true *jīvanmukta*, if such a thing is possible, *could* no longer celebrate mass or receive communion⁵⁹.

(...)

August 7

(...) My duality in relation to the world, to the rest of what-with-me-is-and-has-being, cannot be final. Essentially a matter of space and time. My duality in relation to God even less. God, the supreme and primordial being, one without a second [*ekam eva advītyam*]. As long as I feel two, it is exile.

(...)

Return to Shantivanam on August 10.

[The entries for the rest of August and from October until the middle of March 1953 are partly illegible, where the manuscript has been damaged by water.]

Siluvaigiri

August 27

The contemplative life (or institution) should not be defined negatively. Once the non-future of Shantivanam is recognized⁶⁰, what right do we have to continue here our lives as dilettantes, that is, to [live] here at our ease without any parochial or other concern? (...) Withdrawal from positive tasks should be compensated for by “something else” than simply books and study-filled leisure on the mountain...

September 10

What is the supernatural? What is it to see God as he sees himself? What is it to love God as he loves himself? What is it to enjoy him as he enjoys himself? What is it to participate in the peace of his Being? Participation implies otherness. Participation implies diminution. If a participation in the being of God on the so-called natural level could have been conceived—and with how much difficulty by the theologians of the West, and with how many unsolvable problems that are almost contradictory to the thesis itself—how can we conceive of a participation in God on the supernatural level, a participation which would still not be identification?

59. *jīvanmukta*: one liberated in his lifetime. Abhishikṭananda did not in practice maintain this position later on, for he never ceased to celebrate Mass to the end of his life.

60. An allusion to their disappointment: despite all their efforts to found an ashram, no one seemed to be interested in it and no disciple seemed capable of following them.

For it is not then a matter for the creature of being raised to a higher stage of creaturehood, for example, for a human being to obtain the powers of an angel, or for a Domination to obtain the superadded ontological powers of Seraphim. The supernatural is defined by the exclusion of anything on the natural level, no matter how exalted it might be thought to be. The supernatural is God in himself. Hence God in his incommunicability, in his simplicity, in his *kevala*. I fear that most studies on the supernatural offer us only ersatz.

So can God communicate what is incommunicable? What is a participation in the divine simplicity, in the divine *kevala*? If an analogical image of God's being can be realized in creation, on what scholars call the natural level, what analogy can be imagined for the Simplicity of the *kevala*?

The Simplicity either is or is not, the *kevala* either is or is not. (...)

Theologians study and discuss what makes God to be God. Some say it is a-seity; in my own mind I have often thought it is the Trinity and the Unity. In the last analysis I think that the Upanishad and the Bible agree in suggesting the truth: the "I am who I am" [*Ego sum qui sum*] of Exodus; one without a second [*ekam eva advitīyam*], says the Upanishad. *Advaitatvam* [non-duality] seems to me more and more to be the incommunicable characteristic of Godhead. Seen from the angle of *sat* [being]—Being in itself, a-seity, the *ego sum qui sum*, Yahweh revealed to Moses. Seen from the angle of *cit* [consciousness]—the non-distinction between object and subject, cf. above [August 2]. From the angle of *ānanda* [bliss]—the non-distinction of the enjoyer and the enjoyed, of the lover and the beloved, of the *śānti* in the *kevala*.

(And to mention it in passing, *saccidānanda* [being, consciousness, bliss] will never give you more than a 'clue' to the heart of the Trinity, analogous to the Augustinian analysis of the human mind, *mens*. The passage from Nature to Person, from *cit*, or Wisdom, to the Second Person, etc., can't be made without metaphysical violence to the concepts used, ending up for most of those who practise it in a confusion which in its extreme form leads to confusing the divine intelligence with the Second Person (...).)

That which is characteristic of the knowledge of God by God—however crude [*sthūla*] this expression may be, that which makes the divine intelligence incommensurable with any created intelligence whatever—(N.B. I have not written "with any other intelligence", for the divine intelligence cannot be numbered with created intelligence; they cannot be opposed, or added together, or multiplied by one another ...)—is the non-distinction of subject and object. God is not an object for himself, and so he is not a subject who knows himself.

God is *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*. All our concepts remain inadequate. We cannot say in reality that God knows himself, loves himself, enjoys himself. Nor, speaking rigorously, can we say that he is being, intelligence, bliss. God cannot be an object, be it even of his own self as subject, nor equally can he be an attribute. God quite simply "is." The "who is" [*qui est*] of Exodus.

even the verb is too much, for the verb sets limits to the subject. The ery of the *aham*: Ego.

Granted this, how can we conceive of the beatific vision? How see as he sees himself, love him as he loves himself? We shall be like as he is... [*Similes ei erimus...sicuti est...*; 1 John 3:2]. All knowledge, love, all bliss that remains in the sphere of duality [*dvaita*] will be unable of responding to the demands of the supernatural order. (...)

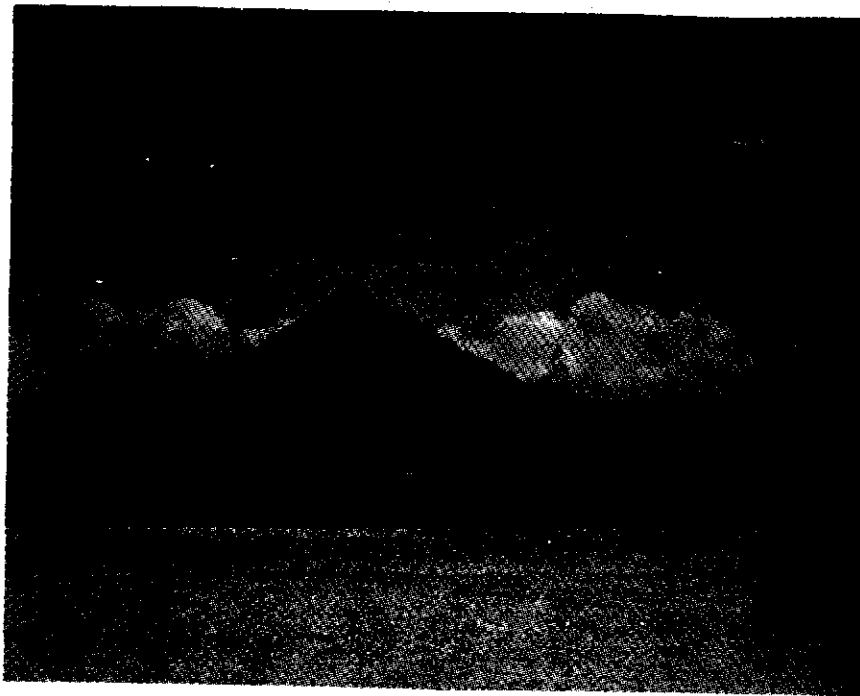
ember 14

Total solitariness [*kevala*] is agonizing for anyone who has experienced what he has felt that truth is only found at the summit—or, if you will, in the *śānti*—, where the subject and the object of knowledge, love, enjoyment, transcended. But he cannot remain in this *kevala*. His own mind, and more his body pull him constantly downwards, into the midst of the "dispensation". And his Christian "role", his role as priest also; his Mass, especially his breviary, so involved in the world of appearance, of *māya*. It is impossible to be translated from Jewish values to Christian values, from Christian values at the level of the "dispensation" into "theological", advaitic values... *kevala* having become the constant nostalgia, which inhibits any rest, lingering in the impermanent. And the world we live in cannot understand that.

The whole dispensation has only one reason for existence: to make us understand that we are *A PATRE*, from the Father. (...) [There follows a long meditation on the Trinity.]

ember 21(?)

(...) The preceding notebook [August 4, not included above] raised the question of the Resurrection in a Christian advaitin [interpretation] which theologians who by chance may read these pages should please regard all 'statements' as only working hypotheses). (...)



View of Arunachala



On the summit of Arunachala

1953

Deepening a Hindu Experience of his Christian Faith

SWAMIJI spent Lent and Advent in the caves at Arunachala. In his solitude he rethought the whole of his Christianity and began to sense its incompatibility with Hinduism. He continued to reflect. His agony is understandable: he took both Gospel and Church seriously in their most radical and exclusive expressions; but for the time being he had a contrary experience. We can follow the evolution of his thought: unable to accept Christian exclusivism, he inclined towards a certain inclusivism.

Certain encounters again faced him with crisis. Swamiji allowed no dichotomy between his thought and his life. If Harilal was right, then he ought to shed his Christianity—later he was even to say that to be Christian one should abandon Christianity.

We have omitted long passages which can be found in more developed form in his published writings, especially in *The Secret of Arunachala*. Two or three themes emerge powerfully: the radical renunciation of the monk, the absolute character of *advaita*, the reality of the inner life.

He was still in the midst of some of his most radical experiences in the caves at Arunachala and at the beginning of his attempt at monastic life at Shantivanam. As a genuine monk, he did not dare to launch a new style of monastic movement, to make a “foundation,” without having first lived the experience in depth. Arunachala (the holy Mountain and his experience in the caves) became more and more his guidepost and his authority.

Some dates for his movements and activities:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| January | At Pondicherry, seeking funds for the ashram; Siluvaigiri; Tiruchengadu. Return to Shantivanam where Father Monchanin was sick (Swamiji delayed his departure for Arunachala). |
| 3-31 March | At Arunachala in the Arutpal Tirtham cave. Much writing, later rewritten in <i>Secret</i> and <i>Guhantara</i> . Visited by Harilal (the 13th) and met Sundarammal (the 16th). At the Patala Linga (the 29th). |
| 1-6 April | At Siluvaigiri for the rest of Holy Week and Easter. |
| June | Touring the South with Father Dominique. |

- July At Shantivanam, very busy with editing *Ermites du Saccidānanda*, recopied 360 pages in 3-4 weeks. At Tiruchchirappalli and Karur concerning his request for Indian citizenship.
- August Sent the manuscript (*Ermites*) to Paris.
- 3 Nov.-27 Dec. At Arunachala, first in a hut, later in a cave. (Mid-November) Feast of Tībam (*dīpam*, lamp, light). Much writing: *Guhāntara*, poems. Correspondence: with Paris (*Ermites*), with his abbey at Kergonan (renewal of his indulgences of excommunication).

* * *

February 2 (?) [date illegible, probably the 2nd, feast of Our Lady's Purification].

The Virgin is the *śakti* of Christ [...]. The Virgin is the revelation of God as Mother, [...], of the maternal aspect of God, of God "*Devamātā*". [...] also the manifestation of God's Purity. The only human creature wholly pure, the purity of the Immaculate (Conception) [...] then finally a manifestation of the divine *śakti*. The Virgin at once (issued?) from the Pleroma and within the Pleroma, for the Pleroma entered into the Virgin, is the Virgin. *Śakti* is inseparable from *paraśakti*¹.

(Swamiji's footnote to this para:) cp. the next dogma of Mary Mediatrix, of Mary Parashakti; (in Tamil) parasakti of God, Param Marial.

[...]

And what is the *Paramaśakti* that the Virgin manifests?

[...]

The Virgin is the one who comes forth from Christ as Eve from Adam.

February 7

(...) For us Hindus, evil is a fact; we do not seek to solve the problem of evil, which is beyond us. It is impossible to assign an origin to *samsāra* [the coming to be of the phenomenal world]. Evil is all one, cosmic, physical, moral. We take nothing tragically, as Christians do, neither their mortal sins nor their hell. Nothing can be final in this world of *māyā*. The sinner sins at the heart of eternity [*in sinu aeterno*], said Thomas Aquinas.² For us this expression is totally devoid of meaning. Eternity is not touched, is not reached, is not realized by any act of this world, of this aeon, by any act of any acon we might imagine, even an angelic one.

(...)

(...) Christ appeared in the world as essentially *jagatguru*³. The *guru* is one who has penetrated the mystery of the Self, and has thus obtained for

1. *Śakti*: divine energy personified, feminine. *Paraśakti* (or *paramaśakti*): supreme *śakti* eternally united to God (Shiva).
2. All the same, cp. *Summa Theol.* I, q.20, a.2, ad 4, where St Thomas says that sinners, as sinners, do not exist!
3. Master of the world, lord of the universe; title given to certain religious authorities, like the Shankaracharyas.

himself liberation from *samsāra* and entry into Being, into Life, into Light, into Eternity—and consequently the one who has authority to teach the way of Life. At the time when the mind was beginning to dominate at least the elite, Christ appeared to teach people to penetrate into the Self, with him, following him, with his grace, and to discover themselves to be Sons of the Father.

(...)

February 22

The Mass disappears when it is completed. The Church disappears when it is realized. A mysterious sublimation. The real value of the world of *māyā* in its own order. Advaita is unassailable. It takes its place in an order completely different from any other order, [into which] we invite it to come down so that we may judge and compare it. You cannot say that Christianity and advaita are two. Advaita does not count (itself) with anything else. It is essentially transcendent: advaita is not opposed to anything, except to the denial of the world of *neti* where it is, which it is. Advaita is only opposed to anything which claims to be Absolute on this side of the *neti*⁴. So only opposes the Church [...] if the sacrament refuses the necessary moment for disappearing.

Deep distress. The essential problem. The Church claims to be the Only way of salvation. The advaitin claims that he has understood the message of Jesus better than the Church...

We have received Revelation only about one particular point, the point which concerns us personally. But we can only dream and speculate about all the rest (the very wise attitude of Dom Landry⁵). The Gospel has revealed nothing about what happens outside the Church, either on the planet Earth or on the other planets; what is above the firmament has only been revealed to us in relation to the Church.

We know one thing clearly—we who have been baptized in the Church which is our sacramental and real link with Christ—we have everything in Christ and the Church. Outside Christ and the church, we lose God. As for those outside, we have the mission to proclaim the Gospel to them and baptize them. Those who wilfully refuse the Gospel will be damned [*damnabuntur*].

On the basis of the Christian Revelation one would be very pessimistic about the fate of the *goyim* [unbelievers]. On the basis of the highest human wisdom, the Church would only be the tip of the cone.

The Church admirably meets all our needs as *bhakta* [devotees, adorers in a loving relationship with God] (Westerners perhaps?). But [...].

In our days we are very anxious to try to discover the historical basis (in the 20th century sense of the phrase) of Genesis, the Gospel, the

4. *Neti neti*: "not this, not that"; the negative theology of the Upanishads. The ultimate reality (Brahman or *ātman*) cannot be described by any term in our experience (cp. BU II,3,6; III,9,26, etc.).
5. Dom Landry, monk of St Anne of Kergonan, senior to Dom Le Saux, with whom he kept up a regular correspondence and whose progress he followed sympathetically.

prophecies about the Parousia. Adam—his creation, his sin, the original Eden. Christ—his childhood, his miracles; today the mysterious episode of the Temptation. The end of the world—the resurrection of bodies, hell! A waste of time perhaps, at least for a monk. Our elders took the myth as totally real, and immediately stepped over into the underlying Reality. In our days we run the risk of being much more concerned about breaking the shell than about tasting the nut itself.

In the world of *māya*, everything, everything is ultimately symbol. What is important is what is “hidden.” What is hidden is quite beyond our reflective thought. All imagining, all forming of ideas is only an approach, or rather a means for us to penetrate beyond, into Reality. This is one of the acceptable meanings of the viewpoint of E. Le Roy. The ignorant Christian, who in all simplicity believes in Eden, the apple, Adam’s rib, etc., possesses behind these symbols an intuition, a knowledge of Reality that is much more deep and real than one who rejects the *mythos* or rather dissects it, and chooses from it what *fits the present stage* of his understanding. (...)

February 26

(...)

The Gospel is not a method of meditation—doesn’t even provide one. As our friend Naidu was demanding. As a matter of fact meditation [*dhyana*], upon the centre, a sense of concentration, was unknown to the Jewish people, to the Jewish mentality. The practice of concentration is a human, natural thing, like many others. In itself it is not what “perforates” the *brahmarandhra* [the opening at the top of the skull which is “perforated” at the moment of enlightenment or of death, through which the soul escapes from the body]. It can be a peak of human activity.

It is not impossible that in the millennia that lie ahead the interiorization of human intellectual activity will continue to grow. This interiorization and the steadiness [*nishthā*] of thought that accompanies it can be preparations that are particularly favourable and effective, and liberating for the work of the *Para* [the Supreme] in the depth of the soul. The total descent of grace from above, or if you prefer, the rising up, the germination of the grace which comes from “within” the “within”, is not bound to this. The neo-Platonic school devoted itself fruitfully to this interiorization and concentration of thought. Christian asceticism and Christian contemplation profited from it greatly. Moreover it is noteworthy that in the Middle Ages the West was for the most part unaware of it, and that its development in the land and culture of the West was accompanied by an incredible systematization, from which we are only beginning to free ourselves. The Benedictine method, like the method of the Gospel, is less a forced concentration of thought than an habitual orientation toward the things of God. [...] Gregory the Great was a great contemplative, but not in the style of Evagrius(?) or of the other Gregory, of Nyssa. (By the way, how much the Benedictine method of prayer should be indianized, using the Eastern Christian tradition inspired by neo-Platonism.)

India, like the neo-Platonic Greek world, has given an important place in its religious life to this search within the self, beyond thought itself. Apart from India and Greece, have any other cultures practised this method?

If the Lord Jesus had spoken of a method of introspection, no one would have understood him; not a single one of his hearers would have been able to understand anything about it. The very real grace of contemplation of the Sages of Israel or the Prophets manifested itself in the same way as it manifested itself later in the case of many monks, in Gregory, etc. A contemplation that passed *through* words and thoughts and sometimes drew the soul beyond words and thoughts. (...) In the course of his prayer, the monk came to forget he was praying, and sometimes the silence even of thought followed.

The way of the Lord Jesus, *mukunda yoga*⁶, consists of doing one’s daily duty with loving attention to his heavenly Father, in forgetfulness of oneself, before God, before other people, before oneself. The result will be entry into the Kingdom. And John has explained to us what Luke had already said in brief, that the Kingdom was within us, and that the coming of Christ would be realized within. A coming of Christ which is linked neither to ecstasy nor to *samadhi* [enstasis]. The way of Christ is the *sahaja* way [“natural,” innate, simple], “to have passed over into God” while living in the midst of this world. “I do not pray that you should take them out of the world,” [John 17:14, in latin] even for *samadhi*.

(...)

Arunachala

Mulaippal Tirtham. Reached Tiruvannamalai March 4th, entered the cave (Arutpal Tirtham) evening of March 5th.

March 4 to 31 Lent at Arunachala.⁷

March 7

(...)

Evening. There is a mystery in Arunachala. What is the mystery of Arunachala? Why have so many already been attracted by its “spell”? Elder sons, they have come from everywhere. I myself have come from beyond the oceans, fascinated. Why this strange feeling? Why, despite all the inconveniences of life here, do I feel happy and at peace as nowhere else? This fascination that has drawn ascetics for centuries. There is something in the caves of Arunachala. Sages have lived here and impregnated the rocks with their inner life, but there is still more. The caves of Arunachala are the *guhā*⁸. Brahman inhabits the *guhā* of the heart, as the Upanishads say.⁹ Here it is the *guhā* of Brahman himself, not so much where he abides in me as where I abide as him. Always supposing that there is He and I. (...)

6. “Salvation-giving yoga”, according to popular Indian etymology.

7. Cp. *The Secret of Arunachala*, ch.3.

8. *Guhā*: cave, cavern; in the Upanishads, the hidden depth of the heart.

9. Cp., for example, *Katha Up.* II, 20.

Ramana lived at Arunachala the mystery of the One. Arunachala, the enlightened, the enlightening. I have seen it red from the rising sun, [...]. *Tejo linga*, *Linga* of fire, Light itself. The mystery of a Presence. The divine Presence is everywhere, but are there not places where the Spirit blows, places where we Hindus think that the manifestation is very close to the Reality. Final springboard from which we leap into the unrevealed mystery. The *OM*, the *linga* of fire of Arunachala¹⁰.

March 8

The true monk, especially the Hindu one, has no other concern, no other interest than the *atman*, established, fixed in the *atman* [*atmanishtha*]¹¹. The *Atman* is enough for him. Entirely within, "having entered into the heart" [*hridi viśā*]. The Christian Hindu monk believes for sure that Arunachala will one day be inhabited by monks who will adore Christ. But it is not his role to prepare for this day, except on the purely spiritual-mental plane. It is enough for the monk of Arunachala, even a Christian one, to live within himself—*secum*, like St Benedict¹². Even if he were totally unknown, his mere presence before God in the name of his people at this holy place is enough.

* * *

The abyss between Christianity and Hinduism seems to me more and more to be this: Christianity, born in a climate of Judeo-Greek thought, is basically realist. The West has taken man seriously, as well as the Earth which upholds him. Not so the East. Man is the measure of all, said the Greeks: man and things are part of being, substance. Hence the value of dogmas, of the Incarnation, the agonizing importance of the present life. But for us Hindus, such a view of reality [*darsana*] has no meaning. We feel too deeply the abyss between the permanent and the impermanent, the *nitya* and the *a-nitya*, etc. Nothing can fill up this abyss. No act of the impermanent can have an effect on the "permanent." The impermanent is what we call *māya*—indefinable by its very nature. This is the great argument of *Vedānta* against *Mīmāṃsā*¹³—a solid one. So every divine manifestation on this earth will take the form of an *avatāra*, will smack more or less of docetism. The Christian does not understand us when we refuse to consider Christ as the Only Incarnation. It is because we know that what is created can nowhere and in no single being *comprehendere* [grasp, understand] God. It is not to defend our position that we refuse to accept the uniqueness of a *deva-mārga* [way of the gods]; it follows from one of the deepest demands of our philosophical and religious thought.

How can we believe in the absoluteness of a dogmatic formula? of a rite? hence, of a Church? Could God then be shut up in what is created? We too believe in Christ as a Son of God. But how could Christ exhaust God? Christian theologians themselves accept the possible multiplicity of

10. See p.26, note 2.

11. See p.51, note 56.

12. See p.51, note 55.

13. A philosophical school of Vedic exegesis, based on the sacrificial ritual.

incarnations. Why should not the Word, incarnate in flesh at Nazareth, be incarnate at least in "word" elsewhere? The first Apologists thought that the Word had spoken in Plato. "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets..." [*Multifariam, multisque modis loquens olim Deus patribus in prophetis*; Heb.1:1]. Our *rishis* also have heard the eternal Word, *sruti*. Why should the Incarnation in Galilee be the summit of humanity? (...) And is there any other difference between Hinduism and Christianity than that of different subconsciousnesses revealed in different ways?

Christianity, stemming from the solid, but 'close to earth' [down to earth], common sense of the Jews, Greeks and Romans, discovered, "encountered" with wonder the Incarnation as the foundation from on high for its earthy realism. Christ, true God and true Man. The sacramental rite that spans the abyss. Faith in Christ first, then the eucharistic rite. Whoever believes in me, whoever eats my flesh, has *already* passed from death to life, from *mrityu* [death] to *amrita*¹⁴ [immortality]. The concept of the Christian sacramental rite has no analogy in traditional Hinduism. Only decadent forms and especially tantrism have corrupted the main path. The Vedic sacrifice leads only to a heaven [*svarga*]. Cp. *Katha Up.*, beginning.

(...)

What is the use of preaching, as was said to me this morning by a swami from Cuddapah district who spent six years with Satyānanda, the present *muni* of the ashram near the mango-cave. The bees gather where the lotus flower blooms. If there is no inner 'urge', how would people come? What is the use of these mass initiations given by Christians, which correspond to nothing deep in the souls of those initiated? Let us allow the *Atman* to work within... It has its own time.

March 13

India will never be converted except by Christians in the shape of a Ramana. Our efforts to reinterpret Vedānta in a Christian way never interest anyone but ourselves. Even if we take nine steps along the path of conciliation, the Hindus will never take the one that remains. It is the same with every attempt to reach understanding with Hinduism as it is with attempts to reach understanding with communism: either we ourselves will be swallowed up or else no one will listen to us. All our attempts at Christian reinterpretations of *karma*, *advaita*, etc. are doomed to ineffectiveness. They prepare the way for Christian thought in India in the future but are useless for attracting present-day India to Christ.

Scientific education will help the Hindu mind to free itself from its sense of the relativity of things and may help to prepare the way. Meanwhile,

14. Cp. the prayer BU I,3,28), so often used by Swamiji in his liturgy:
asato mā sad gamaya "From unreality lead me to reality;
tamaso mā jyotir gamaya from darkness lead me to light;
mrityor mā amritam gamaya from death lead me to immortality."

a movement toward Christianity will only ever happen in India as a result of the irresistible attraction of Christian holiness. Not a hidden holiness like that of teachers and nurses, but pure holiness. When the Lord wills India to become Christian, he will inspire a Christian to go to Arunachala, for example, and above all will give him the authentically Indian mystical grace which he bestowed on Ramana Maharshi. There is no question of playing at being a miniature Ramana. It is not by dint of fasting, silence, solitude, concentration that anyone comes to the sense of the greatest depth. When the Lord brings forth in a Christian soul—(feeling [...] profoundly Indian)—this sense of the greatest depth, then of itself this inner absorption will free it from the natural needs to eat, sleep, speak, etc.; peace will flow out to those who come in contact with the Christian sadhu. [...]

But all this cannot be artificially set up, and does not come at the end of our *sādhana*s [spiritual exercises], whatever they may be. It is purely the work of God.

It will not be monastic institutions, more or less perfect in both Christian and Indian terms, that will reveal Christ to India. Only Christian Ramanas will do it. All that monks can do is prepare the way for these Ramanas...

Evening, strange and impressive meeting with Sri Poonja [Harilal], from Lucknow¹⁵, who told me: "it is rare to meet people like you. But you should climb higher. Leave prayer for the stage of meditation..." He will no doubt return tomorrow. (...)

March 14, Saturday evening

Second visit from Harilal. Two hours of conversation and silence—very impressive. "Leave aside study for thought, thought for the void, the void for what is beyond the void. Why learn languages? What language do you need to converse with the Self?"

He lives his advaita.(...) He spoke as one who knew. (...)

March 15, Laetare Sunday [Mid-Lent Sunday]

Christmas, Easter, are the awakening of the Self. This morning when I woke up I was thinking of this "awakening" of the Self of Christ, entering the world [*ingrediens mundum*] at Christmas, going to the Father [*ingrediens Patrem*] at Easter.

The work of the Self within me is not perceptible to my consciousness, for it is not of the order of the *manas* [mind]. If my inner I attracts any soul, my outward [*bahir*] I is unaware of it. Act at the level of the inner I [*antar-aham*]. What do words matter for communication? One who has reached the Self no longer communicates by words. What he says outwardly by words, he communicates inwardly by his silence. Words are only useful at the level of *māyā*. The monk has gone beyond that.

The world in which I move is what I make it. I meet the great souls whom I wish to meet, whom I am capable of meeting. An intense desire is

15. Cp. the account of this meeting in *The Secret*, ch.4. His visitor is there called by his first name, Harilal.

always fulfilled. Anyone who does not meet great souls is one who is unworthy to perceive them.

Whoever has peace in himself brings peace in the world. [...] The monk does not have to act as a citizen through his vote or as a soldier through his gun, he acts only on the mental and spiritual level. But there he is all-powerful. The Vedic gods trembled before the ancient *rishis*.

(...)

March 16, Monday

Invited to the home of Sundarammal, the neighbour of the "Silent nun," on the occasion of the Telugu New Year. (...) ¹⁶

(...)¹⁷

An experience of the infinite solitude of God, not of solitude with God (...).

(...) An experience at once terrifying and beatifying, of which John of the Cross sings in his poems on the mystical night and the Living Flame. An experience which was known so deeply by the medieval Rhineland mystics, Ruysbroeck, Tauler, and Master Eckhart especially, whose formulas are sometimes so disconcerting, if not troubling, when they try to translate them into words.

(...)

What a condition is mine at Arunachala! Yet much simpler than last year, much more "natural", much more in the *nirguna* [the unqualified, transcendent state], while last year it was more in the idea of *nirguna*. The underlying condition is indefinable—at once the same and not the same as what has happened at intervals. [...]

Why are the days at Arunachala the fullest ones of my life?

(...)¹⁸

March 19, Thursday

Feast of St Joseph. This feast was incomprehensible to me until this very morning. Too lost in the *nirguna* of pure being [*sanmātra*]. Last evening I said Vespers without any relish. And then after Vespers I wrote what is above, the Incarnation appeared to me in a new light.¹⁹

March 21, St Benedict

(...)

I seem to be experiencing a deepening of my condition of last year. I feel myself very, very little Hindu in the *saguna* [condition of being qualified, the exterior manifestation of religion], though last year I felt it a

16. Cp. the account of this meeting in *The Secret*, ch.4.

17. A text on non-duality follows, which includes the next two paragraphs. It was rewritten later in *Guhantara*, ch.3 ("Au-dedans"); still later Swamiji revised this chapter, of which this section was published in *Initiation*, 57-64.

18. A text follows which the author revised and used in *Guhantara* in chapter 4 ("Cheminements intérieures"); cp. *Intériorité*, p.48,49,55.

19. For the continuation, see *Guhantara*, ch.4. Not in *Intériorité*.

good deal. The temple no longer attracts me. The mountain attracts me, but to its centre, not in its outward appearance. I feel no need for *pūja* directed towards Christ in a Christianized Hindu *saguna*. No more attraction, or hardly any, to the *Gloria* in the morning or the *Phos hilaron* in the evening.

Entry within. More and more free from the external, from distinctions. Perhaps last year I had more the *idea* of *advaita*, of the *sanmātra*—and this idea more than the *res* [thing itself]?

(...)

Am I fooling myself, because of the psychological rest afforded by my daily descent to Sujata's house²⁰? This life seems to me this year so very natural. It seems to me that in total solitude at Yelu Sunai [in Tamil] I would be perfectly happy and peaceful and calm.

More and more I dread Shantivanam, and the 'starting' that may be caused by the arrival of Fr Francis Mahicu...

Where is the Lord leading me!

(...)

This morning I gave Sujāta a card with a picture of St Benedict, and wrote on the back:

"In memory of the feast of St Benedict at Arunachala, 1953

—of that Benedict who, when only a child of sixteen years, one day left the city of Rome, the home of his father, and the schools of his Masters, to go off and hide—learned ignoramus, or unlearned sage—at Subiaco in a rough mountain cave, where for three years, unknown to all, alone in the sight of the Supreme Witness, he set himself to live with himself."

(...)

March 23, Monday morning Yelu Sunai.²¹

On entering this place that is so isolated, so unspoiled, I heard the words singing within me: This shall be my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein [*Hacc requies mea in saeculum saeculi. Hic habitabo quoniam elegi eam*; Ps. 132:14].

How will God's will be revealed to me in the time ahead?

Have I noted in these pages how admirably the body is bearing up this time? I feel, apart from a very few days, in better form than I have been anywhere else for a long time. And yet in general the diet is rather Spartan...

"Dare to make the final leap into pure *advaita*"—so the voice continually whispers to me, the voice which, while it is always singing in the depth of my heart, the other day used this Sri Ram of L. [Harilal] to give me the message outwardly as well. In fact, I am more and more distant from *saguna* Hinduism. For the time being I am playing with *advaita*. I am like someone on the point of taking a swim in the sea, who reassures himself, dips a toe in the water, and indefinitely postpones the dive which alone will give peace. I try to understand my *advaita* as a Christian and a Westerner, and

20. During this month he went down every day to Sujata's house to say Mass for her mother.

21. "Seven Springs", a hermitage near the summit of Arunachala, where he was tempted to settle; see *The Secret*, ch.5.

once at the other end of my experiments, of my tortuous reasonings... How complex and *an-advaita* [non-advaita] "my" *advaita* is! So then!

(...)

March 24

First Vespers of the Annunciation. Mary conceived the Saviour in her mind before her body [*prius mente quam corpore*]. Jesus comes from the depth of Mary. From the greatest divine depth of the Virgin Mary = God the Mother. The Self becomes in Mary the Mother of God. *Parā Śakti*.

March 25

Long visit to Velsami(?) the sannyasi of Yavalakundru, who certainly has equanimity. Native of Tiruchendur, taught by his father, left all his relations more than twenty years ago, leaving them in ignorance of where he is. (Never married.) Almost 12 years in the mango cave, then 9 here. His cell filled with holy pictures—for visitors, he explained, who need pictures, signs to adore. But the sannyasi should [...] within the *Nirguna* [the unqualified Absolute].

March 26

Day at Isanya-madam.²²

(...)²³

March 29, Palm Sunday

Went almost by chance to the temple this morning. This time I am no longer attracted to it in any way. I claim to be the Christian monk of the place. Well, the Ahirankal mandapa was open, and therefore the Patala Linga²⁴. I had not been back there since my first visit one evening in November 1951. I went inside, into the inner chamber, and spent a long time there in recollection, sitting right beside the *linga*. The *linga* holds no interest for me, now remembrance of the young Ramana in his *enstasis* was everything. Indeed not so much Ramana himself, as the depth in which Ramana was then so deeply held... that depth which is mine!

Completely within, but in what unsuspected depths of the within. Not with the eyes, nor with the other senses does one meet the Lord, the Self, and no more is he met in the mind, not even in the consciousness. There exists in the depth of oneself a very deep place which continues to exist during dreamless sleep [*sushupti*], and is inaccessible to all superficial consciousness. It is in this abyss, in this Patala that the encounter takes place.

Then how can we know this encounter? The eyes cannot perceive it, nor the ears, no more can thought, or even non-thought. But when the

22. See *The Secret*, ch.6.

23. Text incorporated into *Guhantara*, ch.4; published in *Intériorité*, pp.57-60.

24. The *linga* in an underground chamber in the temple of Arunachalesvara where the young Ramana withdrew in silence after coming to Tiruvannamalai. Cp. *The Secret*, ch.5.

encounter takes place, there is something "new" which makes the entire being vibrate. What is it? (cp. Kena III.)

But how can the encounter itself be perceived?—either it silences all the activities of one's being; this is *nirvikalpa*;—or it inspires it in a new way; and then *aveśam* [possession, absorption] is manifested through the [...] of scripture, work...all the charisms of which Paul speaks.

Liturgical chants mean little to me now; even the chants of Passiontide, which were so absorbing a year ago in the cave of Vanatti, no longer appeal to me... hardly even meditation on the Passion. The Passion, the Resurrection are the return of Jesus within the Self; he had come forth from the Self for his work; from now on he remains in the Self. This is the great mystery of Good Friday. To accept total immersion in the Self.

This morning nonetheless I hummed the blessing of the palms before my Mass and sang the *Gloria laus*²⁵... Nostalgia for a time that has passed, and which henceforth is no longer mine; like childhood joys to which the adult can no longer return... The abyss has too thoroughly engulfed me, the abyss of the Self, the abyss of Emptiness [*Sūnyatā*]...

Like the Hebrews in this morning's first reading:²⁶ Why have you brought me out of Egypt? Why have you deprived me of the meats of Egypt? Because now, even if I wanted, I could no longer swallow them. What a power Arunachala is—but what a desert between Egypt and the Promised Land, the Land of the Self, of *advaita*... Horeb shines as I go past... and the water flows out sometimes... but no longer possessing the joys of devotion [*bhakti*], not yet transformed by pure bliss [*ānandamātra*]...

The nostalgic songs in the evening of my young neighbour, Saccidananda, youth whose call for the joys of the world that have been renounced turns into a call for the deep *ānanda* that is still only glimpsed...²⁷

March 30, Monday

Last day on the mountain: tomorrow I shall have to leave! Why is my heart totally set on Arunachala?

Last evening I returned from 7:00 to 8:30 to the Pātāla Linga. Very moving. Descent to the very depths...

The sun rises for us, the sun sets for us, whereas in relation to the earth the Sun is immobile... So we say that the light [the *prakāśan*, the *jyotis*] appears in the depth of the soul and there disappears ... whereas it is always there. It is we who awaken to the Self and not he who awakens to us. One who is freed from the terrestrial quasi-attraction of this body, the material body [*sthūla śarīra*], constantly has the Sun at its zenith, he no longer rotates with the earth ...

The scholastic idea of a consecration in solemn profession, the monk being not only juridically but essentially incapable of possessing things, of carnal union... How deeply this is also in Hindu *sannyāsa*. The *sannyāsi*

25. The hymn to Christ the King, "All glory, laud and honour", in the liturgy of the day.

26. Cp. Exodus 16:3 (quotation influenced by 17:3).

27. Cp. Secret, ch.3.

being set free in his ego from his *ahamkāra*, to what in him would any kind of possession adhere, whether of a thing or of a person?

(...)

Good Friday is the withdrawal of Jesus into the Self. Having arisen from the Self, returning within the Self: "I came forth from the Father; I come to you, Father," [*Ego a Patre exivi, ad te Pater venio*; cp. John 17:1-13]. But meditation on the return of Jesus within the Self cannot be abstracted from the sufferings which accompanied this Return...

(...)

This evening, a last look at "my people," a last recollection in my *garbha*²⁸, my *Pātāla-guhā* [underground cave]. Tomorrow I will no longer be here [in Tamil]. And yet is this true? Insofar as I have penetrated to my depth and encountered the Self, the absolute, *akshara*, *nitya*, *aham-aham*²⁹, I cannot leave Arunachala, neither my mountain, nor my people. My people—in any case I no longer feel the need to pray for them or offer sacrifice in their name; am I not my people?

And this year besides I no longer feel the pressing need to prostrate before Arunachala. I have climbed to its summit, and I live in its heart, *hridi*, in its *guhā*, *guhāyam*. From now on in what direction should I prostrate? At the Pātāla Linga, last night, there was no room to make a the *sashtāngam* [prostration of the body stretched out on the ground]. So from now on I will never again leave Arunachala, not so much that my heart will remain in the cleft of the Holy Mountain—but that the Mountain of Arunachala, the Sign, the linga of Fire, will have passed into me...

The day when the work of Arunachala is completed within me, I will no longer feel the need for a time, or for times at the place people call Arunachala... And this year, new depths seem to have been hollowed out within me. Perhaps not so much of the novelty, of the emotion felt last year. It is so natural ...

The monk has no more desires, no more will [*icchā*] in himself, not even the desire for Arunachala. One who has passed into the *nirguna* leaves behind the form which led him to the *nirguna*, the raft, as the Buddha said. To light the lamp of the *sahasrāra*³⁰, you need a match. You don't keep the match; if you let it stay alight in your fingers, it burns your fingers too. From the Temple Linga, move on to the Linga of nature, whether it is of Fire, *tejas*, or even of *ākāśa*³¹, it is still a Linga. And for the *sannyasi* the day comes, must come, when the Linga itself must vanish, *Satori*... No room left for anything, anything; the mysterious OM itself is fulfilled in its resonance,

28. The maternal womb; the dark holy of holies in Hindu temples, the "cave".

29. *akshara*: indivisible; *nitya*: eternal; *aham*: I; *aham-aham*: refers to the "mantra" recommended by Ramana Maharshi in the search for "Who am I?"

30. *sahasrāra*: the lotus with a thousand petals at the top of the head, through which the light rises at the moment of enlightenment.

31. *ākāśa*: empty space, ether. Allusion to a tradition in Tamilnadu that there are five specially venerated temples where the *linga* is present in the form of the five elements. The linga at Arunachala is said to consist of fire (*tejas*), the one at Chidambaram of pure space (*ākāśa*).

and this is the *bindu* [dot that crowns the OM] which is the final step leading to the “beyond” of the *kevala*! *Todo nada*³² !...

The touchstone of entry into the *kevala* is an equanimity towards all creatures, towards all their acts, and especially towards all the repercussions these acts may have upon us. The proof that *ahamkāra* has disappeared is only then given. Whether it is a matter of Kadirvel [the watchman who looked after the caves], of the radio, of the hour “in this world” with Mrs C. ... or of the alarm-clock that stops, or of shortage of rice... Hunger and thirst, the [...] of sleep and the rest will be quite ready to be brought to heel on the day when, *ahamkāra* having vanished, nothing will any longer appear except in the light of the *kevala*...

OM śāntih śāntih śāntih

An extraordinary day.

Śānta ānandam [Peaceful Joy]

Why are the high points of my whole life reached at Arunachala!

And so far as I can still speak to the Lord, I abandon myself to the mystery in which I am plunged, and which will no doubt be revealed “in the fullness of time,” [...] the *Saccidananda*.

But *Shantivanam*, the work of the Hermits of *Saccidananda*, henceforth interests me so little. *Arunachala* has caught me. I have understood silence—and also what is beyond the silence, emptiness [*śūnyata*].

And also what is beyond praise, what is beyond adoration, what is beyond prayer. At the summit of *Arunachala* there is no longer room for any gesture, whether of the body or of the soul. Then, BEING alone is possible, pure being, pure consciousness, pure bliss [*sanmātra*, *cinmātra*, *ānandamātra*].

Last year while here I gained a theoretical understanding of Hindu *sannyasa*, and with it and in it of the monastic life in its wholeness and depth. Now *sannyasa* is no longer a thought, a “concept,” but an “inborn summons,” a “basic need”; the only state that suits the depth into which I have entered, that reveals it, realizes it.

The body especially is not yet up to it; once its influence has reached the body as well, giving freedom from what is psychic, from *ahamkāra*, from the need for food, rest, etc., then the port can be forgotten, and also the poor wave, in the great ocean of the stripping, of the emancipation, of the solitude of a *Ramana* or a *Sadā Shiva Brahman*³³ ...

32. “All, nothing”. Cp. the verses introducing *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* by St John of the Cross.

33. *Sadashiva Brahmendra*, a seventeenth century saint, who lived on the banks of the *Kaveri*, and whose life greatly impressed *Swamiji*. He renounced the world on the very day of his marriage and became a disciple of the *Shankaracharya* of *Kanchipuram*, who initiated him into *sannyasa*. He became a scholar and logician, until the day when his guru reprimanded him, saying: “You know everything except how to keep silent.” From then on he became silent (*muni*), living on alms and wandering along the banks of the *Kaveri*. He entered voluntarily into *samādhi* at *Nerur*, allowing himself to be buried alive by his disciples. He left writings and hymns in Sanskrit which are still sung by his devotees in *Tamilnadu*. *Swami Abhishiktananda* visited his *samādhi* (tomb) several times (see 30.12.55). Cp. R.Krishnamurthy, *The Saints of the Cauvery Delta*, New

April 1 At *Siluvaigiri*, after *Arunachala*, with nostalgia.

Insofar as the monk has understood his mission, he no longer has any interest in a mission... But may this not be laziness in disguise?—Is a monk, a priest, etc., a man of the “Depth”? That alone is what counts.

(...)

April 3, Good Friday

The day of Jesus’ Return within the Self, within the “Depth” from which he came forth, by Whom he was sent (...) ³⁴

April 4, Holy Saturday

I have never felt so far from “Time” [the liturgical “Season”—“Temps” covers both meanings] as this year. Even before coming to India there were many verses of the Psalms which no longer spoke to me. And that became more and more pronounced... To enjoy a liturgical Holy Week, one should not have kept Lent at *Arunachala*. To try to reconcile the “Time” of this place with the eternal [*nitya*] of *Arunachala* is very hard for the poor head which no longer knows what it is to “think” before God—can one still say “before God”?

Easter is terribly a matter of “Time”. It is the *nitya* seen through the distorting lenses of “Time”. More and more I had come to appreciate Easter as the return of the Lord to the bosom of the Father. But, imprisoned by my categories, I had never dared to carry this through to the end. It is at None³⁵ on Good Friday that this awakening takes place. What has the assuming or reassuming of the Body to do with this marvellous process? [...]

April 5, Easter Day

(Notes on the liturgy of the day.)

April 6, Easter Monday

(Note on the unity of God, being, creation.)

Shantivanam

April 7-11

Terribly distracting days at *Shantivanam*. Visit from Brother Philippe, then two storms, winds, rain, repairs! What a letdown after *Arunachala*.

April 12, Quasimodo [Second Sunday of Easter]

Today a brief respite. (There follows a poem reproduced in *The Secret of Arunachala*, ch.3, note 9.)

April 13

What is Easter? What is the Mass? What is Sunday? Anniversaries presuppose that you are still in Time. What is an anniversary, a particular

34. A text revised by the author of which some paragraphs were incorporated in *Guhantara*, ch.4. (“Cheminevements intérieurs”); published in *Intériorité*, p.50ff, printed in *Intériorité*, pp.50-52.

35. “None” refers to the ninth hour (i.e., 3 p.m.), the hour of Christ’s death on the cross (Mark 15:34), and when the last of the “Little Hours” of the Breviary between Lauds and Vespers is appointed to be said.

recollection, for someone who has penetrated into eternity and passed beyond the frontiers of Time, the whole domain of "limitation," including that of individuality?

(...)

June 5, Friday after Corpus Christi

Insofar as the Eucharist draws us outwards, it is an obstacle; it is an essential help, insofar as it brings us within ourselves, and leads us to the Self, to oneself.

The Eucharist is essentially food. Even when I prostrate before the tabernacle, it is still an eating that takes place through "spiritual communion."

The Eucharist is not there to take us out of ourselves into itself, but to lead us into ourselves. It is in the "depth" that the union of love itself, the essential fruit of the Eucharist, is completed. And it is in the depth that fullness of spirit [*pinguedo spiritus*] is realized.

The Hindu is right, God is within, in what is most deep, most inward, most "self" of oneself. It is not a matter of going out of oneself, going outside in order to meet God, like someone who would travel northwards by the entire great circle route to meet his brother in the south, who is separated from him merely by a door... Come out of yourself by the inward path, in order to reach the Self. The whole work of creation and of redemption has no other purpose than to reveal to us this "within". The eating [*editio*] of the sacrament itself is the fulfilment and consummation of all the Lord's work.

But apart from the work of creation and of redemption, no entry within is possible. Because their own "within" was closed for human beings, by the fact of their creaturely nature, their insertion in flesh, and their having fallen into the pit of sin; the three interlocking forms of evil.

July 23 to August 10

(Considerations on the Trinity, creation, etc., reworked in *Saccidananda*)

August 26

(...)

When in any trouble, small or great, I cry out, I entreat God. And it comforts me to invoke the Lord or his Angels. Otherwise I am content with "being," or in less "kevalic" [i.e., monistic, pure] but also less precise language, with being in a divine way, being in God. So do I come to myself at such moments? No. I fall below myself, I come back to a stage left behind in my journey toward my centre. With respect to this centre to which I am heading there are flashes of light, sometimes intellectual, sometimes mystical. And there is an almost normal state in which these flashes have established me. I am much more truly myself when I recollect myself in the *atman* than when I call out for help to God or to human beings. The fact that I call out for help shows that I am not yet firmly settled in the natural, spontaneous state [*sahaja*]. Otherwise in the bus the

other day I would have controlled my reaction to the Kaveri flood, otherwise I would not be literally "obsessed" by the situation at Shantivanam.

So also my habitual attachment to Christianity. So also my daydreaming about Hinduism. Daydreaming only confirms my inability to realize. The *delectatio morosa*³⁶ of theologians. I am really myself only in *advaitic kevala*.

(...)

September 19

What does it mean, this agony of having found one's peace far from the place and form of one's original commitments, at the very frontiers of Holy Church? What does it mean, to feel that the only obstacle to final peace and *ananda* is one's attachment to that place, that form; to that *mythos*? Who is there on either side of the frontier to whom I can cry out my anguish—who, if he belongs to this side, will not take fright and anathematize me, and if he is on the other side, will not take an all too human delight because I am joining him?...

What use would it be to go to Europe? What use in going to Rome in search of ecclesial authorization³⁷. When Saint-Exupéry had lost his way and was flying a course between Orion and the Great Bear, he could only laugh a Claudelian laugh when a petty airport official radioed to him that he was fined because he had banked too close to the hangars... So it is with the letters of Fr Abbot.

So when shall I dare to renounce what is at once a help and a hindrance, and then, naked within as well as without, plunge into this Self which already engulfs me?

A trip to Rome is very complicated. How much simpler it would be to go up to Arunachala and never come down again...

(...)

September 24

The three successive mysteries of the beyond...³⁸

Shantivanam

September 25

What gnaws away at my body as well as my mind is this: after having found in *advaita* a peace and a bliss never experienced before, to live with the dread that perhaps, that most probably, all that my latent Christianity suggests to me is nonetheless true, and that therefore *advaita* must be sacrificed to it... In committing myself totally to *advaita*, if Christianity is true, I risk committing myself to a false path for eternity. All my customary

36. Dwelling with pleasure on subjects considered to be evil; sins of thought.

37. This concerns the renewal of his indult of excommunication. In a letter to his father (2.10.53) he says: Father Abbot "ought to deal with the renewal of my 'indult' for being outside the monastery. It seems that I must myself go to Rome to settle the matter. As if I had 1000 dollars at my disposal..."

38. Texts from September 24 were incorporated in *Guhantara*, ch.4, and published in *Intériorité*, pp.68ff.

explanations of hell and the rest are powerless against a reality that exists in a way unknown to me... Supposing in *advaita* I was only finding myself and not God? And yet, it is only since I made the personal discovery of *advaita* at Arunachala that I have recovered peace and a zest for life.

What *guru* will enlighten me?

I pray as a Christian, but I am well aware that all those words are external. The only truth is *quietas*³⁹ at its actual source, within. The *guru* comes at the moment when you are ready, says Hindu wisdom. What is the *guru*, ultimately, but the outward projection of this thirst for the Self?

Why dream of reaching *sahaja*? *Sahaja* is by its very definition your eternal condition. And is not your anxiety caused by your refusal to remain in this eternal condition, incapable as you think you are of freeing yourself from "time" and "place"?

Naked both within and without like Sadashiva Brahman, fixed within—*atmanishtha*.

(...)

September 27

From now on I have tasted too much of *advaita* to be able to recover the "Gregorian" peace of a Christian monk. Long ago I tasted too much of that "Gregorian" peace not to be anguished in the midst of my *advaita*.

Evening

The Self is everywhere, as much in those who do not understand me as in those who do, in those who condemn me as in those who admire me, in Father Abbot and the Roman Congregations as much as in Ramana and my friends at Arunachala, as much at Kergonan as at Arunachala, as much in St Augustine as in the Upanishads...

For the Sage, difference no longer exists; he is not even one who sees the unity beneath the difference, he "is not aware" of difference itself. Do we not say that God does not know evil? He neither loves nor hates, neither desires nor fears. His peace [*sānti*] and his *ananda* have a transcendence that goes beyond all human conceiving [*exsuperans omnem sensum*].

Events are the play of the Self to lead me to the Self, to "myself".

This afternoon at Jayapuram I thought that if Father Abbot recalled me, however harsh his words, I would answer: "The Self is manifest in all creatures and all circumstances. That thou art [*Tat tvam asi*]. For one who has penetrated to the Self, difference no longer exists. I have learned at Arunachala that I am still at Arunachala when I am at Kergonan, since I am Arunachala, since I am, *aham*. *Māyā* does not matter. The games played by the Self are manifold. But they all aim at plunging us into the Self."

Circumstances do not affect the Self, but only this body, this psychic entity, which in time I call mine, and of which outside time I am unaware.

What does it matter to the Self, what does it matter to me if this body is placed by Roman or abbatial command in such and such a place, etc. If

39. In monastic parlance the word *quies* is associated with *otium* and *vacatio*. It refers to the state of rest and peace of mind in contemplation.

this body is hungry, if this body suffers, "I" am not affected by it. It is a matter of *karma*, of circumstances, games played by the Self, with a view to liberating itself little by little from this body, at once gross and subtle.

And what does it matter to be Christian, what does it matter to be Hindu? Is it not *karma* and circumstances that have placed each one in his way? Faiths and ways of worship concern the mind [*manas*] and the body: a mind to think God, a tongue to sing of him, a body to adore him. As the Shaivite catechism says so marvellously.

(...)

This morning I was thinking that if I could be convinced that Ramana was right, nothing could keep me from shutting myself away at Arunachala in total poverty, free and naked like Sada Shiva, or else taking to the roads, silent, stripped of everything, immersed within... Then I would no longer have that feeling of equivocation, of wearing a mask at once of Hinduism and of poverty, that greatly embarrasses me when I live among Hindus.

Am I not more or less attached in a human way to *advaita*, to my experience of *advaita*? Attached because it is exotic, daring, rare, etc. With a human fear that this *advaita* must finally yield to a higher truth which would in fact only be that which I have quite simply believed until now... But how can we ever suppress the human element in "our reasons", our attachments?

How much of the human is surely present also in my attachment to Christianity? And could it not be said that this *human* attachment is what keeps me from taking the definitive step of liberation?

Beneath the human wrapping there is something very much deeper in both of these attachments which torment me and tear me apart—on the final boundary where the two oceans (Hinduism and Christianity) mix their waters dangerously and disturbingly together.

What compass can hereafter give direction to one who is standing right at the Pole? Where is the East and where is the West? Where does the sun rise and where does it set in a six month day and a six month night? He has transcended all directions, the ten, the *disai* [directions, Tamil].—So it is with one who has penetrated to the Self.

October (...)⁴⁰

November 3, Tuesday

Evening, departure for Arunachala.⁴¹

(...)

November 4

Mass by Arutpal Tirtham.

40. Reflections on being, the creation and the human person, incorporated in *Gubantara*, ch.6 ("Ehieh asher Ehieh"); and printed in *Intériorité*, pp.97-102.

41. Swamiji remained there until December 27.

November 13

Had a striking visit yesterday from the *avadhūta*⁴² of Tirthamalai (Salem). He knew Ramana before his mother came to stop his *tapas*. Had lived at the Virupaksha cave and for the past thirty-five years has lived in solitude on the mountain at Tirthamalai, one mile away from the village, feeling neither hunger nor cold, and living for the past ten years almost solely on water. Desiccated body. Beautiful face, beaming with peace. Gentle, slow speech. Long hair falling down to his waist. Does not know how—or does not wish—to read. Only one book: the within; only one *sami* [Lord], indestructible [in Tamil], the within. “Why so many books?” he asked me. Was this not the Self who took this human form to repeat to me the invitation to silence, poverty, nakedness?⁴³

November 20-21

The night of Dipam.⁴⁴ The holy mountain has revealed its light.
(...)

November 26 (Thursday)

(...)
Tuesday the 24th at midday, the Self, taking the outward form of a thief, freed me from my money...invitation to a real *sannyasi* life...
Wednesday evening at the Pātāla Linga.

November 27 (Friday)

Yesterday at midday, a miserable attempt at begging my rice [*bhiksha*]. Encouraged, made to promise to do it by Arunachala Ayer, the temple *sādhu*. He sent me off behind a group of other *sādhus*. Once we got beyond the first house, they asked me to go and beg elsewhere. Then I went to the three streets that they pointed out. Courage failed me when it came to knocking on the doors...

Today at midday I ate at the house of V. Ayer, where Bhagavān received his first *bhiksha* the day after he arrived on August 1, 1896.

Long conversation last evening with A. Shastri, who has been a disciple of Bhagavan and of Ganapati Muni⁴⁵ for the past forty-five years. Bhagavan has practically no real disciples. Only two or three have shared in his experience with the help of Ganapati Muni. Ganapati arrived at his experience after coming to know Bhagavan. *He was ripe*. A ‘flash’ from the one to the other, and mutual enrichment.

Bhagavan was greater than Shankara. Shankara understood *so’ham*—I am He; for Bhagavan there is only *aham*—I. The “ashes” of duality that still appeared in Shankara were never there in Bhagavan. Bhagavan’s experience required years of “trance” before his body could be brought back to normal.

42. Ascetic who lives outside all rules, usually naked.

43. See the account in *The Secret*, ch.3.

44. See the description of this festival in *The Secret*, ch.6.

45. Ganapati Muni, one of the first and closest disciples of Sri Ramana Maharshi. He was also a poet and Sanskrit scholar. He composed the *Sri Ramana Gītā*, which contains the master’s teaching in Sanskrit verses.

He went into trance at Arunachala; a flash occurred like lightning in the presence of the temple *Linga*. Even if he had wished, he was incapable of speech, etc. during the early years, until Ganapati came, who while in *tapas* on the slopes of Arunachala, had a kind of intuition of Bhagavān and came to him and ordered him to speak and reveal himself.

No experience would be possible, according to A. Shastri, without the entry into trance produced by the awakening of the *kundalinī*⁴⁶. Grace, *arul*, Bhagavān apparently told him, is in reality nothing else than the *kundalinī śakti*. The grace needed for the supreme experience.

To succeed in *ātma-vicāra* [the quest for the self], be one-pointed [*ekāgra*]. Seek the place of origin. Do not fear the revolution in body and mind that it will bring about, which is terrifying. Seek with the eagerness of someone who has lost a treasure and cannot rest until he has recovered it. ‘Restless quest’.

Nothing negative: I am not this, I am not that. Be positive: focus on that. Concentrate the mind on any thought whatever, he also told me, the important thing is concentration. (In practice he reintegrated Patanjali⁴⁷ for me with Bhagavan.)

How could Bhagavan be a *bhakta* on occasion? Is God not a *bhakta* in his devotees? Is not all that the wonderful play of *līla*? Ramana, for the sake of his *devotees*, put himself on their level and taught them by his example the *bhakti* [devotion] that was appropriate to their souls⁴⁸.

Ramana and his body. Certainly the connection was severed, the knots of the heart [*hridaya granthī*]⁴⁹. A simple garment which one takes off or puts on at will.

(...)

The hermit in his cave has not yet made the total ‘surrender’. He has settled down there, under cover. I was too comfortably “settled” in the little house of Vadalur Ammal. That is why the “Self” took the form of a thief to unsettle me and invite me to this more complete stripping. I would have completely missed the point, if I had been content to have a ‘money-order’ sent so as to recover my position of two days ago.

Some day I will have to accept being in the temple, only retaining a “room” *simply for the Mass*, and for the rest living here and there, looking for a corner for recollection, going out every midday as a genuine mendicant monk [*bhikshu*]...not even possessing as my own “my” solitude and “my” cave.

(...)

46. The “coiled serpent”, energy at the same time cosmic and psychic, which is present in the human body and has to be “awakened”.

47. Author of the *Yoga-Sūtra*, the classical text on Yoga.

48. The *bhakta* is one who follows the path of *bhakti* (devotional love).

49. “The knots of the heart”, an expression used in the Upanishads to designate the bonds and complexes which shackle the human heart and prevent its liberation. Cp. Mund. Up.II.2.9; Katha Up.VI.15.

November 29, Advent Sunday

Entered silence [*mauna*] at the Patala Linga at 10:30. I plan to keep it up from now on except on Thursdays.

The *sannyāsi* is free, free. I don't like being tied to one house on set days for getting my meals there. Free. You are not truly free unless you have enough money, or else nothing at all.

(...)

Nowhere else have people ever penetrated into the mystery of being as they have in India. (...) ⁵⁰

(...)

December 2

Christmas is the discovery by humanity in the person of the newborn Jesus of the Father's *aham* in the deepest recess of the cave of the heart.

There is only one feast, the naked feast of the *kevala*, of the *sat*, *kevala matra*, of which nothing can be said. The feast of the discovery in the depth of oneself of the solitary I [*aham kevala matra*], the taste of which vanishes in the very act of discovering it. Total night, pure emptiness [*śūnyatā*]. Nothing to fill mind or heart, only naked being.

(...) ⁵¹

December 4

(...)

The first task of the human being is to enter within, and himself to encounter *himself*. If anyone has not met himself, how could he meet God? You do not meet yourself apart from God. You do not meet God apart from yourself.

So long as you have not met yourself, in your inner nakedness—a nakedness still more shocking than your outward nakedness—you live in a world of your own making, of your own imagination, of your '*mind*'. Yourself, the world and God are a dream that you are dreaming, and not reality. Anyone who has not seen himself naked, will think that everyone has come into the world wearing pants and a pair of socks.

The God adored by one who has not met himself in the nude is an idol.

The neighbour approached by one who has not yet met himself is a projection of his outward self, *ahamkaric* [egocentric]...

But the approach to God as an idol and the approach to one's neighbour, the path of loving devotion [*bhakti mārga*] and the path of action [*karma mārga*], are also ways of purification for one who has been enlightened; even for the others, it is a starting point. So we must not be too harsh with those for whom life only gets its meaning when they are singing "the holy name of Bhagavan".

50. Themes incorporated in *Guhantara*, ch.6 (Ehieh asher Ehieh), and published (in part) in *Intériorité*, pp.97-102.

51. Paragraphs incorporated in *Guhantara*, ch.6, and printed in *Intériorité*, pp.91-94.

That was how the *Gopis* loved Krishna.

And this helps us understand the holy women who followed the Lord Jesus.

Ramana's ashram helps me to understand the Gospel.

The primary thing is *atma-drishṭi* [the sight of the Self], that shining forth in the depth of oneself of what is not contingent, not related, not temporal, not spatial... Find in oneself the source of being in itself...

December 5, Saturday

Mass of Our Lady, commemoration of St Sabbas, Palestinian anchorite.

Last evening *Śrī cakra pūjā* at the ashram. (...) ⁵²

Śakti is *māyā*. *Māyā* is the self-emptying [*kenosis*] of the Spirit, the Spirit self-emptied in its evolutionary function... But *māyā* is also *śakti* in its function of involution, of returning to the one. Dispersal in the *aneka* [the multiple], concentration in the *a-dvaita*.

Use every means to grasp this force of *śakti* permeating the body, the mind, the world. (...) In it, in this very diffusion, in its evolution, grasp its power of involution, of re-concentration, of re-integrating in the non-dual. In its exstasis, grasp its enstasis and cling to it. That is the meaning of reciting the *bija-akshara* [seed-syllables, monosyllabic *mantras*], the thousand names, then the three-hundred [of the Devi], (...) ⁵³

Śakti is the Spirit, the power causing the universe to evolve in its *kenosis*; the power bringing back all to the Son and to the Father in its enstasis. The world veiled in order to unveil...

Māyā, *śakti*, scatters and reunites, disintegrates and reintegrates.

The mystery of the Virgin, the *śakti* in whom the universe gives birth to the Son. My Mass of the Virgin Genetrix this morning completed last evening's *pūjā*. Also the flowers that were offered last evening surrounded my altar this morning. The sacrament, the great incantation, the only one that is effective: *Ave verum corpus natum de Maria virgine*. [Hail, true body born of the Virgin Mary!]

Discover at the centre of yourself the source of yourself.

Discover in the source of yourself, the Self at its source.

Discover the source in yourself of the Self in its source.

Are then the Hindu priests able by their incantations to obtain the *śakti*, to obtain the power of the Spirit, so that the flowers offered to *Śrī Chakra*, the rice, the cake and the milk, the ashes and the *kumkum* [vermillion] may be bearers of the power of reintegration?

Grace is the turning of *māyā* into *śakti*, of the power of extasis into the power of enstasis. In this sense Bhagavan said that grace is the *kundalini śakti*.

(...)

52. Cp the account of this ceremony in *The Secret*, ch.2.

53. He is referring to the 1000 names recited at the *Sri Chakra puja* in the *Lalita sahasranāma* and to the 300 in the *Lalita trisati*.

Do I have the right to ask that his [Ramana's] spirit may descend upon me, and that, in the new light in which he now contemplates the truth, he may consent in me and through me to fulfil his mission, which he now knows to be incomplete... To be his Christian fulfilment. To be in communion of grace and spirit with him, to fulfil him, and really spread his influence...

December 6, Sunday

For western people salvation is still to come—this is Jewish messianism and Christian messianism, of the Pauline eschatological variety and the interiorized Johannine variety, and scientific, or Marxist messianism. Salvation is outside, it comes from outside (yet Jesus teaches that the Kingdom is within).

For us Hindus salvation is not in a becoming, a bringing to an end, in a tomorrow or in a just now. Salvation just is, and insofar as we simply are, we are saved, we are salvation; the *tureya*⁵⁴, the Self and the Supreme have the same characteristics, or rather the same non-characteristics in the Mandukya Upanishad.

It is not a matter of going out to find something to complement oneself but of discovering oneself as oneself, of meeting oneself as oneself. For the Hindu sage, the way to salvation is within, in a sense that cannot be understood by the Westerner, who always imagines an inner tabernacle, an unsplitable nucleus in which the Supreme dwells remote from him.

There is the mystery which *Dakshinamūrti*⁵⁵ whispers each day in the silence, the secret he reveals at the heart of his heart—where I am, here at Arunachala—and which he manifests at certain times to the crowd—outwardly—through the waters of grace which gush out from his sides and the pillar of light arising from his crown [*brahmarandhra*].

May I no longer be able to say “I,” “myself,” except within the I of the Supreme and within the first and ultimate outburst of the primordial OM at the heart of eternity; and perhaps may I also no longer be able to say “Thou” either, except within that deeper I [...] the Thou of the Son to the Father, in the Christian mystery...

*

Would I have the courage to be totally the Hindu which the ashes and the *kumkum* on my forehead show me to be, on the supposition that no one would take care of me, would encourage me or help me—thereafter without hearth or home, in total solitude of soul and body—living only by begging [*bhikshā*] and yet not seeking rest for my mind in the *pūjā* of the temples or the *yantras* [diagrams] filled with *śakti*, energy ...?

For advaitin *sannyāsa*, which is without any doubt from now on my grace and my ‘inner call’, is free from all rites, all faith, etc. None the less it is attached in space and time to the Hindu religious edifice as its summit; and in so far as *videhamukti*⁵⁶ has not yet been attained, it is only there that advaitin *sannyāsa* is connected with the earth.

54. “Fourth” transcendental state; cp. Mand. Up. 7.

55. *Dakshinamūrti*: the manifestation of Shiva as a young ascetic and master, teaching the old sages through his silence alone. Ramana Maharshi was often identified with this symbol.

56. Liberation outside the body, that is, after death.

(...) Authentic *sannyāsa* is to Hinduism like its flower. And how could one whom grace has led to *sannyāsa* without climbing the stem of Hinduism be completely at ease, in fullness of *śānti*, without resting on this flower which awaits him, draws him and welcomes him, while still leaving him in his essential *a-sanga*, *a-sparsā*⁵⁷...?

Once one has openly consented to being regarded as a Hindu, what a liberation from pride [*abhimāna*] and from scorn [*apamāna*]. What a liberation from all conventions, etc. Then nothing would prevent me from enjoying the total freedom of the *sannyasi*. But am I ready for this freedom?

(...)

*

What is the within? What is the secret of the within? As you go deeper within yourself, the sheaths become more and more subtle which you weave around this within while you search for it, as if the within could be enclosed in anything? Is there a container of the void, of absolute *śūnyatā*? Is there a cloak of *māyā* for the Eternal? The within is only the within when you have not yet met it or found it. For if it really was the within, it would be the within of some thing, and an absolute within is no longer a within. The final prop on which you were relying in order to discover the supreme secret must be jettisoned in its turn. There is nothing, nothing any more, void, absolute *śūnyatā*. Even the idea of within vanishes when the within is attained. What is the within? “It is.” *asti*, *asti*...

There is no skin, no pulp and no kernel, no grain within the kernel and no new elements within the grain, these are the successive layers of an onion, each one more flimsy; when you have removed the last one, nothing remains ... This nothing is the All.

OM TAT SAT⁵⁸

(...)

December 10-20

The book—in particular, “In the depth of the heart, at the heart of Arunachala”,⁵⁹ the incantatory hymn inspired by a letter of Sr Y.

In the depth of the heart,⁶⁰

57. *asanga*: without attachment, detached; *asparsā*: untouched, like the lotus leaf to which water does not cling.

58. Upanishadic *mantra*: “OM, that (*tat* = Brahman), being”.

59. In the previous weeks he was busy preparing material for his book “*Guhantara*”, of which he gives here the correct name “*Au sein du fond, au cœur d’Arunachala*”. The first phrase, although it could be variously translated, is here rendered as “in the depth of the heart”. In a bibliographical note Swamiji says that “*au sein du fond*” was coined by some French sisters to translate the phrase “*hridayakuharamadhye*” in a famous *śloka* in *Sri Ramana Gita* II. Ramana gave his approval to its being translated as “in the inmost core of the heart”. For this reason “in the depth of the heart” is adopted as the translation of the French phrase which so often appears in the Diary and elsewhere. (In the same note Swamiji explains that he coined the word “*Guhantara*” as his pseudonym (see page 86), though in practice he used it as shorthand for the book.)

60. This and the following poetical fragments, “incantatory hymns”, were noted down and further developed in the days before and after Christmas. They were intended to introduce the book and its title. Much elaborated they appear in chapter I of *Guhantara*.

in the deepest darkness
 a solitary flame has blazed up.
 Who will tell the secret of the flame
 the mystery of the One
 the mystery of the Three?
 He alone will know it
 who will never again be able to tell it
 having fallen into the flame
 and in it been consumed,
 having passed into the flame
 and become the Unique.
 (...)

December 21. St Thomas

(...)
 Beyond the Depth
 at the heart of the Darkness,
 beyond the Om
 within the "heart of Arunachala",
 beyond all that is manifest,
 the silence of the Unmanifest [avyakta].
 Who will tell the secret of the silence
 the mystery of the One
 the mystery of the Three
 the mystery of the Word
 the mystery of the *aham*
 the mystery of the *Om*?
 The one who knows it
 will never again be able to tell it,
 plunged into silence,
 having become silence itself.
 (...)

December 25

Christmas in the depth of the heart, at the heart of Arunachala. But can an advaitin Christmas be felt? Whatever is felt is not of the truth. Whatever is thought is not of the truth, *neti, neti*. To dream of the eternal coming forth of the Son from the bosom of the Father—even that is not within the rights of one who has been led to the mystery of the *kevala*, to the depth of the heart of Arunachala.

Nothing, nothing any more can be savoured.

And even so I let myself be caught up in singing First Vespers and Matins. And I was tormented while remembering the joys of the past, both exterior and interior, the Christmas liturgy and the heart's contemplation. And I was tormented because my people are not rejoicing with me in this holy night, dwelling as they do in the shadow of death [in *umbra mortis*], in the power of Darkness. But that very thing is no longer permitted for me.

(...)

December 27 Departure from Arunachala

Night. What sang in me—in the heart of the depth, at the heart of Arunachala, while the train was carrying my body far from Arunachala:
 Why do you let me leave, O Arunachala?
 To others you say: "Va, va"; ["Come, come", in Tamil]
 Why then do you say to me: "Po, po"? ["Go, go", in Tamil]
 Why did you draw me to your lotus feet and did not leave me there prostrate for ever?
 Why did you draw me to the heart of your heart, and did not leave me there, hidden, forgotten?
 Why did you draw me to your summit, into your flame, and did not leave me there, burnt up?
 It would be so easy for you to attach me to yourself so that I could no longer hear any summons calling me from without.
 Every time I come to you, it is for me a new birth,
 and every day beside you is for me a year of life;
 but every time you send me back to rejoice or weep in a heaven [svarga] far from you.
 Then will not one time be the last? the one from which there is no return: *na punar avartate*⁶¹.
 Then you will have made me enter into yourself so truly that no summons will ever again reach me.
 They will summon, perhaps they will order.
 From then on there will no longer be anyone to be summoned, to be ordered,
 this "me" they were wont to address will be no more,
 because then there will be only You.
 And then when they call me, there will no longer be anyone there to answer,
 immersed as I shall be in You,
 in the flame of your heart,
 having become your inmost Self
 in becoming my own inmost self,
 in the flame on your summit,
 having passed into that flame and become Yourself in it
 by becoming myself,
 having become your summit
 at once the deepest in the hollow and the highest at the peak of Arunachala,
 fulfilling in myself what is manifested [vyakta] of Arunachala;
 at the inmost point of his being
 at the greatest depth of his source

61. Cp. Chand. Up.VIII,15,1: "...he enters into the world of Brahman, and he does not return from it again, he does not return from it again."

at the topmost height of his eternal upsurge
and only becoming "myself" in what itself is Unmanifest [avyakta]
in Arunachala,
in the centre of the heart
from which nothing has yet gushed up,
in the flame on the summit
once the upsurge has ended.

31.12.53



Sculpture of Shiva Maheshwara in Elephanta Cave

1954

Torn Apart by Religious Experience

SWAMIJI wanted to be faithful to his "two loves." He undertook a serious and lucid examination of his two experiences: Christian and Hindu. He found both of them attractive and gripping, but continued to believe that they were fundamentally incompatible. He returned to the caves of Arunachala but continued to be tormented. Even if he could reach a synthesis in his thought, it would remain on the intellectual and not on the existential level and hence would have no value. He felt divided in himself, he seemed to be leading a double life. He must be a very bad Christian since he felt himself a Hindu—but he scarcely dared to say this to Christians. He must also be a bad Hindu since he is Christian and does not have the courage to "reduce" his Christian faith to the level of the *ishtadevata* (the deity of one's choice) or of the *nama-rūpa* (what appear as names and forms): in other words, to consider Christ simply as his chosen symbol to express the transcendent mystery and to see in Christianity simply a manifestation at the level of phenomena (*nāma-rūpa*).

At Shantivanam, they decided to build a *mandapam* (portico) in front of the chapel. Or, more precisely, as he wrote to Sister Marie-Thérèse (10 November), to replace the "bamboo shelter" which was eaten up by white ants, with something more worthy.

This same year Abhishiktananda lost his father, but he did not mention this in his diary. This is easy to understand, for this diary does not recount facts and events; it is a dialogue with himself. Despite his ideal of *sannyasa*, of absolute detachment, Swamiji still kept up some relationships—particularly with visitors whom he sensed to be in sympathy with him; in such cases, his talkativeness became proverbial and quite understandable in one who wanted to be a monastic founder, not a solitary. His ongoing relationships are with his friends (through letters), with a public (through his books), and with himself (through his diary). This diary is a witness to his countless attempts to feel his way, the tortuous development of his western *manas*—indicating that his whole being was not yet absorbed by the experience, that he was on the way to becoming an advaitin Sage confirmed in the experience.

He continued to write about his sense of being torn apart; his "agony" increased as a result of the criticisms of some experts with regard to his *Guhāntara* [a word coined by Swamiji in a rather free way

as a pseudonym, meaning "the dweller in the cave", and used as a shorthand for his book]. The manuscript was not approved by the ecclesiastical authorities. In fact, the censor in Paris, Fr J. Guennou, found it "redolent of relativism, modernism, quietism, modalism and especially pantheism"! Others, such as Fr Paul Henri, S.J., expressed a more positive judgment. The judgment of Fr Bayart, S.J., an indologist living in Bengal, was more nuanced. Fr Monchanin wrote to Swamiji in January 1955: "No, the hard but friendly criticisms of Father Bayart are not an invitation to stop writing; only to tone down some of your Vedantic expressions. A revision is possible, if not immediately, at least after some time of incubation. You need to clarify your underlying philosophy and to distinguish more clearly between the levels of discourse." Fr Monchanin again emphasized this in a letter of 20.12.56: "I continue to think that the publication of *Guhantara* would be untimely and dangerous. Condemnation is always a possibility, despite the imprimatur (...). This might be catastrophic for Shantivanam, and neither you nor I have the right to act without regard for the task we have undertaken."

A year full of activities of all kinds, with much travelling:

January	At Shantivanam. Visit to Pondicherry. Correspondence with Casterman, publishers of <i>Ermites</i> . Work on <i>Guhantara</i> in hope of publication.
15 February	Holiday at Shembaganur for three weeks.
15(?) - 19 April	Holy Triduum and Easter at Siluvaigiri.
20 - 27 April	At Arunachala (Skanda Ashram).
28(?) April	Return to Shantivanam; expecting the visit of Fr Voillaume.
13 May	To Tiruvannamalai with Fr Monchanin, staying in a house near the ashram.
26 May	Swamiji moved to the cave of Sadei SāmI, where he stayed until June 30. He continued to write essays (later collected in <i>Guhantara II</i>). Meanwhile he visited his friends with Monchanin, and got the impression that the latter had understood his feeling for Arunachala.
End of June	Fr Monchanin left Tiruvannamalai.
12 July	Abhishiktananda returned to Shantivanam.
Mid-July	Visited the Rosarians.
August	Wrote new essays (<i>Guhantara II</i>). A time of waiting for the censor's opinion on <i>Guhantara</i> ; for the renewal of his indult of exclaustation; for Fr Mahieu's visa.
Early September	Indult received.
October	Construction of the <i>mandapam</i> .
November	News—of the censor's criticism; of the death of Alfred Le Saux (his father).
21 November	The <i>mandapam</i> is finished.
22 December	At Arunachala, in a room at Mahasthana, until 7.2.55

Shantivanam

January 7

The Epiphany, the one which I await. The Epiphany of the *Aham* in the greatest depth of myself. The supreme manifestation [*vyakti*]. For in its manifestation in me, the *aham* will be and will make me to be myself, *aham*.

In its Epiphany to me is its Epiphany to itself. The springing up of the flame in the depth of the heart, at the heart of Arunachala, as at its summit on the great day of [the feast of] *DIpam*, of the flame.

The Marian year¹ will close on the evening of 8 December 1954 with the illumination of Arunachala. The mystery of this light. The Virgin as Morning Star [*stella matutina*]. And the Virgin beautiful as the moon [*pulchra ut luna*]. When the moon of Karttikai rises over the horizon, the pillar of fire will shoot up...

Christmas-Epiphany. The manifestation to the world of the mystery hidden at the heart of the world, at the heart of Arunachala. In the consciousness of Jesus, the light springs up. This man knows, since his origin, what the world was, and he immersed himself again in his origins, and from these origins he taught humanity the mystery of the Origins.

In Jesus the world learns the mystery of its source, the mystery of the Father's heart. "He who sees me also sees the Father" [*Qui videt me videt et Patrem*; John 14:9]. The Epiphany is the manifestation at a point of space and a moment of time of the cosmic mystery that transcends time and space, the mystery that enfolds all times and all spaces.

The Epiphany is the manifestation in time of the eternal mystery of creation. Each one takes from it what he can appropriate, under the symbols transmitted by the Gospel, as also by the tradition of Christian liturgy, the mystery of the essential presence of the Son to created being, or rather vice-versa: the essential presence of created being to the Father, the truth of the manifested [*vyakta*].

There is Truth, and there is the conceptual and verbal expression of Truth. Revelations, faiths, dogmas exist at the level of expression. They will never express the Truth except in an imperfect way. The level of *advaitin* experience and the level of faith, of Christian or Hindu dogma, do not overlap.

The Hindu's error is precisely to want to compress his ineffable experience into sectarian terms. But Christian dogma is likewise very sectarian, indifferent as it too often is to the mystery of the within.

Yet one is obedient to one's faith, so long as there exists in oneself a "subject" who has received the command to believe or to practise some rite or other. As long as her husband lives, the woman is under the law of her husband, as St Paul says. But in the case of one liberated in this life

1. Pope Pius XII had declared 1954 as a "Marian Year" to commemorate the centenary of the Definition of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, of which the Feast is celebrated on 8 Dec.

[*jīvanmukta*], what or where is the subject who can be given commands, laws?

But as long as a phenomenal "I" subsists, one cannot escape the laws to which this "I" is subjected in the world of *māyā*. Whoever is concerned about his food, his clothing, etc., still has some ritual and dogmatic obligations. It makes no sense to deny the obligations of the "I" and at the same time to claim its rights.

(...)

Does Hindu *sannyāsa* really have an equivalent in Christianity? At least, Shaivite *sannyāsa*, as recognized by the Śāstras and the Upanishads?

Sannyāsa involves not only withdrawal from society, from the social and religious framework, from social and religious obligations, etc., but also a fundamental commitment beyond the intellectual framework of one's life. The *sannyāsī* renounces not only the body and everything related to it, the entire domain of the *bahir karana* (renunciation of rights and freedom from all obligations); but also and likewise the entire *antahkarana*, the psychic domain, *ahamkāra* and *manas*; he renounces the *nāmarūpa* of himself and of God.

Sannyāsa involves a commitment to the apophatic path. We might say that the *sannyāsī* accepts not only a civil death but also a psychological death.

Sannyāsa, in its total renunciation and its total liberation, is incompatible with ecclesial Christianity, which does not admit the possibility of itself being transcended. On the other hand, it is the supreme flower of Hinduism, which is perfectly fulfilled in being itself transcended.

The West has never really accepted that there is anything beyond understanding. In fact, the concept of understanding has taken precedence over the concept of being. Neo-Platonism opened up paths followed by Dionysius and the medieval Rhineland mystics after Scotus Erigena. But the solid common sense of Aristotelianism won the day, since it was better able to translate into philosophical thought the anthropomorphisms of Semitic thought in which, from Abraham to the Apostle John, the Word of God had been "kenosized" [emptied].

The abyss between India and Christianity is also something fundamental. It is less to be sought in superficial differences, which are, after all, linked with remarkable similarities that are equally superficial. But rather in this: Hinduism is fulfilled in transcending itself, in orienting the best of its adepts towards what is beyond its formulations and rites, in which alone the Supreme Truth resides. For Christianity, the only thing that is beyond understanding is Faith; and Faith is an intellectual adherence. The Christian is not authorized to plunge into the Darkness, or at least if he does plunge into it, it is always with the help—or the burden—of his Faith, with its dogmas and its rites. This intellectual "despotism" of the Church is no doubt still necessary. Humanity is not yet ready to receive the gift of its total freedom. Centuries and millennia will still be needed for humanity as a whole to transcend the intellectual stage—the level of the 'mind'—as

Aurobindo said; to which in fact humanity was only introduced a little less than thirty centuries ago.

In those days, India will appear as the marvellous forerunner, although in India itself only a tiny minority has known and lived the marvellous secret. Then only will India enter the Church and crown it. India, as early as the discovery of Thought, discovered what is beyond it.

January 9

Jesus, the Saviour, *tāraka*, the one who takes across.

Passover, *transitus*, the passing beyond. To those who place themselves in his hands and believe in him, he gives eternal life, the life of what is beyond the ocean of *samsāra*, beyond the abyss of the great primordial waters. With him we cross the ocean, he is the raft. The Mass, the sacrament of the Passover, of the *transitus*. The Mass, the raft. You should not keep the raft once the river has been crossed, why play at crossing and recrossing the river?

Jesus our *tāraka*, in and by his manifestation to us, leads us to the Father. Jesus makes us cross over from darkness [*tamas*] to light [*jyoti*], from non-being [*asa*] to being [*sa*], from death [*mṛityu*] to immortality [*amṛita*]². Jesus the Way ends in Life.

(...)

The entry into religion has often been made a ceremony of burial. Pure play-acting!

For Hindu *sannyāsa* it is something real. For the *sannyāsī* commits himself on the level of what is beyond. The Parousia to which Christian monastic profession is the introduction is the final Millennium, Christ reappearing *on this earth*. *Sannyāsa* is quite another matter, commitment to the true and absolute *moksha*, *kevala moksha* [total liberation]. Monastic profession withdraws the Christian from the world but binds him still more closely to the Church on pilgrimage [*viator*]. Passage from one yoke to another. *Sannyāsa* transcends all the yokes of *māyā*, all rights as well as all obligations (...), sets free from all rites and all Canon Law. *Sannyāsa* cannot be Christian.

(...)

January 26

I remain Christian so long as I have not penetrated into the "Darkness"—supposing that some day I penetrate that far. But is it still compatible with the profession of Christianity even to admit the simple possibility of something beyond Christianity?—Will I get out of this by distinguishing the two levels? But even the possibility of another level is contradictory to Christianity. What then?

[...]

March 12-April 4³

(...)

2. Cp. the *mantra* BU I,3,28 (*asato ma sad gamaya...*); see note 14, p.63.
3. Texts reworked in *Guhantara II* (*Guhaja*), e.g., MS pp.95f,41f.

April 7

What in the end is important for everyone is not to adhere intellectually to a particular system of thought or to conform one's external life to a particular system of morality, but rather to be loyal to oneself, to act in conformity with one's conscience.

One who had an authentic Hindu or Muslim faith but received baptism to please his Christian guru, far from receiving forgiveness for his previous faults, would commit a sin that is mortal by its very nature.

Even in the context of Christian theology, each one will be judged on the conformity of his life with the ideal he has glimpsed in his own depth, and not with the ideal of some other person, or of some particular religious sect.

What is therefore of primary importance for anyone's salvation is not his knowledge of a particular doctrinal and moral system, but the human (=fraternal) assistance needed for obeying the dictates of his conscience. All the more because human beings only ever have access to the truth according to the extent of their present capacities. The best can easily be the enemy of the good. (...)

The missionary work of the past three centuries, of high quality on the whole, has been unfruitful except with backward people. (...)

Whether the civilizations of the Far East will one day be able to embrace Christianity, only history will tell. That they are not able for the time being is an evident fact. At the same time, and more urgently needed than an evangelizing mission in the strict sense of the word, is there not a need for a mission of renewal for Hindus? People like Ramana, Ramakrishna, Gandhi did more for the spiritual health of their time than hundreds of Christian missionaries.

What is of prime importance is to help people to live in conformity with themselves. And with a view to that we must help them to discover their own selves. This is the object of all philosophies, all religions.

Advaita will thus offer the equation: *ātman* = *brahman*.

Judaism and Islam: the human being, a creature.

Christianity: the human being, a creature raised to the dignity of a Son.

(...)

April 20, Easter Tuesday Arunachala

(...)⁴

April 24 Skanda Ashram

(...)⁵

During Holy Week I felt the "tragic" aspect of the Christian mystery, to which nothing in the Hindu mythos can be compared. From the Hindu viewpoint, *moksha* will come in its own time. It is something natural. In the

4. Remarks on freedom of choice, reworked in *Guhaja*.

5. Some reminiscences of Mr Bose about Sri Ramana, of which one is quoted in *The Secret*, ch.3.

Christian mystery, there is a choice to be made in time, which is decisive for eternity.

The austerities of Shiva and others have nothing tragic about them. The Passion of Christ, on the other hand, is essentially tragic. The austerities [*tapas*] of our *rishis* remain within the sphere of *Iīa*; in the Passion of Christ the destiny of the world is at stake, its eternal destiny, and in a certain sense even God's destiny. The Passion of Christ extends into being [*Sat*].

And yet, if at other moments my anxiety was that the Christian mystery was perhaps true with absolute truth, so that my Hindu peace was eroded by this fear, my anxiety today is that my Hinduism, marrow of my bones and fibre of my flesh, may be slipping away.

(...)

April 27, evening

A painful parting as always from the Skanda Ashram; then from the temple with Ishwarasāmi, the brahmin *avadhūta* from the Virupaksha [cave], met at the Skanda.

Shantivanam**April 28**

Why look for a Guru? Why entreat Ramana, Arunachala? Ramana, Arunachala are only projections of "myself", manifestations of myself (the real, inward I) to myself (the outward phenomenal I), insofar as the Self reveals itself more and more purely to my *manas*, but since the *manas* has not yet vanished, the Self is still only apprehended in the form of mental eddies [*vritti*] and not in its absolute purity as self-luminous [*svaprakāśa*].

(...)

May 6

The Absolute and the living God.⁶ The mysticism of the living God would be that of the Abrahamites (Jews, Christians, Muslims). The mysticism of the Absolute would be that of the Far East, Hinduism and Buddhism. "Your Hindus do not know the living God," Father Voillaume said to me the other day. And he added: "The living God is in no way anthropomorphic."

What is the living God? Is it Jesus of Bethlehem? of Nazareth? of Calvary? All that has passed away. All that no longer is. The mystical theory of O. Casel is only one stage⁷. The mysteries of the birth, the Last Supper and the Cross are past history. Time cannot be brought back again. True, they have passed into eternity. But transformed, completely new. A new heaven and a new earth [*Coelum novum, terra nova*]; cp. Isaiah 65:17].

If the risen Jesus is the same, even so he is no longer the same. People do not recognize him! That fact is clearly told in most of the appearances of the risen Christ, Magdalen, Emmaus, the Cenacle, etc. He has to prove

6. A text reworked in *Guhaja*, MS pages 36-45.

7. He is referring to the thought of the German Benedictine Odo Casel. See *The Mystery of Christian Worship* (1962).

that it is truly He! It is only through the glorified Christ, through the Christ who has passed into eternity by his Resurrection-Ascension, that we have access to the mysteries of his earthly life, at least any real access. For we do indeed have access by means of imagination and concepts; but then remembering him is psychologically no different from remembering Napoleon, Caesar or Abraham. His memory may arouse our devotion, but the memory in itself is not effective, is not sacramental.

The living God in the actual form of God-made-man, Jesus, is real in quite a different way from all that we imagine or conceive. And yet we only have a real contact with Jesus the living God through the Jesus who has passed by his Resurrection into God, then God in all things [*tunc per omnia Deus*].⁸ The immediate, real, and so sacramental, contact is not with Jesus living in his mortal body, but with the risen Jesus living in God with that mysterious life which totally escapes us, hidden in God [*absconditus in Deo*; cp. Col.3:3].

And if the Church were only an apostolic succession, linked through a series of men to the man—even if he were a God-man—who founded it, and faithfully preserving through this succession the teaching of its founder and the story of his life—even if this included his own resurrection—then the Church would be nothing more than the Buddhist, Islamic, etc. community, all who are linked in time to a founder by a temporal lineage. Time cannot be brought back. Our relationship in time to some event in the past, or to some person, falls short of the real.

The Church, which is essentially the eucharistic sacrament, is essentially a Passover, the Passover, *tāra* [crossing over], the *yāna* [vehicle] of the Buddhists, which ferries us from time to eternity. The mystery which, by taking us out of time, brings us to eternity and in eternity to him who is eternity, the living God, and who is also the Lord Jesus.

And if, moving on from the search for the living God in Jesus, we seek him in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, outside the Incarnation (if not outside of creation?)—then the living God challenges all our imaginings and all our concepts of *living*—and of *person*.

The living God is not necessarily the one to whom we say “*Thou*”.

Who says “*Thou*” to himself?—at least, a real *Thou*, not a purely conventional, academic one? And yet I am living. Every *Thou* addressed to God is a lie, or rather an error. For God is not a *Thou* like the other ‘*Thou*’s that we know, the *Thou* of which we have a concept. To say *Thou* to God is to make him—for ourselves—not living. Whoever believes that he knows him and has tried to make him better known to himself, in truth does not know him and in addition is distancing himself from him.

The living God is only really encountered in the depth of oneself, in recollection in the depth of self, the depth of one’s own life, in the depth of that by which we—every “*I*”—is alive. There alone, in my opinion, do we have the inner experience of life, direct communion with life, through

8. From a passage from St Ambrose, *On Belief in the Resurrection*, 92, read in the Breviary (2nd Nocturn) on the 5th Sunday after Easter.

identity and no longer a merely external observation based on inference... The living God is not truly attained by those who think they attain him, imagine they attain him. They only attain to the work of their hands. If they attain him, it is only beyond that in which they think they attain him, in the deep and real union that underlies their *bhakti*.

Jesus is not to be sought either at Bethlehem or Nazareth or Capernaum or Calvary, or even in his coming forth from the tomb on Easter morning. Look for him where he really is, the living God, hidden in the bosom of the Father [*absconditus in sinu Patris*].

And the bosom of the Father is in the depth of myself.

And the Eucharist is truly the *Transitus* to these depths, the Passover, the passing over from Time to Eternity, from becoming [*bhava*] to being [*sat*], from death to life, eternal life, cp. John [6:40; 14:19; etc.].

The mystery of the living God is no other than the mystery of the *atman*. The Self has made himself known in the course of time, has briefly manifested himself in human flesh and a human spirit. True spirit and flesh, but with only human truth. Is the human being totally real? Do not the flesh and the spirit of which he is composed pertain to *māya*? The Christian rejects docetism, including that of the *avatāras*; but how can Christ be more real as a human being, more definitive as a human being, than the human beings among whom he took flesh?

And Christ died on the Cross, so that human beings might understand the meaning of their lives, and might understand that one finds oneself in the depth of the total stripping of oneself. And he taught them that in the love of their brothers they find the love of the Self. The ultimate meaning of a sacrifice [*yajña*]... And he ascended to the Father and went to the Father. He reproaches those to whom he needed to appear in order to convince them that his entry into the Self at None on the Great Friday had left him living, or rather had given him birth into the true life.

The mystery of Jesus is the mystery of the Self, the presence of Jesus is the presence of the Self, presence to the Self.

Beyond imitation, real communion.

Why want the Incarnation to be more real than the creation?

But Jesus has left the Eucharist = the Church.

The Church is the mystery of Jesus, the Self become *māya* which still continues. How could the Church be more real than *māya*, the “substance” from which it is made?

Bhava (becoming)—the spirit [*cit*] directed towards being [*sat*].

May 7 [Text on the Eucharist]

Arunachala

May 14 Arrival at Arunachala.

May 21-June 3 [Texts incorporated in *Guhāja*].

June 4

Solitude is a marvellous thing when you are tired, when you are hungry,

when you are neglected by others, when things are not going as you might reasonably hope they would go... That is perfect joy, Brother Leo, little lamb of the Good God.⁹

(...)

June 5, Vigil of Pentecost

(...)

The Sage, by definition, sees things as God himself does, for by penetrating within himself, he is sunk in God. In the depth of his contingency he has discovered being; in the depth of his distinction, indivisible unity; in the depth of time, eternity itself. He has passed to the level of eternal life, he has entered the Kingdom of God.

But how explain any more? He has become one single spirit with God. He is sunk in God, his thought is sunk, sunk also his will, his own 'I' no longer exists. He has passed into his divine 'I'.

He has become a pure instrument of the Spirit of Wisdom. Wisdom, that marvellous gift which reveals and releases our divine connaturality. Who can tell the mystery of this connaturality with God? The Hindu too often veers, at least in theory, towards an unqualified identification. The West, for its part, seems too often to fear the plain sense of the words boldly used by Revelation, John, Paul, Peter, not to speak of the Lord Jesus himself.

(...)

June 28 Tiruvannamalai

(A text marked as "used", which forms part of chapter 2 of *Guhaja*: "Le meme et l'autre".)

July 2

(...)

Christianity can only be advaitin. To say that there are two beings is the inconsistency of Samkhya¹⁰ and of Madhva¹¹. The Christian, having said that created being is a participation in divine being, is satisfied with this basic formula, and thereafter thinks and acts as if there were two.

Is *maya* anything else than the recognition, expressed in different terms, of the indefinable mystery of created being, together with the nostalgia—unknown in the West—for the essential non-duality?

But Christianity is also true. Hindu *advaita* must integrate Christianity, and Christianity must integrate *advaita*. Each denies the other, and yet each of them in its depth is waiting for, and is pregnant with, the other... A bouquet whose flowers have to be rearranged, a scattering of iron filings which forms a pattern when the current is turned on.

Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc., are not parallel ways, and no more are they a series of steps towards the truth, Christianity being the final

9. Cp. *Little Flowers of St Francis*.

10. Dualism of Spirit (*purusha*) and Nature (*prakriti*, matter).

11. For Madhva, God and the creature are two irreducible poles.

step. Each of them is a *darsana* [view] of the mystery of the Beyond. Each "true" in its own line, not overlapping, though calling for each other in mysterious "correspondences"... Each has followed its own path in accordance with its starting point, the successive contributions of its faithful, and its own lines of weakness...

In each of them, independently of one another, human beings want to come to God; but Shiva is not Yahweh, nor is Krishna Jesus...

There are lots of geometries; that of Euclid is only one kind. All are similar, yet none is identical with any other. And you cannot move directly from one to another. And likewise, those fields endlessly discovered and explored in pure mathematics.

A Christian, insofar as he is Christian, could not pray to Shiva, because Shiva would be the God of love and the Supreme God. It is only insofar as he is Hindu, as having absorbed into his *mind* the Hindu *darsana* of the divine mystery, that the Christian or indeed the Muslim could prostrate before the *tiru linga* [the holy Shiva *linga*] and adorn his forehead with the sacred ashes.

All these are different approaches of the *mind* to the mystery that is impenetrable to the *mind*. Truth is beyond, non-dual, ultimate, transcendently real [*advaita paramarthata*].

(...) The Incarnation took place to prove to human beings the greatness of the divinity of creation. For how could the human being, apart from certain privileged individuals perhaps, dare to know his essential divine nature, without the mystery of the Incarnation?

Jesus came to reveal man to himself. He came to comment on, to reveal in his own life the *erant valde bona* [it was all very good; Gen.1:31] of creation. He has opened up to the eyes of the most earth-bound the divine secret that is inscribed in creation. The secret of being which creation is. And the secret of Love, the deepest centre of being.

The heart of Jesus pierced by the lance on the cross has revealed, made available the heart of God, the heart of being, of *sat*.

(...)

God is only another name of being, of being when it is looked in the face... But can God look himself in the face? God does not look at himself; if he could look at himself, how would he still be God?

When in the depth of someone's heart the darkness has begun to lighten and the eternal silence has begun to make its voice heard, he can do no more than say with the prophet Jeremiah: "Ah! Lord God, see, I do not know how to speak" [A, a, a, *Domine Deus* [ecce] *nescio loqui*; Jer.1:6], I have no more a tongue to praise you, ears to hear you, eyes to see you, a body to prostrate, a mind to think of you.

"Thyself", "myself", what is that? The mystery of emptiness. For one who has seen, never have beings been so real, and never has their separateness been so real and never has their harmony been so real, as in this void which is the Real itself. And never has God been so transcendent as in this supreme immanence.

No one will more perfectly celebrate his Mass, recite or sing his office, than the advaitic Christian. For, to an extent that no one else could reach, he will feel the divine mystery in every gesture, in every word of the holy liturgy. Every thing, every verse of every psalm, is quivering for him with the divine Presence, with the eternity of being. For *who* is chanting the office? *Who* is consecrating in the Mass? The impenetrable mystery of God who is and is revealed.

No one believes more deeply in the divinity of Jesus than the advaitin, for no one like him has the sense of the divine in the world, the sense of being, the sense of the true, the sense of the beautiful and the good. Others only deck Jesus out with an artificial divinity.

The divinity of Jesus is not separated from the "divinity" of every being in creation. It is the apex, the total fulfilment, of this divinity. Only in Jesus does creation, and with it each of its elements and its events, reach its divine reality, attain to being, realize the totality of its potential for meaning, manifestation, *vyakti*. (...)

July 3

(Reflections on the nakedness of Hindu ascetics and on poverty.)

July 12

Return to Shantivanam.

July 26 & 27

(Notes on his reading on C.G. Jung, which the author concludes as follows:)

God and the supernatural cannot be directly discerned, for they are never found *on their own* in the world. If we accept this, then we must accept as a consequence that many individual or social phenomena or ways of behaving, which people would unthinkingly call deeply religious, have sources that are much less sublime. (...)

July 31

(Long note on creation and God's freedom. Theme of chapter 5 ("Creation") in *Guhaja*.)

(...)

August 27

(Unqualified Unity. Theme of the chapter bearing this title (ch.8) in *Guhaja*.)

(...)

November 27

What does life matter, what does death matter? (...) Truth is neither in life nor in death. Nothing is born that will not die, nothing dies that does not pass on to another life. The Spirit is beyond all that. Death is for him only a change of sphere. (...)

December 10

(Reflections on the Virgin Mary.)

Arunachala

December 22

Arrival at Arunachala.

December 26

Christmas Eve full of anguish. Very different from last year. A deeper fall into the abyss. Walking on a knife-edge. Unable to decide for one side or the other. What a torment.

All night long: do I still have the right to celebrate this Mass? That *bhajan* [chant] this evening... how appealing...

And yet if a man only dreams of a woman other than his wife, is he not already in his heart an adulterer?

Why is the explanation of the mystery of the Incarnation so mixed up with mythology? cp. the "puranic" drama *Yesu Nādhār* [Lord Jesus]. Everything is presented as if on one side there was the world and people working, sinning, thinking, and on the other side God, who from the height of his heaven looks down on what is happening and finally decides to intervene.

(...)

My nerves are at breaking point. Should I seek peace in what is beyond the "I", in the superessential "I" of the within? But as a Christian I have no right to that peace... And precisely in that is my agony; as for Christian peace, how could the advaitin abyss that attracts me allow me to rest there securely?

Why must we always begin the explanation of the mystery of the Incarnation with something "new" from God's side [*a parte Dei*]? There is never anything new from God's side, either in relation to Creation or in relation to the Incarnation. All that is new is from the human side.

Christmas is not God coming down from heaven, which is the crudest anthropomorphism. What is new is that in a human consciousness this should be experienced—The Lord said to me: "You are my son, today I have begotten you" [*Dominus dixit ad me: Filius meus es Tu, Ego hodie genui Te*; Ps.2:7. Introit of the Mass of Christmas].

Mankind had felt that this would happen, that is the whole mystery of the Prophets of Israel. Under the most diverse myths, they had imagined this [fulfilment] of humanity in the divine mystery.

Going beyond the sages of *advaita*, Jesus has penetrated beyond his own "I" into the mystery of the "I" of the Father, the source of his own "I". Going beyond the Patriarchs and the Prophets of the Old Law, Jesus penetrated beyond the "Thou" of the Father, to the still more essential "I", in which he has his origin. The Father and I are one [*Pater et ego unum sumus*; John 10:30; etc.]. And that is why he is called Christ [*dicitur Christus*].

And whoever penetrates within himself to the supreme mystery, in Christ, has passed into God, from death to life, from darkness to light; "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" [*Vivo jam non ego sed*

Christus in me vivit, Gal.2:20]. This is the meaning of the "living for God" [*vivere Deo*] applied to whoever has been raised up in Christ.

December 27

The depth of the soul is the very mystery of Christ, the place of the essential Meeting, the essential Presence to which we are introduced by the eucharistic Presence, in the depth of the *guhā*, the *mūlasthānam* [the place of the source, the holy of holies of the temple].

Christ is essentially the awakening of the human being to his origin from the Father [*a Patre*]; his entry into the greatest depth of himself beyond his own depth, beyond his own self.

As the Shaivite catechisms say [about Shiva, so] Christ is present at the same time in the bosom of the Father, in the sign of food [*anna-linga*] of the churches, and in his disciples [*adīyār*]. In the latter he is the potentiality for total realization. But they have no life except in him, for in him is the origin and end of their life, being alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord [*viventes Deo in Christo Jesu Domino nostro*; cp. Rom.6:11].

(...)

December 30

In the evening a shattering meeting with Mr Bose¹², who asked for my blessing and my Mass!

1955

On the Edge of the Abyss

AT THE beginning of the year Abhishiktananda was at Arunachala, where he was living in a hut close to the ashram, no suitable cave being available. The arrival in January of a detailed critique of his manuscript *Guhantara* by a friend, Fr Bayart SJ, greatly distressed him. After returning to Shantivanam in February, he took a month's holiday in March at Shembaganur (Jesuit scholasticate). As was his custom, he went for Holy Week and Easter to Siluvaigiri. News came in May that Fr Francis Mahieu, a Trappist from Chimay, had at last been granted a visa and would arrive in July. On his way to meet him in Bombay, Swamiji stayed for a few days at Arunachala in the Virupaksha Cave, the last cave on the mountain that he was to inhabit.

In Bombay Fr Mahieu's initiation to India was begun with visits to various ancient sites, Buddhist caves at Kanheri, the island of Elephanta, and Ajanta. At Elephanta they were profoundly impressed by the central cave, a magnificent temple with immense bas-reliefs (7th century) carved in the solid rock, dedicated to Shiva Maheshwara in his different manifestations. They passed the night in the cave, where the sight of Maheshwara Sadashiva (a huge carving of Shiva with three faces) had moved Abhishiktananda to ecstasy. However the meeting of the two monks, so long anticipated, was not entirely happy, probably on account of the inner turmoil which was tormenting Swamiji at that time. In any case, after visiting Ajanta, Fr Mahieu went on alone to explore north India, while his companion returned to Bombay.

There he went to stay with Dr Dinshaw Mehta, a Parsi medical doctor (formerly Mahatma Gandhi's doctor), who had founded a society for "nature cure" and later a religious association. This meeting (for one week in Bombay and a second in Pune) marked Abhishiktananda deeply. He was able to unburden himself to Dr Mehta, who in turn undertook to help him by means of his "guidance". This mainly took the form of "scripts", in which Dr Mehta wrote down messages purporting to have been directly received at night from Christ. The purport of the guidance was that Abhishiktananda should practise total abandonment ("surrender") and devote himself entirely to deeper interiorization. As Dr Mehta saw it, he should abandon the Christian faith, apart from an individualistic devotion to a gnostic "Christ", which was unacceptable to Abhishiktananda on both Christian and advaitin grounds. Nevertheless

12. A Bengali disciple of Ramana Maharshi.

he realized that the teaching on "surrender" was important for him, as it opened his eyes to his need for a deeper spiritual humility.

He returned to Shantivanam in August to prepare for the arrival of Fr Mahieu, while continuing to reflect on his experience in Bombay. Although he said (and felt) that for him the ashram was "finished", he soon afterwards (rather inconsistently) wrote an enthusiastic article on Indian monasticism (published in *La vie spirituelle*) in order to draw attention to *Ermites du Saccidananda* which was soon to be published.

Fr Mahieu's arrival in September made it possible for the first time for Mass and Office to be fully sung at the ashram, which temporarily revived Abhishiktananda's hopes for its future. In December he was again at Arunachala for two-three weeks, during which he visited Tirukoyilūr with Harold Rose and met the Sage Gñānānanda, whom there and then he accepted as his guru. This is vividly described in his book *Guru and Disciple*.

During this year he lived in almost constant anguish; and the crisis which had "lasted for two years and more" seemed to come to a head in his time at Bombay-Poona. He was in fact no longer seeking for a synthesis but for his own identity. The reader may perhaps be tempted to smile at his "tragedies", for instance, at the agonized self-questioning provoked by finding his altar-stone accidentally broken; but he felt torn apart in the depth of his being because of his determination to be faithful to a commitment which he would never betray, even if he had to pass beyond it. When later on he said that we must transcend the intellect and go beyond the psychological level, he was speaking from personal experience. His painful and moving self-questioning whether, out of faithfulness to his own conscience, he might have to leave the Church, is a measure of his detachment.

Here are the principal dates that mark the year:

January	At Arunachala. Received the criticisms of Fr Bayart SJ, on <i>Guhantara</i> and the comments of Fr Monchanin. Visit of Fr Dominique and meeting with H. Rose.
8 February	Return to Shantivanam.
March	Month's holiday at Shembaganur. Short-lived hope for a possible vocation for Shantivanam.
1-5 April	Stayed at Pondicherry to type a French manuscript (<i>Guhantara II=Guhaja</i>).
6-12 April	Holy Week and Easter at Siluvaigiri.
Early July	At Arunachala.
12 July	Met Fr Mahieu at Bombay; with him visited Elephanta, Kanheri, Ajanta.
End of July	Abhishiktananda spent a week at Bombay with Dr Mehta; Fr Mahieu went on for a two-month tour of India.
2-8 August	At Pune (Poona) with Dr Mehta.
20 September	Fr Mahieu arrived at Shantivanam.

	Abhishiktananda writing about Indian monasticism.
Mid-October	A week with Fr Mahieu at Siluvaigiri.
Early December	Went to Tiruvannamalai.
12-15 December	First visit to Tirukoyilūr with H. Rose; meeting with Sri Gñānānanda.
20(?) December	Return to Shantivanam.

Arunachala

January

Then I shall give up writing. Long talks with Miss Merstone!... Father Bayart rips me to shreds.² By considering me a non-Christian, they will finally make me one. Agony, agony, and in the depth, advaita—pure, total, complete. How it calls! Fascinating!

Siluvaigiri

April 7, Holy Thursday

God alone is. Who can understand that without falling into monism or pantheism? And yet, how could this fail to be evident? One who has felt it can never explain it. And yet he knows that the dualist position is untenable, and the pantheist position is also untenable.

(Reflections on Hell and Creation.)

Christianity transcends all religions. It is as much immanent to them as it is transcendent to them. The Christian is the priest of the cosmos.

April 9, Holy Saturday

There is the message delivered by the Angels on the morning of the Resurrection.

And there is the secret whispered in the depth of the heart, within the within [Tamil, *ullatukku*], when the Word awakens there in the Father's heart.

And there is the "remainder," which cannot be understood except by one who gives up trying to understand it.

There is the non-unity of God and the human being. And there is their non-duality—and there is what is at the same time beyond non-unity and beyond non-duality.

There is the not-one of the Father and the Son, and then the not-two of the Father and the Son in the Spirit, and there is the Mystery, what remains...

Shantivanam

June 5, Trinity Sunday

You can no more think God than you can think yourself. To think yourself is to lose yourself, it is to mistake a reflex and artificial picture for yourself.

1. See *The Secret* and above, page 10.

2. See last para of Introduction to 1954 on p.86 above.

The Trinity means that God is Three in himself. So how could I myself be otherwise than in (the) Three within the Self? I cannot be what the Father and the Spirit are not, and also, mysteriously, the Son. I exist only in three Persons, to speak the language of theologians, while subsisting in the second. I only exist in an interchange of Thou with the Father; Buber³ is right, but this Thou neither divides nor separates us, for there is only one Spirit that proceeds; and Gaudapada⁴ is also right.

The liturgy struggles helplessly today in its efforts to celebrate the Trinity. Mass and office are very poor. There is no understanding of or feeling for the Trinity in the composition of this office. The Trinity, a crude, second-rate *Trimūrti*⁵ for the common run of Christians and theologians.

Who then will seek for the Trinity in the place of the source, in my existential springing up... Even Elisabeth of the Trinity remains far, far away... What to say of the others?

The Trinity is the reason for my being, I exist only in the Trinity and not merely by reason of the fact that the Triune God is my efficient cause—that idea of efficient cause which empties out the Reality!

To say that God made me out of nothing makes no more sense than to say that God himself is made out of nothing. I no more come from nothing than God comes from nothing. "I am", *Aham asmi*. And the "I" is essentially trinitarian... This mystery of the same and the other which I bear within myself. This mystery of my origin, which the atheist calls nothingness, and which the believer calls Father, and does so taught by Jesus, himself the only one to have come "consciously" from the Father's heart.

The Father's heart, the original Darkness, the abyss we meet as soon as we probe the mystery of our being, whether temporally by going back into the past, or existentially by descending to the very depth of our consciousness. The original abyss which the seers discover.

"Salvation" is outside time; in truth "my time" has neither beginning nor end. The unique darkness whence time comes forth and in which it is swallowed up.

The Father is the mystery of my origin. And the Spirit is the mystery of my relationship to my origin. The Spirit has to be received. That means first of all that I have to discover my existential relationship with the Father. And that also means: I have to realize it. For I am not unless I make "myself" be. My freedom means: to refuse to be; that is Hell. But Hell is our business. As for those who have neither accepted nor refused to be, there is the problem of Limbo. Those who have themselves baptized for the dead [*baptizati pro mortuis*]⁶. Baptized and saved in the Church, no doubt.

3. Cp. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*.

4. Advaitin philosopher (two generations before Sankara) who represents a radical *advaita*, influenced by Buddhism.

5. The three manifestations of the divine, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, united in a triple image.

6. Cp. 1 Cor.15:29. Apparently a custom among some early Christians.

And the Spirit has to be received also from without, in the sacrament, in Christ and the Church, for I do not exist independently of everyone else. And I do not "proceed" from the Father "on my own". And the Church is the mystery of this fullness, of the universe pregnant with the Spirit in individuals. The Spirit hovering over the waters. The Spirit groaning in the universe and in each being with a view to the final perfection of the Sons—of the Son—of God.

The Trinity is in the depth of myself. Not as in a tabernacle, not as constituting me from outside, but in my existential issuing forth itself. The clumsy stammerings about the "material cause" in Hindu scholasticism. Not outside, and not really within either, within the Trinity, within myself as the Bhagavad Gita tries to explain it: all things subsist in me, I do not subsist in them.⁷

Jesus can only give the Spirit, who is the mystery of his relationship to the Father. And I, likewise, can only give the Spirit. For the Spirit is all I possess, the very mystery of my sonship, of my being, that which is most inward in my inwardness, who issues forth from myself within myself, and not from outside. From his heart there will flow out streams of living water. He said this of the Spirit [*Flumina de ventre ejus fluent aquae vivae. Hoc dicebat de Spiritu*. John 7:38-39.]

The Spirit within me is Wisdom, *jñāna*, Understanding, *vijñāna*, *prajñā*, Knowledge, He is strength, etc. The monk can only give wisdom. (...)

Virupaksha Cave

July 6

What is important in the mystery of the Christ, is above all Christ as the Omega point, as Teilhard said, towards which humanity is making its way. Christ is essentially humanity as one whole. And humanity will only be one whole in its final consummation. Meanwhile, insofar as this consummation conditions humanity—and it does so totally and essentially—Christ is yesterday, today and for ever [*heri, hodie, et in saecula*]. The preexistent Christ of Colossians, First-Born of all creation, in whom all things exist and hold together [*primogenitus omnis creaturae in quo omnia condita sunt et constant*]⁸. Both the pre-existent Christ and the final Christ of the cosmos is the Logos who gives meaning to all that is, and who is therefore found in all that exists, according to the precise degree of being possessed by each thing that exists, for nothing exists except in its relationship to the whole.

And the Christ becomes consciousness as soon as the logos expresses itself in a mind and a consciousness. The more conscious a being is, the more Christ is in it.—I mean by conscious the person who does not let himself be led simply by his *gunas*⁹, but finds himself, re-calls himself,

7. Cp. BG IX,4-5.

8. Cp. Col.1:15-17.

9. The elements which constitute primordial nature (*prakṛiti*), and which bind human beings: *sattva* (purity), *rajas* (passion, activity), and *tamas* (darkness, heaviness).

discovers himself more and more deeply as himself in his own depth. And the Christ appeared totally in Jesus in the midst of time, which was thus the fullness and the end of time. Jesus was the man in whom consciousness reached its ultimate depth and who taught its mystery to his brothers in a language they were able to understand.

Jesus the mystery of God fulfilled in man and the mystery of man fulfilled in God. Freely, in both cases. The Love which is the ground of Being, and which expresses itself in free activity. The "Heart" of Jesus, the symbol of Love and ultimate attainment to the mystery of being.

—The problem that so disconcerts us is that we find God, and so our end, at two points. By entering within and by escaping from our limitations, by expanding outwardly. God is at the centre of that centre of the world which I am for myself; and God is likewise the "limit" of that sphere into which I project myself in the world around me. And this limit of the sphere and this centre of the centre are identical. For I cannot truly enter into the centre of my centre and forget the sphere which issues from this centre, and I cannot project myself to the extremities of the sphere without holding on to that centre in which and by which alone it exists.

Yet the path that seeks God at the limit of the sphere is the path of religions and philosophies, by way of *bhakti* and by way of intelligence. By the path of rites and of doctrines, the paths of the "faqir" (ritual), of the monk (*bhakta*) and of the theologian (or of the yogi), as Gurdjieff said.

And of these paths, all of which lead towards the goal, only one is able to reach it. The inward path, *antarmarga*, is independent of all paths, for there is no rite, devotion or dogma that is not transcended when consciousness is deepened within itself. The Christian religion is, without question, the best religion and the basic religion. Because it is essentially a religion of charity and love. Love is the ground of being. Then too, it is the only one that accepts humanity as a whole and makes love of one's fellows simply another aspect of the love of God. Creative love. From God to us, from us to one another. By means of the mystery of Redemption from sin in which is also a new creation, *nova creatura*, a new birth, *nova nativitas*. That alone is catholic, and in a sense so much deeper than what is given in the manuals. It [the Catholic faith] freely accepts everything, *holon*,¹⁰ the whole, and effectively integrates it. Salvation is communitarian in the Christian mystery, for the human being is in essence a communitarian being.

In fact, the Christian religion is burdened with a load of myths, from which it is nonetheless freeing itself little by little. However there is a great danger in trying to demythologize it in Bultmann's way. There is much more to myth than the rationalized skeleton which the so-called scholar extracts and abstracts from it. Only the true mystic, who has penetrated to the inmost depths of the myth, would be able to express it in other words for the people of his time, without taking away any of its truth. The Church is also greatly burdened with human institutions, and plods on very heavily,

10. The word "catholic" is derived from "*holon*", whole.

for it is old and dignified. Is this not the inevitable price for its "being completely" within humanity, and so part of human society? And by de-institutionalizing itself does it not risk losing something of its communitarian being? Only the charismatic Church of the beginnings and the perfected Church of the End Time can free people from the yoke of Roman centralization.

Then Christ exists at the same time in his *pleroma* fulfilled in the eschatological Church and in the deep consciousness which the mystic attains within himself. The Omega point of Teilhard is reached in this twofold process: in the individual's entry into himself, and in the fulfilment of the evolution of the universe, in which the individual also is fulfilled. And this Omega point is but one. The universe evolves in the direction of a consciousness that is more and more widely shared and deepened and of the adaptation of the universe to this final state of consciousness, that of the Sons of God. Whoever by entering into himself reaches the Omega point reaches it also for humanity and fulfils the world in himself—this is also the mystery of the Eucharist. But from another angle, since absolutely every human being is communitarian, the attainment in oneself of the Omega point will only become *pleromatic* [fulfilled] in the very end of the cosmos, the last day, in what Christian tradition calls the resurrection of the flesh. The flesh is essentially the "communitarian aspect" of the human person. The resurrection of the flesh is the recovery in finality [*telos*] of this definitive communitarianness.

Whoever has in himself reached the Omega point necessarily pours himself out in the work of the cosmos, in the work of creation, in all freedom and love. Just as God and Christ pour themselves out in the Church. The mystic, the *jIvanmukta* [one who attains liberation while still alive] is the one thanks to whom the Mass is possible [...]. People have speculated about the priesthood of Our Lady; that when she was on earth, she was a priest in a transcendental way. Masses began with her. And the mystery and dogma of her anticipated resurrection must mean that her communitarian relationship within the Church on earth remains intact, unlike that of the other saints and those who have passed through death.

In himself the *jIvanmukta* no longer has any ritual obligations. Who would say that Our Lady had to go to Mass on Sundays? She surely had much more than all that the Eucharist could give her: the *Res*. And the *jIvanmukta* has also understood all the reality contained in the rational and mythical formulations of dogma—and he opposes nothing and understands that it is all good; *erant valde bona*.

Bombay

July 17 [The following account (not in the Diary) was written in 1956.]
Encounter with Elephanta.

This encounter was one of those high points that light up one's life. One evening in July, I embarked at Bombay on the mail-steamer that serves the bay, in order to visit the famous caves. In that monsoon season there

was no tourist service by launch, and the only course open to the pilgrim was to be prepared to spend the night on the island, no matter where and at his own risk.

The caretaker of the caves led me to the central cave and, beginning at the left, he pointed out for my admiration the magnificent reliefs carved in the solid rock. In this way we came to the back of the cave, where there looms the immense three-headed statue of Maheshvara. I had often seen reproductions of it and was preparing myself now at last to admire in its reality this masterpiece of which I already had a picture in my mind.

However when I came face to face with it and my eyes rested on those lines, those shapes, those curves, and especially those eyes, the shock was so great that I had to lean up against a pillar.

The caretaker continued his commentary, but I was no longer listening. He suggested that I get ready for supper, find a room for the night. As for myself, I thought of only one thing: to stay seated there, in front of it, in the middle of the cave, in communion with this Maheshvara, immersed in this Presence.

Night fell, nothing of the lines or of the shape of the rock could be made out any longer. My contact continued to be realized at a depth which takes no account of the dark.

Very often afterwards I returned to Bombay. But I never again took the boat to revisit Elephanta. There are encounters which cannot be repeated...

Bombay, Malabar Hill

July 27¹¹

From July 26th. 'Sleep awake' [Waking sleep]. Through concentration on the *ullam* [interior, Tamil] of Christ. The interior of Christ is my interior together with the interior of God, of the divine Father. The divine Father is God in his creative aspect. From the interior of Christ to my interior, and also to the interior of the divine Mother. The merging, the deepening of my interior, of my *aham* into the interior of the Christ, then of the Father. Today. The Christ in the Father as Śri Ranga Natha, Nārāyana sleeping on the serpent [...], the mystery of (the time) before the manifestation. And from this cosmic sleep, to rise up to the supreme unmanifested. And step by step, the consciousness is set free.

In order to enter into the state of waking sleep, a radical 'total surrender' is the condition *sine qua non*. Only to the extent that you are not attached to any thought, to any point of view, to anything at all, that you do not desire or fear anything, that you do not feel delight or sorrow in anything—only so can the void be created in your intellect. If I am worried about what will happen tomorrow, about what I will have to decide tomorrow, I will not be able to reach this void. I must have absolute faith in this mystery of the beyond into which I throw myself. Whether I call it

11. Swamiji here wrote down (partly in English) his thoughts after his meeting and conversations with Dr D.K.Mehta (Babaji) who at that time had his centre at Bombay (and Pune) before later settling in Delhi.

Christ, Shiva, Paramātman does not matter. Total acceptance that someone is there to receive me, to take complete charge of me, or rather that in the end I will find myself set free from all my present limitations.

Free from every thought, every dogma, naked as a new-born babe. And it was also good [...] no more to say Mass these days. The Mass in my present situation is the crystallization of my inner drama. The disturbance it causes is thus suppressed. I will return to it later on in peace, when the time comes. Freedom from every intellectual or emotional attachment and total abandonment to divine control is the indispensable condition for *samādhi*. As abandoned as a lifeless body in the hands of God...

The immediate psychological preparation is concentration on a single point, a thought, a feeling or a perception, something able to hold my entire attention. Dr M. proposes that I concentrate on the Beloved. But I think that I am already too Hindu and too advaitic to do that. Even the symbol of the Cross no longer speaks to me. So I concentrate on the Heart of Christ, *hrid*, in the Hindu understanding of the mystery of the Sacred Heart.

(...)

And now the physiological preparation. Controlling my sleep, food, sexuality. Help from *prānāyāma* and the *āsanas*.¹² Sleep: gradually reduce it.

(...)¹³

July 28

Meditation along these lines [as recommended by Dr M.] is very like a method of psychoanalytical treatment. It is a matter of integrating into consciousness the whole world of the "memory". In order at the same time to bring it to the consciousness of this trans-liminal and through the development of consciousness, beyond this trans-liminal. And this involves a transformation of consciousness itself. For better and for worse, since this "trans-gression" [passing-over] of the immediate world of our experience leads us at the same time into the subconscious and the supra-conscious. The kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light, symbolized by the fact that sleep, with its special rhythm of breathing and calming, can be realized, or rather obtain its fullness, equally well in the state of unconsciousness and the state of supra-consciousness. At that point the potentialities of one's psychological make-up are released. They are at once both powers and their contents, which are moreover as inseparable from one another as are, for example, matter and energy in the constitution of matter. From this viewpoint there is "only" energy, only powers, powers able to produce and develop the object of their own activity.

In the last analysis we are in C.G.Jung's world of archetypes. Metapsychic powers are then necessarily attained, together with potential effects on the body and on matter. (...)

12. *prānāyāma*: discipline of the breath, yogic exercise for the control of breathing. *āsana*: posture for meditation.

13. Several pages (and a diagram) on the effects of Dr Mehta's method.

All experiences, visions, feelings, belong to this transitional stage, which is probably normal, apart from the case of souls who are able to pass over these stages towards the final goal. At this stage, the process is identical, whether it is a matter of specifically mystical life in the religious and spiritual sense of the word, or of yogic introversion or of psychic inadequacy (hysteria, catalepsy, etc.). And this identity of the process will last until the end, except perhaps at the final summit, immortality, which only becomes possible in true holiness. Just as the mind works equally well in conceiving either satanic schemes or divine plans.

The Mehta *scripts*¹⁴ betray in their very wording that they are not strictly speaking *dictated* from outside. They are the translation, often painful, of a "revelation" received from a higher plane and incapable of reaching the level of normal consciousness, passing more or less successfully through ideas, images and symbols of the subconscious, and finally manifesting itself to consciousness by means of automatic writing as a result of the liberation brought about by yogic concentration. Hence, one should not condemn these "papers" because of their inadequate expression. There are noteworthy similarities with the first babblings of Christian theology, a revelation received from on high and seeking to express itself, often with such awkwardness [...], in Greek terms.

Now, as to the origin of this "revelation". As I write this page, this is what I think. It is the emergence, at a level immediately adjacent to that of consciousness, of data coming from a level that is very much more interior or higher.

Include here for the sake of clarity the cascades of illuminations (enlightenments?) of Dionysian angelic hierarchies, different levels of spirits in theosophy [...], Aurobindo's levels, etc.

(...)

To penetrate from the superficial ego to the fundamental *aham* [I] which in the last analysis is alone real, we come across a certain number of stages or levels, all of them of course symbolic, all seeking to explain more or less approximately the mystery of each person's return to his origin.

These are the seven mansions of St Teresa, the seven levels of Gurdjieff, etc., the nine Dionysian choirs, the different heavens of [...], etc., the seven *chakras*¹⁵ of Hinduism, the seven heavens of Hinduism.

All these levels are essentially or rather primarily psychological levels, the stages in the self's realization of itself. To what extent do *real* levels correspond to these psychological ones?

However that may be, the Christic "level" is essentially the circle "interior" to each person, interior to his own *aham*, whether or not it is a reality in the exterior world also. Still more, Christ is above all that un-analyzable contact between God and his creation which the Christian

14. These scripts were "dictated" to Dr Mehta in a state of trance, and he attributed the source of their inspiration to Christ.

15. *cakra*: literally "wheel" or "circle"; centres according to the physiology of yoga which are located all along the spinal column up to the top of the skull.

mythos has thought of in terms of Creation-Incarnation-Redemption-Resurrection-Sending of the Spirit-Church, etc.

And the level of angels is also before all else a level interior to each person. The world of spirits is interior to the self of each person, whether or not it implies entities outside that self. (...)

There is no external world between myself and God. The world that is called external is for me essentially interior.

(...)

Just as the Trinity lives within me, is realized within me, so creation (and therefore the whole aeon of angels) is realized within me, for nothing exists outside God. So there is no real difference between saying that I believe in a revelation coming from Christ or that I receive it from some particular level—in this case, the Christic level—of my inner mystery.

The Heart of Christ is not exterior to my own heart, it is not strange to it. For the Heart of Christ simply means the source in which my heart springs from the Heart of God. To meditate on Christ is to meditate on the *ātman*, on one's own *aham*. Christ is in all truth my *aham*. There is no opposition between Christ and *advaita*, but the identity is something so deep and essential that it cannot but escape those who have not plunged into the mystery of the within.

Christ is the essential intermediary between the Father and myself. But an intermediary who does not cause any separation. For he is at once identical with me and identical with the Father. I say "I" only in him, and he says "I" only in the Father. And the mystery of the Spirit is all-pervasive.

(...)

In my return to my origin, there is a stage at which my consciousness, in its movement toward definitive *advaita*, passes through the condition of Christ's consciousness, having in truth become Christ, as St Paul said.

(...)

July 29

It now seems quite clear that the coming months will be decisive and that great changes are looming ahead in my life. It is very strange to recall that this turning-point was long ago recognized in the lines of my hand. Everything is about to be put 'at stake'. All stability, of whatever kind, has to be blown up. The 'surrender'¹⁶ must be complete. I thought I was naked. This week here¹⁷ has revealed to me a nakedness which would perhaps be more accurately called a flaying. This week, without the Mass and with the breviary recited during one hour at midday, has been a great relief. The Mass crystallizes my inner struggle, and the fact that I make a living, materially speaking, from my Mass, makes it abhorrent for me to be saying my Mass perhaps in order to have something to eat today.

Accept with complete simplicity and serenity the possibility, at least, of having one day to sacrifice to my conscience my material belonging to

16. The English word used by Dr Mehta to express the initial requirement of the spiritual life.

17. With Dr Mehta.

the Church, with all the psychological and material stability that this carries with it. But does not the very fact of accepting this mean renouncing the Church? So how far do I still have the right to say Mass? If Dr M. were leading me on the path of *advaita*, I think I would abandon everything to go along with him. But what frightens me is that he wants to lead me back to Christ, and to a Christ who is not the Christ of the Church. He himself is torturing me, despite the wonderful peace into which my stay with him has plunged me.

But being all the same a member of the Church, whatever my doubts may be, because of the way I have been psychologically moulded for the past 45 years, and as an *advaitin* Hindu, truly reborn at Arunachala, under the 'guidance' of the Maharshi, how can I accept his point of view?

Yet this meeting does not seem to be accidental... My incompatibility of character with Fr F.M. makes it necessary for me to leave Shantivanam, which I will do without regret. And I need to move far away from those three attempts at monastic life¹⁸, all three of which have been sniping at one another. Cp. the letter from Alapatt to Fr Monchanin—Do I remain a Benedictine monk or not? So everything will come to a head in a few months: where should I go? in what capacity? This will be a necessary occasion to practice the 5 laws of 'Divine Supply'¹⁹: 1. 'surrender the self' in that aspect of its wanting to satisfy itself by winning out, 2. the 'supply' comes for God's work and for nothing else; 3. faith; 4. intense prayer and love; 5. 'empty hands'. It would be more honest to say Mass without a stipend when I do not feel spiritually up to saying it.

I cannot really think that Christ could ask me to leave his Church in order to follow him, in his separate person, which is Dr M.'s plan.

To be *advaitin* is quite a different matter; it means abandoning intermediaries, and passing directly to the supreme limit, or to the supreme which transcends all limits. It means passing beyond Christ, at least in his condition as manifesting and as manifested, in order to enter into the eternal mystery, transcending all thought, which is manifested through him and in him.

July 30

(...)

My *advaita* conflicts with the DKM [Dr Mehta] mythos rather deeply. He stresses the fact that, although we are destined for 'oneness', we have not yet attained it. That although God lives in us and we in God, theoretically, there are any number of creatures in whom this is not true. This position squares neither with that of the Church nor with that of *advaita*. For the *advaitin*, sin is to deny in whatever fashion the "I am Brahma" [*brahma aham asmi*], except at the purely pragmatic level which pertains to *māyā*. For the Christian, God is in everything and in all people, the human being

18. These three attempts are presumably Nirmala Ashram (Bangalore), Shantivanam and Siluvaigiri.

19. A copy of the "script", dated 14 June 1954, is in the Abhishiktananda archives.

has to realize this presence in time and by his works—and this indeed on the trans-psychological level—which sets it apart from the way things are regarded here. For Dr M., as long as this has not been realized and the supra-conscious has not been reached, you cannot in any sense speak of the life of God in human beings, for example.

(...)

His framework seems to me to be close to the traditional Hindu framework, *bahir* and *antah-karanam* [outer and inner organs]. *Atman*, which he calls *soul*. The *ātman* gets its life from itself. What is important for the individual is to penetrate to the *atman*. And there, once in the *atman*, progress toward God is possible. First degree: identification of one's individuality with one's soul, then of one's soul with Christ, finally of Christ the Son with the Father. Things which are not yet and will only come to be through our work in time. (...)

July 31

Last night, Sunday, after returning to my room at one o'clock as every day, I was preparing to say Mass, since it was Sunday, when at the bottom of my case I found my altar stone broken... A disturbing sign. It was not fitting for me to celebrate Mass today. Is this because of the place? Is it because of me? What does this broken stone symbolize? Is it a punishment, is it an invitation? So today, though it is Sunday, there will be no Mass for me... Is this a liberation? Is it a warning to make me halt at last on a path that is so dangerous from the Christian ecclesiastical viewpoint?...²⁰

Afternoon

Something very deep in my soul wants to don white vestments and sing of its blessed liberation...

But a voice also weeps in the depths of my soul: "Son, why have you treated us so?" [*Fili quid fecisti nobis sic...* Luke 2:48]. It is the night of prince Siddhartha's farewell to his beloved wife who cannot understand. It is the Church, spouse and mother... Jesus also left his mother. The child rests in its mother's lap, drinks at her breast; but when it begins to walk on its own, the child leaves the mother and goes to the Father. The Church cannot prevent her child from going all alone to God...

And yet, if now I had to die, I would want to receive absolution and especially the Host for my final departure... When the Passover has been fulfilled, is the Host still necessary? In the new Covenant there is no more need for the daily burnt offering. By a single oblation he has perfected those who are sanctified [*Una oblatione consummavit semel sanctificatos*—Heb. 10:14]. Also the *Resurrexi* has begun to sound within me: the "I have risen and am still with you" [*Resurrexi et adhuc tecum sum*]. This separation is only a transition, the time of the death and the descent into hell. All is given back on Easter morning, Christ, the Virgin, the Church, God the Father and the whole mystery about which until then

20. The old Canon Law forbade priests *sub gravi* to celebrate the Eucharist without a consecrated altar stone. If the stone was broken, its consecration was lost. In mission countries some bishops were allowed to provide a substitute made of linen (the *antimensium*, p. 112), but under strict conditions, only relaxed in 1960.

one had tried to stammer. "You have placed your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me" [*Posuisti super me manum tuam. Mirabilis facta est scientia tua—Ps.(138)139:5-6*]. And the Rejoice, Jerusalem" [*Laetare Jerusalem*] has followed on. And yet...

At midday I wrote six pages for Doctor M. setting out the whole problem in rational terms. This event, certainly a sign, cannot be interpreted by itself alone, it requires a new sign and, in due time, the entry into the very deep peace of the within.

My attachment to the Church is not simply the result of the initiation to my earthly life, but rather of many basically personal commitments, priesthood, religious life, of a 'drinking deep' from the riches of holy Church; more than so many others I have deeply "savoured" my priestly consecration, my Mass, my monastic life—the 'loneless life' [solitary life], which is my only condition henceforth, made so uncertain by the uncertainty of my legal situation in India—, the praise of those who count for nothing, the pain and grief of better men, the incomprehension of all who love me, the dismay of those who have trusted me, the censuring of my superiors held responsible for having given me free rein, the ruin of the work²¹...

No solution can be looked for on the rational level.

Total abandonment to the Lord, in total nakedness.

Evening

Brother X. to whom I have just made my confession told me that all I needed to do was to get an *antimensium* at the bishop's house in Poona or Bombay to take the place of my stone... He has no idea of the immensity of the problem... —I am like a blind man who has come to a road-junction shaped like a cross with three arms. The roads go in completely opposite directions. There is now no question of a compromise, but he must at all costs make a choice, for better or worse, for salvation or its opposite, for the highest or the lowest. There is no way for himself to look at the signs, or to see where the road leads, for it bends right away. The people he meets, according to their personal whims, tell him to take the left or the right. And all of them tell him they have travelled this way with success, and each claims to be right rather than the others.

And he must choose, or he will stay there for ever turning round and round at the junction...

(...)

The three-way junction of this morning was transformed in this evening's meditation into a jet-plane soaring up to heaven. So would the two ways and the quest be reconciled in the definitive take-off?

August 1

(Some pages on the method and spirituality of Dr Mehta.)

Poona

August 2

(...)

All my objections collapse, one after the other. To ask for a sign, whether exterior or interior, is a lack of real faith. If I have faith in Christ, I must believe that even if I am mistaken about the 'guidance' that I have accepted, he will be able to correct it and set it right. He will not disappoint me in the hope I have placed in him.

But is it not all the same if I give my Faith to him in the Church or if I give it to him in personal 'guidance'? In the latter case are not these truly the signs that he does not want to let me dawdle any longer, or waste my time any more—this fact that he has been pursuing me for several years with these doubts?

For in the end, to speak only of quite recent events, it is only too clear that this trip to Bombay was only a means of causing me to meet DKM, and the arrival of FM was a formal notice that I should at last make a choice, since from now on the work of Shantivanam is finished for me. I am asking for signs, but do I not have more of them than I need? And this sign of the broken stone has been like a way of giving me a rather rough shake, so that I might understand the language of events. For why, before he brought me to Bombay, did he bring me to Arunachala and make me find in an advaitin Shaivite milieu what I have never found in a Christian milieu and atmosphere, this rebirth in the cave [*guhājanma*], from the cave into eternal non-birth, *guhā-ja*, *guhā-aja*! [born in the cave, unborn in the cave].

And before that, letting me come to India. If I am to blame for taking this decision now, or rather if the one in whom I have put my faith blames me for what I am ready to do, could I not say to him: "It is you who have done this, Lord!" [*Tu enim fecisti Domine*].

I have been 'stripped stark naked' in my soul during these days at Bombay-Poona. And my 'pride' in having realized something has been swept away, and I have been made to understand that everything I had, not only through my intelligence and through my previous study and meditation, but also everything I thought I had learned in the secret place at the heart of Arunachala was still nothing, nothing, simply the babbling of a child...

Here I have to be simply a disciple and even to receive through this other person the message of him with whom I thought I was one. Great pride in the conviction that one is beyond advaita, when one has hardly set foot on the road, entered the stream.

August 3

"There is no other go for me, I know it definitely. All the objections I try to put forward are only the last appearances or shows of resistance in a position that one sees well, it is lost now. Moreover they are pure negative trends... fear of ulterior weakness, fear of appearance or reality of unfairness, dishonesty..." [This paragraph was written by Swamiji in English.]

The present situation cannot be the result of being "bewitched" or temporarily infatuated. If nothing had prepared the way for these days I would readily believe that, but these two weeks seem too clearly to be the culminating point of a crisis which has gone on for the past two years and more; my whole life for the past two or three years has been converging on

21. The ashram at Shantivanam.

this point. Everything was calling for it and it seems to me that the Lord was leading me toward this final stage, in which everything has been 'unplanned'; if there had not been so much accordance with previous developments, how would there have been such an attraction, such an 'attunement'? Even the deficiencies of the one to whom the Lord has sent me should help me in my faith and will show me that the Lord [...] it all, and that the very deficiencies of the instrument are the proof that he is only an instrument and that the source is much higher, even if the instrument passes on the current (the message) imperfectly.

Rather 'funny' that it should not be on the purely advaitin and Hindu line that I should find my "master". The relinquishing of my very Hinduism, of my 'conception' of advaita. All the *vāsana* [psychological residue of past actions] must disappear. One thinks one is naked and discovers that one is decked out in a veritable parody of evening dress. Nakedness and poverty set one free from the 'shackles' of comfort but draw one into other 'shackles'. In the same way we must leave (the) 'outside' to come 'inside' but then rediscover 'inside' in 'outside'.

Shantivanam

August 8

Returned Monday midday.

Was it a dream—all that happened during the past two weeks? What is left of it? Only a memory? But it is too closely bound up with two things: the need for a profound change in my outward life due to the arrival of Fr M. And then my constantly growing disenchantment as regards the Church.

Taken in their essence, and disregarding the mythology in which they are wrapped, the general and particular messages I have received really correspond to some of the present needs of my soul.

An insistent call to a more and more intense interiorization, a warning against the subtle pride of the advaitin—surrender of my desires, surrender of all attachment to my thought or point of view. It is as if it were high time for me to place myself psychologically and physically at the level of the deep state reached at Tiruvannamalai.

August 13

I fear that Fr M.'s enthusiasm for Buddhism is chiefly the joy of rediscovering here his beloved Cistercian conventual monastic life... (...)

The Hindu monk has neither community [*sangha*] nor Dharma nor Buddha to give himself to, he lets himself be swallowed up in the Absolute... These are two opposite poles, two different worlds. The Shaivite monk reaches beyond Shiva the deepest essence of monasticism. The Buddhist monk, like the Christian monk, remains the prisoner of a *form*... How could collaboration be possible between one who had his enlightenment in the solitude of Arunachala, from a guru who never shows himself, and one who has received it from a flesh-and-blood master in the Chapter House at Scourmont?

In every fibre of my soul I am a Hindu monk... All that remains is to attune my body and psyche with what takes place in the soul in the depth of Arunachala...

(...)

O my Guide, lead me to the centre of myself and from this centre of myself bring me to the centre of thyself, for the centre of my soul is no other than the centre of thyself in the very depth of myself, O source of myself, Thou in whom I was made, Thou who madest me, Thou from whom I am separated in the mystery of the estrangement of Adam, the primordial man, and in whom I return to my source, in the mystery of the last Adam, which is thyself and myself in Christ.

Thou alone canst lead me back to the centre of myself, for Thyself alone hast found the path and the source of myself in thyself—Thou who never lost it and took our nature wounded by the separation in order, in thyself, to bring it back to the source, and in thyself every other "myself"...

In bringing me to myself and then to thyself, inseparably, Thou bringest me to the Father, to where I issued forth in the eternal place of springing up, and where at the end and completion of my time I become aware that I eternally issue forth in the only real advaita... (...)

August 14, Sunday

Concentration works much better when sleep has been reduced, as I noticed once again this morning. And, more generally, sleep is very peaceful and gentle and awakening is happy, when you fall asleep following a 'raising of consciousness' instead of falling asleep casually.

(...) A precise subject is truly for me an obstacle to concentration. Again today I tried the central subject suggested two weeks ago: the *ullam* (interior) of Christ, at one and the same time the *ullam* of myself and of the Father. (...) It is still much too much. Concentration has been realized only at the boundary of the simplest form of thought: being, myself, *aham*. If I want to interiorize myself, it will only be by refusing every thought, even that of Christ which is an obstacle to me. Simply to lose myself in the being that I am.

Christ, the living God, does not mean for me once again Jesus of Nazareth. Christ is the mystery of my origin from God [*a Deo*].

(...)

As for the total 'surrender' which is asked of me, it is only the clarification, always a little more precise, of that of 9 January 1928²², with which my whole spiritual life remains bound up. And the *Suscipe* which I was already singing long before my profession, expresses the whole of my prayer of both then and now.

I think that now the total 'surrender' has been effected of everything that made up and now still makes up my life, including my priesthood, my monastic life and my belonging to the Church. It is a little like the lands handed over to Vinoba by their owners, which they continue to cultivate on

22. See page 171. (His acceptance of holiness as his goal.)

Vinoba's behalf until the day when he actually asks for them...²³ My Shantivanam, above all else, is also 'surrendered'. And yet, everything seems to promise that it will now take off, the arrival this morning of Sachit²⁴, the departure of T.

To return to my path through Christ [*per Christum*], it was for forty years a fervent path and especially for twenty-five years. My advaita was like a fulfilment, a transcendence in which everything remained, even in the midst of its disappearance.

Give me everything, everything. Sacrifice to me everything, everything.—I have abandoned everything to you, every thought, every affection, every desire. Nothing (is left) but "to be", *śakti-mātra* [pure potentiality]. Pure and naked as when I came forth from the hands of God. My soul, myself before my sin, the return to my source. The mystery of the Immaculate Conception. But my [state] of being a sinner means that I have to return to my source, for in the first Adam I distanced myself from it and in the second Adam I return to it, I quench my thirst from it with the water of life, the source of life. Whoever believes in me, the source from which he springs springs up anew in his own heart²⁵. And this "anew", *kai nun* [even now], is the arrival at the day of eternity, when from the One and from the Two there proceeds the mysterious Three, the Spirit who completes their coming forth.

Sunday evening

To act according to the 'guidance' out of fear of some reprisal is the attitude of a slave. The 'surrender' called for in the 'guidance' is precisely in order to free the soul and make it docile to the impulse of the Spirit of Christ. Any negative attitude—and fear is that above all—is just the opposite of this freedom. Receive with love and carry out with love all that comes to me in this way.

And note that at last true obedience in its turn is revealed, as it had never been revealed to me during my monastic life. The completion of the essential monastic lesson received at Arunachala. And now I understand the role of obedience as liberation. Outward obedience is the substitute for the 'guidance' of the Spirit within, as long as the latter is not yet realized. Whatever is done by personal choice always has some dust, 'dross,' and so must be 'surrendered.'

(...)

August 26

(...)

Why make plans? Why dream about returning to Poona; why dream about being at Benares, Uttarkāshī or Arunāchala; why dream about new

23. A reference to the *Bhūdān* (land-gift) Movement started by Vinoba Bhāve, the disciple of Mahatma Gandhi.

24. In a letter of 25.8.55 to his family he wrote: "We have with us at present a Bengali aged 30, a convert from Hinduism and Communism, who does not have sufficient words at his disposal to say how much he admires what we are doing."

25. Cp. John 7:37-39.

situations if I have to leave the Church... And all those other things, so insignificant... They are all only pretexts for escaping from the fundamental task of interiorization. It is so much easier to fall back to the level of the 'mind' for the best of reasons and in order to think about the holiest things.

Shut down your reasoning faculty. Turn off your thinking machine, even and especially at the time of meditation. Let this time be sacred above all, for it will lead you in its own time 'unto the Real'.

Evening

Still nothing at noon today from Bombay. The solitude, 'lonesomeness' which was foretold for me—its time has come. I no longer find any consolation in the Church, not even any help. I keep up the cult out of duty and so recite the formulas I am bound to recite. And I have no right to look for anything more in the Hindu myth. The Hindu myth, just like the Christian myth, must be left behind.

The call came from the inmost centre during this trip to Bombay. And I passed over all the mythology and all the imperfection in the expression of this call, in order to go right to the depth. But since leaving there, nothing. Nothing but my efforts, so often fruitless and always so laborious, to recover that ultimate centre of my soul.

I am eager to escape from all that binds me and at the same time helps me, but in which I no longer find myself. And I would like to be helped from the other side to leap over the chasm. I was helped to come near to it, and I was helped to recover my momentum. And now I am alone, terribly alone. Was then all that happened at Bombay and Poona pure illusion? Despite all my resistance, in the end I made an act of faith and what was promised did not come. Is this the way the Lord acts?

In the past I said and wrote: If some day I have to leave the Church, it must be done independently of every kind of consolation, congratulation, etc. from the other side; I must be ready to be completely neglected, left on one side, even by my Hindu friends, for the sake of pure and naked obedience to the voice of my conscience...

Advaita has an diamond-hard purity. Any joy experienced in *advaita* makes *advaita* disappear in its pure reality: the aloneness of the *kevala* in the abyss of Arunachala...

August 27

(...)

Evening

Miss Merston's mediaeval monk. Then we shall never be able to escape either from our religion or from our culture. Deeply rooted in our subconscious. Rending and burning. And yet when everything calls us, far, far away from them. When they are the bonds that prevent us—at least, so it seems—from reaching ourselves, the self. When the Self, under the siren form of *advaita*, calls and calls us, and it is as heart-rending to close our ears to this call as it is to cut or tear out the bonds which prevent us from responding to it.

Medieval monk, what can you do? In vain are you naked with the nakedness of the Hindu monk that you want to be, that you are in the very depth of your being, and who will not let you go until you realize yourself in himself and he realizes himself in you. On your shoulders and your head, there is always the shadow of Cluny's cowl... You take your Cluniac heritage even into the depth of your cave, and the liturgy that no longer speaks to you, at least so you think, the psalms and the prostrations and the ceremonial of the choir—all that holds you captive without your suspecting it. And you will never break the bridge. For all that is too deep within you. And it will pursue you, like a rejected lover who is too firmly installed in your heart ever to leave you any rest; the monk's cowl and the priest's chasuble, and the Christian's sign of the cross—all those things that you think to be the final obstacle on the way to the inner mystery. And whatever the objective truth of the messages you have received, are they not strangely true for you? Were they not perhaps dictated by you yourself, with a clearer awareness of yourself than the self-awareness you think you have?

The cave at Arunachala gifted you with the peace, the profound bliss—that of the *sahaja* [inborn, natural]—which unwittingly you were carrying in the deepest recesses of your being. Dinshaw (Mehta) was basically only your own medium, the one through whom you revealed yourself to yourself, in the very depth of the interior of your soul. If what he transmitted to you was not true for you, how would you have resonated with it so deeply, since everything in you in your clear awareness was against receiving his message, and this clear awareness of yours for a long time resisted it, or at least wanted to resist it, for the day came when it clearly understood that its resistance was not real and that it was no longer possible for it to escape the spell, the spell cast by the only true spell-binder: the Self within the self.

What do they matter, the deficiencies of the transmitter or the deficiencies of the cave at Arunachala? Means chosen by the Self, the deep self of my being, to reveal itself to my present awareness...

And now what should I do? (...) My anguish is certainly no longer about a total 'surrender' of what has up to now been my life and my joy. All that has been given. I keep it and cultivate it like a piece of land that no longer belongs to me. Conscientiously, but no longer as if it were mine. But how could anguish fail to come one day? Will not the medieval monk have these terrible moments of awakening? And yet, on the other hand I know that the voice of the within will henceforth never leave me in peace until I have yielded to this within, *having let go all my moorings*.

And this within is no longer a within of thought—whether of Christian thought, or of Hindu thought, or of advaitin thought. How then could it be Christian if it is no longer thought, since Christianity essentially belongs to the order of thought? And how could it be Hindu? So then it can only be advaitin, the real *paramārtha advaita*! For as soon as there is thought, *advaita* has disappeared and conflicts with Christianity and everything that is thought.

A within that no longer thinks, either of what suits it on the spiritual level, or of what suits it on the temporal level. No level suits it, no matter what the level may be. It is even strictly forbidden, for it is the fundamental obstacle to the essential introversion, to the return to the Source, to the inner mystery. In the Source that has no bottom; no lowest level on which one could rest. For this bottom is the bottomlessness of the Deity, to which the human being has access in the symbol of the essential and existential circumincession of the Three.

August 28

Wait for an answer? Look for an answer? Ask for an answer? What meaning do these words have? Who is asking? Who is answering? What answer can be given?

Entering within is the only real demand and entering within is the only real answer. Why worry about details, at least in advance? When it is needed, the "sense of the within" will dictate one's conduct; 'come closer to me'.

The Mass, the supreme means for the Christian 'of tapping [*sic*] the veil' [of piercing the veil?]. The supreme, sacramental way to trans-psychological union. But to take the Mass as the goal is to abandon the purpose of the journey 'for the sake of the road'. The Mass essentially straining towards its mystical fulfilment—bringing itself forth [*editio sui*].

To be satisfied out of laziness and false humility that others obtain this mystical fulfilment, and as regards oneself to be "content" with the Mass, and take one's joy in one's Mass—that becomes a kind of idolatry. The Mass is essentially a "straining forward" until he comes [*donec veniat*; 1 Cor. 11:26]. When that is forgotten, the Mass is no more than a soulless ceremony, acting from then on only in a roundabout way. Therefore a means, and because a means, never essential. Death puts a final end to its celebration. And there are in life ways of "dying" that are more real than death itself.

Evening

All day long, confirmations at Kulittalai. How far, far I am from all that... A new level that no one can understand except those who have reached it themselves. And I have to bluff with X., about his future, etc. I have to come back to the level on which I have contact with the Christian and ecclesiastical world.

What a farce is my participation in these ceremonies, my conversations on these topics. How much better it would be once for all to be totally frank... and to escape to a place where I would have the freedom to be myself. I feel nostalgia for those days at Mayfair (Bombay) and Poona when I was freed even from the agony of the Mass.

August 29

(Note on reading C. Tresmontant, *Studies in Biblical Metaphysics*; and on Teilhard.)

August 30

Anniversary of my baptism²⁶. Every year sees a reduction in the number of those who brought me to it. But then again it was Jesus who baptized me. —All was agony in my Mass. The Mass an entreaty. I need to be freed from the Mass, the Office, etc., for a long time. Homeopathy. Afterwards would I perhaps come back to it? Who knows? If I did not come back it would be because the summons to the beyond is true for me.

Everything is true in the Church, at the level of symbol, but that is only the level of *māyā*.

(...)

To lose one's faith after psychoanalysis is not really to lose faith. It is the disappearance of a monstrous excrescence in one's consciousness. Religion had been for that person the expression of a monstrous complex. The apparent loss of faith is really a liberation and an advance of the person in question towards the recovery of his personal integrity. The same applies to the so-called loss of religious, priestly vocation...

Should we go further, using more or less the Jungian patterns? Life is a constant psychoanalysis, but a slow one; certain circumstances, however, allow a sudden integration of new zones of the subconscious (e.g., Arunachala, etc., the action of [...] on this person or that). Faith, which is linked to very superficial complexes in the abnormal case mentioned above [*de quo supra*], is based on deeper and more solid strata in the general run of cases termed normal. At other times have I noted in my thought (...) and maybe have even written that faith, phenomenologically speaking, comes [from the fact] that a given dogmatic, moral and social system "responds" to the conscious and especially the underlying expectations of a particular psyche. We do not know at what depth the sources of our faith lie. These correspondences are at different levels, of family, morality, etc.

How superficial, alas, are the levels to which the faith of our so-called converted pariahs is attached! In any case, whether through psychoanalysis under the guidance of a specialist or through the slow psychoanalysis of life, through yogic penetration to the depth of the soul or through circumstances which more abruptly disclose to each of us depths previously unknown, it happens that we make contact with regions of our being, deeper and more essential than those in which what people call faith has taken root. Then the world of mythical and conceptual symbols is left behind. The faith, its obligations and its rites retain their truth value at one level, but for those who are no longer at that level, what truth do they still have? Are the Christian faith and religion such as to be grounded in the ultimate roots of the personality, and what remains of them once total integration is achieved? The divine mystery, in its ultimate advaita, might then shine out more than ever and more than anywhere else, but what about the mystery of Redemption, what about the imprisonment of the divine mystery in the social organization called the Church? What place remains for them? The Church is true at a given level of human consciousness. Just as the religion

26. On the day of his birth.

of magic was true at a level that once existed over the whole earth and still exists here and there. Religious forms are the expression of the inner mystery as it is presented by the best people and is 'acceptable' to the crowd. Religion, or rather any given religion, is never binding except at a certain level of consciousness.

(...)

August 31

Original sin is the cosmic and biological inheritance of the mind. (...) (There follow considerations on original sin.)

September 2

Are Satan and hell anything else than certain dialectical moments? (There follow reflections on Satan and hell.)

September 3

(...)

(...) Given *Humani Generis*²⁷ in the dogmatic and theological field, how can one honestly remain in the Church? Unless you are two-faced and as flexible as a Jesuit. Since the Pope ties my belonging to the Church to my acceptance of certain myths as historical and ontological reality (or conceptual—as the concept perfectly expresses reality!), he himself makes the Church non-Catholic; just as Pius IX, in declaring the incompatibility between the modern world and the Church, declared that the Church has no obligatory value in the modern world.

The fundamental anguish is always the conflict between the human being as inserted by his flesh into human society and the human being as personal consciousness/conscience²⁸. The conflict between conscience and cosmos.

I have noted above that the original stigma was nothing else than the fleshly root of the thinking mind. Is not the Church itself attached to this fleshly root? For it is through the human body that the "conscience", which every human being essentially is, is linked to society as a whole, and thus also to the one called the Church. The fleshly inheritance is at once a help and an obstacle. The soul only attains to conscience through the flesh, whether one accepts the theory of the creation of the soul in every human conception, or the theory of the evolution of the soul through the cosmos and the body, and then its development of "spirituality" through its very use of the body (thought [mind being also corporeal]). But from another angle the law of the flesh constantly drags the soul "downwards"—the very security and stability which it finds in society is perhaps the supreme obstacle to its reaching the *kevala*.

God's word to Abraham, "Depart from your country", holds at every stage in the advance towards the supreme Goal.

27. The encyclical of Pope Pius XII, published in 1950, on the new tendencies in theology, giving a warning against the so-called "New Theology" and reaffirming the traditional positions of 19th century Catholic theology.

28. As the French word *conscience* can mean both "consciousness" and "conscience", it is sometimes difficult to be certain in which sense it is being used.

(...) so long as the Church lives in the world, and so long as there remains something of the Good outside the Church (...), each one, while working as far as possible inwardly at the level of the *sahaja*, has an outward mission to fulfil in the world at the level of society. And the choice of this mission is not dependent on dogmatic dictation.

Can it happen that someone would have to leave the Church out of fidelity to his conscience? Normally he has to wait for the imposition of tests which he cannot accept without denying himself and therefore God. Joan of Arc was burnt by the Church for having obeyed her conscience. And Marguerite Porète as well. And, no doubt, so many others!

Evening

No logic will resolve the present conflict. The pendulum swings too and fro, and sometimes frighteningly. What a violent contrast it is to pass from Arunachala to the Bishop's House at Trichy or from Bombay Mayfair to the presbytery at Kulittalai!

Ultimately, all arguments and reflections are secondary. There is one fact which determines everything: the religious experience which I had on non-Christian ground with an intensity never even glimpsed until then, but which was in line with all that I had obscurely felt before. Ramana's *advaita* is my birthplace. The original womb [*mūlagarbha*]. Against that, all reasoning is shattered. And I have always hesitated to take the decisive step in which I have always felt that final peace and joy would be found.

And now, Dr M. is urging me to purify my *advaita*, by liberating it from and 'surrendering' its Hindu underpinnings.

Christological and ecclesiological theories can indeed be fascinating... But it is too late.

Oh when will I have the courage to set out for Arunachala alone, free and naked, and for good?

(...)

September 5

Society is the primary means for human beings to realize their "communitarian" being, their condition of being communitarian, of *co-esse*, co-existence. Multiplicity in genus and species has been studied on the basis of exemplary causality. But it seems that there is something still deeper. In order to integrate the level or the archetype of "communitarian being" of which they are conscious, human beings pass through society, and through religious society, the Church, and through history, and through the centre of history, Jesus. They experience their archetypes and their levels of consciousness under sacramental symbols that are cosmic, historic, and social. They are sacramental in the sense that in them a person arrives at the integration of his own being, he literally "swallows" them because they express what he can only feel very confusedly in himself; in some sense he discovers himself as himself through contact with them.

There lies the whole origin of faith. The convert moves from wonder to wonder in the discovery, for example, of the Christian mystery, because without realizing it he is finding in it his own fullness, and that in a trans-psychological way. His deep energies, having been realized, are "calmed," and it is for analogous reasons that the caves at Arunachala and the verses [*kārika*] of Gaudapada²⁹ provide others with the "savour of being" of which until then they had never had any idea...

It is your own mystery and therefore the inner mystery of being that you are living, when penetrating into the Bible and living its liturgy.

It is the mystery of being, penetrated by way of its aspect of "becoming", of "not yet being," and of "being inserted in time, grounding time," etc. In Christ, the geometric locus of God and humanity, the resolution of the paradoxes of the created and the uncreated, and of the being-not-being [*sat-asat*] which the creature is.

But this happens by means of a contradiction and a paradox still more shattering. How could Jesus have ended up in any other way than being crucified, torn apart as he was in his ontological being itself? He carried with him the crucifixion in his very condition as God-man.

Urs von Balthasar sees in Christ the existential resolution of all our conceptual paradoxes, and the transcendence, if not the overthrow, of all our human philosophies and wisdoms.

But in so doing, he presupposes faith in Christ, not to mention the fact that his synthesis identifies, at least in practice, the Body of Christ with the baptized; whereas there are more Christians outside the obedience of Pius XII than there are within it.

And even more, we should not stop at any archetype. All the archetypes of consciousness and the cosmos must be transcended. Christ repeated this often enough to his followers: it is necessary that I should go away, that I should disappear [cp. John 14:28], and it is necessary for your sake, for whom my presence is becoming a obstacle. Only at the realization of the Father—with whom I am One and in whom you are together with me, the Unity of the Spirit in your consciousness—will you be able to halt, with a repose which will be equally an essential circumincession.

Otherwise Christ himself is reduced to the level of an idol. One who is afraid of the mystery and the abyss places the mystery and the abyss in a picture that he has invented or that has been handed on to him, but which he can see and understand and to which he can cry: "You are the abyss." And the abyss that he thinks he can feel can no longer be the abyss. And the mystery he thinks he can touch is no longer the mystery. It has escaped him, *neti, neti*. The call of the abyss resonates in a strange fashion. Why here and why not there? How many people are satisfied with the conceptual or cosmic experience of the archetypes, which is always external, a reflection of the soul [*psyche*] in nature [*physis*]. And in that they find peace.

But when the piercing call resounds from the abyss of Arunachala, what can that poor wretch do, whose ears are rent by the cry, whose eyes

29. Gaudapada's commentary on the *Mandukya Upanishad*.

are blinded by the darkness of the abyss, who is made to totter by the vertigo of the infinite void?

How else could religions be the truth than at the level of nature [*physis*], at the cosmic, historic level? How could they be anything else than ushers into the mystery of consciousness, the mystery of the abyss of existence? Like so many Beatrices indeed, they bring us into the cave where the realities are reflected in mirrors, where this reality is manifested in the form of images and concepts, though it is essentially un-manifestable. Blessed perhaps are those whom the cave satisfies. But as for those driven by an infinite anguish to turn round and look... do they not remain blinded by the sun that dazzles them? Then there is no more Beatrice. There is no more Church. The child has been snatched away from the woman and taken up to heaven and to the throne of God. (Revelation 12:5).

(...)

'Surrender' both my desire to remain a Christian, born of an instinctive fear, and my desire to live completely as the advaitin Hindu which I often think I am. In total surrender to the mystery. Free and naked at the heart of the abyss, hanging there ...

September 6

The Jew found it hard to accept the idea that the *goim* could have a place in the Kingdom. It was Paul's task to reveal to the world that the mission of the Jewish people was over once Christ had appeared. Yet it was a painful birth—this new interpretation of the Jewish covenant. The preparation for a new covenant which would be of this world while also being of the other world, the transference to a new Israel which would loudly proclaim that it was only the continuation and flowering of the old Israel, but which at the same time would completely take over its duties. There is no Jewish problem for the Christian, since the Jew existed only in view of him; there is a painful Christian problem for the Jew, who cannot understand how the promises made to the Fathers could be fulfilled apart from himself.

Israel was replaced by the Church. But the Church borrowed from Israel not only its messianic consciousness, but also that human sclerosis which kept this consciousness from bursting out. Scribes and Pharisees are just as alive today as in the time of Jesus. Where would Paul, following on Jeremiah, find the law of the Spirit [*lex spiritus*] in our clerical administration or our canon law, etc.?

A new liberation of the human consciousness surely has to be realized, and probably in our own days. The Church is Israel extended over the Mediterranean world within the framework of the Roman Empire and its successors, but has scarcely spread any further even today. The Church is Israel, which doubtless no longer recognizes the privilege of race and blood for entry into the Kingdom, but which still only recognizes as members of the Kingdom those who have accepted integration into that human form of society into which it has actually developed: administration, rites, etc., beliefs more and more minutely defined.

The level of global consciousness towards which humanity in this century is so laboriously struggling upwards has caused many Christians to "become aware" not only of the need to integrate into the Church, together with individual converts, all the values of thought and love which they represent, but also of the fact that a good number of them here and now [*hic et nunc*] belong to the Kingdom, however blind the official Church may be in this regard, and however terribly confused the explanations of the professional theologians, the "scribes" of the new Israel.

The Church has long been satisfied, like the first Israel, with being the only chosen people, and for a long time has felt no unease about abandoning to the prince of darkness the numerically most significant portion of humanity. (...)

We are forced to admit that God's grace is at work in the whole of humanity; and from the Christian viewpoint there is no grace of God that is not also the grace of Christ. To say that a person has turned towards God (cp. St Thomas) means that he belongs to the Kingdom of Christ; he receives the influence of Christ, much more so than the so-called baptized person who does not live according to Christ's precepts. He is one of Christ's sheep who do not belong to the Church's fold (cp. John 10:16). They have not yet heard Christ's voice but they are Christ's, and in a mysterious way he guides them and leads them to pasture; he feeds them and quenches their thirst in a way, or rather under symbols, that are different from those he uses in the Church: "but the Rock was Christ" [*petra autem erat Christus*; 1 Cor.10:4]. And that rock for us Hindus is the Holy Linga in our temples.

The Christian consciousness is also realizing little by little how deeply it is inserted into humanity in Christ, the first-born of all creation [*primogenitus omnis creaturae*; Col.1:15], in the Incarnation which is the foundation of Creation. The historical Incarnation and its continuation, the Church, is only the emergence in history, in time and space, of the fundamental condition, the primal ontology of the human being. The emergence, or if you like, the issuing of a central axis for the development of humanity with a view to leading each one by means of the cosmos and of society (sacrament and organization) to the integration into his consciousness, deepened as far as its very source, of the essential mystery of Christ.

All Christian dogma and the whole organization of the Church and its whole sacramental work has to be rethought within this total perspective. Ecclesiastical theology has not become any more aware of the universal extent of the kingdom than were the Jewish scribes, except in some passages difficult to interpret, faint glimmers issuing from a depth that fitted awkwardly into the system.

The most beautiful christic dissertations of Balthasar and others fail to integrate the full mystery of the Kingdom and remain marvellous theoretical concepts, certainly an aid in thinking about the final mystery, but false and 'misleading' by the very fact that they are limited.

(...)

September 9 (Notes on reading H. Urs von Balthasar.)

September 10 (Notes on the demands of total 'surrender'.)

September 11

What I most lack is deep, real, total faith, *śraddhā*, that which made Peter walk on the water and Ramakrishna's milkmaid cross the Ganges without even getting her sari wet. Faith in the one who guides me, faith that makes no reservations, that never says of anything 'provided that'. Then alone there is real 'surrender': then alone there is 'accurate divine supply', in the material sense as well as in the spiritual.

September 15

Dislocation. Too Hindu to form Christian monks, too Christian to be totally at ease in Hinduism, even advaitin. Too imbued with Christian *vāsana* [deep psychological impressions] and with Ramana's *advaita* to follow the 'guidance' [of Dr M.] without reservations.

An experience, whether of Christianity or of *advaita* or of 'guidance', should be integral. The Mass does not fit either with *advaita* or with the 'guidance'. It is both torment and obstacle. *Advaita* attracts me so much more than the 'guidance'.

Dislocation. The horizon completely closed. Life useless. Nothing has come to confirm the so-called 'guidance'. And yet I was fascinated, somewhat in the way I had been at Mayavadi³⁰, but much more deeply this time. 'Hoping and fearing together it might have been only a dream.'

(...)

September 18

The answer to my ritual problems is to be found, I think, in the Gita. If my *karma* is such that I am bound by sociological obligations to celebrate Mass and recite the Office, for example, why try to escape from them before liberation comes to me, whether from on high or from within? What is important is to perform nothing with attachment or in the expectation of results. To perform Christian ritual actions with attachment, looking to them for spiritual consolation would be false and an obstacle on the way of the Spirit. Perform them quite simply because it is a matter of good order, with a view to self-purification. The rite itself is a help and a path toward the Spirit. A day will come when this is no longer necessary, but it is not for man to decide when. Let me not be attached to my Mass and let me not desire to be freed from it. All attachment and all desire impede the manifestation of the Spirit.

If some day a Christian reads these pages, how could he fail to conclude that the one who wrote them had completely lost his faith.

30. Meivazhi ("Followers of the Truth"), an adventist Hindu-Muslim ashram south of Tiruchchirappalli, whose members lived in the expectation of the imminent end of the world, singing Tamil hymns all night long. Swamiji had visited it in September 1952. (Sw. *Abhishiktananda* (1995) 59)

The Church belongs to the level of mind [*manas*], it does not belong to the *atmic* level. Nothing human retains its value at the level of the *ātma*. How could the Church accept this, Jewish and Greek as it is? For the Jew who has remained at the pre-philosophical level, there is really no problem, his symbols are the truth in themselves. For the Greek, material things are symbolic and must be transcended and understood; but what is intelligible is the truth in itself. For us, the mystery of the real lies beyond what can be sensed and also beyond thought...and nothing that is impermanent can obtain the permanent [cf. KathU II,10].

Real presence in the Tabernacle. How much more real the presence in the mystery of my being.

September 22

God is for the human being essentially a call, the call from the depths of himself, of the self. Human beings caricature God, to the point of making one sick of every name and every idea of God that people utter. The Shiva of the [...] was so much more God than the Yahweh of many Jews. The call from the final and definitive advaitin mystery which I am.

The call of and from Arunachala.

Who is Arunachala? Only one who has heard his call knows who Arunachala is; and when he hears it he recognizes him, and likewise recognizes his own self. The call from the abyss which engulfs. The call from the ecclesial Church and from Christ perhaps.

In any case, the call from that mystery of 'Emmanuel' or of divine sonship which is the final step before being lost in the ineffable Ray of Darkness, *irudchudar* [Tamil, light in darkness].

The call from that which has no name or form or distinctive sign, from the absence of everything that being means for mankind. Arunachala, a call that tears you apart as long as you have not been plunged into it. Arunachala, a fire that scorches whoever ventures near to it, so long as he has not been thrown into this fire and been burnt up in it...

The call through the whole cosmos, outward and inward. The call that has such vast echoes when it begins to work its way through the world of creation and of thought. The voice of Yahweh which is like the thunder, like the noise of the storm, like the roaring of the sea. And then the human being takes their echoes for the call of the mystery itself. He believes he is seeing God, believes he is feeling and experiencing God, believes he is thinking God. And if he is faithful, or if he has been chosen despite all his infidelities, the voice pursues him and the fire scorches him and the vertigo of the abyss seizes him.

(...)

September 23

When the Church demands that I believe in its mythos of the origins and of the End-time on pain of an essential break with my being, my nature, my destiny—this is the meaning of "mortal sin"—, it judges itself and exposes the futility of its claim to absoluteness in other areas of thought, such as

personal moral conduct or sociological behaviour, where it claims to impose itself on man as the token of his admission to a relationship with the Absolute. However the Church is in any case an irreplaceable religious movement, which at given places and times of world history has given considerable help to human beings in discovering themselves and in advancing towards their destiny. It will certainly continue its work, in some guise or other which without a shadow of doubt will be very different from the one it displays today.

September 24

Did I exist before I was born? In the language of time, no doubt I must say : I did not exist. But does not "I am" contradict "I did not exist"? "I am" has an essential relationship with the eternal "AHAM". I cannot say "I am" without relating myself to eternity. If "I am", then at the level at which "I am" is true, "I was not" is without any meaning. "Before Abraham was, I am" [*Ante quam Abraham erat (sic, fieret), ego sum*; John 8:58]. In order to exist at the level of the contingent and the temporal, I exist at the level of the absolute and the eternal.

How could anyone who has once enjoyed the incommunicable taste of the present, then go in search of spiritual "flavours" in the past, Jewish history, Church history, in the myths that try to express Reality in "history", in the mysteries or sacraments which help to recall this past or anticipate a future that is just as unreal as the past?

(...)

September 26

(...)

Those whom the Church sent on mission into the working-class world quickly discovered, on the whole, that instead of giving they had in fact to receive and to learn; and they had a bitter experience of the Church's non-catholicity, that is of the "non-catholicity" of the sociological structure which incarnates in the world the Mystical Body of Christ. But if you do not succeed in dissociating the Gospel from the Church, then what is left? And in the same way, having entered the Hindu world in order to bring the Church and Christ to it, I myself also have understood that India made me penetrate much more deeply into the mystery that until then had manifested itself to me with the features of Christ and the Church.

(...)

October 28

(...)

The sufferings of death surrounded me, the sufferings of hell... [*Circumdedederunt me dolores mortis, dolores inferni...*; (Ps 18:5,6) Introit of 3rd Sunday before Lent]. Septuagesima, a Sunday worthy of Sartre and Camus.

(...)

Why be so ill at ease in addressing Christ as my guru, the one who opens the way, the ferryman, *taraka*? He really lived; he has passed on to

the centre. And in reaching the centre, he has made it accessible to everyone. And people have called him God precisely because he has attained being. But the Church is the fundamental obstacle between me and Christ, between human beings and Christ. And yet it is the link.

Hindu images [*mūrtis*] are essentially *māyā*. One is also comfortable with her (the Church).

John's Gospel and Paul are basically acosmic—"the form of this world is passing away" [*transit figura hujus mundi*; 1 Cor.7:31]. But when the Church had settled down in the world, they "eternalized" the world, deified *māyā*, ontified, ontologized *māyā*, the institutions, the sacraments, and all the rest.

India had understood that if the world is real, it was precisely as being non-*māyā*, non-world.

(...)

The anguish, the longing to disappear into nothingness so as to escape the impossible choice. But nothingness is the very mystery to which advaita calls me, that beyond-consciousness which Dinshah [Dr Mehta] is inviting me to enter. Negative attitudes are always false, like fear, anxiety, anguish, hatred, opposition.

Only openness is worthy of the human being, only openness to being befits a being. The negative attitude is a closing down, and therefore so is the desire to be set free by death.

There is a solution. Which? in the Church at Shantivanam or on my own? Free from the Church, at Arunachala? With Dinshah?

(...)

The Christ, whom I first knew and loved in his historical life in Jesus, and then in his epiphany in the Church, at the end of time (of my time) has appeared to me in the form of Bhagavān Śrī Ramana.

Seated on the lotus, at the centre of my heart; all my efforts aim at finding this centre of myself which is he. Abhishikteshvara in the form of the Maharshi. To find in the depths of myself that *śiva śānta advaita* [grace, peace, non-duality] that Bhagavan is. Not the Bhagavan that I have venerated and before whose image his disciples prostrate, but the Bhagavan that I am in all reality at the source of myself.

(...)

October 30

Yesterday we started the Office³¹ except for Vigils—that brings back memories, it is pleasant... is it not a children's game? The level of the *Ila* of *Īvara*, God's play. You cannot give yourself to it in the same way after having passed through Arunachala.

October 31

The bee only approaches the lotus when it has bloomed. We moan about our stagnation [at Shantivanam]. Of course others would have acted in a more "human" way and succeeded in enticing people and giving them

31. The Office was sung by three of them, including Fr Francis Mahieu who had arrived in September.

the material conveniences and spiritual consolation that are dear to them. Here we only want to give the total aloneness [*kevala*]. The rest is unworthy of India. As long as the Church has not shone forth upon India the *kevala* in its own life, India will not come to the Church. India has more in its own *kevala* than in the "myth" offered to it by the Church. (...)

If we were such as is required by the call that rises up to us from the very depths of India and the very depths of the Indian Church, Hindus and Christians would rush to us.

We have never been anything but amateurs, dilettantes.

People are happy that the ashram now looks a little more attractive and comfortable. And they tell me: "Now it is livable in, appealing, etc." Ramana had nothing but a cave on Arunachala, and a simple thatched hut at the foot of the mountain, when the crowds began flocking to him...

(...)

November 1

First sung Mass at our ashram. This dawn [*arunodaya*], sung Lauds and Mass really has some value... Yet, when I plunge again into my depth...

(...)

November 16

In my *guhā*³² is the *guhā* of Christ. In the *guhā* of Christ is the *guhā* of the Father. In the *guhā* of the Father, I am.

(...)

It was said to me [by Dr M.] that the solution of all my problems would be found in "interiorization", at that point where I am as it were "awaited". His whole role in my regard is to help me to find my way to that point. To expect from him direct guidance, etc. is false. Practical solutions will be given me in due time. And it was clearly indicated that all that will happen only when I have at last found my inner guide.

In any case, I do not have to take any initiative about leaving the Church, if it comes to that. My whole duty is to embed myself in the *catholicity of the Church*. Clashes with the institutional Church will perhaps occur. Entry into the depths of the within [*ullam*, Tamil] will then show what course of action to follow.

I must 'surrender' not only my eagerness 'to plan' but even more my anxiety 'to know', to know "intellectually" what all that means, and the solution to the mystery of the Church and the mystery of Christ, and also to know what is going to happen to me... Things in fact will only happen "in accordance with" my deepening in the within [*ullam*].

(...)

Arunachala

December 5

Shiva is real on the mythical level, Christ is real on the temporal level.

(...)

32. *guhā*: cave, hidden place, the heart, the hidden depth of the soul.

December 6

(Notes on the story of Lakshmi Devī retold in *The Secret of Arunachala*, ch.3.)

December 8

The Immaculate Conception is the mystery of the *Śakti* within us, pregnant with the being that we are, all seen according to the level of time and space. Mary's Child-bearing and her Assumption: myths that are parallel, not successive. Each retells in its own way the single mystery. Child-bearing here, Assumption there, each an aspect of the single secret-mysterion.

The Immaculate Conception; "myself" in eternal beauty, and eternal freedom from blemish, restored in me beyond sin, *samsāra* and *karma*. My being in purity from which I issued. The mystery of the divine self-origination [a se], manifested already in the Trinity, once again here: through my purity I am child, mother, bride, virgin. All these, harmonious aspects of the essential mystery: *aham*.

December 9

(...)

Visit of a Sadhu. This visit this afternoon on the mountain, calm this time, has deeply impressed me. There in truth is where my heart is.

(...)

Shantivanam

December 25, Christmas

Is not Christmas the supreme temptation on the Arunachala path? even the most Taulerian³³ Christmas, the mystery of one's own birth within, in and from the Father's heart [*in et de sinu Patris*], that which is beyond non-duality [*ati-advaita*]? As long as this birth is thought and felt, *advaita*, far from being transcended, has not yet been reached. *Advaita* must be lived in the absolute darkness of its absolute splendour. [At this point Swamiji drew a small star in the text.]

(...)

We must dare to experience *advaita* courageously, come what may, or rather what God wills. Overcome the dread of the edge of the abyss.

I have not yet noted my overwhelming encounter with Śrī Gñānānanda from Monday the 12th until Thursday the 15th of December at Tirukoyilur. For the first time I understood *gurubhakti* and *guru-śakti* [devotion to the guru, power of the guru. Cp. the account of this encounter in *Guru and Disciple*].

(...)

Who will imagine at the heart of *advaita* that mysterious auto-genesis of being in the Trinity and in creation...? Only he who has attained realization.

As long as the inner secret has not yet been glimpsed by the eyes of the soul, its faith and its religion are external.

(...)

33. Johannes Tauler, German mystic (1300-1361).

Christianity is no doubt the highest form of the "religion" of the neolithic era in which the world continues to live, that era in which humanity begins to reconstruct the world for its own use—a task to which it gives itself in our days with ever growing frenzy.

The atomic era is not a new intellectual age for humanity. This intellectual age is still basically Semito-Greek with essential contributions from the Russians and the Germans. This was the appropriate form for constructing the world. At that time the axis of the world passed through the West, and India could remain dormant, while preserving in the recesses of its soul the flame of the future, that which its *rishis* had discovered and which it kept latent in the hearts of its children.

India's hour will come, when human beings, having rebuilt the world, will search for themselves and at last find themselves as they are. It is this need to get to the heart that is at the source of the gigantic contemporary movement to discover the secret of matter and life. Evolution needs to come to its term. The human being must integrate space-time in order to transcend it, in attaining to himself [...].

The Omega point of Père Teilhard: before it is the centre of the world, is it not the centre of the self?—is it not when that is reached that the whole universe will come to its fulfilment?

Christ, even more than a being involved in Space-Time, is that absolutely final level of consciousness, that final point beyond which nothing remains but the passage to the Father.

(...)

December 27

What is important in faith is surely much more the fact of believing than the precise object of belief. The object of belief is always something that is *conceived* by the intellect, not the Real itself. The act of faith is what reaches the Real itself—something which the act of "conceiving", recalling, thinking never does.

No matter how you explain it, faith always involves a plunge into what is beyond conceptual understanding, beyond the *manas*, a contact with Reality in itself that cannot be conceptualized, and it is this essential contact that makes it adhere to the object. Faith is at its own level supreme in the advaitin plunge.

(...)

December 30

Pilgrimage to Nerur [to the samādhi of] Sadashiva Brahman³⁴.

1956

Advancing into Solitude

DURING February-March, Swamiji was staying at Tirukoyilūr with his guru Gñānānanda. In September he was sent by Fr Monchanin to Trivandrum, where the Syro-Malankara archbishop invited him to found an ashram in a Brahmin setting; he found the idea "very interesting and tempting" (letter to Sister Marie-Thérèse, 27 September).

He continued to be pulled apart by the two lives he was leading: a Hindu life with Hindus and a Christian life among Christians who had little idea of his inner conflict, a conflict which led him to a moving confession in the course of a pitiless self-analysis. He even referred to his childhood trauma, which he considered to be the cause of his speech defect and perhaps also of his timidity.

Paradoxically, while *Ermites du Saccidananda*, published in August, portrays the ideal of the monks of Shantivanam, Swamiji in no way felt at ease there and gave serious thought to leaving. His dual loyalty set him apart. Father Monchanin had a different view of the relationship between the two religions; and up to this point, those who felt attracted by the ashram did not raise the question of integrating Hindu values, they wanted to be contemplatives and to remain "traditional" Christians. But the hermits of Shantivanam were a bit impatient. At this time, monastic life was almost unknown to Christians in India. The few candidates who came forward desired first of all to know the Christian monastic tradition and follow it. Furthermore, the Hindu monastic outlook was and still is quite traditional. Swamiji reacted to the obstinate conservatism of certain Christians circles, but in his enthusiasm he did not always recognize that Hindu conservatism could be just as stifling as the Christian variety.

Abhishiktananda felt that his vocation as a *sannyasi* could not develop in full freedom within the Christian environment of south India; what he needed was a Hindu environment. But he believed that actual belonging to the Hindu environment would represent unfaithfulness to Christianity.

The chief event at the end of this year was his retreat of thirty-two days in solitude and silence at Kumbakkonam, a Tamil city famous for its temples and its brahmins. At the Mauna Mandir, Abhishiktananda stayed in "a large room (a separate building in a garden) with bathroom attached, doors and windows shut...receiving my food through a revolving

34. Cp. note 33, page 70. (March 30, 1953).

hatch", as he described it in a letter to Sister Marie-Thérèse on December 19. There he wrote many pages that reflect the intensity of his inner travail. To avoid repetitions and for reasons of space, we here reproduce only selections from these notes. The time of mauna (silence) at Kumbakkonam remained for Swamiji one of his fundamental experiences.

Some notable dates during this year:

25 January	Visit with Fr Monchanin to the <i>samādhi</i> of Sadāshiva Brahmendra.
28 Feb.—15 Mar. March	At Tirukoyilūr with Gñānānanda. Completed "Monachisme chretien aux Indes" for <i>La vie spirituelle</i> (published in September).
April	Sent "L'hindouisme est-il toujours vivant?" to <i>La vie intellectuelle</i> (published in November). Corrected final proofs of <i>Ermites du S.</i> Busy writing a first draft of his experiences with Gñānānanda and at Arunachala.
May	A week at Siluvaigiri. Three days in a Hindu village near Salem in a hermitage belonging to Gñānānanda.
End of May	H. Rose arrived at Shantivanam. Six weeks of construction work at the ashram.
June	Six to sing the Office together at Shantivanam.
August	<i>Ermites</i> published.
Aug.—Sept.	Plan for an institute of secular priests attached to Shantivanam.
31 August	Fr Dharmanāadhan arrived to join the ashram.
13 September	Abhishiktananda at Trivandrum, exploring the possibility of a new foundation. Retreat for the Sisters of the Sacred Heart.
5 Nov.-8 Dec. November	Retreat at Mauna Mandir, Kumbakkonam Fr Mahieu left Shantivanam to found an ashram in Kerala.

* * *

January 3

From the point of view of salvation, to belong to one religion or another is *in fact* a secondary matter, whatever may be the juridical position. What is important is not the outward behaviour [*velikalhai* (Tamil)] but the inward attitude [*vudkolhai* (Tamil)], *sincerity* with oneself. Faith is above all the acceptance of an absolute beyond even the furthest point that reason can reach in itself or outside itself. The form under which this absolute is accepted is not of capital importance. The absolute can only manifest itself in non-absolute terms, and no term can fully contain the absolute.

It is right to criticize the current misuse of the term "mystical, mystique" being applied to everything. However, the widespread and improper use of this term is surely an indication that modern thought at last has an intuition

of the deep correlation in this significant connection with religion, patriotism, ideals in the scientific, economic, social fields, etc. Mysticism is essentially the attainment of the absolute. The down-to-earth mathematician has never felt the soul hidden in the depths of $2 + 2 = 4$. And yet in poetry, patriotism, religion, etc., it is the absolute which little by little penetrates into our lives...

Indian intuition has always dreamt of this absolute in the pure state, attaining to oneself beyond oneself, attaining to oneself in oneself, finally having become oneself. It is that which precisely forms the specific character of the soul and the thought of India, which was spread by Buddhism over the whole Far East. [...]

The West finds in yoga scarcely anything but Hatha Yoga, physio-psychological exercises aimed at obtaining the full possession of one's external being. Hatha Yoga is only one part of yoga, [in(?)] Patanjali. The external part of yoga, the third and fourth *anga*. What is essential in yoga is the cessation of mental activities [*vritti nirodha*!], the concentration which finally reaches beyond the *manas*. And as regards that, there is no school and no sage that fails to advocate it as essential.

Can it still be christianized? For a long time I thought so. More and more I have come to doubt it. For this "personal" or transpersonal attainment of the absolute, and even the decisive and committed search for it, conflicts with Christian dogma and the Church, which being grafted into history, is obliged to attribute an absolute value to time in order to preserve its own value as absolute.

What is beyond the 'mind' is opposed to all absoluteness at the level of the 'mind'.

(...)

January 4

I marvel as I read Marguerite Porète, the poor woman of Valenciennes who was burnt at the stake! But all the same, how hard these Westerners have to work in order to reach the point where we are at the outset. They need a mass of suppositions, of similes, to rise above their poverty-stricken level.

When I think that all I dream of now is to settle down near Gñānānanda or Sadā Shiva's *samādhi* and go about begging my rice in the nearest brahmin village [*agrahāram*]!

Studies, new foundations, even studies of the Vedas! Nothing speaks to me any more...

Sadā Shiva, awake within me! That was my "prayer" the other Friday at the *samādhi*. For in the depth of myself there is no other but You, no other but Myself...

January 5

(Reflections on Eden, Redemption and Eschatology).

1. *Yoga Sutra*, I 1.

Christianity is the wonderful psychoanalysis of the western soul, just as Hinduism is the psychoanalysis of the Indian soul. But Christianity forgets that the psychoanalyst must some day step aside. It has never understood, far less taught, the parable of the Buddha's raft. [...]

January 6 [Feast of the Epiphany]

During these feast days, which I formerly lived so intensely as a Christian, how deep is my anguish. I can no longer appreciate anything in them. Whoever has once had the "taste" of *advaita* on his tongue, no longer enjoys the flavour of anything else.

However as regards the 'surrender', I have not yet managed to achieve it—the 'surrender' of my "ego" as a Christian, a monk, a priest. And yet, I must do so. Perhaps it will then be given back to me, renewed. But meanwhile, I must leave it behind—totally—without any hope of its return.

And that means absolute poverty, nakedness, hunger, fasting, a vagrant life without means of support, total solitude in heart, in body and in spirit.

And still more, it involves the breaking of all those bonds that are as old as myself, those bonds that are in the most secret recess of the heart. All that superego derived from my family upbringing, from my whole training as a child, as a young man, as a priest, as a monk. Received from others, welling up from myself within myself.

If one does not renounce *all* that one has...²—even the Jesus whom he has before his eyes. The Apostles themselves did not want to believe in this. But there was the Ascension.—Even the God of Jesus, for that again is an idea which the "ego" possesses, and which prevents the "ego" from disappearing in the abyss.

Neither Jesus known and loved, nor God himself known and loved. The passage through death. Cutting the bonds between soul and body is nothing compared to cutting the knots of the heart [*hridaya granthi*]. And the Church can only condemn that. For the Church knows nothing about the other level. The Church has no jurisdiction over the dead. How could the Church recognize as her own one who was called to that death?

Only in aloneness. The only, only way of reaching the Alone.

And that in truth is the Epiphany, the total disappearance of all that has led (me), the voluntary surrender of all that has led (me) thus far.

(There follows a poem on the Epiphany.)

Is not one who accepts the possibility of some day being outside the Church already by that very fact outside the Church, since he *doubts* its transcendence?

—People talk of a "catastrophe" (de Lubac) when referring to someone's departure from the Church, especially if he was committed to the priesthood. Yet if that man is sincere, has there ever been in his life a more heroic act or, to use Christian terms, one more meritorious in the eyes of God? For what sacrifices made by him in the past ever reached the depth and intensity of the sacrifice that he makes on this day? Depths of himself

2. *omnia quae possidet*; cp. Luke 14:33. etc.

which until then had never been released are what he is offering as a sacrifice to the Absolute who demands everything that he has just discovered in his own depth. His renunciation of his Mass is the very fulfilment of his Mass, the *Res* of the sacrifice that for so long he was offering every morning under the veil of the sacrament. With Christ, he then penetrates beyond the veil, there where Jesus vanished at the Ascension...

All my life, all my thought was centred for so many long years on that point in space and time where Jesus appeared. And now it must be "disconnected" from space-time and centred on the eternal, the non-manifest [*avyakta*].

What a disconnection! And then, to be centred on the eternal, what does that mean for the creature? It has no meaning, and the creature from then on has no meaning either. And I have no more meaning.

Make a full surrender of the whole theoretical and practical problem of my being... Solutions will come in their own time... or rather, they are not bound to come...

(...)

January 10

This morning the singing of the Mass of the Epiphany, very beautiful and moving. That *Surge et illuminare Jerusalem*... [Arise and shine, Jerusalem; Is.60:1].

And yet it no longer satisfies the soul in the way it used to. New depths have been opened up in the soul. Jerusalem, the Church are no longer, no longer for me, what they formerly were. They no longer "resonate".

However in the prophet's vision and in the minstrel's song there is a truth that shows itself behind the fable. When the fable has disappeared, does not some truth still remain?

Surge, illuminare Jerusalem from the very centre of human consciousness, from its most abyssal depths. Awake and shine. He who is enlightened by Christ, born of him, from his side, is also his Spouse, having issued from the primordial waters, from the great archetypal abyss. The Church, the Jungian *anima* in each one's depth, the personal Church, "given birth" by the institutional, social Church, the coarse body [*sthūla śarīra*] of the mystery of the Church. The Roman institutional Church, the highest means of giving birth in humanity, and therefore in each individual, to the *anima* which lies hid within him, to the child who in each person has to be born from the Father's heart or, to use another terminology, has simply to recognize himself as eternally born and being born within the Father's heart.

Christ is the historical revelation (i.e., on the spatio-temporal level) to each one of the reality that each one essentially is. The Church is oneself in the Spirit of Christ. The last stage before the mystery of the Unmanifested [*Avyakta*] of the Father.

The Church which rises up before the wondering eyes of the world, out of that *sthūla śarīra*, the institutional Roman Church which bears it,

leads it little by little to its perfection and at the same time veils it. The placenta confused with the embryo that lives in it, at once hidden and nourished by it.

This is what some call the eschatological Church—but the eschaton is essentially in the depths of each one's soul. And that is much more truly the Church than the heavy Roman institution which nonetheless at the level of space-time has an essential and irreplaceable role to play in revealing the *anima* beyond the level of space-time...at the centre of every soul.

Surge, illuminare Jerusalem, in the depth of my soul, in the world, in the institutional Church, freed from its strait-jacket, purified, baptized in water and fire.

January 12

Fr Monchanin is amazed that I always speak of Hinduism as if "inspired". Hence the "dangerous" impression given to others. But how can I do otherwise? It is in Hinduism that I have found this incredible increase of *sānti* and *ananda* [peace and joy], which I never knew before, and to which the only obstacle is my psychological and sociological attachment to the Church. A superego so imperious that I am afraid of utterly destroying my being and my eternal being if I reject it. And yet! Do I have to be condemned to flirt with it for ever?... No bond is unbreakable in this moment of *māya*, or rather no bond is unbreakable except at the level at which it was bound. "A woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if he dies, she is free" [*Mulier viro ligata est quanto tempore vivit, mortuo viro, liberata est*; Rom.7:2-3].

(...)

Painful argument this evening with Fr M. about the future. He bitterly reproaches me for wanting to quit. He cannot understand that if he had taken our monastic life seriously in 1950, all this would surely not have happened. He cannot understand that my visits to Arunachala were different in quality from his interruptions of the monastic life at Pondi and Bangalore.

He cannot understand that it was from him that I learned the relative character of the Scriptures and Christian dogma: once I understood that, thanks to him, I have simply been logical.

Jesus was condemned by the priests of his religion for having proclaimed the inner mystery that sets us free.

Is not the most authentic martyr the one who, like Jesus, with him and in him, suffers persecution for righteousness' sake, for proclaiming the inner mystery that is greater than legal conformity?

(...)

January 13

(...)

Faith in Christ and in Christ's Church does not have to be abandoned for a Hindu "faith" in the *advaita* of Ramana or Gaudapada, or in the mythology of D.M. One faith in exchange for another, what does it matter? Faith remains on the level of the mind [*manas*].

But if one day the supreme *advaitin* experience takes place, then the question no longer arises. Until then I must remain in the Church. But do I not have the right to "leave myself open" to this *advaitin* experience? But then, is it not this deep *advaitin* experience in the depth of myself, in the progressive integration of my *manas*, which is the source of my dislocation, (of my) anguish?

January 14

(...)

The two encounters of last year must surely have been providential. Neither of them was sought. Whatever may be the value in Christ and the Church of Dr Mehta's revelations and of Gnanananda's *sahaja* ["natural" state of realization], I was "led" along that path. And in any case the essential advice received in both instances is valid.

There is no place for anguish in one who is totally 'surrendered'. Indeed, the sign of full surrender is precisely the radiant peace, the equability, equanimity, *samatva*, that is so evident in my *guru* [Sri Gñānānanda]. And in the Lord Jesus, the *sadguru*, first of all. Posing as a "victim" only shows that the surrender is incomplete. *Samatva* in thought, word, deed...

Why agonize over saying Mass? Say it in all simplicity and if one day I no longer have to say it, leave it unsaid with the same simplicity, the same equanimity.

Why oppose Christ and my *guru*? Is my *guru* not the very form under which Christ presents himself to my senses, to my eyes, to my ears, for my prostration, in order to help me reach himself, in the depth of my soul, where he is, which He is in truth?

Christ is more truly close to me in my *guru* than in any memory I may have of his appearance on earth. The meeting with the *guru* is truly an epiphany...

The Christ of memory and of faith; Christ manifested in the *guru* of flesh—these exist with a view to the inner manifestation, the encounter, the recognition.

January 15

(...)

Christ cannot be taken out of history, but the Church at the same time brings about and hinders the spread of Christ's influence in time and space. The institutional Church in 1956 is the body, *śarīra*, which both hides and reveals the Church of the parousia, the real Bride. In this *śarīra* the real Church is at the same time being born and dying. A real mission in the Church is never without holiness. If it is as a *saint* that the worker priest goes over to communism, if it is as a *saint* that the Christian *sannyāsī* goes over to Hinduism, then this proves that he has been given a mission, even if this mission must blow up the institutional Church, so that the Church of the parousia may rise up in its glory from the depth of its awareness of being the Church: Rise and shine, Jerusalem! [*Surge, illuminare Jerusalem*].

But holiness is not in the first place synonymous with devotion, zeal, asceticism [*tapas*]. It means above all humility, equanimity [*samatva*], freedom from egotism [*an-ahamkara*]. Jesus was condemned by the priests of his own nation, Joan of Arc was condemned and burnt, Al Hallaj was condemned and hanged, but in them there was never any *ahamkara*. That is the proof that they had a mission.

If the reason for separation from the institutional Church is *ahamkara*, then separation is sinful. It is only the supreme act (see above) when no trace of *ahamkara* is mixed with it...

To oppose the Church in the name of an advaitin system is a sign of *ahamkara*. To be misunderstood, unknown, abandoned, rejected by the Church, because lost in the advaitin mystery, because there is no longer "someone" to be affected by the laws...only then, *if this case is possible, there is a mission* (all this inspired by the reading of Balthasar, *Theology*).

January 16

Does this mean that I would no longer believe in the Eucharist, or the Incarnation? I surely believe in them as much as before, but the reality of the whole system of reference in which they are contained has been "obfuscated" by the brightness of the supreme Reality. (...)

January 19

The present, very painful situation with Fr Monchanin who cannot understand me is exactly what Dr Mehta foresaw. Fr M. accuses me of selfishness: of thinking of myself and no longer of the work [at Shantivanam], not to mention everything else.

Ramana often used to say: First of all, realize! But then I no longer feel up to doing the work. Have I sometimes been up to it? At least I have thought so and acted accordingly.

The turning point came at Bombay, some impulse to repeat the experience in the autumn. Tiruvannamalai and especially Tirukoyilur were decisive. Insofar as *I* am seeking *myself* in this new direction of my life, wherever it may be taking me, I have no right to commit myself to it. Insofar as it is *the Self* in me that is seeking *itself*, it is not even in my power to escape from it.

(...)

January 21

Our fears are in proportion to our lack of confidence in ourselves. When we are absolutely convinced that we have to do something, we fear nothing; for all the criticisms, etc., that might be directed at us will come up against the solid mass of our being. There is fear when our "self" trembles, 'shakes'. When the self is solid, established in all its weight of being in all it does; fearless [*impavidum*]... Neither Bishop nor Pope, neither friend nor family will be able to move it or distract it from its peace. It is established at a depth which nothing of that will be able to reach.

The post-neolithic era will be characterized by its wonderful renewal and development of Hindu and Buddhist advaita. The "neolithic" Church of

the present day will itself explode in this transformation of human consciousness, the descent of the 'supermind' foretold by Sri Aurobindo, and will find itself new, beautiful, and eternal, a bride ready for the wedding. The neolithic era is the time in which humanity "builds" the earth for its own use and in its own style, whereas during palaeolithic times human beings were content to use it without impressing their mark upon it. The neolithic era is the era of the *manas*, the *nous* [mind, Greek], at once speculative and practical, the time of the conquest of the new, of drawing up plans for it under the banner of ideas. The atomic age is no doubt the final epoch of the neolithic era; yet during this epoch the powers of consciousness as it labours more and more insistently to attain to the mystery of the self will become more and more manifest, counterbalancing that fall into materialism which is the 'inescapable' hazard of the conquest of matter. Matter reconquered by spirit. But the spirit should not let itself be conquered or enslaved by matter.

Then, at last, beyond the era of the *nous* and the *manas*, the atomic era. The grasping of oneself by oneself, and no longer through the medium of the intellect coupled with the external world : the Self (seeing) the Self in the self [*atman atmani atmānam*; cf. BU IV, 4,23; BG, II,55; X,15, etc.]. What the Orient was the first to surmise; what its elites experienced. That which formed it.

The European era is that of making plans, of rationalizing the world. The era of the East is that of the Self in Itself.

That which the scholastics glimpsed in their speculations about the angelic world.

India is the womb [*yoni*] of the millennia to come. Shiva and Krishna may vanish. The mystery within these myths is the axis of humanity which is gradually being prepared for it under European and Christian "pedagogy" as the Greek world was prepared for the Jewish revelation.

The neolithic era, the era of clothes, of falsehood, of pretence. Artificial self and artificial world... (...)

The greatness of the one clothed in space, *digambara* [i.e., naked]. The decadence which is symbolized for India by wearing a shirt instead of simple pieces of cotton cloth worn round the waist and the neck out of respect or against the cold...

Angels and demons are personifications of cosmic forces evolving toward the Omega point, whatever that may be. Fulfilment of the human being. This means that human beings in fulfilling their destiny, even if they themselves are the essential determining factor, are "helped"—more or less—by these forces which behave like personal and free entities. Human beings do not attain their destiny alone. They attain it together with the universe.

When I dream—and with what delight—when I desire—and with what deep desire—that as soon as possible and for ever I may be a pure and true Hindu *sannyasi*, I should not dream of being or desire to be regarded as a saint, a scholar, etc., by those with whom I will be dealing.

And even, if nobody anywhere met me with reverence or honour, or even respect, my desire should be just as intense. Even if people were to fling some rice at me or leave me to fast, I should no less love and desire my *sannyasa*. Have I reached that point?

However I believe that I am sincere when I say that at least I desire with all my heart to have the grace to get there.

(...)

January 22

There are only two kinds of people who are at peace:

—those who have understood nothing of the mystery of God and yet think they have understood it: the theologians;

—those who have “realized” and admit that they know nothing of God. What an agony when everything in yourself calls out for realization and when theologians and priests around you—even more, the theologian and priest that you bear within yourself, that you are— threaten you with an “essential loss” if you leave the path of the intellect. And yet Jesus said: Only one who is ready to lose his soul will find it.

(...)

January 25

Second pilgrimage with Fr Monchanin to Sadā Shiva at Nerūr. How appealing! Oh, this awakening of Sadā Shiva within myself!

(...)

February

(Reflections which recall the theology of Joachim da Fiore.)

February 3

The essential task is the absolute ‘surrender’ of the peripheral ego to the interior mystery.

From the moment that anyone knows, through the Scriptures, and the *guru*’s teaching, and especially his own beginning to experience that the Real is beyond all mental apprehension, there is then only one possibility for him—the one who has “seen thus”, *tattvavid*—namely, to live in a state of relationship—essential relationship—with the interior mystery that is not thinkable, not to be grasped [*acintya*, *agrāhya*]. Not that the interior mystery should be “related” to the peripheral *ahamkāra*, but rather that the peripheral *ahamkāra* recognizes whole-heartedly [Tamil, *mulumansudam*], that “it” is “related” to this mystery. It gives up being the absolute, being its own rule.

(...)

February 5

All that I have written in this notebook: babblings? ramblings! A deeply felt crisis, but with none of that pose of being a victim, in which I used to take delight.

I ought to be with Gñānānanda. Fr Monchanin pounces on every excuse for advising me to put it off. So as not to cross him, I shall wait, but this is the best way to make make me end up by one day leaving for good...

An agonizing situation that should be analysed to lay bare its psychological underside and its less worthy motivations. My mental outlook in regard to the Church is absolutely comparable with the one I had for fifteen years in regard to Kergonan, the one that broke out so blatantly when Father Abbot refused to let me go for M.

Peace calls me over there, as I wrote to Father Abbot two years ago, but I do not have the right to go where peace awaits me. Bound by my *karma* to the “ecclesiastical profession”.

Then is not this *in-quietudo*³ something psychologically much deeper in me, some childhood accident perhaps, manifesting itself in a violent form in my distaste for the monastery and for my present situation? To be compared with my handwriting, my speech, even my way of thinking, always racing ahead of themselves, and with those constant plans for the future, for this, for that, with my choice of what is most total in the life consecrated to God: mission, then monasticism, then total monasticism dreamt of, and then realized...

Is it not also linked to that kind of instinct for self-punishment that makes me dream about all kinds of horrible, humiliating situations... The need to escape? Crushed, stifled, feelings in my dreams of too restricted spaces... In another direction, also, fear of responsibility, not to have to decide about my life. The dream so often entertained of being carried off by night in a “yogic” fashion, and taken to the place where all that is within me calls me.

Motivations which are less deep now, but which surely play their part. Reluctance to obey.

Humiliation at having so little success in my life, whereas ‘in my teens’ I thought I had such great potential. In my pride, jealousy of those who have made more of their life, while on top of all that, everything that I do goes under the name of others! In ‘my retiring alone’, the desire not to bear the humiliation of being in the second row, the desire also to punish the world for not having recognized “my talents” or helped to develop them.

All this counts in my plan to leave Shantivanam, but does it make the “other” reasons less real?

And in my disenchantment with the Church, is it only that inner demon of instability, etc., that will pursue me until I die, always returning in some new form? Or else is there a very real call to the “Real” which, however, cannot fail to have as its ally—but as a very troublesome ally!—this demon that dwells in my unconscious?

How to distinguish the voice that resounds at the ultimate level of consciousness from those confused voices, cries, etc. that mask it and bring it back to the intermediate levels?

February 6,7,9

(Long notes on sin, faith, the Church and India.)

3. A reference to the famous phrase of St Augustine in his *Confessions*.

February 9

[...] The Incarnation the supreme myth, the manifestation to the cosmos of the inner mystery that every human being bears in the depth of himself. the supreme sacrament, the fullness of all magic, of all divine activity, through the communion in which the human being attains himself in the depth of himself. Christ is in truth the cosmic and social expression of that which every human person bears within himself. The duality of centres, yet the essential *advaita*.

(...)

February 10

Flu.

February 17

[...] No spiritual joy is any longer possible, for to experience it you have to be "yourself" in God's presence. But this distance itself is no longer permitted. Why not leave everything behind and remain immersed in the sovereign peace of *advaita*?

The fact is that Christianity cries out that *advaita* is incompatible with itself. And, indeed, true *advaita* blows up the institutional Church of the Vatican. Then? these bonds that I do not have the *right*—unless it is rather the *courage*—to break, and that are my agony and kill my body more than any deficiencies of diet, climate, etc. Let me be Sada Shiva, the naked wanderer, or Ramana sitting naked at the back of his cave, lost in the self.

The essential agony of not being able to take rest or joy in any of that which was formerly my rest and my joy. In the "thought" of God and my "relationship" with God, whatever that might be... For wherever I want to or seem about to halt, an imperious and pitiless *neti, neti* wells up from the depths of my being: Do not halt, do not halt... And another voice tells me: Unless you halt, you are heading for the abyss, the essential abyss.

And this other voice is the voice of all my friends, all my education, all this human flesh that has grown up with me. But I know that this voice can no longer give me either peace or *ananda*. Whereas the other... but is it a siren voice or the actual voice of being? As to what it promises me, I have already received a first sample. And nothing that I had ever tasted until then could be compared with it...

(...)

February 19. Quadragesima Sunday [First Sunday of Lent]

(...)

Creation is simply the mystery of God's freedom; it is as incomprehensible, in-conceivable as this freedom. The ponderous dialectic of the West has not been able to integrate the notion of *Illa*, the divine play... Creation—in mythical terms—is the dream of Brahman. And it is this dream which the actors in the dream mistake for the *jāgrat*, the waking state.

Creation is as incomprehensible as is divine freedom. Creation is real insofar as freedom is identical with the divine essence, and the creation is *māyā* insofar as it is distinct from it. But is not this distinction between the

freedom and the essence of God already *māyā*? And yet the creation is real since God is really and essentially free... And the creation is also, really and essentially, a game, a dream... And this dream is a constituent of God's eternity (which in no way means that time has no beginning, since time in its own order necessarily begins and ends).

Creation is essential to God, since freedom is essential to him. And therefore a game, and therefore a dream. And therefore, the fact that creatures are "spell-bound", live under the spell of the dream and are unable to come out of it.

Everything in creation is true, and terribly true, cruelly true, wonderfully true as well, both the love of God which is displayed and redemptive suffering, for human beings only emerge from their dream into reality when they have been "broken". And the world discloses itself. What does it matter when it begins and when it ends? Science can hold forth about it, and what does revelation turn out to be but a myth that commits us to the quest for the Real? Every moment of time co-exists with all eternity, basically there is only the mystery of Being.

February 28

Thursday morning, Arrived at Tirukoyilur, Tapovanam ashram. [An account of his visit is published in *Guru and Disciple*. Here we give only some extracts of a more personal nature.] (...)

Tapovanam**March 5**

(...)

My joy! my peace!

Days of fullness—a peak.

That night close beside the Shiva *linga*, corresponding to and continuing the one I spent at the feet of the Maheshvara at Elephanta. How can I fail to prostrate myself before it when I return to that temple, this time with other people, and no longer secretly, with my forehead also marked with the mysteriously threefold sign of the sacred *linga*!

But is not the Shiva-*linga* myself just as much as this stone? Who is prostrating, and before whom? And this body sinks to the ground and this intellect collapses, just so that finally there may emerge, from the deep womb [*yoni*] of the heart, which has at last been discovered, at last attained, that sign, that pure sign, which is the sacred stone in the centre of the place of rebirth in Being.

But I have to leave behind my joy! But I have to leave behind my peace!

So also said the Buddha.

So that the *linga* might arise from the depth of the *yoni* of my heart, the lotus from the *nabhi* [navel] of Vishnu Ranganath and Brahmā from the lotus, everything must be given up, everything must be left behind.⁴

4. He is referring to the symbolism of the *Sivalinga*, a plain cylindrical stone standing on the stone *yoni* (womb); and to the other symbolism of the God Vishnu lying on the serpent during the cosmic night. From Vishnu's navel arises the lotus of the new creation in which Brahmā, the creator God, is born.

The thought and the feeling of my joy,
the thought and the feeling of my peace.

(...)

March 6, Tuesday

(...)

Everything has slipped away: where is the truth? How to organize my future? Even how to write down what I know (should only do so at moments of fatigue or when a strong call is felt). The answer to everything is in the space [akāśa] of the heart [hridaya]. Once arrived there, I will have the solution about Gospel-Advaita, and about what to decide for my future. Here, at any rate, such peace despite the noise. (...)

What inner freedom I feel here. Yet I certainly feel that, as things are at present, the only choice open to me is between Shantivanam and Hindu sannyasa. As an independent hermit, my life-style will necessarily be Hindu and Shaivite. For whatever you may do, sannyasa is in fact realized within the Shaivite-Hindu social context. Until now sannyasa has normally been Hindu.⁵

(...)

[On Dhyana, meditation] The important thing is to fix the mind on something that leads to transcendence and frees from wandering thoughts. For me, it is the thought of the within [ullam, Tamil], the *aham* [I], for example. To make my abode within, to sit there, plunge in, vanish. If thoughts still come, they should be like birds flying in the open space [akāśa] of the heart, over my head without disturbing me. What is important is to make my abode stable.

The one who is at the centre of the *akāśa* of the heart is the very same as the one who is in the sun, and in each person and in each being. Śrī Gñānānanda: God is everywhere undivided [akhanda]. The heart is the mirror in which we see him. To see him in the universe is to see him with difference [bheda] and duality [dvaita]. To see him in the mirror of the heart is to see him as he is, undivided [akhanda], in *advaita*.

(...)

To go within through the idea of the within is a good way. However the idea of the within is in itself distinction [bheda]. As long as I distinguish the *within* from myself who seeks the within, I am not within. He who seeks and that which is sought vanish in the last stage, and there is nothing left but pure light, undivided, self-luminous [jyoti akhanda svaprakāśa]. The last work to be done is to cut through the final distinction between *he who seeks* and *that which is sought*. That is the knot of the heart, *hridaya granthi*. And Ramana was right in recommending the annihilation of the *very thought of myself*, which is the source of everything else.

March 7

(...)

5. See his essay on "ecumenical" Hindu-Christian sannyasa, "Sannyasa: the Call of the Desert" in *The Further Shore*.

It seems to me that I could readily describe my present condition since Arunachala as a dawn, *arunodaya*: even before the sun rises, the sky is lit up. *Jyoti, śanti, ananda*. The birds are already singing, and my heart is already singing. Await with joy the appearance of the wonderful orb.

(...)

March 8

(...)

The desire to be here, to be free of Shantivanam, to be a hermit near this village [agraharam], to be a wandering *sannyāsī*, etc.—all these are thoughts, desires, and therefore "off/for something", which distract me from the essential and hold me back. For who is thinking? Who is desiring? As long as there is any thought of oneself, even though it be of what is best, it means that what has to disappear so that the undivided light [akhanda jyoti] may rise in the depth of the heart, has not yet disappeared.

Renounce my God, which does not mean renouncing God.

Renounce my joy, which does not mean renouncing joy.

Renounce my peace, which does not mean renouncing peace.

Renounce my renunciation.

This afternoon I opened my Gospel for the first time in quite a long while, and I fell without thinking of it on: *Jesus audivit...*, Jesus heard that they had cast him out, John 9:35, the whole story of the man blind from birth, then, as so often, the anguish returns.

(...)

March 10

(...)

A complete change from what I wrote last year on July 31, on the evening of my broken altar-stone; now I would in all simplicity die in the arms of my guru, trusting in my guru.

(...)

March 15, Thursday

Left Tapovanam. At Tiruvannamalai, Mass at 11:00. Mr Rose.

March 17

Saturday morning, return to Shantivanam. I stay here in a state of drowsiness. How can I wake up here? The time has passed.

March 19

(Thoughts on the cross he wore about his neck with the symbol of OM at the centre of the circle and the cross.)

March 21

Seventh feast of Saint Benedict at Shantivanam. A painful one this year. Fr Mon. has always put a brake on my enthusiasm and now he is surprised that I have no more zest for it. (...)

Since my return, anguish has returned. And the very good physical form in which I was when I came back, which was noted by everyone here,

all of a sudden gone. Peace and joy for me are there where I am not allowed to go; and yet it is only there that I have enjoyed them with a fullness never found elsewhere. I can no longer live as a Christian monk here; and I cannot live as a Hindu monk. May the Lord take pity on me and cut short my life! I cannot take any more...

April 1

All Holy Week at Shantivanam. Easter, singing of Tenebrae, etc. All that reawakens emotions of the past. But my soul has gone to a deeper level.

Painful arguments with Fr Mahieu. I said there is no more joy for me on earth. For where my peace and my joy are, there I have no right to go...

Singing the Exsultet: The advaitin *night*. Easter evening, Fr Mahieu leaves for Malabar; on Tuesday, Fr Monchanin to Pondi with JT. I remain alone at Shantivanam. After a few days this solitude calms me...

April 9, Monday

Annunciation—all that, like the Resurrection, signs of what is beyond the advaitin night.

April 11

I have often thought about the mystery that I *myself* have come on this earth. There were so many other possibilities, first of all in my very parents, then their own meeting, without mentioning any earlier stages. But of course that is not true. All this body of mine, this character, this temperament is not myself, it is only my psychic and physical body [*antar bahir karanam*]; I am the witness of what these *gunas* do, or according to another system, the agent who is using the instrument. But as for *Myself*, I just am. I *Myself* do not come from my parents, nor from the myself of others. That is the secret that Christianity expresses under the symbol of the soul created immediately by God. The *anima* in the Greek sense of *psychê* comes from the parents. The *Atman*, the *Pneuma* does not. And the mystery of the *I am from God*—is it that the moment of advaita has come, or is it the transcending of advaita?—in the very symbol of the Word born eternally [*ab aeterno*] from the Father. Is that not essentially what Christ revealed, whereas people have taken from his message only what suited their Jewish, Greek and Roman mentalities?

I should not try to understand with my *manas* either Christ through Ramana, or Ramana through Christ. The *manas* can do nothing in this matter. The connection is on another level. Let me boldly enter into that level. Not to rack my brains trying to know if I should or should not remain in the Church. In actual fact, at certain times I have the impression that I belong to it very little. But there too, let me wait for things to develop in their own time. If the Church, by connecting the absolute with trifles, makes me choose, its ignorance [*a-jñāna*] itself will have given me the answer.

(...)

So you are a Christian Shaivite?

Why add the word Christian? If by Christianity you mean all the ritual and legalistic structure of the Church, or if by Christianity you mean living in a “dead past” when the man who was called Jesus lived on the earth, then certainly I am not a Christian. From my Shaivism, thanks to the Upanishads, I go straight to the goal.⁶ Christianity, the true kind, is basically only one “view” of the advaitin mystery.

Entrance into the “depth” for the Hindu and for the western Christian: The gentleman of the West with his top hat, frockcoat, waistcoat, braces, shirt, trousers, underpants, vest, socks, shoes, collar, tie, etc.—when he has to undress, how complicated it is! and after taking off each item he looks at himself, analyses his descent into nothingness, the dark night, etc. The Hindu just undoes his *dhoti* and jumps into the water, he is entirely simple and without fuss. No drama, no dark night.

The complications are the same in the excellent Marguerite Porète, when she explains what is so simple for us Hindus.

(...)

April 15

Jesus said to his disciples: It is good for you that I go away. And in fact he disappeared. Passion, Resurrection, Ascension. Disappeared in the bosom of the Father. The one who died, rose, ascended to heaven is henceforth no longer “known” except in the *pneuma*, the Spirit, in a spiritual, *pneumatikê* form.

Whoever has known Jesus according to the flesh, i.e., according to the memory preserved in the Church, in its fleshly thought (*antarsāra*) must, when the time comes, plunge with Jesus into the paschal waters, into the cloud of Tabor, into the cloud of the Ascension. Then there is no more a Jesus for the frightened Apostles.

So it is for anyone who, when called from within, is ready to plunge into the advaitin experience. Christ necessarily disappears, and therefore the Church as well. In the beyond, under what form Christ and the Church will be found again, no one can know on this side of the shore. “He is sown in a bodily form, he will rise in a spiritual form” (mixed latin and greek, based on I Cor.15:44).

Trust in God, the inner mystery: come what may.

April 16

(Reflections on the body and the *atman*.)

(...)

6. A brief and general phrase which does not explain the relationship between Shaivism and the Upanishads. By Shaivism, Swamiji does not mean some particular system like Śaiva Siddhānta, which is not advaitin, but the religious and monastic environment in which he found himself at Tirukoyilur (Tapovanam) and Arunachala. The Upanishads which are basic to philosophical *advaita* and practical *sannyasa* remained for him the fundamental inspiration which brought him “straight to the goal”.

April 19

(Long dissertations on the Eucharist, truth, faith, Hindu and Christian worship, and on the various stages of *jñāna-mārga*, reworked and published in *Intériorité et Révélation*, "Esseulement".)

June 14

[This passage was revised by the author]

Seek God until you find him beyond all thought of him and all feeling of him—

beyond the thought you have of his being unthinkable,
beyond the feeling you have of his being impossible to experience.
And to seek God, seek also yourself,
beyond the subject of whom you are aware that he perceives, that he feels, that he thinks,
beyond the subject who is aware that he himself perceives himself,
that he feels himself, that he thinks himself.

As long as you are still aware of yourself, you (yourself) will not have reached yourself.

You are as far from yourself as God is far from you,
God is as close to you as you are close to yourself,
God is as far from you within yourself as he is far from you outside yourself.

Scour the starry firmament, go beyond the galaxies, and you will still not have reached God. God's heaven is beyond all the heavens that human beings can reach by their senses or their reason.

The mystery you bear within yourself is itself also beyond all the galaxies that your mind can explore.

God is as transcendent to you when you gaze at him within as when you gaze at him without.

And just as inaccessible.

And you yourself are as inaccessible to yourself as God within you is inaccessible to you.

For your own mystery is the very mystery of God.

And (it is) a mystery of God even deeper than the mystery of God in himself—so the poor reason will stammer.

The divine immanence is at the furthest confines of the Transcendence. And the *apara brahman*, the immanent, is in truth only reached at the very heart of the *para brahman* [the transcendent].

(...)

July 5

Some seek in meditation for a content of consciousness, these are Greek meditators whoever they may be—Ignatius of Loyola and equally Monsieur Olier, St Gregory the Great and even the great Teresa. Others seek in it for states of consciousness, and these are the *yogis*. And the former are very proud and are pleased to show the latter that perfection is not a psychological state, not even that of emptiness. Perhaps we could call

the project of entering into meditation the search for a spiritual attitude. Seeking for a content or for a state of consciousness are only the preliminaries, means, "myths", within which the essential and definitive attitude of the human soul will ultimately be produced.

The last thing that meditation is, is to be face to face with God. Being face to face presupposes on each side at least something that might be identical, that might be added together, make two, might face each other. Yet between God and the human person there is nothing that could be counted. I do not say that the human being is God or that God is the human being, but I deny that the human being plus God makes two.

And so? *advaita*, *an-advaita* [non-advaita].

(...)

July 19

God revealed himself to the Jew on Sinai, to the Hindu in the depth of the heart. The *rishi* revealed very early to his brothers that the mystery which they revered in cosmic phenomena and which they approached with reverential fear in the sacrificial rite was essentially the mystery which was springing up in their innermost being, and at the heart of which they themselves spring up unto being.

The Hindu loses the self in himself, in God. His prayer is a gaze, a sinking in, a vanishing, supreme liberation.

The Jew burdens God with his own personality. Everything is centred on himself for the Jew. God must fight for his people, exterminate his enemies. How wearisome and distracting the Jewish psalms are for the *atnavid* Hindu [one who has realized the Self].

Yahweh is a national God. The Christian Israel has inherited Jewish chauvinism. Jewish, followed by Christian, prayer and worship are centred on the human person; even when they are theocentric, God is a projection of the human person...

The day before yesterday someone (H. Rose) said: Saccidānanda is a metaphysical concept, not the living God. As if God's life was made up of the fits of temper that the Prophets project onto him. But who will ever understand the intensity of the life of Saccidānanda, if he has never been touched by...burnt by it?...

Our Vedic *ślokas*—and our liturgy—are more ancient than the verses of the Jewish psalms which they [...]. And how much better they express our Hindu religious soul!

God is not more here, less there; these distinctions are how things appear to human short-sightedness. God is as much in the flight of the insect as in the theologian's contemplation or in the mystic's act of love.

God was no less in Yājñavalkya than in Isaiah, in Śākyamuni [the Buddha] than in Paul of Tarsus.

There is however the whole world of grace, on which hangs the ontological reality of the Judeo-Christian fact.

Every "particular presence" of God is confined to time. It is only in relation to time that God can influence events. And time does not "last". Christianity belongs to time, and on its own level it is no doubt supreme.

As for Hinduism, it does not seek its perfection in time, it essentially opens onto non-time.

Cullmann has well seen that Christian eternity is a time that lasts for ages of ages [*in saecula saeculorum*]⁷—not the essential non-time⁷. The Christian heaven is still a heavenly place [*svarga*]. Christ has "passed over" to the Father...and the Church, scared of direct experience, delights in the myth and the sacrament of this passing over.

July 20

The Christian has a persecution complex. He invents persecutors for himself when he does not have any real ones. A Jewish legacy. The psalms are calls for help and for revenge.

The Jew does not manage to forget himself and lose himself in God. Save me, avenge me. And when he can find no external foes, he attacks his "sin" within himself. He cannot leave his Lord in peace.

This restless attitude has been only very little transformed by Christianity. The Christian rests under the shadow of God's wings [*sub umbra alarum Dei*; cp. Ps.17:8]. That is the essential Gregorian theme. The Christian kneels at the Lord's feet to be caressed by him, while the Jew, standing in His presence, gesticulated impatiently.

How "exterior" all that is for us Hindus.

(...)

July 21

Gandhi's *Satyagraha*. "Truth, whatever it costs," as T.C. put it.

At the back of my head there is this thought: If I was compelled to leave India and earn my 'livelihood' as a lay person in France, I would then find it very difficult to be a Shaivite and an advaitin. And I am aware that I would be ready to make all the intellectual concessions necessary to recover my place again in the very soft and comfortable nest of holy Mother Church...

Does this not prove precisely how insincere I now am? Is it not, more than anything else, fear for my "human comfort" that keeps me from responding to the call of the abyss from on high? Is it not sociological, material, and psychological reasons that I dignify with the fine name of fidelity? Fidelity and courage? or rather cowardice and insincerity?

If I were a "man", I would set out tomorrow like *Sada Shiva*...

July 27

Eight years ago, Marseille and my departure.

(...)

7. Cp. Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, c.3.

July 28

God is in the depth of the "I". God is the real I, covered over, overlaid, by egoism.

God is in the depth of the "Thou". God is the real Thou, covered over, overlaid by egoism.

Two ways of access to the Divine [*theion*], to Brahman: the I, the Thou, existential approaches, not proofs by means of essences that only end in ideas.

Not only is God in the depth of every Thou, but without God there would no more be a Thou than an I. And the Thou is, with and after the I, the existential reality directly received by the human being. Moreover the I only reveals itself in relation to the Thou and the Thou in relation to the I.

And as long as the I is in opposition to the Thou, it is egoism, the ego superimposed on the *aham*.

The truth in the original androgyne (hermaphrodite). Man and woman were distinguished only later. *Śiva ardhanaṛī* [androgynous], but Shiva is not neither man nor woman, not 1/2 man, 1/2 woman, not man plus woman. The androgyne is only a symbol of the mystery which cannot be expressed on the basis of our present concepts.

Fundamentally it is neither a 1/2 I-1/2 Thou, nor an I plus Thou, nor "I ⇌ Thou", nor an I≠Thou, but something indefinable, transpersonal.

According to these two ways [the "I" way, the "Thou" way] the human person rises up to God.

India was chosen to follow the first way; for in India the second exists wholly in the aura of the first.

The Semito-Greeks are the heralds of the second way, and Christianity which was their marvellous flower. But they indeed do not know that the second way is fulfilled in the first. That is why the Christian cannot understand us... The Thou is *karma-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga* [yoga of works, of devotion]. The Thou directed to God in the human person, the service of God in the human person, is *karma-yoga*; the Thou directed to God in God is *bhakti-yoga*. The steadfast and progressive purification of all the egoism that contaminates the Thou; the commandment of love.

The *bhakti-mārga* and the *karma-mārga* are one; charity towards God and towards human beings is not twofold. Love your neighbour as yourself, Jesus taught. In that case there is no more egoism in the Thou which I say to my brother. But only when my I is stripped of all its basic egoism—the egoism that constitutes its separate individuality—only then do I understand that the two commandments are but one: when I love myself in my neighbour, I am loving only God. Such is the *jīvan-mukta*, the one who has "realized".

Then the I has lost all egoism. One last time it says Thou: and then there is no more an I to say Thou. *Quis? cui?* [Who (says it) to whom?] The I has passed into the Thou. But if there is no more an I, how could there be a Thou?... God is only other to me so long as I have not made the total surrender of myself to him. To say "I have surrendered myself to You" is

to lie. For there is no longer anyone left to say "I" when the surrender has been real. "I want nothing but You, my God." And in the end "Who then remains to want whom?" cp. the Persian legend: Who are you? [...]

(And so *bhakti* like *jnana* "merge" in the *svarupa akhanda brahman* [essential nature of the indivisible Brahman]...)

[But equally] God is the "Other" *par excellence*. That archetype which is manifested in the Father, the Mother, the Bridegroom, the Bride, the Friend, the Protector, the Saviour, the Just Judge, the Avenger, the Head.

July 29

(...)

My best times have been lived as a Hindu! Vedānta gave me what the Church never did! So?

God, Christ, etc.—for Jung, psychic realities, archetypes; but are they not archetypes precisely because they are real? not so much real outside the 'mind' as at the source of the 'mind'. In the mystery of the eternal birth of being...

(...)

August 6

"It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God..." [Heb. 10:31]. The living Saccidananda is a devouring fire, *Brahman kevalam matram* [only Brahman, utterly alone]. Nothing to cling to. So?

(...)

September 16

Trivandrum.

October 24

Through the Eucharist-Church we *become* in time what we are in eternity. The Eucharist, the Church is the *eschaton* [the End] in the form of time and space (at how much greater depth than formulas and Canon Law!).

The Eucharist is the *eschaton* which *makes* the Church and which the Church itself makes. The Church is the Body of Christ, real with the reality of the universe, and the Eucharist is the Body of Christ in-mystery [mystérique].

Christ is the *eschaton*, as the Son of Man who has gone to the Father. The *parousia* [appearing, presence] in the first place to the Father.

But what does *becoming* matter to me, if I *am*? The whole paradox of the Church and the Christian sacrament.

My wrestling with the Angel, which has already gone on for years. My repeated efforts to recover myself as a Christian. And after every effort I fall back lower than ever. And I am afraid of the liberation, of the *moksha* in the beyond from which the royal secret of advaita, *rājaguhyam*, summons me inexorably.

No solution, either in thought or in experience. The doubts will only vanish when the doubter has disappeared.

(...)

October 25

Totally involved and totally uninvolved at the same time. The freedom of the divine essence. The essence of God's freedom. (...) It is a kind of Copernican revolution when the individual—and what will it be when the Church—becomes aware that the Spirit is not limited to the Church, and that, rather than condemning to hell en bloc almost the entire human race, we must indeed recognize that the vast majority of those who are saved are saved independently of the Church, at least so far as it appears.

October 26

(...)

I wrestle with the Angel. I constantly try to deny the ultimate [paramārthika] value of advaita. Inexorably, in the depth of my heart, there rises up the *ekam evam advitīya* of the *rishis*, (the) *advaita paramārtha* [non-duality the ultimate truth]. My whole life an "anamnesis" [remembering, Greek] of this *paramārtha*.

De profundis, from the depth of the abyss. The whole of the Mass and all Christian liturgy is a *de profundis*, a cry rising up from the soul terror-struck in the depths of *samsāra*, crying out for deliverance, *moksha*. The Mass attaining to *moksha* out of the depth of *samsāra*, sacramentally realizing liberation [*mukti*].

(...)

When I celebrate Mass, what is agonizing is to have one foot in *samsāra* and one foot in *moksha*. And that is precisely what is false, *na samsāra, na moksha* [neither phenomenal world nor salvation]. *Nirvāna* is *samsāra* and *samsāra* is *moksha*⁸. Wholly in the one and wholly in the other at one and the same time (for in reality there is not the *one* and the *other*), just as God is wholly in his essence and wholly in his freedom.

(...)

October 31

If it is through egotism [*ahamkāra*] that you leave Christ and the Church, then it is sinful. If it is through fullness [*pūrnam*], then in leaving them you are not leaving them. *Pūrnam*, the pleroma, is in Christ.

(...) The mystery of *advaita* is the intimate mystery of Christ, which neither Ephesus nor Chalcedon could express, and the still deeper mystery of the Father and the Son.

November 6

Kumbakkonam

On the bank of the Kavery, Mauna Mandir, since 9 p.m. last night.⁹

—If I am, how can You be?

You, my brother, my friend, the unknown, my God?

8. According to the famous expression of Mahāyāna Buddhism, liberation, the state of extinction and of bliss, is nothing else than the phenomenal world, and the world of *samsāra* is ultimately nothing else than *nirvāna* itself.

9. Beginning of his long retreat and silence, lasting thirty-two days.

—If I were not, how could You be?

(...)

The resurrection: *bodhi* [enlightenment]. The resurrection is not a return to life as it was before death, but the very opposite of death, *a-mrita*. (...) If the Awakened One, whether Gautama or Jesus of Nazareth, is the life and the truth, it is in a form “totally other” than the one in which he was the Way. And this form is without form. The Awakened One is truth in his *nirvāna*. And *nirvāna* is unthinkable by human beings. And the *nirvāna* of Jesus is his Resurrection and Ascension, his going to the Father. His passage to Being, to Life, in Truth...

(...)

November 7

Penetrate so deeply within oneself that one ‘uproots’ oneself. Introversion is fulfilled in something that is beyond both introversion and extroversion.

Not to halt at Shiva. Shiva is also a *mūrti*. Is my *advaita* not too much steeped in Hindu *vāsana*? It should be pure, pure, diamond-pure.

(...)

The desire for salvation [*mumukshatva*] has nothing passionate about it. Its fervour and its fire are beyond all fervour and all fire and passion. But this fervour is essentially peace. An unmoving mover. The essential fire of Agni. Such great fervour that it is no longer fervour. For fervour goes outwards, and the fervour of *mumukshatva* is totally directed within. A fire that burns nothing but itself.

OM *mani padme OM*¹⁰, this mantra has constantly been singing within me since my first night here. The pearl to be discovered in the depth.

Everything is *padma*—my body, each of my members, my mind, every human being, every being, every grain of sand. Within them is the gem [*mani*] to be discovered.

The Virgin the *padma*, Christ the *mani*.

The world the *padma*, Christ the *mani*.

(...)

The work of this “retreat” is to fix my attention on the present moment and on what “is”—within me—, attentive to what is becoming insofar as (already) be-ing, and not on what is becoming in its straining (towards being).

That is *satipattāna* Buddhism¹¹ and Gurdjieff: Become what you are. Direct my attention to the fact that I am.

November 8. Om mani padme Om.

The Church looks terribly like a conventicle. Its viewpoint is sectarian, not universal. The attribute “catholic”!

10. Cp. the Tibetan Buddhist mantra: *OM mani padme hūm*. *Mani*: the jewel, the “pearl”; *padma*: the lotus (of the heart), so “the jewel in the heart”. He has replaced the mystic syllable *hūm* with *OM*. (Cp. Nov.27 below.)

11. A Buddhist method of concentration, of sustained attention fixed on the slightest movement or action of the body or the mind.

In revealing the secret of his being, Jesus revealed the secret of every being. Each one within carries the weight of an essential secret, of the mystery of being.

Jesus revealed “his” secret only so that each one after him, with him, may discover his own secret within himself.

And Jesus has shown, has opened up the way of the passing over, the way of the Passover. Let me pass over to this secret, to the Father, as Jesus called this secret. The secret which Yajñavalkya and Aruneya called *ātman*, the Self. [cp. BU]

The Mass, a “tantric” path to the *ātman*.

Jesus did not speak much, any more than the Buddha did, about this secret of being that he bore within himself, that he was. And about the *ātman*, our *rishis* said only that it was beyond all knowledge: neither knowledge nor non-knowledge [*na prajñā, nāprajñā*].

Jesus taught the way to reach it, the way of the Beatitudes, the way of love. Whoever sets out on this way is sure to reach the goal, provided that he does not make the way his goal, the *paramārtha*—which unfortunately is the case with the main body of his disciples. They forget that Christ’s community [*sangha*] is essentially eschatological, connected with the Risen Lord, just as the Buddha’s disciples have forgotten that their *sangha* is essentially nirvanic.

Nonetheless, whatever of this I may have in my Christian depth, how much more do the formulas of our *rishis* speak to me; how much more “insistent” on Reality they are! If Jesus had awakened to the state of being awake [*jāgrat*] in our land of Bhārat [India], would he not have spoken like Yajñavalkya? (...)

Here there is not that joy which I felt at Arunachala or at the feet of my *guru* [Gñānānanda]. Here, free also from every Hindu sign, from every Hindu influence, in nakedness, in the essential *ananda* beyond any joy that is felt or even thought, in the essential *sānti* beyond any peace that is felt or even thought; in the search for the pearl within the lotus, *mani padme*, for Shiva *akhanda* [undivided], *asparśa* [untouched] within the *linga*, for the Word, the essential OM *akhanda*, *asparśa* within the host (Jesus is the OM, in human *mūrti* [form]), for the Word *akhanda*, *asparśa*, in the mystery of the human Jesus.

And Jesus, in the Passover that was his whole life, became what he was, going to the Father [*transiens ad Patrem*].

OM *mani padme Om*, OM *tat sat*. (...)

The awakening to being. Who is? Being is. (...)

The awakening to being of Jesus: *Deus dixit ad me...* [Ps.2:7]

The awakening to being of Gautama Buddha: *Om mani padme hūm*.

The awakening to being of the *rishi*: *Om tat sat... Om...*

The awakening to being of all being in the one who awakens to being with his whole being,

a-bhinna, unified, *akhanda*, *asparśa*.

Everything is an image [*mūrti*] of being. What does the *mūrti* matter?

November 9

Meditation on being is basically nothing else than meditation on the Presence. And this is the way our yoga could be presented to the Christian. Sink into the Presence. Practise the silence of the imagination, of thought, even of the idea of the Presence. And then the blazing Presence—the Presence is being—*ShekInah* [Hebrew : God's mysterious presence in the world]. The Presence is the Glory. *Intra in gaudium*—Enter into the Presence—enter into being.

The paradox of creaturehood: to attain to being! As if being could be attained! Who then attains it, if not being? And if being is, how could it attain to being?

There is then nothing more than the Presence. But then, Presence to whom, to what? The Presence is the name of being as long as the veil has not yet been torn apart.

Who is present to whom? I try to place myself in the presence of the Presence. And in the Presence, I am finally present to myself. Who is present? The Present. The awakening to the Presence.

Christ, present to Himself in the bosom of the Father, in the essential Presence of the Father.

To live in the present is to live in the Presence, in being. Become all that I am—it is in this becoming insofar as it is being, that I am.

Jesus' continuous awakening to the Presence, from the "beginning" of his consciousness in Mary's womb until his eternal awakening in the dawning of the Passover, the Passing Over.

Yesterday morning I was scared. In the depth, in the lowest depth of this waking sleep, my breathing much diminished, the scarcely felt rhythm of *Om tat sat, Om*—and then a glow on my right. It was as if in front of a bend in the road, like a tunnel, where like a train the rhythm of *Om tat sat* was as if entering. And this glow became more and more intense, threatening, aggressive. Anguish in my whole being. As if that glow was going to make the whole psyche explode. And this fear made the brightness vanish and the train was derailed... That glow—the Presence, the Present, the *sākshin* [witness]...

Twice the cross appeared and immediately disappeared... (...)

November 10

Serenity in the problem of anguish, serenity in the anguish of celebrating Mass. To be in the Church as not being of it. Not to neglect its laws through *ahamkāra*, which is disobedience. To keep them as usual, for what does it matter?

Basically rites are valuable in the world of *māyā*. They permit us to live *sat* [being] in the world of *māyā*, to realize liberation in symbols, the Passover, the Passing over to being, in the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist.

(...)

All this passion in prayer, in trying to solve the problem, in seeking *anubhava* [experience], is false. It is artificial, *māyā*; it is not something

real, *sat*. It has nothing to do with the presence. On the contrary, it is an escape from the Presence. It is a withdrawal pretending to be an advance, a sinking into the subconscious regions of the "ego", an obstacle to the awakening to Being. For Being is only attained in actually being. Because being cannot really be reached, it simply is, there is only being [*sad evam asti*]. Every movement toward Being is a flight from being.

Being is in "embracing" the present moment. The eternal embrace of the Father and the Son in the eternal a-dvaita which is the Spirit, which is Being.

The rite of eating and drinking, the rite of cooking, the rite of making love, the rite of making money, the rite of cultivating the earth, the rite of learning and teaching, the rite of family worship, the priestly rite, all that is a "sacrament" in which the human being lives his reality, in which *sad evam asti*. Then he is called to the being of being, beyond all rites. Being is everywhere only Being: *kevalam mātram Sat*.

The serenity of the monk, the serenity of Gregorian chant. Perhaps it is because I did not find it in my practice of the monastic life that I now struggle so hard to prove to myself and others that it is essentially somewhere else.

(...)

November 11

I will sing a song for my Beloved
my Lord Arunachala
with the words that He himself drew from my heart
in his own heart.

I will plait a garland of flowers
for my Beloved Shiva Arunachala
with flowers that he Himself plucked in the garden of my heart
in his own heart.

I will thread pearls
to adorn thy neck, O my Beloved
with the pearls which diving down thou thyself didst discover
in the ocean of my heart,
in the depth of Thy heart.

I will mix thee a balm
for thine ebony locks, O my Beloved
adorned by the crescent moon
with the choice perfumes that Thou thyself didst distill
in the flower of my heart
in the depth of Thy heart.

And I will sprinkle on Thy feet the lustral water
O my Beloved
from the Spring that Thou Thyself hast caused to well up
in the very depth of my heart

from Thy own heart.
 And I will wave before Thee the blazing flame
 which Thou Thyself didst light in my breast
 at Arunachala
 in the depth of Thyself.
 And I will burn myself up like the incense
 that I offer before Thee
 having come from Thee, having passed into Thee,
 nothing but Thyself alone,
 O Arunachala.
 And I have ashes too, very white ashes
 to mark thy forehead and thy breast
 and thy shoulders and thy arms
 with the three mystic lines.
 Ashes, O my Arunachala
 which are what is left of the heart
 where Thou thyself hast burned
 as a devouring flame,
 O Arunachala!

November 12

(...)

The seventh day of retreat. Since last evening, a state of interior recollection that I would have feared even physically, had I not been so explicitly called to it by Dinshah and Gnanananda.

(...)

The awakening to being = the awakening of *śakti* (the explosive uncoiling of the *kundalinī*, according to the tradition).

The ascent to the depth, like the ascent to the summit of Arunachala. The goal gets more and more distant as you climb cliff after cliff. You are always right up against something which blocks your view (except behind you). Then suddenly, the summit; everything is given back, all around, in a single glance; that which took three hours to cover on foot when you made the *giripradakshinā* [circumambulation of the mountain].

(...)

However this search for the void is a useful exercise in detoxification (eliminating poisons). The error is to be attached to it for its own sake, as if the liberating flash were going to issue from this search itself. Neither the disciples at Emmaus nor Mary Magdalen were able to recognize the risen Christ in the form he had chosen to manifest himself to them. They were unaware of the condition of one who had "passed over" to *sat* [reality].

Twelve hours per day in meditation [*dhyāna*] is no more ideal than half an hour. But at least it would be normal for the monk to find himself again in *dhyāna*—as in silence—when no duty calls him outside.

Is this meditation on the void a Christian meditation? Prayer of the Presence, of simple gazing. But the Christian believes that he must

"construct" some thoughts and feelings in order to perform a Christian act, that he needs some conceptual references to the God of theology for his "thought" or "action" to be supernatural. Why do we always confuse the true supernatural with our current "idea" of the supernatural, with what we construct?

Whatever is *Sat* is supernatural. The supernatural is not within our reach, cannot be manufactured by us. It simply "is". *Sat asti*. Eating is an act of trinitarian life, for I cannot even take a mouthful of bread without the whole mystery of the trinitarian processions being involved in this humble action.

(...)

November 13

(...)

As I hasten towards You, I leave behind all my skins, all my shells, everything I had, everything I thought I was, everything I identified with—all this falls away, for the hole I must pass through gets narrower and narrower. And as I run in pursuit of You who are slipping away, I slip away from myself.

No longer a You to embrace, no longer a You to kneel before, no longer a You at whose feet to sit. No longer an I to embrace you, no longer an I who would kneel before You, no longer an I to sit at Your feet. For if there could still be an I for other people, how could there still be one for myself, since I have slipped away from myself in pursuing You?

I thought to draw You from the Universe to myself, in You I have taken immense delight. I have delighted in the heavens of my heart and I have delighted in the abysses of my heart. I have sung to You in symbols, and I have thought I was taking hold of You. But the anguish soon came of finding myself alone in the presence and in the hands of the living God. Alone, without anything to fall back on. Alone in myself with Yourself. The dread of the numinous, 'awe'. This duality, unbearable so long as it is not resolved. And which cannot be resolved by an act of adoration, for in my prostration there is always Yourself.

(...)

November 14

Ninth day. Recollection once again very deep, but without strain, not even in the eyes. My eyes simply "open" to the within, *antar mukha antar drishti* [the face turned within, the gaze within]. Not to turn back towards oneself. But to turn one's self towards the Self, *de se ad se in se*; cp. *ātmani ātmānam ātmanah*.¹² This *AD* [towards] within the self, the whole "essence" of the Son in the Trinity. The Trinity is a marvellous approach to the *ekam eva advitīyam*. Essentially *AD*, but within oneself, not outside. The Son's

12. "The Self of the self fixed in the Self." Cp. BU IV,4,23: "Hence the man who thus knows will be at peace, tamed, quietly contented, long-suffering, recollected, for he will see the Self in [him]self; he will see all things as the Self..." (tr. R.C.Zaehner, in *Hindu Scriptures*, London 1966, p.741.

Ad Patrem is originally, so to speak, an *Ad Se*. Wholly *Ad*, until the moment when the *Ad* itself is no longer seen, and there remains only *Tat*, that, *OM tat sat*.

At first I "imagined" an eye within the self, gazing. But the *atman* is within this very eye which gazes. "Just simply gaze." A gaze, without anyone gazing or being gazed at.

(...)

I had come here to make you known to my Hindu brothers,

But it was You who made yourself known to me by means of them in the overwhelming features of Arunachala!

November 15

(...)

Meditation on the Cross, prayer to the Virgin, the intercession of the saints, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, desire for heaven, filial trust, be careful that these be not pain-killers.

Does not the Church much more relieve symptoms by pain-killers than heal by radical operation? *Advaita* is the definitive surgical operation, but you need a strong heart to bear it.

How could the mystery I bear within me be two? It is sometimes called Jesus and sometimes Arunachala.

You give the impression of laughing at my anguish,
and of playing with me a cruel game of hide-and-seek,
O Jesus Arunachala!

(...)

Today I feel somewhat tired. That is not at all surprising. Besides it happens practically every other day. Is there not an element of disappointment in this tiredness? I had counted so much on this retreat. I was hoping, without clearly admitting it to myself, to obtain practically as a matter of course the state of waking sleep, to pass beyond it, and to wake up to that experience [*anubhava*] which Swami Gnanananda had let me glimpse... And then my agonizing problem would have been solved by the very fact of its being left behind; in fact I was hoping to be equipped "then" for making in all serenity the choice that circumstances might propose to me.

But that is not happening; and thanks to my weariness, my fundamental problem is still just as painful.

(...) The *advaitin* experience, it is mine, because "I am." Why go in search of it in this or that, in some particular mental attitude or state of consciousness? To be present to the present moment just as it is, that is the *anubhava*.

Yet, is there not something in Ramana and in the others that is not in me? That memory [Tamil, *jñabham*] in the *atman* and not in the *manas*, as Gnanananda was telling me? Precisely that which brings about their supreme serenity.

Do I not have to make an effort to attain this serenity, to be wholly purity [*sattva*], freed from passion [*rajas*] and darkness [*tamas*]? Yes, but an

effort that is not forced, a tension that is not strained, an *ad* freed from all its effort, all its strain... (...)

Why want at all costs to name the mystery that is within me? Under the name of Jesus, I entered marvellously into it, and this heart of Jesus, my heart, appeared to me as the Father's bosom. Under the name of Arunachala, I next entered into it and then the light was so great that it dazzled me; and all the names, all the forms that until then I had distinguished within it under the guidance of my previous masters vanished in this full sunlight. But when the sun has appeared, have the stars left their place in the firmament? And has the moon stopped in its orbit?

Wanting to give it a name, in that lies all the 'trouble'. Do not name it; gaze, be dazzled, "be"; do not give a name to, but be this mystery.

And I am it, the rest is only a name [*nāma eva etad*; cf. CU VII, 1, 3].
I am.

(...)

Why have you played a mean trick on me, O Arunachala?¹³

You have burnt me. You have wounded me.

For pity's sake, O Cruel One, finish me off.

You have left me limping, reeling on my feet; my flesh rots away from the wounds that you dealt me,

O Arunachala!

I can no longer walk, no longer stir,

lying here as I do,

like this, before you.

And You, You laugh at me!

You have ravished me, O Arunachala!

like a young girl to whom someone has made love,

and you have left me here,

like this, before you...

They all stare at me,

and they laugh at me, all those who pass by and see me,

and no one wants me any more,

because You have come to me,

O Arunachala!

Since You have ravished me, carry me away,

or else finish me off!

Since You have wounded me, kill me,

or else heal me!

Since You have burnt me, burn me to ashes,

or else come and burn with me!

But You are laughing at me,

and You leave me alone, lying here quite naked,

like this, before you!

13. The first part of a poem, later called "Bhairava". The second and third parts were composed on November 28 and 29 respectively. It is given here in the version later revised by the author.

You have snatched away everything from me, O Arunachala,
while seizing hold of me,
my clothes, my jewels, everything,
while promising me everything ...
And you have not even given me a kiss!
Your face brushed against mine, your arms were extended,
and I offered my lips and held out my arms,
and You, You laughed at me,
and withdrew into Your mystery,
beyond my reach!

And I remain here, naked, prostrate, like this,
and I no longer have even the strength to rise,
I am covered with shame,
I no longer dare even to look at myself...
All that is Your work, O Arunachala—
No, I do not want to think of You any more!

I want to desert You,
to leave You,
as You Yourself have left me,
to forget You for ever,
and so take my revenge!
Alas, you have gnawed at my heart,
And the worm You have put there bores into it,
bores into it horribly,
and I cannot tear it out,
Ah! I cannot tear You out!
To forget You is my desire, I do my best to do so...
Ah but how to forget You?
for how to forget myself!
It is as if it were Your heart that is within me, O Deceiver!
You should either not call me,
or else give Yourself to me!
Deceiver, Destroyer,
You are also the Dancing Nataraja,
Trampling on me.
You dance and make fun of me.
And with each step You change your form,
You, who appear in every form!
(...)

November 17

In serene solitude, in sovereign solitude.
In serene fullness, in sovereign fullness.
In blessedness,
in the solitude of my fullness,
in the fullness of my solitude,

in the solitude of my blessedness,
in the blessedness of my fullness.
Alone, with nothing either in the firmament or on the earth.
The agony of Jesus in Gethsemane and on Calvary.
Deus, Deus meus ut quid dereliquisti me?
[My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Matt. 27:46]
At the centre of the *guhā*, the threefold mystery
no more related to one than to the other,
because unattached [*asparsā*].

Grasped by being,
the *spiritus* grasped by the *Spiritus* within.

Paul lived in his "being-grasped" within by Christ, Christ's
"being-grasped" by the Father, the essential mystery of being in the depth
of myself which is *aham*.

This mystery within, which Jesus called the Father and the relationship
to the interior of the mystery, which he called the Spirit.

And the three are one [*Et tres unum sunt*; 1 John 5:8.]

And he explained that to the Jews, as if those poor people were capable
of understanding anything about it.

The Trinity is the interpretation by the Greek intellect of the impact
of the experience of Jesus in his depth on the Jews and Hellenistic Christians.
It took time to erect the Trinity at the heart of being.

Would the Trinity then be simply another formulation of the
experience of our *rishis*?

(...)

November 18

(...)

Even so what a struggle it is to remain Christian! All the other problems
are forgotten, these days; but that one, the fundamental problem, keeps on
coming back.

Can one remain a Christian out of pragmatism? Because I am afraid
of the consequences of a social nature, I am afraid that my Christian *vāsana*
[impressions on the sub-conscious; see Glossary] will play unpleasant tricks
on me later on, afraid of the pain I would cause, of the death-blow I would
give to the work which is currently mine within the Church: (which is) to
open the Church to its being engulfed within ...

*Satyam eva jayate nānritam.*¹⁴

(...)

Vedantin ascetic practice does not consist in putting something in
place of one's ego, nor in yielding the place—something that is always
artificial and forced—but in recognizing that the place is taken already,
from the start, from eternity; the "I" that has installed itself there is only a
usurper, and the day it becomes clear that the place is occupied, the usurper
has no choice but to vanish.

14. "Truth alone conquers, not error" Mund U. III,1.6. The motto of the Indian Republic.

In contrast, Christian ascetic practice is to put off the old man, to put on the new man, Christ, to let one's *spiritus* give place to the *Spiritus Dei*. Christian asceticism means using effort, imagination, etc., which does not prevent it from being effective.

Vedantin asceticism: the royal secret of being.

Neither merit nor sin [*na punyam na pāpam*]. Good desires, desires to do good, desires to act well, are in themselves obstacles to *Brahmavidya*. Perhaps this was the meaning of the symptoms noticed by Dr M. in the time before entering the monastery. No doubt the desire to be a "saint" was too ahamkaric [egocentric].

(...)

November 19, St Odo

Anxieties come from the fact that total interior 'surrender' has not yet been accomplished. If "everything" had been given, how would it be possible to be worried because this or that will eventually be torn away from me, whether my Christianity, or my Hinduism? Seeing that anxiety has two sides to it.

(...)

November 21, Presentation [of the Virgin Mary in the Temple]

My Mass praying for light. Why does the eternal Word of the Father manifest itself to me with so much power and light under the form of the Upanishadic OM?

agre OM āsIt [in the beginning was the OM]

brahmani OM āsIt [the OM was in Brahman]

brahman OM āsIt [the OM was Brahman]

omnia per ipsum et de ipso facta sunt [all things were made through him and from him]

in ipso prāna āsIt [in him was life]

prānah prajānām jyotir āsIt [the life was the light of men]

OM śarIra abhūt [OM was made flesh]¹⁵

The *pranava*¹⁶ resounds everywhere, in the Bible as in the Upanishads, in Christian liturgies as in Shaivite liturgies. Listen to it quite simply in the Psalms; it is the groan of the afflicted, the song of the contented, anger at evil, the fervent appeal, the act of trust, of love. Why try to understand? The *Ila* [play] of *Iśwara*. The play of the divine *Sakti*.

The *ātman* is eternally and essentially free. No one can shackle it. They can bind my hands, my feet, my tongue. But no one can bind the Self within me, no one can bind ME. All that they do with me, all that they say about me is not done with Me, is not said about Me. Beyond all that, I (simply) am. And in this share in their life to which they commit me, the worship, the life of Shantivanam, etc., they cannot obtain from ME either joy or sorrow over my sharing in it, either desire or fear as regards either staying there or being turned out. For in all this it is the *gunas* alone that

15. Adaptation in Sanskrit of the Prologue in St John.

16. The sacred syllable OM, whose meaning is similar to Amen—Yes, total affirmation.

are active, the *gunas* alone that suffer. I am *asparśa*. And there cannot even be in me any vexation at being committed to it; for all of that is the *Ila* of being. It is my own game; *akhanda*. And I play my game in this body with the same serenity as I play it in the universe, as I play it in the *devas* [gods] and the *asuras* [demons], in the good and the bad, in the afflicted and the contented. In all beings, it is the breath of life that moves [*ejat prānam nimishair ca*], in this *śarIra* neither more nor less. For the *ātman* there is neither joy nor sorrow, for there is no subject to feel joy or sorrow; he does not hate, does not desire, is not pleased, does not rejoice [*na dveshati na kāmati na tushtati na nandati(?)*]. In him and for him there is no longer anything but the essential *ananda* of being, of the Om, of the *ātman*. The brahmic condition; *brahmasthiti*. (Several lines in Sanskrit)

Accept Shantivanam, with the dualism it sets up in me, the impossibility of fulfilling my work there, the attribution to others of its successes—there I am just the link—its failures blamed on me...

No more touched by all that than the lotus leaf is moistened by the water, *asparśa*. Not out of indifference or stoic self-control, not out of negligence or weakness, but out of total acceptance of the whole *Ila*, *akhanda*.

What the Christian calls the will of God—and he reposes on it, and it makes a nice pillow, this resignation into the Father's hands; like the child who is only too happy to have a small injury which provides the opportunity of being petted by its mother. Not finding my strength in someone else, but finding my strength in Myself in the depths of myself. Eternally I issue forth within Being. From being also, if I want to speak in Christian terms, i.e. a *Patre*, in being, *in Filio*, into being, *in Spiritum Sanctum*.

The God who is other is for most people nothing but the impossibility of oneself being *oneself*. Fearing to be. The vertigo of *being*. So we exorcise this weakness and make it the solid and eternal support by which to maintain ourselves in being. Without having ourselves to shoulder the responsibility for being. How the divine name is blasphemed! The Jew was right in not wanting to pronounce it. We can only think of substitutes for God. Idolatry.

Only God can know himself: *evamvid* [the one who knows thus].

The one who knows Brahman becomes it [*Brahmavid brahma bhavati*].

Only the one who has become Brahman knows it [*Brahmabhava eva brahmavid asti*].

Fretting about not yet having obtained *brahmavidya* after all these years of trying and particularly in these days. What nonsense! Who obtains *brahmavidya*? What does the ego [*ahamkāra*] have to gain in *brahmavidya*? The fact is that the *ahamkāra* "imagines" *brahmavidya* in the form of a sweet and pleasant euphoria in the mind, hence in oneself; of a state of life which, even if certain aspects of it are only dreamed of, evokes attention, esteem, veneration from people; and even when it brings dishonour [*avamāna*], it simultaneously produces pride [*abhimāna*] in being scorned "for the sake of the kingdom of God and (his) righteousness" [*propter regnum*

Dei et justitiam; cp. Matt. 6:33, etc.]; finally and above all, a deep self-satisfaction at having succeeded, having realized "one's being."

All that is vanity of vanities, all vanity [*vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas*; Eccl. 1:2], emptiness [*śūnya*]!

So long as the *ahamkāra* desires *ātma*vidyā, there is no true desire for *ātma*vidyā. *Mukti* cannot be desired, it simply is, *asti*. Neither origination nor *nirvana*, neither bonds nor liberation, and no desire for liberation [*na utpatti ca na nirvana ca na bandha na moksha, na mumukshuśca*].

I only desire "to be" as long as I do not yet know that I am. And my desire to be misleads me into looking for being everywhere except where it really is. So it is with the self that looks for the Self within the self, as if it was something distinct from itself. Realize that I AM.

"So, if they say to you, 'Lo, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out; if they say, 'Lo, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man." [*Si ergo dixerint vobis: Ecce in deserto est, nolite exire; Ecce in penetralibus, nolite credere. Sicut enim fulger exit ab oriente et parit usque in occidentem, ita erit et adventus filii hominis*; Matt. 24: 26-27.] Refers to the awareness of being.

Being outside myself, *asparśa* [untouched], I am at the centre of myself, *akhandā* [indivisible], being outside of everything I am at the centre of everything. Transcendent immanence, immanent transcendence. *Śiva-linga* [Sign of Shiva]. In order to hide from things, hide within them.

Faith in the *ātman* is like faith in the Father. The Christian believes that God is bound, within and without, no matter that God is for him the Creator, Father, Saviour, that he loves him, etc. He does not "know" it, but he believes it. No doubt he knows it in an incipient fashion that would be too indefinite to determine his conduct and spiritual outlook, but yet it is the peg on which hangs a faith that depends on the Scriptures. And according to this faith, he acts. Although he may not believe in a God who is present, he acts as if God were present and because he "knows" by faith that He is present.

Similarly the Vedantin on whom, from the standpoint of his temporal history at the level of *māyā*, *brahmavidyā* has not yet shone, attains through faith in his guru and in the Scriptures to this incipient knowledge, to this dawn that glimmers in the depth of his soul. And even though, as being not yet liberated, he does not realize the universal transcendence and immanence of the *ātman*, he lives them in his faith. A mystery of his inmost being, perceived in the depth of being, but so subtly that the help of a revelation through others (who themselves have realized) is necessary to bring it—through faith—to a rule of thought and conduct.

But so long as people remain in the sphere of faith, it is an external rule for the Hindu as much as for the Christian. And then it is that the Christian and the Hindu come into conflict, the world of externals, the world of differences [*bheda*].

The *ātman* is the mystery within oneself, which was discerned by the Jewish and Christian seers in their Semitic-Greek context, in the concept of Father.

November 22. St Cecilia, Memorial of Mother Cécile Bruyère.

(...)

The agony of the ego, and this dislocation, those nights spoken of by John of the Cross, for which we know here the deep reason. And the ego hangs on to everything, to everything in itself that is most subtle, most high, most pure. To everything in myself (that) has appeared to it in the hardest light, the light of *sat*. It gives up everything, all that in spiritual verbiage we call "created things," the things of this world, and that is easy. But as for eternal things, how could it let go of them? As if there were any "eternal things"! As if whatever is 'graspable' (*grāhya*) by the intellect were not created, connatural to oneself!

But there is the Church, the sacraments, etc.? Yes, *neti, neti*. But there is the revelation that has come to me through the Upanishads, there are the *rishis*, there are the *gurus*, there is all that Shaivite cultural and mythical atmosphere within which I have had access to enlightenment: a raft that helped you to cross the ford—or what you thought was a ford; a taper that helped you light the fire—which you thought had gone out—cry out these same Upanishads. Let the raft float away with the current, drop the taper into the fire, *neti, neti*. But there is still an ego which runs after enlightenment, which wants full enlightenment, which wants *brahmavidyā*, there is still the *mumukshu* who like Śakyamuni under his pipal tree is eagerly straining after the supreme realization.

As long as there is someone desirous of salvation [*mumukshu*], there is no salvation [*moksha*]. As long as there is a desire for being, there is no being. As long as there is an other person or some other thing, there is still nothing.

Sat, being, alone. *Om tat sat*.

And the *ahamkāra* struggles in the waves of this ocean. It refuses to take the plunge, to sink, it wants to live, to live what it calls life. But it is being eaten away at its heart, a fire is burning it and allows it no respite. (...) It is on fire, and everything in it gradually slips away; burnt up. But it still refuses to vanish.

And this agony is also the gradual liberation of the functions of the ego from their *ahamkaric* tendency, and their slow adaptation to the conditions, new for them, of life in *Spiritu*.

The most evident sign of this work is the ever fuller entry into the great silence, the ever greater reduction in the eddies—*vritti*—of the body, of the emotional, the perceptual and intellectual faculties, the 'pervading' (*sarvagata*) of the *maunam* [silence].

Like a new *sarvagata* ('pervading') of the *ātman* in all being; like a new spreading out of the *ātman* in all being. Like a new shiva-izing of the *śiva-linga*. Attaining, 'as it were,' from the viewpoint of the body, to one's origin from eternity.

"Set my joy in the *atman* alone." [BG 2:55] As if one who is other than the *atman* could rejoice in the *atman*, as if anything could be set in the *atman*!

The right way to speak is: The joy of the *atman* is in the *atman* alone.

The invasion of an Other, of the Other who comes to dislodge me from all my more or less comfortable positions, in which however I always manage so well to get settled. My Christianity, my Hinduism, etc. The invasion of God, in the language of the Christian mystic.

This Other turns me out, he turns me out from the place that I thought was made for me in being, from my place in being. He does not just chase me out of one place from where I might pick myself up and hide in some other place. For this Other cannot endure an Other self. He does not have an Other to himself. And when that has been perceived, what an agony for the "ego", which no longer has either a place in being, or "reason" for being. That is what hell is.

(...)

So long as there remains in me a "desire" to leave the Church, it will be the sign that the time has not yet come. And the same with Shantivanam.

Desire is *rajas*. In *sattva* everything is so natural. Can there be in reality a desire for being? And it is in a wholly natural way that the play of being manifests itself in its various functions.

At noon today, my hosts were damp, when warmed, they stuck together, when moistened, they solidified, etc. I had to write urgently to Shantivanam to get some more. Strange how I have been upset by the prospect of missing my Mass if they do not arrive on time. I thought I was much freer from the Mass than that.

Deep within me there is a Christian foundation [*adhithana*] that is difficult to break down. But this worry about possibly having to miss saying Mass is not like an *atmavid*.

(...)

I will not manage to accept the fact of not saying the breviary proper to the first Sunday of Advent (I do not have the *pars hiemalis* [winter volume of the breviary]).

November 23

(...)

The *Om mani padme Om* is much too complicated as a *mantra* at present.

November 24. St John of the Cross.

Great weariness, electricity cut off since last night.

John of the Cross, dying at 49 after so much work! Nothing mythical in his history, unlike that of Clement and Cecilia. And he was great, very great. But Ramana was also very great, and Śāndilya and Gaudapāda and the Buddha.

For forty years I too have so much loved Christ, in his infancy, in his Passion, in his glory, in his Church extended by his Spirit through space

and time even to the ends of the world. I have so much wanted holiness, without any qualification, for almost thirty years now (9.1.28). And whatever particular follies there may have been, since that day this has been my only goal, the great goal [*mahat padam*], the Only One.

And look, You have let me drop! Whereas the others, some others You have led to Yourself, lifted up, clasped in your arms! Wretched man that I am! [*Vae mihi, infelix homo sum*; Rom. 7:24], like the Prophet.

And though You have let me drop, a dawn broke in the depth of the heart, at Arunachala, dawn, *aruna*, on its peak, in its cave; springs flowed from its sides and I drank eagerly from them, water, milk, nectar, ambrosia, *amrita*.

Is this your game that still and always leads me to You? But to which You? To You the One Incarnate at Bethlehem and in the Church?—throughout this whole night; or to You in your definitive form of Arunachala, the Risen One, dawn-coloured, with the eternal immobility of being, *acala*, *ekam eva advitīya*?

(...)

If it is You who are great in Ramana, You who are great in Sadā Shiva, why should I not have the right to respond to this dislocating call from my inmost being, which is what Ramana is within me, which is what Sadā Shiva is within me. Like something that would rise up from unknown hiding places, from depths in myself forgotten for generations and generations, as people would say here. Like something in myself that rumbles like a volcano beneath the crust accumulated in its crater, which cannot fail to explode and shatter everything.

[Why should I not have the right to answer] the call of that outward *mūrti* of oneself which the guru has been, which Ramana has been, which Gñānānanda has been, which Sadā Shiva has been, which Arunachala has been, which the Upanishads are, which every day reveal me more deeply to myself from depths which neither Jewish nor Greek Christianity ever released within me?

Like a child put in front of its mother who throws its arms round her neck in full view of the public, caring nothing for conventions, for laughter or disapproval...

Oh! how sad I would be if Ramana were not right, completely right.

And yet I struggle to remain Christian, not consciously, but in certain solid depths of myself, also within myself—where the original elements of the Earth have been transformed into metal and granite. And which will finally get the upper hand—the fire that runs underneath and the molten lava? or else those solid foundations that a long Christian and monastic formation has laid?

But, O my God, You whom I have so much adored, so greatly loved, I can no longer truly call You You. How then can I live as a Christian? How then give you as a priest? It is as if You had driven me from the very place, at the greatest depth of myself, in the inmost centre of myself, in the most wonderful mystery of my consciousness, where I used to adore You,

where I used to love You; and that You settled yourself there in order yourself to say to yourself there "I am Brahman" [*brahma aham asmi*]; in order to utter there Your divine and eternal "I".

And so when I say "You" to you, it is no more than literary fiction! This "I" that tries to affirm itself by still calling you "You" is a soap bubble floating in the air. And that soap bubble which floats in the *ākāśa*, the space of my heart, it is still You.

And I have thought, I want to live, I want to keep on living eternally in order to praise you, to adore you. But now I understand that this desire was still only a desire for myself, a longing to *maintain my separate existence* on the excuse of being at Your eternal service.

It is not for love of wife and children that you love your wife, your children—Yajñavalkya said it well: it is for love of the Self [cp. BU II, 4, 5].

It is not really for God that basically you love God, but for *self*. And the mystery is that this is good, this is true, and Renan's insolent translation reveals everything to one who can understand. For it is God himself who "desires" himself, 'as it were', under the *mūrti* of myself. "One" is not other than the Self.

And I have wept and cried out that nothing would remain of myself to praise and adore you in eternity, to be with You in the world without end. As if something that existed could ever perish!

Being does not come from non-being [*asato na sad bhavati*];

non-being does not come from being [*sato na asad bhavati*; cp. CU VI, 2,1].

As if in the teaching of Ramana and of our *rishis* there was not that which is most essentially myself within myself, which remains for ever. As if in *ātma-vidyā* there were another than myself knowing itself. As if in *brahma-vidyā* there were another than myself knowing *Brahman*. As if I were other than the *brahma-vid*. (...)

(There follow the accounts of two dreams and attempts to interpret them.)

*For Ramana was great*¹⁷

And if it is not You, O Christ, who made him so great, then there is someone other than You capable of making men great in the order of the Spirit.

For Ramana was as great in our eyes at the level of mystery as many of those who assume Your Name and call themselves by it.

And if it is not Your grace, O Christ, that made him great, then there is someone else who is also in control of grace, or at least of one grace; unless it is the individual who of himself is able to become so great, without needing Your grace or Your Spirit, or any grace, whatever its source might be.

But then, O Christ, if it is You who made him so great, how would they, whose brows are marked with Your sign, not fall down before his greatness—even where others could see them,

17. We give here a later reworking of this poem by the author.

when, by chance or by grace, it has been granted them to meet him!
For on his radiant brow no one could see the Cross that gave him his splendour,

no one, not even he himself.

And what an agony it is for your own people to feel themselves burning in his fiery splendour...

For too often the Cross is not radiant on the foreheads which it has marked;

and what is the Cross without the Spirit?

And that is Your divine game, that you draw people to Yourself through Ramana, through Your own splendour which shines on Ramana's brow, without anyone even guessing the presence of Your Cross hidden in the *guhā* from which these rays issue;

and that you attract the crowds to Yourself, to Your Spirit, through Your Spirit, who is himself unknown and imperceptible,

with the risk that, into these crowds there may have strayed some who bear Your Cross on their foreheads, but are tired of a cross from which the Spirit does not shine.

If You are *Satya*, Truth, if You are *Sat*, Being,

if You are Life and if You are Light,

then it is You, and it can only be You,

the *OM* of Truth, Immortality and Light,

who reverberates in our Upanishads,

it is You, the *Śabda-Brahman*¹⁸

with which our bards and our *rishis* quivered,

for it is You, the Word,

who, coming into this world,

gave to all the Voice, the *Vāk*,

that *Vāk* of which only the Spirit has full knowledge, *scientiam habet vocis* [has knowledge of the word, the voice],¹⁹

and he who is born of the Spirit.

It is You, the Light of Dawn reddening our Arunachala,

it is You, the Linga of Fire whom they venerate in his Temple

at the foot of his Mountain,

and it is You who consent, under the different *mūrtis* [images], in an adorable kenosis [emptying],

to make Yourself present to Your worshippers,

to those who seek You in the features of the sweet child Murugan²⁰

as to those who seek You and adore You in the lovable Gopala.²¹

And it is You who, later in time, lead all people to the mystery of Your unique Incarnation in the womb of Mary the Virgin,

18. *Śabda-Brahman*: the Absolute as Word. Cp. Maitri Up. VI,22: "There are two (forms of) Brahman to be known—the Brahman-Word and the Supreme. Those who know the Brahman-Word attain to the Supreme Brahman."

19. Introit of the Mass of Pentecost.

20. The divine child worshipped in Tamilnadu.

21. "The cowherd", Sri Krishna.

as with infinite patience You led the Jewish people, so slow to understand, from Horeb to Tabor, from Mount Moriah to Golgotha.
 You who shine in the mystery of the cave [guha] which our rishis revealed to us,
 after You had been revealed to them first of all under Your name of Hidden One, *guhācara* [the one who moves in the cave, in hiding], *gūdhā* [hidden, secret].
 You, the *Brahman* who gave our Vedic chants their ritual power,
 You, the supreme *Brahman* who shine in the form of "I am" in the eternal presence of the Father, in the mystery of my own heart, at the heart of my "I",
 You who "kenosized" [emptied] Yourself in those very mysteries which are not of Your Church,
 for the benefit of those who are not yet able to enter Your Church—any more than Joshua's hordes were able to hear the Beatitudes or taste the eucharistic manna—
 and who are yet in their faith and their love so much more eager for Your Spirit than were even Your Patriarchs when they entered Canaan—
 and for the instruction also of those who are in Your Church, so that they themselves may at least finally know that it is not enough to sign their forehead with the Holy Cross,
 but that their forehead, so signed, must radiate and be transparent to the Glory of the living God!

* * *

O my Beloved, why have You hidden Yourself under the features of Shiva and Arunachala,
 of Ramana the *rishi* and of Sadā Shiva, the naked Wanderer,
 in order to give me Your grace?
 Is that Your divine game?
 You adopt every form,
 And You make fun of us,
 for You want us to seek You beyond all forms!
 For there is no form in the world that is not Yours,
 which does not hide You from the ignorant,
 and which does not reveal You to the one who knows!
 It was You who in Pilate were condemning Yourself,
 and in the Roman soldier were scourging Yourself.

The Name (may it be blessed!) is invoked also over the *naivedya* [gift of blessed food to the faithful] of our Temples and over the sacred Flame, just as You Yourself did when You instituted Your memorial. Is it not from You, in reality, that they are fed without knowing it—those faithful of our land, when they devoutly receive the *prasādam* [blessed food], and is it not

by Your Spirit that they are warmed, when full of desire, they hold their joined hands over the flame?²²

You are everywhere in Yourself, and wholly in Yourself, O God. Word, primal Light, the *OM* of which our lips pronounce the echo. You are at home, Yourself and in Yourself, in our Temples as well as in the Churches, in the *mūrti* of the temples [*mandir*] as well as in the icons of cathedrals.

You are, O *Vak*, O Word, the Veda pronounced by brahman priests in their ritual. You are the Rig, You are the Sāma, You are the Yajur.²³ You are the *Udgītha*²⁴ and the others. You are the one who offers and likewise the One to whom the offering is made. You are in that which is offered.²⁵ For, apart from You, what is it?

You are Shiva the Benevolent, Dakshinamūrti, the Master of Wisdom, Murugan, the Lovely God, the Divine Child, Skanda the Son, Vighneśvara, the One who destroys obstacles, Shanmugan with the six faces, which look in every direction.²⁶

You are Nilakantha who swallowed the poison to gain for us *amrita*, the draught of immortality. You are Natarāja, the victorious Dancer trampling on the defeated demon.

And it is You who play Your games of love in the sanctuaries of our Tamil country, celebrated by our saints.

And You are Anbē Shiva, Shiva-Love.

And if to become Christian again I had to give you up, O Arunachala, to abandon you, O Ramana,
 then I would never be able to become Christian again,
 for they have entered into my flesh, they are woven into the fibres of my heart.

How could I become Christian again if I had to forget Ramana and the people of the mountain, the *sādhus* and the *munis*, the people of the Isanya Matha, my *guru* Gīānānanda and his followers, the brahmins of the Agaram and the man, himself called by Ramana, who one evening called to me on the stone bench—

all those who were my companions on the way, and were each in his own way my helper or my guide towards the great enlightenment.

If to say Mass I had to give them the slip, then I could never again say Mass.

And if to say Mass, I had to forget or reject or condemn that person—that element—in myself which penetrated with so much emotion into the dark sanctuary of Arunachala, that person—that element—in myself which spent two nights alone with Kailasanadar's Shiva-linga²⁷ and a transforming

22. A ritual act (*ārati*) included in all *pūjā*, religious worship: the flame that has been offered before God is finally touched by the faithful, who then with hands thus purified by the sacred fire touch their eyes and forehead to sanctify them.

23. The three Veda. Cp. BG X,22.

24. The chant of the Sāmaveda; the sacred syllable *OM*.

25. Cp. BG IV,24; IX,16 and 24.

26. He is here referring to different mythological aspects of Shiva.

27. Cp. the account of this experience in *Guru and Disciple*, chap.5.

evening at the feet of the Maheshvara of Elephanta, and that person—that element—in myself which at the *samadhi* and temple of Sada Shiva “remembered” forgotten abysses of his heart—if indeed the eucharistic offering could not be made by him who prostrated himself there—

then the Eucharist would no longer be true for me, and whether or not I wanted to, I would be unable to offer it. For all that is not a garment that you take off and put on at will, and it is not just ashes on your forehead that you wipe off with your hand;

these ashes on my brow are the silvery background on which glows redly the Cross of Christ, and they cannot be wiped off without removing the cross.

It is not just a single member of my body which, if need arose, would have to be torn out to avoid scandal, but it is in my very heart that all this is inscribed, placed and lodged, in depths of the heart which this alone has opened up and from which no one could tear it out without causing the death of the whole being.

Advaita is the viewpoint of Brahman, the viewpoint of God. For Christ, the viewpoint of the Father. Jesus was always situated, ontologically, at the Father’s point of view; this “I” prevailed within his self and devoured it.

The Church is God from the human point of view... Who could ever prevent me from being at God’s point of view? (“Did you not know that I ought to be) about my Father’s business?” [*in his quae Patris mei sunt...*; Luke 2:49])

provided however that this is not out of *ahamkara*, in order to escape the demands of the human point of view, the Church. In the depth of the Church, by means of an essential transcendence...

(He again takes up the interpretation of the dreams.)

On the pretext of *advaita*, it is not permitted to despise *śakti*, that brahmic power which is present and active in the whole world of *māyā*.

(...)

November 25, Sunday of the End of Time

I was thinking last night, desiring the appearance, the rising up, the outpouring of Dakshinamūrti in my depth, in whatever form the Self desires. But why desire a *mūrti* of Dakshinamūrti in the form of Jesus, in the form of Shiva? A *mūrti* to be seen by the bodily eyes, by the imagination; a *mūrti* to be seen by the understanding. The Self teaches beyond and within every *mūrti*.

Sivam atmani paśyanti pratimāsu na yoginah ajñāna-bhavanārhaya pratimāh parikalpitāh [Yogis contemplate Shiva in the Self, not in images, but due to ignorance images (of him) are conceived].

The truth beyond—through what is within—contradictions.

(...)

The drama of the Church is that, while being essentially a sacrament completely ordered to the manifestation of the Spirit, it remains at the level of sacrament. It has reduced the Spirit to the sacrament. The sacrament, that

is, the rite and the sacraments in the special sense of the word, the ecclesiastical institution, the dogmatic formulation.

That is also how it was at the time of the Brahmanas; the *rishis* arose (they were not always brahmins) who had seen, and they taught the Vedanta against the Mīmāṃsakas [ritualists].

But none of those who stood up against the sclerosis of the Church and the near-betrayal of its message escaped the same danger; all the “protesters” became institutionalized in their turn. The price paid for the “incarnation” of the Spirit. The Spirit’s kenosis in the Church, so much more “scandalous” than that of the Word in the Man Jesus.

To what extent does the Church have the right to confine the Spirit within its formulas and prescriptions, for example, to decide that so many prayers must be said by the priest under pain of committing mortal sin, i.e. of losing the Spirit, or that certain days are days of fasting, of abstinence, etc., etc.?

Apart from what is strictly necessary in order to maintain itself as an institution, to what extent does it have the right to bind consciences?

Every day the letter kills the Spirit in the Church. Was that what Jesus had in mind when he gave Peter the keys of the Kingdom?

(...)

November 26. 21st day. St Sylvester, Abbot in his Desert.

I bear in my soul a mystery, my own mystery,²⁸
 the very mystery of Being,
 and my anguish on this earth is to name it,
 that beyond-every-name,
 beyond the names that people give to things,
 the names, the words that criss-cross and zigzag in all directions
 in my mind like wandering stars,
 for this mystery is the very mystery of my body,
 of every part of my body, of every member,
 of the roundness of my figure, the smoothness of my skin.
 And this mystery is the very mystery of my heart,
 of my loves and my desires,
 of my expectations and my disappointments,
 of my refusals...
 And this very same mystery is borne by each of my brothers,
 in his own body, in his gait, in his silence, in his speech,
 in his anguishes and his enthusiasms.
 And this mystery is the very one which is in the firmament,
 in the entrails of the sun, at the heart of every star,
 and in the ocean depths,
 and in the fire,
 and in the fleeting wind,
 and in unfathomable, unexplorable, irreducible space

28. There follow parts of the poem “The Further Shore”, subsequently edited by the author.

and in the earth which bears her offspring: plants, beasts and humans.
 And it is this mystery that is within history,
 in the time which humans make
 and in the time which measures human life,
 in the time of the wind that blows, of the fire that consumes,
 of the waters that flow, first in streams and then in rivers, from the
 mountains to the oceans,
 from the oceans to the firmament and once again to the bowels of the
 earth,
 And it is this mystery that is in those people who determine human
 history and stamp their names upon it,
 and it is this same mystery which is, at one and the same time,
 at the heart of the least of those born of woman and of the humblest of
 created beings,
 and at the heart of the greatest ones who strut about among the children
 of men.

And the mystery was no greater at the heart of Jesus of Nazareth, the
 eternal Vāk [word], incarnate in time and in the elements of the world,
 than it is in my own heart.

For the mystery is one without a second, *ekam eva advitīyam*,
 and the mystery is indivisible, *a-khanda*,
 and the mystery is impenetrable, *a-sparsā*.

And it is this mystery that is hidden—and at the same time so powerfully
 revealed—in the secrecy of the dark sanctuary in the depth of our
 Temples,
 and in the bowels of the mountain of Arunachala, whence the waters
 issue and the flame shoots up,
 and in the stone serpents which the piety of humble folk sets up at the
 foot of trees,
 and in the teachings of *rishis* and the *darśana* of *gurus*; and which, when
 we meet them, rises up so overwhelmingly from the depth of our
 hearts, in the very depth of these hearts,
 piercing them, and mercilessly hollowing out
 pits of darkness which the brightness of Being may illumine.

It was in the heart of Mary's Son that this mystery was revealed in all
 its immensity,

and the words were minted which would tell it to humankind.
 That is why Jesus is the Word in person, the Vāk, the Speech, the *Logos*,
 and it was because he was the Word in person that he spoke.

And this mystery is still there gnawing away at the heart of the poor
 wretch who wallows in the mud,
 in his vomit and his excrement—
 that of his bowels, his heart, or his thought.
 The Spirit was there, which was burning and devouring

Job's heart as he scratched himself on his dunghheap,
 and Raikva's heart as he scratched himself under his chariot,
 and who unveiled the truth to King Bhallaksha, descendant of Jānaśruta,
 so proud and satisfied with his good works and his charities,²⁹
 and this mystery is there behind the dull eyes of the poor woman in pain,
 and the one who prostitutes herself
 in order to have something to eat,
 and in the Breton fishwife who shouts and bawls in the market,
 and behind the vanity of those who strut about
 and drink up flattery like sweet milk,
 and behind the pride and cunning and anger of humankind,
 both of those who make their mark on the destinies of the world,
 and of those who never leave their alleys and their slums,
 as it is also present in the holiness, the dedication and the love of those
 who lead people to the world of the Spirit,
 often without themselves knowing or others realizing it,
 beneath the white head-dress of the sister of charity,
 or in a mother's total self-forgetfulness,
 or in the most pure prayer of the child whose heart opens up to God.
 A human being has only one mission in this world;
 —to release in himself this inner mystery, and in releasing it in himself,
 to make it available to the world,
 and perhaps, if this mystery in himself wells up in words,
 —to speak to others the words which will help them penetrate within
 themselves,
 and always, in any case, to reveal it to others by his look.
 It is not other than he who is within myself,
 for it is not other than he who is.
 And it is not other than he who is within the world.
 It is not other than the Other whom I have discovered within myself.
 But then myself? Where am I? Who am I? What am I? (...)
 I am from an Other than whom there is no other.
 (...)

**November 27. Birthday of the Awakened One, the Buddha, in the Roman
 Martyrology.**

Missa O. SS. Monachorum [Mass of all Holy Monks]. This [...] is
 better in Easter time. *Exsurrexi...* The ancient monks who read his legend
 could not imagine that he was not a Christian. And their sense of God made
 them see the truth: *Om mani padme Om*.³⁰ He and so many others, carried
 by the Church, in her ignorance, in her bosom or in her crown.

Better perhaps no longer to write so much... Simply be there, *secum*
 [with oneself], taken up with entering the Depth...

29. Cp. CU IV,1-2; the story of a pious and generous man, Ballaksha, who was humbled
 and instructed in wisdom by Raikva, a leper seated beneath a chariot.

30. He writes *Om* instead of *hum*. Cp. 7 and 8 November 1956 and note 8.

(...)

If it really is the Church that has the words of eternal life, and the Church alone, then why, O my God, have you led me to Arunachala, and made fun of me by opening the caves of Arunachala in the depth of my heart?

And if your mysterious plan was that as a member of the Church I should penetrate to the furthest reaches of these deep caverns, and that I should help my brothers in the Church to lose themselves in them, then why do You not now at least bring me back, in heart and soul and thought, to your Church?

Of what significance is the name I give you, O my master hidden deep in myself, my *Sadguru*, *Dakshinamūrti*! By whatever means you choose, reveal yourself to me and remove the fear, *bhayam*, from my heart.

Fearlessness, *a-bhaya* is characteristic of *Brahman* and of the *brahmavid*, for what does he have to lose?

But I am afraid, I am afraid, an ocean of anguish wherever I turn. You call me under the name of Arunachala, and how can I resist your arms enfolding me, your lips pressed against mine?

But if this were only one of Your games! For the Church cries out to me that this form is not You. I am afraid, you see, that if I remain tied down in the Church, I will renounce that inner mystery in which there is no longer either You or I, which You revealed to me at Arunachala.

And in that case what a loss! What paradise, what *svarga*, can ever console me?

And I am afraid, if I let myself be driven out of the Church by the theologians and canonists, of risking my "eternity" for a mirage!

And yet, no, You are not a mirage, O Arunachala. You are that mountain, solidly built of granite, which cannot be shaken, *achala*. And the dawn, *aruna*, that has risen rose-coloured on the summits of my heart, is not unreal.

One who is established in the *atman*, *ātmanishtha*, could not be afraid of anything or anyone at all whether in great or small matters.

But so long as one has not really discovered oneself, how one dreads being lost.

(...)

De profundis clamavi ad te Domine [Ps.130:1], out of those depths of Yourself and of myself into which your Spirit has made me enter, in Arunachala,

and where I no longer hear what is said about You up above, outside, by your Church, if indeed she is yours...

(...) When the *ātmaavid* becomes a Christian is there not already in his heart the essential love of God and of his neighbour (of God in his images [*mūrti*], himself being a *mūrti*), and also renunciation? So what is it that the Church gives him? Ritual initiations, sacramental rites, a code of institutional laws, a series of ideas thoroughly bound up with a particular philosophy and with mythical imagery inherited from a particular culture... What more is all that going to give him?

(...)

How complicated that all is! They may be ways of climbing gradually up the slope towards the mystery.

(...)

Our *rishis*, for their part, reached the further shore with a single jump, a non-stop flight. Long ago I said that to my good Novice-Master at Kergonan, when he recommended to me a heap of virtues which he had studied in Suarez: Is it not much more direct to act out of love? Why do you want me to take a bus and count all the stops, when I am offered a free place on the non-stop plane?

November 28

(...)

The work of the monk, the work of every human being likewise: reaching the further shore of the heart.

("The further shore," a title for an article or else a book?)

(There follows part of the poem entitled "The Further Shore," (*L'autre rive*) published in the book of the same title (1984), Appendix.

You have already taken everything away from me, O Arunachala,³¹ and now You want to tear me away from myself.

Are you then going to devour my flesh,
O Ogre?

So do you want to make me a beggar clothed with a string and a rag between my legs, spending the night under one of the porticos of Your Temple and going into the town each morning to beg for my pittance of rice in a chipped bowl? With a bushy beard and verminous hair, sitting all day long in the courts of Your sanctuary, concentrating on You, O Arunachala, with eyes glued to Your peak, where the *Thibam* blazes up on the sacred day of *Karttikei*,³² and from which You for ever shoot out Your burning Flame into the devastated hearts of Your devotees? Or else hidden in one of those clefts in the rock, at the foot of Your Mountain, O Arunachala, in the darkness of Your caves, entering into You, in the furthest recess of the heart?

For You only give Yourself, O Arunachala,³³ to those who have nothing left at all,

stripped of their body,
stripped of their heart,
stripped of their mind,
stripped of their very self;

only to those from whom you have snatched away
everything in them that would still be able to say "I" to you.

(...)

31. Continuation of the poem called "Bhairava", see 15 November.

32. The festival of *Dīpam* or *Thibam* (cp. *The Secret of Arunachala*), p.129.

33. This and the following stanza of "Bhairava" are published in *The Secret of Arunachala*, ch.3.

Thus, throughout the centuries, O "Magnet",
 you drew so many of them
 to Your Temple, to Your caves,
 to Your peak of rock and of fire,
 to Your springs of living water...
 And thus You brought so many of them, panting,
 O Deceiver!
 to Your feet, prostrate;
 to the cave of Your heart, lost;
 and You keep them there, moaning, roaring,
 shuddering as they cry out for Your grace!

It is not by reflection or introspection that you come to recognize yourself in "the other", within yourself. It is like a grace, like something which comes ready made from above, or rather from the depth, without being in any way the result of work on the psyche undertaken in order to attain it. Just as in Christian theology eternal life [*vita aeterna*] is in no way the necessary conclusion of any human "work."

"Yogic" work consists essentially in clearing the ground, in creating a vacuum, in curbing and ejecting from even its last hiding places the ego [*ahamkara*], which is wrongfully taking up room—so say the Scriptures and the *guru*; and then it is normal for the dazzling light of being finally to appear in this vacuum. For in Vedānta there is no other obstacle to the radiance of being than this presence of *ahamkara* with all it implies.

(...)

November 29

(...)

How burdensome it is³⁴ to have still to do a human task when you have been marked by Arunachala,
 and when he has caused his Light of Love and of Dawn, *aruna*, to shine out in the depth of your heart,
 and when he is set there like a mountain, *achala*, unshakable,
 a Pillar of Fire, of which, no more than Brahma or Perumal³⁵,
 am I capable of finding either the base or the summit,
 where it begins, if it has a beginning,
 or where it ends, if it has an end;
 for he has snatched me away from this passing time,
 from this day that dawns and passes away,
 from this fleeting instant,
 and also from all the past and all the future,
 taking away from me, snatching away all memory, all desire,
 and I no longer know where I am, or whence I come,
 or where I am going, or where I am settled,

34. The last section of the poem "Bhairava".

35. Vishnu. A reference to the myth in which Shiva is revealed as a column of fire, and Brahma and Vishnu, who try to find its base or its summit, find themselves incapable of doing so, and have to recognize the greatness of Shiva.

for in my heart, he has planted an infinite foundation,
 a pillar of Fire that blinds me and burns me,
 and I know nothing more either of myself, or of the world, or of God,
 nothing but that brilliant Light,
 without rays, without reflection,
 without any horizon where the eye might rest
 and from which it might take its measure,
 where all is Light, before and behind, above and below,
 measureless, a boundless Sea of Glory,
 a limitless sea of ice, in which one would be held inexorably,
 at once being caressed and tormented,
 so long at least as there still remains something
 to be consumed
 by this Fire,
 this ray of darkness...

God does not create with a purpose in view,³⁶
 for God has no purpose.

He is because he is,
 he acts because he is,
 he creates just by being.

God created out of play, but God does not create in order to play,
 He does not do anything with a view to something else.

He is Play as He is Being,
 He is Being in his inviolable freedom,
 in his spontaneity, shackled by nothing.
 Tragedy exists only from the human viewpoint.
 Natarāja dances,
 not because he wants to dance,
 but because he is.

The child who runs and jumps and sings,
 without knowing where it is running or what it is singing or why it is
 dancing,
 what a marvellous thing!

But as for the adult, he does everything for a purpose,
 even when he is playing or when he is resting.
 In growing up the adult forgets what a marvel it is to be,
 quite simply to be, without thinking of anything more.

The adult wants to be: he *becomes*,
 he can no longer *be*.

The child *is* and plays.

This is how God plays in the world.

And the adult sets God questions about the running of the world,
 and why he did this and why not that,

36. Another part of the poem "The Further Shore".

and why did he thrust humanity into *samsāra*,
and what will happen tomorrow and next century.
The human being is too serious a partner for God.
When Vishnu came to visit the Earth
in the form of Krishna,
at the same time he made the over-serious ascetics
of days gone by to be embodied in the form of cowgirls,
and He enjoyed himself to his heart's content
with those men become girls,
sporting with them, playing tricks on them,
and then kissing them,
forcing them to come stark naked before Him,
naked and bursting with laughter like children...
So the Spirit plays in the world.
Play, jump and dance with me,
in the *ākāśa* of your heart,
says the Lord Natarāja.

What an interesting and instructive experience it is, in its successes and also in its failures, to dwell alone with oneself [*habitare solus secum*]³⁷, without human company, without books, even without nature, the withdrawal of the senses from their objects [*pratyahārah*] which facilitates concentration [*dhāranā*],³⁸ beyond the world of superficial distractions, beyond also the world of dreams, *svapna*, all the subconscious that is released in symbols, so different from ordinary daydreaming, and in which I have lived to a large extent on certain days of silence. Now that stage seems to have been left behind, and the body seems to have found its balance. It was so tiring during the first weeks, not psychologically, because I never got bored or had headaches, but physically.

Living alone with oneself, not with one's books, not with one's thoughts, not with one's daydreams, not with the emanations of one's subconscious, but alone with oneself, in the nakedness, 'as it were,' of one's spiritual substance.

At midday today, very deep recollection, a descent below thought, below dreams, below the subconscious, to the place lower than the point where speech and even the awareness of self-attribution originate.

And when I had reached the foot of the stairs, I noticed that I had still been even more the spectator than the actor in the descent; then, to return into this spectator, and compel him to withdraw himself within himself, and to forget that he is watching.

Then a simple 'awareness', but there is still someone who contemplates this 'awareness'. So aim steadily at the very centre. Very slow rhythm of

37. Cp. note 54 on 24 July 1952. This text, which he also quoted in his writings, profoundly influenced him as a Benedictine monk.

38. *pratyāhāra*, *dhāranā*: two of the disciplines of yoga.

breathing, very great stillness apart from the movement of breathing, the rest of the body, lips, etc., becoming slack like a corpse [*sicut cadaver*].

Very great difficulty in "waking up" again, even when my eyes were open, as when at night one lacks the courage to emerge from sleep.

Yet still remaining fully conscious. This must be something along the lines of *savikalpa samādhi* [the state of absorption in which thoughts still remain].

Then, beyond that, there must be the leap beyond this final point where self-consciousness has its origin, about which I wrote last evening, *nirvikalpa samādhi*, a total night leading into the illumination, the shining out of the *aham*, of the *sahaja sthiti* [the "natural" state].

Pursue the ego into its final hiding places; and corner it there, where it can no longer show itself by any thought, any desire, any memory, any consciousness, and yet where even so it is, in its original integrity.

(...)

November 30. 25th Day.

Alone with God. That means alone with the Self. Dare to be willing to face God in a direct meeting with the Self. We have met God in the world, in history, in the firmament: Father in heaven, Christ born of the Virgin, the Church... [*Pater in coelis, Christus natus de Virgine, Ecclesia*]. The moment is coming—and towards this moment all time is moving, to it the Spirit is moving, as It carries along the worlds in the onrushing breath of its eternal Procession—the moment is coming at last when it will be necessary to face him in the Self. The true religious terror. The feeling of 'awe', of the "numinous". Nothing to help in this meeting, nothing in heaven or on earth, nothing in one's thought either, or in one's memories of the past or in one's hopes for the future.

(...)

C.G. Jung was right in saying that a human being is rarely up to being 'faced' directly with the archetypes. And if anyone is faced with them, how could he even find support in the election which has marked him out for the essential work of humanity? For, in the depth of this *kevala*, "who" is there to take pride in "what"?

The prophet of the Epistle to the Hebrews said it well: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (10:31). For here truly is the living God, so much more really living, living in "himself," than all the pictures of his life that we store up through our eyes and our mind; living with a life so much more real than that of Nataraja, than that even of Jesus as he writhed under the lash at his scourging; living with a life that you can neither think in your thought or feel in your heart, and which nonetheless "burns" you in the very depth of your soul.

"God is a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:28). The terrifying aspect of God in the ancient mythologies. Shiva Bhairava. All this tries to express, in no matter how degenerate a form, a very profound contact that took place in the depth of one's own soul, or else the impact on oneself, on the world, of

a contact that took place in the heart of a "chosen one." And Moses said on Sinai: "I tremble with fear" (Heb. 12:21). And the people were afraid of being in contact with the living God. [Exodus 20:18]

And God was rejected in what one calls his Transcendence, as if it were not his Immanence itself that is the source of the divine Transcendence, and vice versa. And God agreed that there should be an intermediary between himself and his people.

But when Christ came on earth, he was God without intermediary. But how often, here as well, people stop at the "sacrament" which was Christ's body. "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away..." how otherwise would you receive the Spirit? (John 16:7)

People were afraid, as they penetrated to the depth of their hearts, face to face with themselves, to the depths of the heart of Christ, of meeting there, face to face, the Father, the living God,

at the very wellspring of life,
of the life beyond every veil, beyond every sign,
in the reality of him "who is".

However, as Jesus said to Nicodemus: You must be reborn of the Spirit. The Kingdom of God can only be entered by returning to your mother's womb, only in a baptism in the mighty waters of the origins.

cp. *mama yonih apsvantah samudre*
ya evam veda sa devIpadam apnoti
aham suve pitaram asya mūrdhan (Devi Upanishad).

["My womb is in the waters, in the ocean; the one who knows thus attains to the place of the goddess. I have begotten the Father on the summit". Cf. RV X, 125, 7, where the Word (Vāk) itself pronounces these words].

And this is the yogic descent to the depth of oneself, the return to sources of oneself that are more primordial than those in which a person was conceived in his mother's womb. Not simply beyond all that he received, thought or desired in the course of his life; not simply to the paternal seed from which he has issued; not simply to those human, cosmic and elemental roots, from which this seed itself has grown; but to his essential origin in being, awaking in being, from being, to being, in the heart of God, *ante luciferum*, before the dawn, in that face-to-face which is the essential judgement. For Jesus has truly said: There is no more judgement for the one who is reborn of water and the Spirit.

And in truth, nothing less than this is included in the baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

The person called by grace—and in the name of his own love also—to be what he eternally is in the Father's love, of which he is born in the Spirit, in the water and the fire of the Spirit,
in his waters which flood over him,
in his flames which devour him,
in his breath which carries him off.

Where did he go, he who dared to get there?

Where did he go, he who was carried off there?

How could he himself still know that?

Christian thought has admirably concretized these archetypal instincts of the human consciousness, in the way it received them from the unique experience of Jesus, the Christ, the Word, the Father's only Son, co-eternal and consubstantial with him,

from whom the Spirit proceeds, who is God "resting" upon the world, upon the Servant, upon the Son, the Spirit who is the mystery of the Father-in-the-Son.

And the Church by its sacrament takes the human being back to his origins—"no one, unless he is reborn...", [*nisi quis renatus fuerit...*; John 3:5]—by bringing him to his fulfilment, to the Father through the Spirit.

It is just that which makes humanity a race apart, in that it can be reborn of the Spirit.

You will be saved, says St Paul, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Lord, and if you believe in your heart that he has risen from the dead.

That is to say that in Jesus you have awakened to being,
at the heart of Being, the Father,
and that in Jesus you have attained to the Lordship of the universe,
the Lord of all, the all-knowing, [*sarveśvara sarvajña*]
and that you are
and that the world is in you
in that depth of yourself
where there is nothing any more but You,
the You of Jesus to the Father, in Being.

To be reborn in one's primordial origins, beyond one's human birth and one's cosmic birth, going beyond and ahead of those myths, like that of the Hindu *samsāra*, in which people try to live with their fundamental incapacity for being..., beyond this original incapacity, which is as inaccessible to my reason as it is to my consciousness,

rebirth in the awakening to being, in one's first awakening,
in the first awakening
beyond death, total death
when nothing any longer remains, absolutely nothing of oneself,
not even rest in God's love for oneself,
Eli, eli, lamma sabacthani;
the resurrection.

(It was to the Resurrection of Jesus that Paul applied the "You are my Son" [*Filius meus es tu*] (Acts 13:33). Christmas is a feast that only later came into the liturgy as well as into the Christian consciousness.)

The re-birth,
before which, in fact, there never was a birth,
since it is
from all eternity.

There is no awakening to being in the depth of oneself that is not an awakening to being in every being, and in the whole history of the cosmos

and of humanity, and in the whole history of each person, and in the whole of one's own history.

Yogic introversion is only fruitful on this basis. Only then does it even have a result. Understand it in this sense :

This *ātman* is Brahman. All this is Brahman. [*ayam atmā brahman. Sarvam hyetad brahman.*]

He who breathes through breath, that is your self that is within all. (...) You cannot know that which is the knower of knowledge. That is your self that is within all. Everything else is perishable (or, evil). [*yah prānena prāniti sa ta atmā sarvāntarah. (...) na vijñāter vijñātāram vijānīyah. esha ta atmā sarvāntarah. ato 'nyad ātam. BU III.4.1,2*]

Be what you are, quite simply: *atmanishtha tvam bhava.*

An extremely difficult day, horrible exhaustion, a little fever, dizziness, nervous shivering. At midday, I was beginning to gain a measure of calm by sinking deeply into *dhyāna*, when my breviary arrived by registered mail, with two receipts to sign. That finished me. I can understand R. Bose who told me that after six months of retreat in Ceylon he was disconcerted by the slightest sound.

In this yogic state, the 'mind' (and hence also the body) like a corpse [*sicut cadaver*], can no longer defend itself. The slightest shock sends it flying. In fact, this silence and this solitude is a dangerous experience (not to mention the lack of fresh air plus the damp and cold) which is to a large extent the cause of being physically unwell. I will not recommend it to many, unless they have a *guru* at hand to take the pulse (at least by written notes) of the "patient". And as for the yogic technique itself of descending into the depth of the psyche, it likewise remains disquieting.

Nevertheless no *advaitin* outcome as I was thinking or rather hoping. *Advaita* still has hold of me, but for reasons which I do not feel in my consciousness, and not even in this yogic descent to the furthest bounds of consciousness. Such a yoga, at least such as I have experienced it here, is entirely compatible with an "abiding" very simply in the presence of God; if not in the actual state of *dhyāna*, at least in its interpretation by the (guided) consciousness and its development in the course of time.

What, nevertheless, is killing me here, I must admit, is this problem of *advaita* and Christianity. All my agony lies in the fact that I still want to remain Christian. If once the step were taken, once and for all, of frankly accepting *advaita* with all its possible consequences, including the "letting go" of Christianity, everything leads me to believe that then peace would shine out. But that—whatever I may have said or written or thought—that I have never done.

(...)

December 1, 26th day.

Calm returned last evening. But I woke up this morning very tired.

If I could once again believe, my life would again have a meaning, and I would bear witness to Christ, a Christian monk, in the midst of my brothers, *advaitin* Shaivite monks.

(...)

*There is a mystery in every being,*³⁹
and in the world there is a mystery,
and it is human beings who reveal the secret of this mystery,
the secret of the being which comes from the Father.

And in every human being there is a mystery,
and it is Christ who reveals this mystery to humankind
within his own heart,
where he awakens eternally to Being,
in the bosom of the Father.

And in every people there is a mystery,
and it is the Church that unveils to each people its own mystery,
of the Spirit bearing fruit deep within it,
overshadowing it like Mary,
so that in it also the Word may be born,
from the bosom of the Father.

And at the heart of India there is a mystery...

That which our *rishis* had sensed of Being in the depth of the self,
having been overshadowed by the Spirit,
that which, moved by his breath,
they had told of Being, discovered in the depth of the self,
that which in the depth of our *rishis'* hearts
the *Vāk*, the eternal Word,
had set forth about himself.

The Word himself, having come in human flesh and spirit,
revealed its whole secret to human beings,
as much at least as they can understand
and their words can repeat:

the definitive *brahmavidyā*, knowledge of the Father,
the definitive *atmavidyā*, knowledge of the Spirit,
himself Wisdom in person, *Prajñā pāramitā*.

And he revealed the secret of attaining to it,
the Way of Faith and the Way of Love,
the secret for human beings of attaining to it in human community.

The *OM* which our *rishis* heard resounding in their souls,
when they descended to the greatest depths in themselves,
deeper than their thoughts and deeper than all their desires,
in the existential solitude of Being.

The *OM* which sounds in the rustling of leaves shaken by the wind,
the *OM* which howls in the storm
and moans in the gentle breeze,
the *OM* which roars in the rushing torrent
and the gentle murmur of the river flowing peacefully down to the
sea,

39. Another part of the poem "The Further Shore".

the OM of the spheres making their way across the sky,
and the OM that throbs at the core of the atom.

That which sings in the song of birds,
that which is heard in the call of beasts in the jungle,
the OM of people laughing and the OM of their sighs,
the OM that vibrates in their thoughts and in all their desires,
the OM of their words of warfare, of love, or of trade,
the OM that Time and History utter on their way,
the OM uttered by Space when entering into Time.

This OM suddenly burst out, whole and entire,
in a corner of space and at a point of time,
in its indivisible fullness,
when in Mary's womb was born as Son of man,
the Word, the Son of God.

(Yesterday I thought unkindly: the Church boasts of possessing the Spirit. No doubt, but in a cage. Or else in its coats of arms, unless it is not in its coats of arms...)

Advaita is when a person has plunged into the "cave" [*guhā*],
has been swallowed up in it,
in the Father's heart.

Then everything looks different from before,
because from then on nothing any longer looks different;
and it is a taste that overwhelms all tastes, it is quite different from
every taste; and no taste is any longer different from it.

But this is not a doctrine that fights with other doctrines. It just is.

In sinu Patris. The idea of being in the bosom of the Father gives great joy. But as long as you have this idea, and you feel this joy, you are not yet in the Father's bosom for the Father's bosom is the *kevala* [total aloneness].

People foolishly believe that they are going to feel that they are in the bosom of the Father and to feel what is in the Father's bosom, and that they are going to know that—if they are Christians; and that for that purpose it is enough to kneel down, bury their heads in their hands and *think* they are waking up in the Father's bosom, Sons in the dawn of eternity.

And people foolishly believe, if they are Vedantists, that it is enough for them to sit with their legs crossed, to breathe rhythmically, to suppress their desires and after unifying their minds to empty them as totally as possible of thought, in order to realize the secret of advaita and know that from the beginning there is nothing but being, *ekam eva advitīyam!*

As if the Father's bosom and the secret of being, which are the same thing, could ever be felt or thought.

There is certainly something that happens, to speak in human language, at a certain decisive depth in the psyche, but in areas of the soul quite different from those where concepts [*eidōi*] are formulated, desires are born

and feelings are experienced. Then that, when it takes place, manifests itself in its own way, in a person's subconscious, which it stirs up often from top to bottom, and finally in his emerging consciousness, taking the form of a concept [*eidōs*] and the feelings which inhabit it. And it is more or less powerful. Does this mean that there is something "new" in the depth of the soul? Different stages in this birth? The Christian will say yes, the *advaitin* no. In any case, the invasion of the subconscious or of the conscious is by stages. But finally it seems that there is the definitive invasion. That of *jīvanmukti* [liberation while still alive] and that of transforming union. Then liberation [*mukti*] is realized.

At the beginning there is a kind of nausea for everything. Feelings of sickness are indeed one of the first signs that a woman is pregnant. Things no longer have any taste, especially things "thought" about God. These are the Nights, all the more burdensome in a Christian context because the Christian has been taught to give major importance to rites and doctrinal formulations. Then finally there is a new taste discovered in everything. A taste for being itself, a taste for the Self, and no longer a taste for the ego [*ahamkāra*] and for one's "thinking".

At the beginning there are exhalations of heat and even of flames which escape through the cracks that get more and more numerous at the bottom of the crater. And then one day, the volcano erupts.

From the beginning you have felt that "Advaita, that is it!", but still the experience is not intense enough to avoid shocks, 'clashes', at the level of thought, between the *advaitin* concepts in which, more or less surely or naively, this experience is framed, and your former concepts, which were dualistic in character.

A day comes when everything pours out through the vanished floor of the crater, when the tidal wave has engulfed the dykes, when the cyclone destroys everything...

O blessed day! O long expected day!

Expect what? Why expect? Expect from whom? The expectation for anything whatever, definite or not, from whoever it may be, preparing for what *I will be tomorrow*—that truly is sin, the opposite of "being".

Meditation is not the goal of human life. Thought is only a goal for the Greeks who have remained under the spell of the mind [*nous*] (the supreme act, according to Aristotle: Contemplate that which is highest). No more is it to create the yogic vacuum. This vacuum is only an exercise, clearing the way, preparing for the liberating invasion. And afterwards? That no longer concerns me. "Who" will be? "Who" is?.

All the same, if only I could be completely sure that there is no eternal risk to be run in following Ramana to the end!

There is no more fear, *bhaya*, for the *ātman*.

Ferry me across to the further shore beyond fear! [*bhayaśya pāram mā tarayatu*]

December 2. First Sunday of Advent

All these things thought and written in trying to tell—oh, so clumsily!—what is happening, to come to understand as far as it is in my power the inner mystery that is asserting itself.

Deep experience does not add any new element to consciousness. It is rather like a kind of electric shock that establishes a new magnetic field, according to which the elements of the conscious and the subconscious, willy nilly, have to reorganize themselves. This first of all affects those elements that are weakest and most defenceless, unless it be those that are already most positively receptive. And, by their means, new points of view come to the surface in the consciousness itself. But the consciousness cannot know where these new viewpoints come from; they may be the outcome of unhealthy upheavals in the subconscious or else the disastrous influence of external elements which has succeeded in forcing its way within the psyche.

(...)

There is no more *ahamkāra*. *Ahamkāra* is the form in human beings of the state of the “closed-ness” of things, starting with the minerals etc. In the human being nature reaches the state in which this “closed-ness” can explode. The rebirth in the Spirit, from the deepest sources, of which I was speaking the other day.

(...)

December 3. 28th Day

Composure came back yesterday, very tired in the morning, afterwards that eased off, but I remained cautious. This morning also very tired when I woke up, I no longer get up until 5:00, it is impossible to meditate at night, or then the day is spoiled. Here I do not experience freedom from sleep as elsewhere in the same situation. No doubt circumstances are more exacting for the body, it would be all right except for the lack of fresh air. The silence does not trouble me. And since that is all right, I am afraid of seeing the end of the experience. I had rather thought of going to Tirukoyilur this final week. Now I no longer have any desire for that.

(...)

December 4. 29th Day

Awoke very relaxed at 3:00, Mass at 4:30 [...] Presence neither agonizing nor beatific. Simply presence. To define it is to lose it. That is to rediscover oneself, in one's lower self, instead of the Presence, the Self.

(...)

‘We must indianize, we must indianize!’ I can hear all those priests who are going to shout about it at Madras during the cultural week that opens the day after tomorrow.⁴⁰ Broad smile, they rub their hands, shuffle their notes, they are going to “do” something. Just *ahamkāra*, wind.

40. He is referring to the “All-India Study Week: Indian Culture and the Fullness of Christ” held at Madras from 6 to 13 December 1956, at which Fr Monchanin gave a paper on “The Quest for the Absolute” (printed in the Memoir, *Swami Parama Arubi Anandam*, pp.181-187).

Indianization begins with depth, that which is India's depth: *brahmajijñāsa*, the quest for the Absolute. Indianizing the Church in the first place consists in establishing it in this depth of the soul and not in formulas or constitutions.

Total exhaustion, pain in the back, between the shoulders, a kind of ache, due to the *asanas*, or to the damp? I cannot remain seated for meditation. Concentration is no longer possible. Otherwise, peace.

(...)

December 5. 30th Day

Awoke with my back aching. This is surely due to the damp. I should have opened up everything to let in the fresh air and the sun; too tired to write.

Even so, deep joy and calm. How well I now understand the Upanishads, and do so more and more. Reread this morning Yama's answer in the Katha Up.: how true it is.

(...)

In this darkness, sometimes already a glimmer heralds the sun, like a firefly flitting about across the space [*ākāśa*] of my heart.

But it is still true that there are places that help one to find that place, and *gurus* who help one to meet the *guru*, and books that help one to hear that voice, and sacraments that help one to penetrate into the mystery.

That place which is not located in space, that *guru* who has no form, that voice of which no sound is heard, which does not reverberate in space, that mystery which no symbol expresses.

The place within me where being originates (to speak humanly),
the place within me where my “I am” originates,
the place within me where my thought that “I am” originates.

All the same the day will finally come when I will understand that I am, when I will no longer play with this thought and this extraordinary consciousness that I am, without taking note of what it holds within itself, when I will grasp its truth; and then it will explode in my poor *manas* [mind], which is incapable of bearing such a power, and my ego, my *manas*, my *buddhi* [intellect]—all that will explode along with it. A setting free of the primordial energy, of which from now on an atomic explosion provides us with the most expressive symbol; but still very inadequate, for the atom in exploding becomes another atom, whereas the ego which explodes is still there, totally itself, integrally itself, and yet who knows henceforth where it is...

The *advaitin* is one who does not amuse himself with, does not play with, does not joke with “I am.”

This explosion of “I am” which took place one day in Ramana, without any outward absorption [*samādhi*],

well, that is the appearing of Dakshinamūrti.

(...)

December 6. 31st Day

Firmly set, all straining towards that depth, that place, that *guru*, that silent voice. Straining towards the Father [*ad Patrem*], when one is on the level of *manas*. And then at moments when already flashes, gusts of the natural state [*sahaja*] come, simply being there without any more thinking, oh, no, either about the place, or about the *guru*, or about the voice of Dakshinamūrti. Everything, outside, is a symbol of that, the *mysterion*.

Got up much less tired than yesterday. However the pain in the back and shoulders, spreading into the right arm, becomes worse and worse. Even so, how much I would like to remain here. Profound joy, almost unfelt. A feeling of completeness.

(...)

This evening the fever is rising, but in order to hold on I asked yesterday for a blanket, today for a candle-stick; since yesterday I am having some tea at 10:00 and 4:00, and at 6.00 I am having hot water for my bath.

I think that the "essential problem" from which there is no escape is to a very great extent the cause of my present condition. It saps my strength. And my return to Shantivanam is the symbol of again putting off its solution until later.

I was hoping, at least in some ways, that here the enlightenment would take place and that the definitive light, the experience [*anubhūti*] would solve the problem by transcending it, whatever might be the practical consequences of this experience. But here, nothing!

Wrote today somewhat disillusioned to Harilal. And yet I have received so much here! I feel a kind of dread at having to leave this silence.

(...)

December 7. 32nd Day

Got up in fine shape. Almost no aches and pains. The final day! I dread having to leave this place and this time (of retreat) tomorrow. Who will leave? Who has ever come? Who has ever entered the cave at Arunachala? Who has ever come out of it? In the *guhā* of the Father, the Son proceeds without entering in or going out, in a "time" that has neither beginning nor end, neither before nor after.

(...)

All last week felt tired, incapable of "yogic" concentration, but a genuine recollection beneath the distractions, as at Arunachala.

Gave every opportunity to my Christianity during this month. Read the Gospel as much as and more than the Upanishads! My only two books. Said my rosary almost every evening! Something that had not happened to me for a long time. And yet there is within me as it were a deep personality, that of the life in spirit, which is that of a Shaivite advaitin. That of the Christian seems to me so much more on the surface, rarely managing to make contact with the origins of the soul.

It almost makes me believe in rebirth! As if I were slowly waking up from a long dream of more than forty years. All my residual impressions [*vāsana*] from previous existences, no doubt as a brahmin and priest of the

Shiva-linga, come back to me. Those transforming times at Arunachala; the "shocks" before the Maheshwara at Elephanta and at Kailasanadar's temple at the *agrahāram*.

Nothing extraordinary happened here, whatever Pūjya Mota may have suggested. I have very often feared and at the same time desired it, I admit. No sustained waking sleep, which I was also hoping for. No decisive enlightenment. No definitive direction given for my life. Felt my psychic and physical limits.

And yet a 'milestone in my life' in all probability. I dread leaving tomorrow, I would like to come back as soon as possible... The call of and to Sadā Shiva so often during these weeks... the call from and to Arunachala!

Why this irrational fear of failing in my love for the Father, for Christ, etc.? Is not the mystery deeper than any set of symbols that seek to express it, Christian as much as Shaivite?

And why has it happened that new caverns of this mystery, that of the Bosom of the Father, that of the Heart of Christ, were opened up to me here, in the recesses of Arunachala, in the "recess" of the Shiva *linga*?

The heart of Arunachala, is that not the bosom of the Father? And Shiva, is that not the Hindu name for the mystery of love and presence which in the Judaeo-Greek context was revealed under the name and story of Christ?

Kyrie eleison (Lord, have mercy), save me, under whatever name you are pleased to draw near to me, O You who gnaw at me from the depth of the heart, You beyond every name!

December 8 (written on the 11th)

After the Mass of the Immaculate Conception, after breakfast at 6:30, I had to open the door. Once the door was opened and the first words of *nandri* [expression of thanks] were said to the faithful servant Thangaraj, I broke into sobs...

Worn out too by the fresh air of the outer world. Only one desire: to be able to resume this very evening my solitude and its silence, I said it and I meant it. Dinner at 10:30 at Nemikumar's house (Trinity Mandir). Bought some Sanskrit books. Found an excellent letter from the *guru* at Nadiad.⁴¹ Took the train at Darasuram. Spent the night at Trichy with Shri Gopaldas. Returned Sunday morning the 9th to Shantivanam, to say Mass at 8.30... again only one desire: to return there. Here the superficial, there truth. To walk in the truth, one step in the *sat* [being].

Truth [*Satyam*] and *Ila*—"to BE (not to DO)".

How "different" I become in this Christian environment, "different" from the "true" (*sat*) that I am there!

Obliged to go to the Bank on Monday. How shameful. That adds to my "distaste" for this place. Arunachala will catch me again.

OM tat sat.

41. The letter of the *guru* (Pūjya Mota) is attached to the Diary.

December 12

'Gopaldas requests me to sit and to be. Christians urge me to run and to do. That makes the whole difference.' Is it surprising that my heart has made its choice?



Swamiji with Raimon Pannikar at Banaras



Swamiji with Murray Rogers at Jyotiniketan

1957

A Year of Transition

IN silence and solitude, what was subliminal in his soul had emerged from the depths of his being. His conflict was not resolved on the level of doctrines, but a possible solution came into view at the existential level, or that of praxis: in the north of India, people seemed ready to accept him. Hindus as well as Christians told him he was welcome. He began to realize that the situation of the Church in the north was different from that in the south. In the south, the Church had been implanted since the first centuries AD; the Christians, who were fairly numerous, formed a minority that was turned in on itself and rather conservative. In the north, local Catholic Churches were practically non-existent (the very flourishing Christianity of the tribal people was located in the east and north-east); there were only tiny, scattered communities partly composed of Goans or Anglo-Indians. This situation allowed for greater freedom, as people were more ready for experiments. Swamiji was convinced of the need for seeking greater depth, even at the risk of losing his Christian identity; it remained to be seen if he would find in the north the promising ground that he sought.

However his agony still continued. He travelled widely and made new friends. He began the year at Shantivanam. Then from March to September he set out on a great expedition, first in the south: Siluvaigiri, Tirukoyilur, Tiruvannamalai, Karnataka. He next moved westward to Bombay and Poona, made a retreat at Sinhgadh (near Poona) arranged by Dr Mehta and then stayed in Poona at the Pontifical Athenaeum. He was there for Holy Week and Easter, and later gave a retreat for students from Kerala at the Papal Seminary; then from Bombay he left for Indore.

At Indore, where he stayed for a long time, the Franciscan Sisters from Angers welcomed him at their clinic (where he ended his life sixteen years later). They put him in touch with Hindu friends; the latter invited him to join other *sannyasis* who each morning addressed a pious crowd that met to chant hymns to Rādhā and Krishna. Swamiji went along with this, and spoke in English translated into Hindi. He was received "very warmly". Three weeks of this proved an immense success. He set himself to work hard at learning Hindi.

At Pachmarhi (Madhya Pradesh) he took part in a conference of priests and bishops who were exercising their ministry in the north. He felt that he was accepted and even loved by his brothers in religion and regained confidence in himself—and in the Church. After a further spell

at Indore he moved farther north. At Varanasi he stayed with Dr Panikkar whom he had met in Poona, and the two of them conversed incessantly.

In the north, Swamiji enjoyed great freedom; he did not feel stifled as he did in the south, but his problem of fidelity to the Church and to his conscience was still unresolved. Various people wanted to give him direction, which he did not accept, though he feared that his indecision might be only a hidden way of betraying his Christian beliefs. Henceforth, his inner and his outer pilgrimage proceeded hand in hand.

He already foresaw the possibility of settling in the north, but still felt responsible for Shantivanam.

On his way back, he stopped at Nagpur and Wardha. Arriving at Madras, he learnt that Fr Monchanin was seriously ill and waiting for him at Pondicherry. At the insistence of doctors and friends, the latter agreed to leave for Paris to undergo an urgent and delicate operation, after getting an assurance from the Indian authorities that he might return to India if he recovered. Swamiji accompanied him to Bombay. They were not to meet again. On 5 September, Fr Le Saux wrote from Pondicherry to his friend Fr J. Lemarie:

Dear Father,

Fr Monchanin is not well. After treating him for a month or two at Pondy, they have discovered a deep unspecified tumour that urgently requires an operation. The doctors here have asked that the operation be done in Paris. He will leave Pondy on Tuesday (by plane) and will be in Paris at midday on Wednesday (or if there is not room on the Tuesday flight, on Friday at midday). I will go and put him on the intercontinental flight at Bombay.

All this has just struck me like a thunderbolt on my arrival this morning in Pondy. I arrived the day before yesterday at Madras eight days since leaving Benares. There a telegram was waiting for me, summoning me here.

Despite all that I may have thought or written, you know the place which he holds in my life.

As he wrote to you through me, a visit from you would surely please him. Please contact Fr Duperray on this point.

My impression is that the chances of his recovery are very slight. We are in God's hands. I am dashing off this brief note to you this afternoon, for I must write about this to various people.

In Domino,

Fr Monchanin died a month later, on October 10, but his presence remains very much alive; the prophet continues to give inspiration. There is no comment on his death in the Diary, but the date is emphasized by being placed within a box; it indeed marked a decisive turning-point in Swamiji's life. When asked to disclose his identity, like any good *sādhu* referring to his *guru*, Abhishiktananda introduced himself as the disciple of Father Monchanin. After the death of the latter, he became his successor in his *sampradaya* (tradition, lineage). Furthermore, we know that it was

precisely in his final year that Father Monchanin showed increasing severity toward Abhishiktananda. It must be said that, despite their very different characters and their differences of opinion, Dom Le Saux did his best to assist Monchanin during his lifetime and to continue his work after his death. It is significant that today at Shantivanam the *samadhis* of the two founders (Fr Monchanin's is a cenotaph) lie side by side.

Important events of this year:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 6 January | Feast of the Epiphany at Shantivanam with guests. |
| 5 March | Departure for a tour in North India which lasted until September. On the way he stopped at Siluvaigiri, Tirukoyilur, Arunachala, Madras (in connection with his naturalization), Bangalore, Mysore (meeting with Harilal), Bombay (Dr Mehta). |
| 3-6 April | Poona, at Pontifical Athenaeum. Many contacts, including students at the Papal Seminary. |
| 7 April | To Sinhgadh for a ten-day retreat, arranged by Dr Mehta. |
| 18 April-9 May | At Poona: Holy Week; retreat for student religious. |
| 10-30 May | At Bombay, Indore, Ujjain, Pachmarhi, Indore. |
| June-10 August | Returned to Indore for study of Hindi. Invited to speak at a nearby Hindu <i>mela</i> (assembly). |
| 11-29 August | At Varanasi. |
| 29 Aug.-Sept.4 | Gorakhpur, Allahabad, Nagpur, Wardha, Madras. |
| 5 September | At Pondicherry. Found Fr Monchanin gravely ill. |
| 10 September | Accompanied Fr Monchanin as far as Bombay, en route to Paris. |
| 10 October | Death of Fr Monchanin.
Wrote an article on Fr Monchanin for <i>La vie spirituelle</i> (published in January 1958). |
| 26 Oct-2 Nov. | At Trivandrum, retreat for sisters. |
| 2 November | Father Dharmanādhān left Shantivanam. |
| End of December | Participated with some friends (Fr Dominique, Fr Bede, R. Panikkar) in a theological conference at Shantivanam. |

* * * *

March 5, Shrove Tuesday. Departure from Shantivanam.

March 6, Ash Wednesday. Siluvaigiri.

March 7, Thursday midday. Tirukoyilur

Shankārananda, the new administrator, was twice summoned during meditation by Gñānānanda, who was unknown to him.

(...)

The teaching [*upadeśa*] of Gnanananda: to shut myself into my room in order that I may stay there in meditation. He does not want me to go here and there. He insists I should go to the temple by the Turinjal¹.

March 9

By car with P.R.Subramanian to Tiruvannamalai. I am only allowed [by the guru] one visit there, to Miss Merstone.

March 11

Monday morning. Sri Gnanananda leaves for Chittilingamadam. I am forced to disobey him because I am expected at Tiruvannamalai and have business in Madras with a view to my naturalization.²

In the evening, circuit of the mountain, slept in the Temple court.

Tuesday morning, went up the mountain, sat a short while in the newly empty cave of Sadai Sami. Vadalūr Amma (Rādhābai) looks very unwell. (...) The door of my cave is shut. Yet how it calls! The call of the Turingal temple, of my cave, of the little room at the Isanya...

Nor does Miss Merstone approve my plan for the Himalayas. The only thing I need is a favourable place for my *dhyāna*. Arunachala if possible; if I have to get farther away from Shantivanam, it doesn't matter where: Bombay, Haridwar, but straightaway, without dawdling here or there on the way.

At the Temple this morning, Arunachala Aiyar also tells me : "Why go so far. Is not Arunachala enough for you?" (...)

Madras

March 13, Wed. morning

The Consul. After him, the Secretariat.

March 14

Again the Consul. For lunch and afterwards with Mme C.Drevet.

March 15

Morning, (visit to) Adyar³. Evening to Bangalore.

Bangalore

March 16

Midday Mr Bose. Afternoon Perumal S. (woman devotee of Gn.)

March 17 Sunday

Midday Banasandra. Then Shivasandra, with H.W.L.Poonja⁴, until—

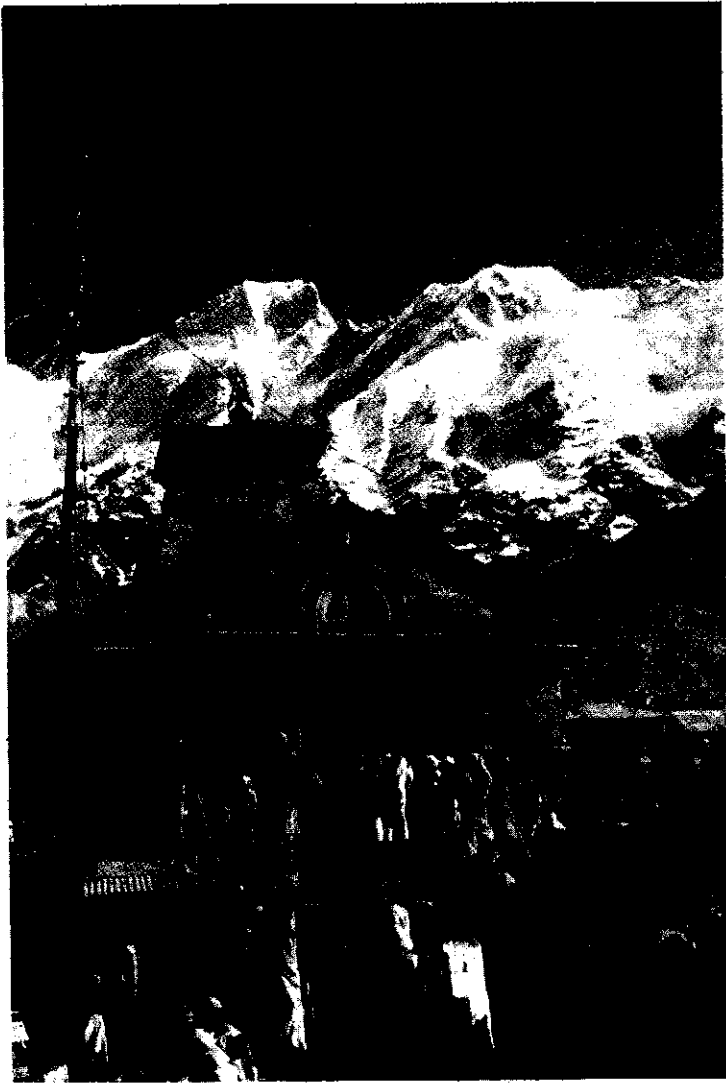
1. This refers to an isolated temple near Tirukoyilur which had much impressed Abhishiktananda on a previous visit, and where he had dreamed of staying. See *Guru and Disciple*, chap.6.
2. He was granted Indian nationality in 1960.
3. Near Madras, centre of the Theosophical Society.
4. Poonja (Harilal) was at that time working as director of mines in the Mysore district. See the account of him in *The Secret of Arunachala*, chap.4.



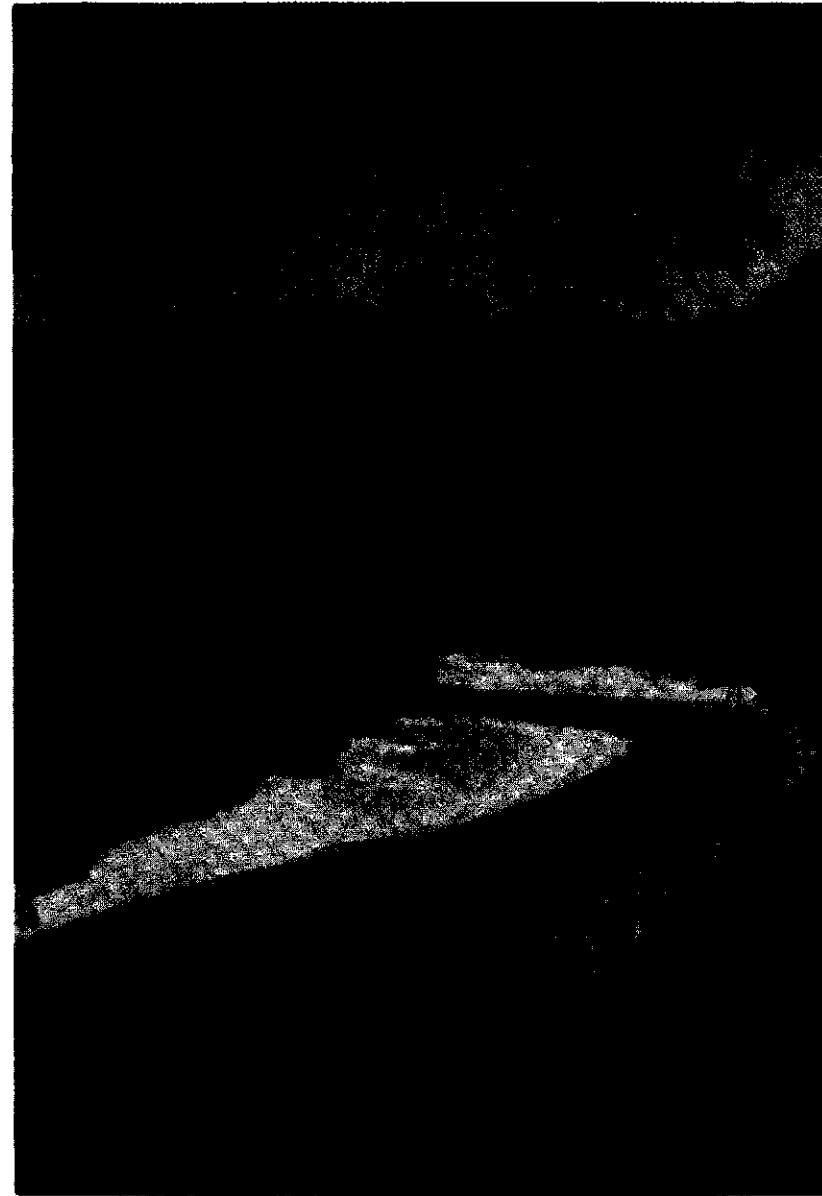
The holy mountain Arunachala



Temple of Annamalaiyar from Arunachala



Temple of Shiva at Kedarnath



The Ganges below Kaudiyala. Ranagal temple (not visible) is on the right above the bend in the river.

March 21

Middy, left for Poona.

Poonja was amazed that I have not yet "arrived", I have been so ready (and near) for the past four years. No preparation for enlightenment possible. "It is." Asat cannot lead to sat. It just happens. (Cp. Yogavaśishtha and Zen). (...)

March 22 4 p.m. Poona**March 23 10 a.m. Bombay**

(...)

March 30

Not to say Mass is perhaps to be free from attachment to the Mass but not from attachment to no-Mass.

Free from Church and from no-Church. Free from Mass and from no-Mass. As long as you feel a sense of freedom when you do not say the Mass, you have simply changed your type of slavery. Freedom does not lie in not conforming to a law chosen by yourself, that is still enslavement to *your own* inclinations.

Beyond the level of *your own* ideas: complete 'surrender'.

Free in the Spirit. Be free to say Mass; be free not to say it also. Do not fear this or that, what this or that person will think or say. Fear is the lower self. One who is free, does not fear. Beyond the conflict, the witness, *sākshī*.

Reason cannot resolve the conflict. Only the Spirit can. The inspiration of the Spirit is necessary, the theology of the gifts. (...) Be in a state of docility so that the 'guidance' may come in the way that the Spirit will choose.

Be sure of what I am doing, then I will never be upset by contradiction. If some other person opposes me, even the bishop: "Is it so? [in Tamil]. It's like that?"—above all never let myself get upset.

In their spiritual search people most often seek for the *self* as they conceive it, 'not the *Self*'.

April 1

(...)

Today news of fresh enquiries at Parushipane plus the reflections of Bishop Leonard (Madurai) as he told Father Dominique at Salem.⁵ Why get upset? Is not the whole trouble entirely within the mind? Whether I am disturbed or not, it makes no difference to what is being hatched against me. Provided I am present to myself, to the inner mystery of Myself, I shall be ready to respond on the day when whatever it may be takes place.

There is a depth of myself which cannot be touched either by death or by excommunication. "Who will separate me from the love of Christ?"

5. Mgr Leonard had come there to preside at the funeral of Mgr Prunier (bishop of Salem from 1930-1949), during which he revealed his negative attitude towards all Christian *sannyāsa*.



Swamiji at Indore in October 1973

Where within me is true sincerity to be found? The question faced me only a few weeks ago at Shantivanam. When I claim to remain in the Church on account of other people, or on account of my *vasana*, of my psychological make-up, or else from fear of a hell which is after all possible, is that really sincere? Is it not an attempt to veil my true depth, the centre in which I really abide, even if I only reach this level of consciousness at rare intervals? And then, my Christian behaviour, is it not a facade? And should not my outward behaviour be completely different, if I really wanted to be outwardly myself, as in my conscious thought, as I *really* am deep down?

Dr Mehta and others want to have me make a distinction between Christ and the Church. The Christ whom I find in the ultimate depth is as far from the Christianity that men have made, as is the *kevala* from the God of their thoughts!

The Spirit beyond the Church, the Father beyond the Son. The Christ beyond the Church and beyond the Christ of history is still more really the Christ, the living God!

Beyond the Christ there is always Christ. Beginning from the man born of Mary. Christ in the mystery of *sat*.

April 8

Arrived at Sinhgadh, Sunday evening the 7th.⁶

(...)

If I want something, even realization, I am wanting the object of my thought.

The Real is not something to be wanted.

It just is.

As long as I have not realized that "I am", anything I want is futile, for being is not something to be wanted; anything I do is futile, for being is not something to be done.

There is nothing to want, nothing to desire, nothing to seek, nothing to attain.

The total solitude of being (of *aham asmi*).

For all that is desired, sought, attained is a human work, a human thought—done by one who-is-not-that-which-is.

The past is something thought of, and the future is something thought of, not that which is. Be free from the past, both that which was long ago and that which was just now; be free from the future, both that which will come later and that which is about to happen now; this does not mean driving out one's concerns, desires, regrets, by means of another thought no less empty than the thoughts that are driven out; but it means quite simply

6. In the hills near Poona, where Dr Mehta had made all arrangements for him to stay in solitude. On 12.4.57 he wrote to his sister: "I am writing to you this morning from an old fort in the Maratha country 1300 metres above sea level... There are not six families on the plateau... I am enjoying this solitude which a friend in Bombay has provided for me."

"to be", to realize that I literally am: *aham asmi*. Nothing more to desire or ask for, nothing to regret, nothing to get, nothing to abandon. The *kevala*.

(...)

April 11

(...)

The obstacle is not my Christianity, but the fears that feed on my Christianity.

What is important is not to discover in meditation what I will be or do, all that is essentially a secondary matter, whether I remain Christian or not, etc. The only important thing is to discover what I am, more precisely, to realize it. For who does the discovering? The knowledge of that by which, once it is known, everything is known.

It is not possible that the realization of Being should be reserved to a few privileged beings who have the spare time to live in the jungle, etc. Realization is, theoretically at least, within the reach of everyone. It does not correspond to any "function" in society. It has nothing to do with the priestly caste, or even the "monastic" one. The servant [*naukar*] and the cabinet minister and the landlord and the president are called to live as "realized" in the specific function assigned them by circumstances, or by their *karma*.

To disappear as some have recommended. Why make plans to disappear from human habitations, to disappear from human sight?

To disappear within, Shiva in the depth of the Shiva *linga*. The witness, *sākshī*, totally detached, totally committed, *asparśa*, *akhanda*.

Christ "disappeared" twice, the first time at the Passion, and that was his Resurrection in the bosom of the Father; the second time at the Ascension, and that was his coming in the Spirit within the world.

To begin a new life, with the past 'dead', the present 'dead', so it was written in the last message. How is that possible without breaking with the Church? I would have had to be much more reticent, not to have spoken about Sinhgadh to anyone and just disappeared here. This constant failing of mine: not keeping myself to myself and being far too open with others.

(...)

April 12

No way out of my situation. Arunachala has taken too strong a hold on me for it to be possible for me to turn back. I am not an advaitin through reasoning or through faith. I am so because of something that is so much deeper. "You would not be seeking me if you had not already found me" [Pascal]. And at the same time (there is) my Christianity, my belonging to the Church. 'You want to eat the cake and to have it,' as someone said to me last month.

I often dream of dying, for it seems there is no way out for me in this life. I cannot be at the same time both Hindu and Christian, and no more can I be either simply Hindu or simply Christian. So what is the point of living? How little heart it leaves me for living.

(...)

Throughout this journey, despite the “calls” to advaita, I more and more get the impression that I will remain in the Church. But when I try to analyse this impression, I feel something within me that is distressed at this lack of courage, and it seems to me that I am not remaining in the Church for any valid reason.

Apparently at least, all my interior life is now derived from a different principle. No interior joy, no peace, no inward consolation comes to me from my belonging to the Church, whereas they do come to me, marvellously, from elsewhere. The Church does not provide me with deep inner well-being, but rather with a social “position”, and also a kind of mental comfort that corresponds with long established psychological habits. Is it really honest to remain in the Church? Am I not merely wearing a mask of Christianity, out of fear of the consequences? Or is it that there is something deep, imperceptible to myself (as deep, perhaps deeper, than that essential experience of advaita which at once overwhelms me and gives me a marvellous peace) which even so keeps me in the Church, despite my discomfort with formulations, gestures, etc.; something that makes me speak of Christ with conviction, makes me (when occasion offers) desire that someone or other should come to the full light of Christ, makes me say the Mass even when nothing obliges me to do so, and when I do not derive the slightest consolation from it?

April 13

Very harsh letter from Fr M[onchanin] at midday, my reaction shows me that the ego is far from being annihilated in me...

Where is the *sthitaprajña* of the Gita? [the one who is established in wisdom, unshaken; cp. B.G. II, 54-72].

A ‘severance’ of my links with the Church which would have the nature of passion [*rajas*] would be the work of the self, sin. Nothing but what has the nature of purity [*sattva*]...

...I have just opened the *Gita*, and without looking for it found in Chapter 1 Arjuna’s anguish when on the point of fighting against his own people.

It is difficult to fight against those who do not love you. But against those who love you, who oppose you out of *dharma* [religion]! This is my case in regard to Fr M. and my friends in the Church.

Then Chapter 2.9 (in Sanskrit): So speaking to Hrishikesha (Krishna) Arjuna said to him, I’ll not fight!, and said no more [*evam uktvā Hrishikeśam Gudākeśa... na yotsya iti Govindam uktvā tūshnīm babhūva ha*]. And Hrishikesha smiled and said: How is it that this fear takes hold of you at this supreme moment? [based on 2.10 and 2]

April 14, Palm Sunday

Long peaceful sleep all these days, great peace this morning. The word received the other day ‘*silence is guidance*’ is correct. It seems to me that little by little the conviction is again taking root in me that Christianity

has the truth of *paramārtha* [ultimate, transcendent truth] without my being able to “understand” it yet with my discursive reason. Going beyond (by the interior) and not outside the imperfections of the thinking and the institution of the Church. But we have to pass through this “night of India” as individuals, as the Church, (Holy Saturday, the Ascension), in order to reach the real Christ of the Resurrection and the sitting at the right hand of the Father [*sessio ad dexteram Patris*].

It is not good to fight against ‘*self-love*’ by means of an antagonistic ‘*self-love*’. To answer Fr M. with the same weapons is just what the Enemy is trying to get me to do. Not with a humility assumed in order to imitate outwardly the Christian saints, nor with an aloofness assumed in order to be an equally outward imitation of the sages [*jñānis*]. The solution is neither one nor the other, but it is to enter more deeply into the inner mystery, to become stabilized in the higher regions of consciousness, as Dr Mehta would say. And then the solution will come on its own, the way to answer and to act. To expect a ready-made solution from the ‘*guidance*’, whether it be Dr Mehta’s or that of the Holy Spirit (according to St Paul), is to have understood nothing. The value of any solution lies only in the spiritual attitude from which it derives.

Christ really is in the very depth of my soul. As he is in the very depth of the cosmos. He is in that furthest point, the ultimate product of evolution, in which the individual as well as the universe attains to Being, God. God all in all [*omnia in omnibus*]. (...)

During the rest of the day I was tired, discouraged. I can’t get over the blow from Shantivanam, coming after all the others. The new life that is to begin here (according to the “messages”) would require total liberation from my ties with Shantivanam, with Church authorities, etc. Otherwise I will always have at the back of my mind those basic worries that undermine the body, whose weakness in turn undermines the spirit.

(...)

April 16

(...)

Unshakeable faith that the Father is leading everything towards Himself (the Self) through me. No matter how things may look. Not to be upset by the clashes. Accept them coolly; coolly evaluate the reasons for them, separate what is objective in these from what is simply passion. If I judge that I should persevere on my own line, let me do so, without posing as a hero or a victim. Hold on to a higher level of “myself”, of the consciousness, just as from the top of Sinhgadh I look down upon the surrounding valleys and hills. Stand above all that without haughtiness or false condescension.

Feast of the “little” Bernadette. A very humble, very simple Saint. “True” if ever anyone was.

(...)

Poona

April 18, Holy Thursday evening. *Fransalianum*.

[...] The horrible “swinging to and fro” that happens to me with every

mail, coming on one side from Shantivanam and from Parushipane, on the other from Mayfair [Bombay]; each one trying to lead me to the truth according to his own "method", and in all sincerity.

No one has in fact succeeded, whether Christian or Hindu, in leading me "there". The Christian has made me halt at a rite and a form of meditation that is more or less wordy or silent, while I await (how easy it is to give yourself a clear conscience about standing still) the mystical grace that depends only on the Lord. The Hindu makes me halt in a life of *sannyasa* which is dignified with fine words about *advaita*.

The *sat* is in myself, free from all that curtailment to the individual [*ad individuum*] to which it is reduced by all those who want to be my masters. Accept once and for all that being "is" [*Sad asti*], according to the viewpoint so energetically maintained by Poonja.

Let people push about my body and my poor reason as they like. I have had enough; from now on let me look down from above, free in myself, fixed in the Self [*ātmanishtha*]. But in relation to Christianity, is not this attitude already a choice to write it off?

Results of Sinhgadh: health very poor. At that altitude very nourishing food is needed, such as would allow exercise and life with plenty of fresh air. My *kheer* [rice with sweetened milk], and then my *seer* [litre] and a half of milk barely fill the stomach. And the noon meal is far from giving me the nourishment needed for the whole day. The cost is prohibitive. Expenditure for these ten days at Poona⁷: (details) at least Rs.20 for food plus Rs.4 for transport, Rs.25 for a 'hunger diet', for I have never been so constantly hungry as I was at Sinhgadh, where I can do nothing to cheat my hunger, as I could at Tiruvannamalai.

I came back here [Poona] this morning in a [state of] dreadful exhaustion.

April 18-21 Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter at the Fransalianum. Evening the agenda (retreat programme).

April 22-30

I was leaving for Sinhgadh. First a letter from Mehta asking me to go to Bombay, then because of the death of Mrs Mehta's mother I wait for him here. Long conversation with him from Tuesday until Saturday⁸ without disagreements, things are getting sorted out. I had almost given up the retreat because of the impossibility of meeting Father Gabriel when all these events caused me to stay. That seemed to me like a providential sign. The script of the 22nd showed much more understanding of my real situation than the preceding ones. It is practically agreed that I should have the retreat plus Indore plus Pachmarhi. My own solitude is only postponed.

7. He must be referring to the ten days that he spent in silence at Singadh, from which he came down to Poona for Easter, as he wrote to his sister on 12.4.57: "I am going down there [Poona] for the holy days, because on those days we are not allowed to say Mass privately."

8. i.e. during Easter Week, April 22-27.

I have the impression that I am agreeing to Bethany (the retreat) and Pachmarhi in spite of my ego, which would rather lead me to solitude. I am ashamed to see myself thinking only of myself in front of these people who are so devoted to the work of Christ and in fact so deeply forgetful of themselves.

These 'West Indians' (Goa, Mangalore...) have made a good impression on me. Among them there is perhaps more hope for a truly Hindu Church than there is from our Tamilians who are so "slow" and our Malayalis who are so narrow [*kacci*].

One of them said to me : "If only you were close by..." Dr Mehta is offering me a place at Talegaon or else P., not to mention Sinhgadh. Let's see how things develop.

A difficult retreat. The spiritual life is for them a matter of behaviour. The retreat has about it something 'tense, strained' (vocal prayers which never end all day long). I do not feel free to speak. Then I have to prepare everything. Still I hope that something is going home.

I am now feeling nostalgic for Sinhgadh; it is the same with all the places where I have entered into my true place within myself. If I was thinking only of myself, I would run back there.

After Pachmarhi I am totally in the dark. How easily I would sacrifice all my wanderings for a solitude like that at Sinhgadh, if the monsoon did not make it impossible after mid-June...

May 10, Friday night at Pune railway station

[The following is on two pages inserted at this point in the manuscript by the author.]

Everything is his image [*mūrti*], everything his sign [*linga*], only that. Meher Baba⁹ refused to give his *darsana*. I get as much in the *darsana* of the coolie who carries my bag as in the *darsana* of Meher Baba. And as much when I see the most wretched beggar and the insect, and the buffalo and the most unclean animal. What a roar of laughter, like Claudel's,—that descent (incarnation) [*avatara*] in a "pig". No need to give it a Sanskrit name¹⁰, it was really in this animal which wallows in the mud and eats excrement, that he [Vishnu] willed to appear, according to the official teaching of the Doctors of the Law.

He is in the unclean act, and he is in the act that people call sublime. Not just that he is there, he himself is precisely the act itself.

The goods wagon that passes by and the crates people move about on the platform, precisely these are the mystery of God.

And people say "the mystery" in order to give themselves time to think and to preserve the rights of "their" wisdom.

It is this mystery that flows, that flows, through things, people, beings, animals;

9. A Hindu spiritual master and the founder of a school of spirituality, who passed the last part of his life in silence.

10. A reference to the Varaha Avatara of Vishnu.

that is made, that is unmade, that grows, that continues, that becomes.
It is this which "is."

It is all this that the *linga* is. That is the *linga*.

It is Shiva. For Shiva is the *linga*.

Then was it not this which Saul saw on the road to Damascus, and this which Christ tried to implant in the heads of his apostles: The littlest one, that is I, the poorest, the most deprived, that is I?

I am Vishnu in the dwarf, in the tortoise, in the pig, and in Ram the handsome warrior and in Krishna, who is the flute-player and the lover of the cow-girls just as much as the tutor of Arjuna. It is I who am your coachman, your 'driver,' if you only have a bit of common sense.

And I am your Christ, loved in the beggar who gets on your nerves by screeching after you, and in the sergeant who drafts you for service, just as much as in the infant that offers its cheek to you for a kiss.

All that is flowing, flowing; do you feel it?

The iron freight car that passes by, the locomotive that puffs and whistles, and then these water supply points and these lifting hoists, these stalls where they sell tea and bread.

All this, it is myself.

And you, you are that: *tat tvam asi*.

And, do you see, sin is to make centres in this infinite flow of the eddies, where the water, instead of running ahead, turns round and round on itself, collects up the drops, checks them and makes them spiral down towards the bottom.

Towards the bottom, do you understand? That is hell.

But even the eddies do not stop the flow, for in the end they too are carried away; but beforehand, uselessly, they have resisted, they have wanted to be new centres.

That is the sin of mankind: you will be like God (gods) [*eritis sicut Deus*; Gen. 3:6]. But human beings can only ape God.

God is the centre who is everywhere and who is nowhere.

And everything revolves around him, whether it moves straight ahead or in a circle or even in a spiral.

As for the human being, he holds up being at himself. The centre of "being" is myself.

That is the gnostics' demiurge. It has created bubbles of air.

Indore

May 15

Invitation from the bishop to settle at Indore.

(...)

May 16 Polda and Ujjain. 18th, Indore. 19-20th, Omkareshwar. 21st, Pachmarhi.

(...)

May 30, Ascension

The succession of events all this week. Pachmarhi. (...) The very urgent invitation to Indore. Decided to return to Indore for Hindi.

Returned on Monday the 27th, completely exhausted, the heat, the train, the dust. Mass at 10:30. After dinner no room at the Gita Bhavan, I am going to rest at the 'Nursing Home'. At supper, suddenly, no appetite. At night horribly feverish. This problem of Hinduism and Christianity, this effort to make my head explode in order to find the centre, unity, to centre everything (a kind of nightmare arising from the depths behind the consciousness). An impression that it has been reached. Does not the awakening of the *kundalinī* play some role in all that?

On the 28th, Mass with great difficulty, fever 102, it had been much more during the night. To bed, absolutely unable to move, under the fan. Wonderfully cared for by the three Sisters. In the evening things begin to improve.

On the 29th, the fever down, intense exhaustion continues. I don't quite know who Mother Théophane contacted by phone. Swami Premānand-ji turned up with a crowd of people. They offer me places to stay. (...)

The 30th. This morning 22nd anniversary (of Profession) on the same date and feast. Flowers and pictures. At 2:30 they come to fetch me for Premānanda's lecture at Gita Bhavan. Warm welcome. X brings me back by car. (...)

This evening, Breton songs [with the Sisters]. I thought at the start ("Dors donc mon gars") that I would not be able to stand it. The crisis came after they [the Sisters] left. But on the whole it was good. All that must also be integrated and not forcibly buried under the debris. This evening at 9:00 great calm, great joy.

This morning I was thinking, as I sat on the platform, in front of the crowd (500 people), introduced on the mike by Swami Premānanda, then watched, salutations [*pranāṁ*], flowers thrown... in his Name [*in nomine ejus*]. A simple and pure reflection of Christ, not only another Christ, *alter Christus*, but Christ himself, *Christus ipse*. Pure transparency to Him, but not to Him as "other". The crystal has forgotten itself. Such an unexpected welcome from Hindus. However often I tell them that I am a Christian, it does not bother them.

Here I receive priests and nuns dressed as a *sādhu* in a *dhōti*; it is quite natural, here I don't have to play a double game!¹¹ (...)

At Indore until Sunday, August 11.

August 13 Benares

25th and 26th Gorakhpur

29th Left Benares for Allahabad.

31st Nagpur (...)

11. He is referring to his manner of dressing.

Sept.3 Madras
 5th Pondicherry.
 9th Madras
 10th Bombay (...)
 30th Salem; evening Shantivanam

October 10 ¹²

October 26 Trivandrum until November 3.

November 2 Fr Dharma left (the ashram).

Shantivanam

November 22

The true mystic is the most 'matter-of-fact' of beings. But at the same time he has discovered the *essence* of things (the true eidetic intuition?) and he feels them in his consciousness of being, henceforth deepened down to its very source.

(...)

December 16

(...)

David the *holy king* had many queens and concubines. The tribes of Africa are still unable to practise monogamy.

Physiologically, sociologically, intellectually, there are people who are unable to enter the Church as it presently is. They are compromise Christians. Can we imagine a Church of "savages"? For that it would be necessary to go back again to what is essential and to shake off all the sweat and dust the Church has accumulated in twenty centuries.

1958

The Inner Focus Shifts Outward

SWAMIJI'S correspondence provides more details about his life than the Diary, in which important events are not mentioned. In January he was granted an indefinite renewal of his indult of excommunication (*ad nutum Sanctae Sedis*), which permitted him to remain as a monk outside his monastery.

His hopes for the future of Shantivanam revived. He was in touch with several European monks who hoped to come to the ashram, and in October a prospective vocation (Matthew) arrived. The latter seemed to be moving in the direction of which he dreamed; but rather quickly he realized, once again, the utopian nature of his ideal (for others).

During this period the Carmel of Lisieux, which "discovered" him by reading *Ermites du Saccidananda*, began a relationship with him by correspondence. His visit to the Carmel at Bangalore (at the end of June) gave him confidence in his role as spiritual director. This visit marked the beginning of his long association with various Indian Carmels.

In December he was excited by a new idea: to form young people in the spirit of St Benedict in a kind of secular institute; but nothing concrete actually came of this.

His interior situation remained much the same; however his agony, having become almost chronic, was less of a torment. This may be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that he had begun to meet kindred spirits with whom he could sincerely share his ideals. In this context we must mention the small group of friends that met at Shantivanam at the end of the years 1957 and 1958.

His ideas about Christianity and *advaita* did not change, he discussed them often and continued to oscillate between two convictions, either that they are fundamentally incompatible or that they are harmoniously complementary.

His "Church" was still both the cosmic, universal, transhistorical Church and at the same time the institutional, historical, Roman Church.

This year he hardly left Shantivanam. We can glean, here and there, a few dates;

Late February	Four days at Arunachala.
March	Several visitors, including C.T.Venugopal, friend and Protestant convert, high official in the railways.

12. Fr Monchanin died in Paris.

- 1-14 April Holy Week and Easter at Āshirvanam; visit to the Christian ashram at Tirupattūr founded by Dr Jesudasan; brief visit to the hills (Shembaganur?).
- July-October Work on the *Memoir* of Fr Monchanin in English.
- September Publication of "Christian Sannyasis" in *The Clergy Monthly Supplement* (India).
- Nov.-December The *Memoir* was being printed.
- 14-22 December Second theological conference at Shantivanam with two more friends present: M.P. Christanand and H. Rose.

* * * *

Shantivanam**February 19, Ash Wednesday**

(...)

February 20

To be naked but attached to one's nakedness is far worse than to be clothed without attachment to one's overcoat. To refuse to wear clothes in order to prove one's freedom is a "dharma-like" freedom. The really free person has no need to prove his freedom, either to himself or to others. He is totally free whatever may be his situation or his personal appearance, for his freedom has nothing to do with any kind of covering. But one who is perfectly free can never be "confined" by any human law. He will meekly (to all appearances) allow himself be led by the most diverse social obligations, but without any attachment to them. And then when the Spirit prompts him, free from all law and free from all attachment to laws or to self, he will set off under the inspiration of the Spirit. But how many people go against the law out of attachment to self!

(...)

May 7

(...)

The Egyptian monks in practice lived without sacraments, just like the sannyasis of India. Paul [the Hermit] lived for one hundred years without any contact with the sacramental Church. Even if his story is a legend, it proves that people in the Church had at least the idea that such a situation was possible and acceptable. It was only later, when the life of hermits and monks was organized, that the priesthood got mixed up with it.

May 14. Vigil of the Ascension, evening

Jesus is a reality at once historical and ontological, of becoming and of being, of time and of eternity.

(...)

Whoever has had the *darśana* of the risen Christ no longer sees anything but him in the universe, him who is the One towards whom the universe is essentially tending (from him and to him, as he is from the Father and to the Father).

(...)

May 15. Ascension

There is no distance between myself, whoever I may be, wherever and whenever I may be, and Jesus. His words resound in my ears in the words of the Holy Church that transmits them to me; she transmits them not as a record fixed once for all on the wax, which one could turn on at will, but as a living voice, not altered, but enriched, absorbed from hand to hand. And this absorption is exempt from danger of error by means of the "heralding" presence of the Spirit.

Thus Jesus is speaking "to me" in the Church. Thus Jesus is speaking to humanity in the Church. Thus Jesus is continuing to reveal himself to humanity in the Church. But who can say when hearing a Christian's speech or (seeing) his life with his eyes and ears of flesh: No one has spoken to me like this man. How can I not believe in him?

The Gospel does not have to be read in books, nor to be heard when read in Christian assemblies, but rather to be proclaimed in the life of every Christian.

And what is essentially important for the Church is not to adapt herself to the communist or the Hindu or the Buddhist environment, but rather "herself" to free herself from all that is not Christian, and to bear the message of the nakedness of the Resurrection.

Christ returns in the Ascension to the place which he never left. He is glorified by the Father with the Glory which he has never ceased to possess. In Jesus the advaitin paradox is verified already in the Resurrection:

I have risen (awakened), and am still with thee [*resurrexi et adhuc tecum sum*; Ps.139:18];

having awakened [*prabuddha*], I recognize that I have never left thy bosom.

(...)

May 16

The anguish has lasted for five years, since that Lent of '53, when in the cave at Arutpāl Tīrtham I understood advaita and the essential pages of *Guhāntara*¹ were written. Since then my advaitism has prevented me from feeling settled in my Christianity and my Christianity from feeling settled in *advaita*. Torn to pieces.

How often I dream of being set free to follow freely the advaitin gale, violent, devastating, that carries me off. And yet I am (too) afraid of others, also afraid of myself, to do this.

If the Church seems to me less and less "believable", the historical fact of Jesus remains without any satisfactory explanation apart from its "Christian" interpretation. Then supposing it were true?

So I endeavour to hang on, reading, the liturgy, reflection, etc.; and after a quarter of an hour, or at most after a day, all the scaffolding that I

1. Some chapters have been published in French in *Initiation* and *Intériorité*.

have put up in trying to support my faith collapses like a house of cards. And that is the reason for the fluctuations and contradictions in all these pages.

No human being, no *deva*² (cf. visions, the subliminal, subconscious), no personal reflection can give me the solution. Not by the senses, nor by the mind, nor by the subliminal, can the True be reached... And all *āveśam* (all being "carried away" as by some external power) would still fall short of the reality and be questionable.

The solution is *within* myself, and *up to* myself, I will only find *myself* in releasing *myself*.

My metaphysical anguish has been getting worse lately, since no human solution for my external problem seems to present itself. I have tried to hold on here [at Shantivanam] after last October's blow³, and various signs have come indicating that I should hold fast. At the end of seven months, what? I have been urged to hold on because of what Shantivanam would bring to other people. Who has come to see Shantivanam?

A record of contacts during seven months, apart from Fr Dominique's visits and Christmas week. (A list of visitors follows.)

A very poor total, which does not justify Shantivanam. (...) Shantivanam, which is neither a hermitage nor a community, all this has brought me to the end of my tether, physically, psychologically.

A person tries to forget himself by reducing himself to a function (monk, missionary, bishop, pope)—typical case [...] distraction and recovery of himself transfigured (a mask), etc.

I know from experience that we forget our essential problem in activity. I would forget my problem with the Church by giving myself to the Church. Is that honest? If I had the narrow faith (and the mental narrowness transfigured into faith) of a preacher, no doubt I would find a solution.

And how to preach to the Hindu [...] I wonder if I still believe.

(...)

May 17

27 years of Profession. The individual is the mystery of God, individuation is the problem that makes the individual to be at once undivided (*akhanda*) and multiple, except for the unique case of the infinite being, no quiddity contains the *quid* of the HAEC (*Scotus*, Gilson 462)⁴. The individual is the mystery of God realized in a not-one [*aneka*] way in its [...] indivisibility as undivided non-duality [*akhanda-advaita*].

2. *Deva*: gods or angels, "celestial" or "divine" powers. In the Upanishads the word often refers to the powers at work in the human being or to his senses. In some contexts (see the SU) *deva* refers to the only God (*eka deva*).

3. The death of Fr Monchanin.

4. Cp. É. Gilson, *Duns Scotus* (Paris 1952), p. 462. The correct quotation is: "Sauf le cas unique de l'être infini, aucune quiddité ne contient de quoi être *haec*." ("Apart from the unique case of the infinite being, no quiddity (essence) contains what makes it to be *this* (thing).")

There is only one problem, the problem of God. God is *esse, unum*, etc. How can it be that he is "also" in created individuals, who are not other than he and not not-other than he?

The advaita solution of *māya* is a desperate solution. (...)

Choose between Arunachala and Rome. At least take a bet. Is that honest? For the truth is not where I decide it should be, and the truth cannot be here and there at the same time. Rome says: It is I, leave aside the rest. And the risk involved in the choice—it is this, or it is that—is for me quite simply a matter of being or of not being. 'To be or not to be', at the level of being, i.e. eternally. Would not the truth be found in the end, not where I might decide by my choice that it is, but rather in the truth and the quality of this decision itself?

(...)

May 18

As long as I have *vrittis* [impulses, movements of the psyche] of "I" and "mine" (*mama, ahamkāra*), God is necessarily "other," for I have limited to *myself* the domain of the *I*, of the *aham*. In that case to practise advaita is blasphemy, sacrilege, it is to imprison the absolute, the infinite within the limits of my *aham*, which is pitifully small, essentially limited, it is to limit God to *one* of my concepts. As long as I think *aham brahma asmi*, I am not at the level of advaitin truth. For my life belies my thought, and I am under obligation to "treat" God in some adequate way.

(...)

May 24. Vigil of Pentecost

The monk belongs to eschatological time, but eschatology is not only temporal, an era, it is also a degree or an aspect of being. That means that the monk is outside time.

(...)

May 25. In sacra die Pentecostes [The Feast of Pentecost]

A day with a little *āveśa* [exhilaration] and hope. I dream again of all that would be possible, here or in the north, if only...; discouragement then is in the 'mind', and hope also. Beyond all this, in what is true.

But the anguish is always there, for does my advaita still have a place in Christianity? The Spirit is surely the Paramātman and is spoken of on every page of the Upanishads (cp. *Īśa* + Wis. 7.22ff). But all the same, is the Paramātman of the Upanishad capable of opening up and letting us see within itself the mystery of its spiration at the very greatest depth of the Filiation of the Logos?

The ground of my anguish is that I do not dare to take the risk of advaita. For after all, the fact of Jesus presents a problem. And neither Couchoud, nor Loisy, nor Bultmann have solved it. (...)

May 26

(...)

There are no false gods, there are only false ideas of God. (...) Every idea of God is false in that it is imperfect, and there is no idea of God, even if it is false, that fails to express God, at least to a very slight extent.

The affair of the snake that I found coiled up on my mat when I woke up on Friday morning proves that I am not yet without fear [*abhaya*] when faced with the possibility of death. And yet how many times have I not cried out for death during these hard times!

There is fear inasmuch as I identify myself with this or that; at bottom I worry less about myself than about books, papers, etc., all that makes up Shantivanam, "my mission".

As long as I give myself a mission, I will not fulfil it. [...]

May 27, Pentecost Tuesday

The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is the symbol, the sign, the sacrament, the "cosmic origin" of the penetration, the impregnation of all our faculties by the "mystery of the depth."

(...)

May 28

The work of the human being as he gets older and "grows up", surely is to free himself from that "ready-made," prefabricated shell in which his environment has imprisoned him from birth, which it has forced upon him again and again, and which he himself has "enlarged" (thickened) by putting into it the best of himself, by putting himself into it, thinking that he was developing himself, when he was only shutting himself in.

A thought pure, true, spontaneous,
the flower that blooms,
the lightning that flashes and vanishes. (Kena⁵ and BU)

A "free act,"
not a servile thought, not a "gratuitous" act,
a liberty more servile than anything in its own effort to prove itself.
Without taste, without smell, like pure air,
finally an expression of "oneself"...

and not the betrayal, the feebleness, of taking part in one's own "alienation".

That marvellous Marxist ideal of "dis-alienation"; something that would be myself, an expression of myself, and not a surrender to the expression of myself *through* a Greco-Latin or even a Hindu culture, in which I am alienated.

May 30 and 31

(The author continued his reflections on "alienation.")

June 2

(Reflections on the integration of Evil, the acceptance of the sinful self.)

5. KenU IV.4: Now there is this description of Him (Brahman): "Ah!" [what people say] when the lightning flashes, "Ah!" as they blink their eyes (tr. R.C.Zaehner).

June 3

(Reflections on the institutionalization of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, on its different possibilities.)

June 4

These days I am rereading Saint Thomas "De fide." "I am simply blinking." It is concerned with a totally different mental world from our own. The Hindu (I am speaking from the intellectual, not the religious, point of view) finds there nothing to which he could attach his own meditation, or rather he finds nothing in himself to which he could attach the notions that he reads and spells out there...

Christianity was born in a world that had a specific conception of time and of concepts (*eidōs*). Greek time is certainly not the linear Hebraic time. However time existed for the Greek, it was itself an *eidōs*.

For us here, neither time nor *eidōs* is real with absolute reality.

Should we say that the Revelation of Christ has absolutized Semito-Greek "ideology"? (That is the point of view of *Humani generis*.) Or else should we say that this Revelation, although providentially poured into Judeo-Greek culture, so transcends it that there will be new, deeper, purer, more real expressions of this Revelation that will develop providentially in other cultures, and above all in this far-eastern world of *atman* - *nirvāna* - *Tao*?

(...)

Shantivanam

June 5

Let me find my fulfilment in each of my actions, eating my rice, washing my feet, listening to boring stories.

(...)

I persist in believing that baptism by water was never "thought of" by Jesus as the essential way of entering into his Church. What was expected was a baptism in the Spirit and in fire [*in Spiritu et igne*; cp. Matt. 3:11]. And this baptism was received at Pentecost. The often repeated formula in Acts: "and the Spirit fell upon them." Baptism was practised by the Apostles in imitation of the baptizers of those days. And little by little the visible outpouring of the Holy Spirit "passed" into an invisible outpouring at the time of baptism by water.

(...)

June 7

41st anniversary of my first communion.

On 7 June 1948 I left Sainte-Anne de Kergonan, or rather since I left on a Sunday evening, it must have been the evening of the 6th.

(Reflections on finality and on "intentions".)

(...)

June 10

(...)

In fact before Hindus I do not dare to bear witness to Christ, for I am ashamed of our Church that veils him still more than it reveals him (the Christ displayed by Christians wears the cloak of their failings) and I have no words to make them understand how *advaita* does not empty Christ of meaning, for I myself have no idea, and I do not have the nerve to tell them stories.

(...)

And I always come back, no matter what I may say, to my conclusion at Arunachala: why force myself to give the name of "Christ" to this depth (especially since my "Christ" 'stands for' these appalling theologies and Canon Law) or at least why impose it on others?

To awaken these spiritual depths—this is the mission that I felt at Indore last year. Why should the name of Christ in the form of the Church be precisely the obstacle to the proclamation of this message—the message of Christ in his ultimate interiority and of the Church in its true catholicity (without qualification, because to qualify "catholic" is to negate its substance)? (...)

Shantivanam

September 4

Is the anguish of the so-called purifying "Nights" fundamental? Or rather is it not the expression of the narrowness of a consciousness accustomed to certain "forms," etc., or of a restlessness in the subliminal that is perhaps abnormal?

September 15

Reading Heidegger (...).

October 1

(Short note on the Trinity.)

October 2

(Heidegger again) (...)

November 21

How hard it is not to have "anyone" to whom you could say "My God." To have purified your "sense" of God from this "need for the father" with which it is too often identified. (...)

Not being able to think of anything as God. Not that one dares to say that there is no God [*non est Deus*], but no word and no concept has the taste of God, and this leaves the being unsatisfied, for in the depths of itself, it has, unknown to its thought, a sense of God which it cannot express.

1959

The Call of the Himalayas

THIS was the year of his great pilgrimage to the Himalayas. In February he visited friends in Bangalore; he spent Holy Week at Trivandrum; and at the end of April he set off for the north. After a few stops on the way, he reached the mountains. He stayed at Kalimat (at Binsar with Vivek Datta), went on to Almora, Pithoragarh, Pindar, Karnaprayag (where he mingled with the pilgrims), and then went down to Delhi for a brief stay.

He returned to the mountains, and in September, having obtained his permit, made his way on foot to the shrine of Kedarnath in the high Himalayas. Much has been said of the fascination of the Himalayas. However that may be, they left their mark on Abhishiktananda, and remained one of the strongest impressions of his life. In October, he was back at Shantivanam.

Gradually a change took place in him owing to the fact that the Church did not seem to oppose his ideas. People were sometimes sceptical, but they were kindly disposed towards him personally and towards his plans. He was warmly welcomed at the regional seminary in Bangalore, where he established friendly relationships with some visiting bishops. He was getting more and more involved in the Indian Church. Could it be that the Catholic Church of this country would also be touched by India's power of absorption?

The distance he covered this year amounted to thousands of kilometres. The train (third class) was his means of transport, and a number of his friends marvelled at his knowledge of timetables and connections.

A few dates enable us to follow his travels:

January	Publication of <i>Swami Parama Arūbi Ānandam</i> (Memoir of Fr Monchanin).
12 Feb.-11 Mar.	Visits in Bangalore: to Ashirvanam, Poonja, Mr and Mrs Ingle, Carmel.
End of March	Holy Week and Easter at Trivandrum with the Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart; then Shantivanam.
26 April	Left Shantivanam for the North.
2-19 May	At Nagpur; Indore.
21 May	First visit to Jyotiketana Ashram (near Bareilly).
25 May	At Kalimat.

June At Almora, Pithoragarh, Pindar.
 July At Karnaprayāg, Rishikesh, Haridwār, Solan; then to the plains: Delhi, Agra, Jyotiniketan.
 August Return to the mountains: Kālimat, Almora.
 End Aug.-7 Sept. Sick with herpes, nursed at Pithoragarh at the home of his friends Laurie and Elisabeth (Kuni) Baker, then at Jyotiniketan.
 16-20 September Haridwār; then to Kedārnath.
 End September At Meerut; the bishop accepts his proposal for a hermitage at the source of the Ganges.
 Mid-October Return to Shantivanam.
 Nov-December At Shantivanam. Few visitors. Alone for Christmas.
 * * * *
 [No entry before 28 July 1959].

Delhi**July 28**

(Reflections on the knowledge of God, faith and mystical experience; the manuscript is practically illegible.)

Agra**July 31**

(...)
 This morning visit to Agra Fort after Fatehpur Sikri yesterday, the Taj [Mahal] the day before.
 (...)

This Indo-Moghul style which has become profoundly Hindu. Only here have I found once more the atmosphere of our Temples in the South.
 (...)

In the mosques belonging to these monuments, the mystery of the hidden God [*Deus absconditus*; Is. 45:15]. Islam is great to have inspired such palaces, such mosques. It is the first time in my life that I have understood it.

Sufism comes directly from the *Deus absconditus* of the Masjid [mosque]. It comes also from the Old Testament, even having no name for God except He is. But people later on made Jehovah out of that. How monstrous, to give a name to the God of Abraham and of Moses! As if he was one among the gods, and his name one among the names which people gave to God.

The hidden God (is) in India as well. One has to have ceased saying I in order to be able to meet God. The Father is only met once a person has passed into the I of Christ.

(...)

Almora**August 17**

(Reflections on two portraits of himself by Rudolf Ray; the manuscript is partly illegible).

(...)

The creature is something sprung-up-but-not-yet-sprung-up, the "leaper" [*skanda*] in the act of leaping [*skandatva*]. Time is precisely the measure of this *skandatva* but eternity underlies Time, eternity is "interior" to Time, rest is "interior" to motion. The Father is "interior" to the Spirit. But for us this interior is our Grace.

(...)

Almora**August 19**

(Various notes on depth, on realizing oneself, etc., stimulated by Ray's portraits.)

(...) Am I still Christian? I was thinking one day that if it should become clear to me that Christianity is not what it says it is...nothing would be changed in my spiritual life. As a matter of fact, the anguish is no longer what it used to be; my anguish is like a cyst you get used to and no longer feel, at least as a rule. But is this loyal? If the moment of "lucidity" were to occur...

I still feel that everything, everything could be sacrificed so easily... Is this weakness? or is it a deep experience of my Christianity, my "Faith", a deeper experience than even my advaitin experience of being?

If I am the bearer of a message, as people tell me, then what is this message? You can bear witness only to your own experience. There is only one thing I know, that "I am". This I am, *aham*, which bursts out in all creation, in every thing, in every event, natural or historical.

This message goes over very well in a Shaivite context and in the words of Vedānta. But is it also Christian? And what could I give Christians except that, for the rest is only words, things learnt by heart? It is not something "known" in the depth of the heart.

Recall to the Christian that he is, what he is. A risen being, clothed with all the mystery of Christ—for the believer this experience is personal and definitive.

Christ risen from the beginning of the world [*ab origine mundi*]. Everything has being in him. Recognize my own being as risen. But is there a passing over to be accomplished, a Passover? The mystery of the collaboration of the person, of the being, in the redemptive act, the acceptance by faith and love. The act of one who transcends *himself* in order to attain to what he truly is. This is the most extreme act that could be imagined of faith, of surrender, of love, the salvific act *par excellence*. To pass from self to the Self is to pass into the risen Christ. Of what importance (perhaps, or at least existentially) are the words in which this passover is clothed?

Recognize yourself as risen. Recognize [*Agnosce*] and accept, O Christian, your dignity.¹ This acceptance is the Passover itself, your Easter, for it involves the absolute renunciation of the whole of your old man, *vetus homo*. Your sin? But does the Christian sin?

1. Cp. St Leo the Great, *Sermon on the Incarnation*, I.3, included in the readings in the Office of Christmas Day.

Of course that is not "protestant."—How *dull* the Church of England prayer at Kareli is, no matter how fervent it may be! It has so terribly reduced God to the scale of man; either have Quoiist's prayer and Mass on the bar-counter, which accepts the immanence with all its consequences, or else the hieratic style of the Greek and Roman Church, which expresses the transcendence; but the *Prayer Book* is God become an Englishman, made to the measure of the Englishman. God in a dog-collar. After all, I prefer him as a Persian monarch or as a mate in the factory.²

(...)

October 24 & 25

(Reflections on Christ as king, priest, prophet.)

(...)

October 29

(...)

When God hides from the soul, according to the interpretation of their "Nights" given by "dualistic" mystics, it is the progressively deeper entry by grace (and also as the "fulfilment" of a natural process, in response to an urgent, inexorable call, coming from the depths) into the solitude-ipseity-aseity which is being.

Then the soul cries out in pain to the absent God. Who, who then will make it *understood* that this so-called absence is a deeper, truer entry into the Presence, the Presence of oneself to oneself, which is the very being of God, the "being of being"? (...)

November 2

(Undeveloped notes on various subjects and particularly a note on his reading of Heidegger on the fundamental human fear.)

November 3

The "good news" brought by Jesus to the world is that the human being *really* is. Without the Gospel revelation the human being could never have been sure that he *is*. (...)

What the Gospel adds to *advaita* is not in the first place a revelation about God, but a revelation about the human being. (...)

The Gospel teaches the human being that he *is*. Revelation takes place at three levels: the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Human Being; and bound up with all that, Sin, Redemption.

If God were not Three in himself, creation would be absolutely unthinkable. There had to be a ground within being itself for that outpouring of being beyond its internal limits which the West calls creation.

The Incarnation and the creation of Human Beings and then of the universe—that is all one thing. The Incarnation of the Word all alone does not make any sense. The creation of the universe without human beings to be its crown, or of Humanity without the incarnate Word to perfect it,

2. All this does not lessen the affection that Swamiji felt for the Jyotiniketan community.

likewise makes no sense, at a deep level of truth (leave it to the *brahmavādin*-theologians to debate to their heart's content about the superficial aspects of these truths).

To debate whether creation is necessary or not makes no sense, it is the product of extremely limited views on the mystery of being, when it is known only by speculative interpretations and not in itself.

Creation is neither necessary nor free, in point of fact it simply is. God is beyond necessity and freedom. Can it be truly said that the Father begets his Son of necessity [*ex necessitate*]? As if it were possible to imagine that *first* the Father is, at least dialectically, and then that by necessity of his nature—an intrinsic necessity of course—he utters his Word. The Father is not, even dialectically, before the Son is.

[...]

The Presence of God—as soon as you *think about* it (and by the very fact of one's point of view in time, from time, a *tempore*)—is only plenary in the Eucharist. Whoever is involved in time attains the fulfilment of his being in the Eucharist. Eucharistic communion is the unique and *plenary* expression of the experience of being. It is only in the Eucharist that I myself, a human being made of flesh and of becoming, existing in space and time, attain to the total experience of being through faith, through the sacrament: the Mystery of faith [*Mysterium fidei*]. The pledge of immortality because in it I in fact attain the goal of my being, my end [*telos*]. In the Eucharist I am *teteleiomēnos*, at once initiated and fulfilled. In the Eucharist I meet myself.

In my faith, my faculties of flesh and of mind attain to this experience of being, in that place at the centre of the soul that is closed to them. In the Eucharist, the individual in myself is.

(...)

Shantivanam

November 8

Today is the 30th anniversary of my taking the monastic habit at Ste Anne de Kergonan.

The Blessed Sacrament is put back again in the oratory. Moved the kitchen and refectory, and returned to my original hut (Feb. 52), remodelled.

(...)

God is within me before I am there myself, before I am. God calls me to myself. I only am when I have reached myself in my archetype, the Risen One, the Anointed One, the Christ.

November 9, 14, 15, 17

(Considerations on the interior mansions of St Teresa of Avila, particularly on the 7th, which he relates to 'self-realization'.)

(...)

November 18, evening

The monk acts within, from what is within, through what is within. He does not "exert an influence" by his physical presence to other people, but by his presence, within, to God.

His ministry is silence and solitude, *maunam ekāntam*: the monk does not have to exercise this ministry of his in one place or another. Just where he is, it is enough [*sufficit*]. For the monk to move, there must be a very special call from the Spirit.

(...)

November 21

(...) Since Being is Trinity, life is a communication, an exchange. Not only is the life of the supreme Be-ing [*l'Étant*] whom we call God an exchange, communication between the Father and the Son in the communion [*koinonia*] of the Spirit, but so also is the life of each "be-ing" who is endowed with thought and autonomy; exchange between this "be-ing" and the Father its source (and its end), quite directly, through its fellow-beings, through the universe, and above all through the First-Born, Jesus.

Every time that a reasonable being refuses this exchange, this communication in unity, this communion in love [*koinonia en agape*], it is sin. The human being is not free to accept or refuse this exchange, for it is the law of his nature. A vital exchange, an existential, essential exchange. To hold up the torrent of life, the movement of life, at oneself, not to throw the ball back into play—that is sin.

Every time that I *make use of* God, or *make use of* my neighbour, it is sin. Of course I have the right to use my neighbour to fulfil the divine work, the work of being (even for myself). But never to detain anything at myself.

The exploitation of my brother, on a small or large scale, is sin. The exploitation of my brother in the name of God is sacrilege.

Life is essentially being-with [*co-esse*], a person-to-person relationship. That which the Bible has so powerfully brought out in the theme of the covenant. Perfection for the Christian is not in isolating oneself, but in receiving God and giving oneself to God in one's brothers, i.e., in living one's divine sonship in fraternal exchange.

(...) It is only the revelation of the Trinity that allows us to go beyond Hinduism.

(...)

November 24

Not to suppress possessions—that's too complicated—but to suppress the "possessor".

Shantivanam

December 10

Paul had the experience (*anubhava*) of Jesus alive, although previously Jesus "had died", the experience of a dead man who had come back to life, and to a definitive life that "can never be taken away", by means of a faith in which henceforth everyone could himself attain to [Hebrew word], life opposed at the same time to death and to evil, for death and evil (sin) went together in Hebrew thought.

Ramana had the experience (*anubhava*) of "self-be-ing", not of a dead man come back to life, but of a 'so-called' mortal who possessed *being* in his inmost depths, in the only true way, that which senses that this being "can never be taken away" by any power whatever, whether of nature or of will. (...)

Anubhava that was decisive for the one as for the other. The classic example of the Christian, the classic example of the Hindu.³ (...)

Was Ramana deluding himself when he believed himself to be in the condition of an "entity" that was eternally protected from non-being, interpreting in this way his fundamental experience?

In the eyes of the Christian, his certainty of not-dying is an illusion, his non-fear of death (of evil in all its forms) is simply short-sighted; he has not gone to the depth of things!

Or else was Paul, because of his Semitic mentality, incapable of the definitive experience, that of a Ramana; and was he obliged to live that existential contact with the fundamental archetype under "forms" that were unable to transcend the transference onto an "other" of his experience of "be-ing"; was he incapable of transcending in himself his own experience—also existential—of mortality and sin, of care and insecurity; unable to integrate his 'dark side'?

What answer at the intellectual level might be given to this problem, which is the very same problem between India and the Church? To what can each of us bear witness, apart from his own faith? But what is faith, once the searing fire of the Presence, or of Being, or of the living God, has touched the intellectual formulas and the mental and emotional attitudes in which this faith manifests itself?

Is it not paradoxically necessary for the Church that there should be some Ramanas? Since the Church cannot, without denying itself, accept the existence within its bosom of people who are beyond formulated dogma, beyond worship and canon law, it is necessary that there should be some of them "outside the Church"—which is perhaps its most fundamental part.

(...)

Who will maintain in the Church the sense of the *asparśa* of God, i.e., that God is neither this nor that, that nothing can tell, conceive, express or manifest of his aloneness, of his essential *holiness* (*asparśa*), beyond every sign, even sacramental, of that which the Incarnation of the Word (even while it manifests a depth—of love, of gift—that is so to speak 'inexpressible' outside a free creation) cannot tell, cannot reach, cannot reveal—who but Ramanas, whose place in the ecclesial structure is so deep that no one can detect it?

Paul has established an example of a new way of knowing, that which he had lived in his experience. If I understand him correctly, Paul thought of his experience as an experience of universal value.

Ramana also.

3. Reflections after reading J.Baruzi (probably on St John of the Cross).

An experience that totally “renewed” his way of seeing things (of himself, of Christ, of beings, etc.).

“The old has disappeared, a new being is there” [*ta archaia parêlthen, idou, gegonen kainā*] 2 Cor. 5:17.

Ramana also...

(...)

December 12

The person who is self-satisfied in the practice of his religion has not yet begun to be religious.

Whether it is a matter of the Torah, the Dharma, church law, the rules of religious orders, no observance can justify a person. Paul had seen this clearly, and Luther again—behind his excesses—was the witness to, the prophet of this fundamental truth.

Salvation consists in accepting the total “Otherness” of God. An otherness whose strongest and most ‘unbearable’ sign is Sin.

The saints have experienced this inaccessibility of God under the symbol of their sin, their supreme agony. I can never say that I am righteous in the presence of God: this is what the Psalmist is expressing when he speaks of forgotten sins, unknown sins. (This reappears in St Thomas and St John of the Cross.)

The otherness with regard to God, in which alone I can live out my original otherness as Son with regard to the Father, in which I have my being. In rising again from my death and my sin—the two deaths—I shall attain to my condition as Son = I shall be.

This Otherness is the supreme night of purification. Only by throwing oneself, body and soul, headlong into it, can it be transcended,

in the unity of being,

in my faith in the Christ who is, with St Paul,

in my experience of being, with Ramana...

having totally disappeared as *other* and as *myself*,

my non-being and my non-righteousness, my sin...

So long as one’s own distance from God is not a burden impossible to carry, an agony impossible to bear, one knows nothing.

Sin is not what the moralists make of it. The state of sin means being distant from God.

Is not the human being more profoundly distant from God by virtue of his constitution than by all the outward symptoms that are attributed to it?—That is the witness of the book of Job.

Even more than through the forms of concupiscence, the state of original sin is manifested through the “worry”, the anxiety, the terror of “possibly not being”, of the uncertainty of one’s state of existence.

(...)

December 13

The distance from God is unbridgeable, no matter what I do. We are not more or less far from God. We are always at an infinite distance from God.

The Son, in his equality with the Father, is already at an infinite distance from the Father.

No “work” brings me close to God, no rite, no practice, no penance. That is what the theologians try to explain with their often clumsy terminology about sin, sacrifice, etc.

And all at once the distance has vanished, the original Presence has been “realized” in faith (*śraddhā*) in the Risen One or in the experience [*anubhava*] of being. The darkness has become light...

No work, no meditation ever leads to the *anubhava* of being—to the *anubhava* of the self; only by eliminating the obstacles [*removens prohibens*] will the essential light finally shine forth.

For his Distance is not expressible in any human terms. It is of another order.

“He moves and he moves not;

he is far, yet is near;

he is within all that is,

yet is also outside.” [Īśa Up. 5 (tr. *Vedic Experience*, p.811)

(...)



By the Ganges at Haridwar, 1959

1960

Indian Citizen at Shantivanam

HENRI Le Saux became a citizen of his promised land. In his heart, he was already "Hindu". Now in June he obtained Indian citizenship. During the month of February he had an operation for a hernia at Pondicherry. Between February 15 and June 12 we find no entry in his *Diary* and the final note for this year is for July 23.

This year he remained in the South. The year was marked by the widening of his Carmelite contacts. He visited Carmels at Kumbakonam, Pondicherry and Bangalore, as well as other religious communities. He also welcomed new friends to Shantivanam, notably for an "ecumenical contemplative week" in May.

Henri spoke of his impressions after listening at Bangalore and Trivandrum to the music of Mozart, Bach, Honegger and Stravinsky, which moved him deeply. He hardly ever had the opportunity of hearing European classical music. He was leading a hard life, but preserved his lively sensitivity.

The hermit at Shantivanam wrote little; his thought seemed to become clearer along the lines of a Vedantic interpretation of Christianity. He still spoke of "the anguish of the Upanishads and the Gospel coexisting in the same heart".

For this year we point out only a few noteworthy dates:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| January | John Cole came from Jyotiniketan to spend ten days with Swamiji at Shantivanam and Arunachala. He became one of Swamiji's closest friends. |
| February | Visits to the Carmels of Kumbakkonam and Pondicherry. |
| 10-17 April | Easter at Asirvanam. Then visited the Carmel of Bangalore. |
| 30 April-7 May | Ecumenical contemplative study-week at Shantivanam with a small group. |
| 11 June | Abhishiktananda acquired Indian citizenship. |
| August | At Bangalore: Asirvanam and Carmel. |
| End of August | At the Carmel of Kumbakkonam. |
| September | Visits of Fr Dominique and Fr Lazarus (English Orthodox priest) to Shantivanam; Devananda, a young Singhalese Anglican, founder of an ashram in Sri Lanka, with him for the entire month. |

October	Visited the Clarists (Alwaye), Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart (Trivandrum), Nazareth C.S.I. Theological Seminary (Tirunelveli), and the Rosarians.
Mid-November	At Bangalore: Asirvanam; Mr and Mrs Ingle.
28 Dec.-4 Jan.	Retreat for the Carmelites of Bangalore.

Shantivanam

January 13

The divinity is first of all for human beings a "faceless" reality, from which arise the obscure forces of life. Cosmic, agricultural, etc. religions.

For Israel, no, it is Yahweh, the God of the Fathers, the one who brought Israel up from Egypt. History.

For India, God also has a face, the face of every being, the face of every human being, and above all of every "saint". For here every *mūrti* is the face of God! Whether it is Rāma, Krishna, Ramana, etc., it is simply an "Epiphany" of God, always more or less shrouded in an aura of unreality.

The world itself is a face of God for me. Is it not itself also, again, more or less unreal, its reality always being only that of a "sign"?

For the Jew and the Christian, God manifests himself in history, in human beings insofar as they are involved in history. That is evident already in the most ancient records of the Jewish religion. The Epiphany of Jesus, the greatest epiphany of all, is not wholly contained between his birth in Bethlehem and his being raised up to heaven from the Mount of Olives. It is rooted in a long preparation, which constitutes the Old Testament, and develops in the whole life of the Church. Jesus is historical.

Krishna is not "historical." Whether he existed or not is of no importance for the Hindu. Krishna just "is". He manifests himself as he pleases, in accordance with his play at various times... The Krishna of time is never more than the sign of the real Krishna outside time.

In contrast, the Jewish and later the Christian Yahweh manifests himself in the forces of history themselves. His most common title is *Yahweh Sabaoth* [cp. Is. 9:6, etc.]; he is *El Gibbor*, the warrior God who marches at the head of armies, God thought of as totally involved at the human level of humanity. To this the Incarnation in Jesus was to give full confirmation.

From another angle, my encounter with the Jesus-of-the-past is illusory, in the sphere of *māyā*. As St Paul well observed, the Jesus of history has passed on and been left behind. It is only insofar as Jesus is alive now, my "contemporary", that he has real interest for me; or else as the eternal Jesus, who manifested himself in time, just to show the way to recognize him or to discover him outside time in the Hindu fashion; or again, as the risen Jesus of Christian theology, whose life, existence, and reality is woven into the reality of time, and to whom I can attain in the categories of faith and sacrament, through the mediation of that temporal Reality which prolongs him and lives by his Spirit, the Church.

In any case, the Gospel, with the Bible that prepares for it and develops it, is wholly ordered to the *present Encounter*. At this point the insights of

Hindu-Buddhist wisdom about the raft can be applied. To stop at the Gospel, at the knowledge of the Gospel, at the remembrance of Bethlehem or the Cross, is to miss the goal. How then can we actualize this present encounter?

Judaism and Christianity always live in a *yesterday* and a *tomorrow*. A yesterday, a history which is their only key to understanding today's reality. A tomorrow, in which alone today will be actualized. The Prophets are also still relevant, and the messianic hope is always for tomorrow. (John however reacted: "and now is" [*kai nun estin*; cp. John 4:23]).

In reading St Paul we get the impression that once one is baptized, that is all. Alas! History as much as individual experience shows us that baptism will only be fulfilled tomorrow... and the same for the Eucharist and all the rest.

India: mysticism "of today."

Christian mysticism is in time; now is essentially a transition from before to after, and today is from yesterday to tomorrow.

Here: it just is. Mysticism is to enter into what is, into the now [*nunc*]. (cp. Psalm 95:7 and Hebrews 3-4.)

February 3

(...)

If in your descent towards yourself, into yourself, you are seeking to prepare a tomorrow, for yourself and for others, if you are seeking a meeting with God, a face-to-face, seeking an attitude of soul or of consciousness, a picture, a thought, even a "knot" that would avoid any picture and any thought in any point in your psyche, you will never find yourself.

You will only find yourself in the total loss of yourself, a loss as harsh as the loss of one who passes through death, of one who does not have for his consolation or strengthening even those symbols of survival which religions dispense, of one who nevertheless does not take up a Stoic posture in the face of death.

Death is the abandonment of all "plans", of all "projecting" of yourself into any kind of future, into any kind of work. Death is the stopping of the action with which a person has identified his being. Death is simply being, and no longer doing or acting.

When you have consented simply to *be*, no longer to seek for yourself in your senses or in your thought, or in your consciousness, when you have accepted no longer to live this present moment in the expectation of a tomorrow, of a selfish tomorrow, of a historical tomorrow or an eschatological tomorrow, when you no longer project yourself, then only you will be.

Abrahamic wisdom, whether it be Jewish, Christian or Muslim, and at the highest point of each of its branches, is a "plan" of salvation. It has accepted Yahweh's breaking in upon the "plan" of the person, who has suddenly found himself [...].

Here there is no plan. There is no time which Yahweh might break into. Yahweh is met in his eternity where he is before he has met me in my

time. How would the wisdom of the Upanishads understand the inbreaking of the God of Abraham?

(...)

February 7

The shamelessness of daring to name God, to speak of God— whether it is a case of Eisenhower or of preachers in their pulpits. These “takeovers” of God under the guise of respect.

It is possible to speak of the Trinity, but is it allowed? Could anyone who has truly met God still speak of God?

The Jewish people, more than any other people, monopolized God, and by means of their God monopolized the universe in their eschatological dream.

(...)

June 12

Theologians ordinarily start from man in the presence of God [...]. Now man cannot be in the presence of God; man cannot see God without dying. In the presence of God man *is not*. And that is the drama of all real religious thought outside the trinitarian revelation. Those who have remained at the stage of idolatry feel no anguish. And how many do remain at the stage of idolatry, clothing their profound idolatry with revealed names and concepts which give them a good conscience.

In the presence of God the human being is not. God alone is. And no room is left for the human being. That is the logical conclusion of Vedānta. In the revelation of the Trinity, the human being truly comes at the same time to the Self and to God. The human being only truly *is* in the revelation of the Trinity. We have to start from God, and in the very depth of God, to find the human being, the self, whose being is made of love. The ground of being—God’s love.

We expect God to arrange everything for our temporal advantage. But the things of time have no value in themselves. Temporal circumstances have very little importance. They are only means to release the “human being” within us—“and suddenly he becomes someone”; i.e., (they are) to test us [*ut exerceant nos*].

That is by way of response to objections against God’s goodness derived from the unpleasant circumstances into which he plunges creatures.

However there are temporal circumstances that seem to make it practically impossible to release the spiritual being within the individual.

That is because the salvation of humanity is collective.

I am not in the presence of the Trinity—a God who would open himself up before me in my Christian meditation as if with three faces. God has only one face: mine.

For the nature that surrounds me, and also other people, all exist in relation to myself. It is in myself that I know them and in them that I realize myself.

There are not Three in whose presence I would be. There is the Father, face-to-face with me, in whom the Son reveals himself to himself and to him (the Father) in me. And there is the Spirit of our *advaitva* [non-duality]. Cp. Paul to the Galatians 1:16 [there follows the text in Greek]: to reveal his Son in me in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles.

Idolatry means giving the name of God to anything whatever that he has made.

Faith in Christ has such great effects (see St Paul) because it sets a person before himself and requires of him a “total act”. It is not the simple “I believe” whose repetition is here the sole condition for receiving baptism. Baptism presupposes a turning round, the “Repent” [*metanoieite*] of the Gospel, a person’s being turned round from within. That before which a person is seized by the prospect of martyrdom.

But this reaching of the Self at its source is not necessarily philosophical. The archetypes are set free, release themselves through symbols.

“Let us place ourselves in the presence of God”—that makes no sense. For there is nothing, and no one in the presence of God. In being there is nothing but God face to face with himself. Unless you take the word God in the scriptural sense. For Paul, John, etc., God means the Father. Cp. also, I think, the Synoptics.

It is only in the person of the Son that the Human Being can pass into God’s presence (Can we adore the Spirit? Can we say that Jesus was face-to-face with the Spirit? Does the Spirit have any “face”?).

That is the work of the Mass. In the concept of sacrifice, is there not overmuch stress laid on “annihilation”? But the creature simply is not, so long as it has not been transsubstantiated into the Son, into Being. The Eucharist is more than transsubstantiation (passing from one substance to another), it is a “passing” into Being. In it alone is creation fulfilled. (The body of Jesus is the goal of creation.)

The Mass is not a passage to death, but a passage to life.

Theology (and even the formulation of dogma) is much too dependent on pre-Christian theories limited in time and space.

June 15. *Veni Domine Jesu (Come Lord Jesus), Maranatha.*

This little phrase contains everything. The call which the world is, the call which the Church is, the call which the Eucharist is.

Jesus comes, from Heaven and from Earth at the same time. He does not come totally from Heaven, he is also born of the earth and grows from and on the earth (Luke, Paul). Let Jesus be the Call that surges up in the Bosom of the Father, calling for the birth of the Son. The call from nothingness.

July 12

When I experience (that) “I am”, it does not mean that I will continue to be in a time that would continue to be after the break-up of this organism of mine. “I am” has nothing to do with my “future” life, for being is not of the future, but present, and the present is eternity.

Being, *sat*, is neither a continuous time, nor a cyclic time, it is eternity. Were they not quite right, those who refused to say that Christ or the Word was before the Incarnation? Before the Incarnation there was the future Mother of Jesus and all his antecedents, familial, human-karmic, geological and cosmological. But the divine being cannot enter into time.

Even John's formula "And the Word was made flesh" [*et Verbum caro factum est*] is only valuable as an approximation, a designation ('to point at'), not a definition.

Shantivanam

July 18

(...)

Reread today the history of Pelagianism and the canons of the Councils of Carthage and Orange. They must not be forgotten in my efforts to give a Christian interpretation of Vedānta.

July 19

Do not the debates concerning grace (Pelagius, Vincent, Molina, etc.) derive from a wrongly formulated problem? Always oneself is taken as the starting point, and after that we think about making a place for God. Reality means always starting from the ontological nothingness of the human being. But it is Vedānta that gives us that. Time is deceptive. The human being is as much created in each moment of his life as he was at the moment when he began. The human being is a *tvam* [thou]. There is no *aḥam* [I] apart from this *tvam*. His *aḥam* is this very *tvam* that is spoken to him by the Father.

There is in being only one Principle: the Father, the Principle, the Source, the origin [*ādī*]. All the rest is a "development" from him, both as a whole and in detail. The time-sequence does not affect it. The Son of God is begotten—'so to say'—in every moment of eternity. Cp. "Today have I begotten you" [*Hodie genui te*; Ps.2:7].

"What I see the Father doing, that I also do" [*Quae video Patrem facere ego autem facio*; cp. John 5:19]. Apart from the Father there is no "independent" Principle in being.

If the Son is the Principle of the Spirit, it is within the *principalitas*, the 'Principle-hood' of the Father.

Being is essentially relationship from [*ab*] and to [*ad*], and no doubt the same thing will one day be discovered in the deepest component of the atom.

All that exists is from the Father, and all that *is made* originates from the Father [*a Patre*]. And since the world is the very mystery of freedom, of election, of love (love is *ati-dharma*; it transcends all law, all necessity). [Swamiji adds in a footnote:] Cp. the leap from matter to life (biological laws are not opposed to physical laws, but are not "graspable" through them), then to love: (we are) beings of love (1 Cor.13: "If I do not have love, I am nothing").

Sin alone does not originate in God, for sin is not being. What is this mystery of opposition to God, to being! The "I" placed before the "Thou" (which is heard). The human being hears himself called to being. In hearing himself called, he is.

There is the attitude of the person who has given himself totally to God: *Deus meus omnia*; of the person who has received everything from God and gives it all back to him: *de tuis donis ac datis*¹; and there is the person who gives nothing back because he has nothing to give. A relationship has two poles. He himself and everything he has. This only *is* in relationship with the Father. So it is already from the Father, essentially. What can he give? He himself, can he give himself? Giving is something accidental, but his substance, his being is to be mutual gift, relationship.

The *Suscipe* of Ignatius² is only a stage. Otherwise one is satisfied with saying that one is giving, or even with actually giving oneself, in order to avoid looking squarely at the overwhelming fact that one is only something received, that one is nothing for God. At the very moment when I seek to bring myself towards God, I am not yet, or if I am, I am a relationship.

Prayer is about something heard—adoration, thanksgiving, at hearing the Father say: "Thou, Thou art my son" [*tvam me putro 'si*].

And yet the Son of God is active, yes, but active in passivity. That is where the mystery lies. The Son is the Principle of the Spirit, but within the very "principlehood" [being the Principle] of the Father. Man gives only by receiving. Not that he receives first and then gives, but rather his begetting is fulfilled constitutively in breathing (the Spirit). In fact there is nothing in the human being, as is the case with the Son, which does not come from the Father.

Listening to the Father.

A text of the Council of Orange to combat activists and support Shantivanam, Canon 7 : *Si quis per naturae vigorem bonum aliquid, quod ad salutem pertinet vitae aeternae, etc.*³ [...]

July 20

To say "I am from Thee", even that is hardly allowed. When I say "I", it is after "Him" that I say it. To say "Thou" presupposes a preliminary "I". Then there is nothing more than a silence of expectation. A silence of longing. Who is expecting? Who is longing? A longing, an expectation which would be totally dependent on what is going to fulfil it, which would only have being in the future. Which would not be some thing, someone, who is waiting, longing.

1. Canon of the Latin Mass.

2. A prayer of self-surrender by St Ignatius of Loyola.

3. This text of the Second Council of Orange (529) considers as heretics those who think that they can merit eternal life by their own efforts or by their thought; and referring to John 15:5 and 2 Cor.3:5, it reaffirms that every good work can be accomplished only under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Cp. Denz. Sch.377.

This light which comes: I only am by looking at it. I only become aware of myself as being, seeing, in becoming aware of this light. Light from Light [*Lux de luce*]. He has created everything in the Light. The Hymn *Lucis creator optime... Primordiis lucis novae mundi parans originem*.⁴

Still more subtle than the light (*agni*), the sound (*ākāśa*) that one hears when all else is excluded, *śabda brahman*⁵. I only become aware of myself as hearing when becoming aware of this sound.

And this light comes to me in all light and all seeing, and this sound comes to me in all that I hear. And in smell also I am, and in taste and in touch.

The Church found it difficult to accept that the earth was not the centre of the world, neither the earth nor even the sun... Similarly, the great distress of the Christian when he meets the Spirit in those who are not Catholics, and even in non-Christians.

July 23

(...)

There is no real Christian faith which has not set the human being face to face with the 'ultimate concern,' as Tillich says. That is exactly what Jesus came to bring to Judaism, to that people whose whole religion was identified with the Torah. He came to teach that the Law is not something written, but that it is the Spirit himself in the depth of the heart. But, since the Torah had taken the place of God in Judaism, the Messenger of the Spirit could only be put to death: that the whole nation should not perish [*ne omnis populus pereat*; John 11:50].

(...)

What is important for everyone is conversion. (...)

Christianity is not an insurance policy against the evils of this world or even of the other world, nor a "philosophy" so as to put up better with the evils of this life. In Christ the human being has been brought face to face with the total mystery of being.

(...)

4. Hymn at Vespers on Sunday in the Roman Office:
O blest Creator of the light...

And o'er the forming world didst call
The light from chaos first of all.

5. *Agni*: fire and light; *ākāśa*: empty space as the "medium" of sound, according to the Indian conception of the elements and their relation to the human senses. The *śabda brahman* is the aspect of the Absolute *qua* sound, Word.

1961

Foothold in the Himalayas

THERE are no entries in the notebooks that contain the Journal. There are however some texts in a file numbered Z 61, which can be presumed to belong to the year 1961, since two other files numbered Z 56 and Z 63 have been identified as extracts from the Journal for the years 1956 and 1963.

This was a year of travelling. From the beginning of January until mid-February, he was visiting in the South, then went to Bombay and Indore, and finally to the North: Jyotiniketan, Delhi. He met several persons and groups who were important for him. We can single out the ecumenical Anglican ashram at Jyotiniketan (first visited in 1959), where he always received a warm and understanding welcome.

In mid-February he returned to Bangalore. In March he was back in Delhi. Then he left for the Himalayas and acquired at Uttarkashi a piece of land for his future hermitage. In May he was back in the South. In July, the Kaveri rose and flooded Shantivanam; this moved him deeply and he realized how attached he was to this place. In mid-September he left again for the North; in mid-October he was at Uttarkashi to oversee the building of his *kutira* (a little hut, built of stone because of the mountain climate). At the beginning of November he returned to Shantivanam, but shortly afterwards he was back again in Delhi to take part in the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches. At the closing session, Swamiji, dressed as a *sādhu* (two pieces of saffron cloth, barefoot with sandals), attended the reception at which dignitaries of the Churches met members of the government, the former in their spotless ecclesiastical robes, the latter formally dressed. Someone signalled the servants to bring in a chair for an important person who was about to arrive. These rushed to bring the chair for Swamiji; for them, a *sādhu* was more venerable than a Church dignitary or a government functionary. "That's India for you!" remarked Swamiji. Heading back South, he stopped at Indore and stayed at Manmād, Maharashtra, where he preached a retreat.

Little by little, he became more deeply inserted into the Church, especially in the North. He participated in several meetings and began to realize that he was perhaps not all alone in bearing the weight of making a Hindu-Christian "synthesis" and that others were close to him in thought. He felt that *advaita* is not exclusively *Hindu*.

It is perfectly understandable that, having traversed India from South to North several times during this year, he hardly had time to note down his reflections:

Let us attempt to follow Swamiji's movements:

January	End of retreat for the Carmelites (Bangalore); visited Poonja (near Mysore); stayed at Bombay (one week), Indore (one week); on to Lucknow, brief stay at Jyotiniketan.
1 February	At Delhi, met (on the 2nd) Dr Jacques-Albert Cuttat (Swiss ambassador to India).
15 February	At Bangalore (Asirvanam), met the Abbot of the Abbey of Saint-André, Belgium; visited the Carmel; back to Shantivanam.
1(?) March	At Delhi. Decided with Dr Cuttat to hold a meeting at Almora in April.
4 March	At Jyotiniketan, study group on Teilhard de Chardin.
13 March	At Uttarkāshī, acquired a plot of land for the hermitage. Stayed in a shelter for pilgrims. Celebrated Mass for the first time in this place.
10 April	Left for Rishikesh, Haridwar, Almora.
16-30 April	At Almora: took part in a meeting to discuss the Vedantic and Christian experience (one week). Returned to the South via Meerut and Delhi.
3 May	Back at Shantivanam. Visited Kareikkal, the Carmel of Kumbakonam, Tiruchchirappalli.
6 July	The Kaveri overflowed its banks; flood at Shantivanam.
16 Jul.-10 Aug.	Visits to the Jesuits (Dindigul); to Fr Mahieu (Kurisumala in Kerala).
15 September	Left Shantivanam for the North; stopped at Poona, Manmād, Jyotiniketan.
9-end Oct.	At Haridwar, then two weeks at Uttarkāshī to see to the building of his hermitage.
Early November	Back at Shantivanam, welcomed Fr Duperray.
18(?) November	Left for Delhi. Took part in the Assembly of the World Council of Churches (ten days, from Nov.23).
Early December	Meeting at Jyotiniketan; visited Indore, Mhow; stayed at Manmād (retreat).

* * * *

Peace

The pacified person is one who lives in the present, who has integrated the past in its entirety—(no frustration, gains and losses are received alike and accepted with equanimity [*aequanimitas*], faults are pardoned, and one has pardoned oneself for having sinned)—and for whom the future sets no

problem; neither fear, nor desire, not the slightest projection of oneself into this future—totally oneself in the totality of the present moment: *totus simul*.

A state of being relatively pacified, which nonetheless can also be very stable, comes from achieving equilibrium at the mental, psychological level (philosophical convictions, religious faith).

Absolute pacification comes from reaching the depth: an essential equilibrium. For the Christian it is the experience of wisdom, a direct experience, an experience of and through connaturality, the final fruit of faith. For the Hindu, it is the experience of being.

When I have realized that I AM, that my ego, liberated from all the *upādhis* (attributes based on time and space¹), coincides with the essential *aham* that I am in the depth of myself, what place is left for any desire or any fear whatever? for any completeness still to come?

When I have realized the mystery of my being in the divine Filiation, my paschal passage from non-being and anti-being (sin) to life eternal (i.e. from all time and for ever) in the bosom of the Father, then what place is left for desire, except for the essential desire to be what I am?

Introversion and self-giving²

The Indian method of *sādhanā* (contemplative discipline) is to interiorize the person, to turn him (*meta-noia*) towards what is within.

The western method of meditation focusses on a picture of God in one's thought or imagination (*eidōs*), or on thoughts related to God: always at the level of intellect.

The Hindu discipline focusses on something deeper, on the very centre of one's being, of oneself, on the place where the self has its source. Such introversion might seem to contradict the duty of the human being towards other people, and even towards those outward things with which he is linked in virtue of his nature. But no, for what prevents a person from giving himself totally to others is all the contents of the *antariksha* (the space between heaven and earth) which stand between him and others. The person who has reached his own depth, who is recollected in his source, is no longer conscious of belonging more to this body which is called his own than to the "other" bodies. He is equally indifferent and at the same time equally given both to this body and to the others. Egoism is to identify the self, the *aham*, with these areas of the *antariksha* (his passions, his viewpoints, etc.)

The realized person is led totally by the Spirit. He has neither hatred nor desire. He will take up arms like Arjuna in the battle of Kurukshetra if his duty [*dharma*] requires it, and with the same readiness he will sacrifice his life for others³.

1. See Glossary.

2. This text looks like a draft for publication.

3. A reference to the *Bhagavad Gita*, in which Krishna exhorts Arjuna to do his duty (*dharma*) as a warrior in the war at Kurukshetra. And continuing his exhortation, he teaches him that perfection does not consist in renouncing the deeds of human life, but in performing them disinterestedly.

The Christian experience is faith, *śraddha*, community, *koinonia*. The Hindu experience is direct evidence, *sakṣāt*, total isolation, aloneness, *kevala*.

Is faith an experience? It is the experience, not of reality in itself, but of one who has seen it, a sharing in one who has the evident experience. *Koinonia* does not contradict *kevala*. The Vedantin experience is of the order of the parousia, beyond history and time.

Creation and Kevala

Creation is not opposed to the *kevala*, because the human being only is from God. Christ is the first among creatures, because all creation originates in the procession of the Son. The human person is the point of impact (on nothingness?) of the free love of the abysses of being. And the mystery of being is the mystery of God. Wherever there is being, there is God.

The creature is not something placed by God outside himself, nor something emanating from God which would be from the divine or from God, at a second level. The being of the creature is in the "very depth" of God. This is where India invites us to seek it, not in ourselves, but in him.

* * * *

(...)

The Christian guru is the Christian community (*koinonia*). The *koinonia* is the Church. The Christian does not derive his instruction from an individual, however eminent he may be, from one who would have personally attained realization, but from the Spirit who lives and is revealed in the community of the Called. The kerygma (proclamation) only has value in the *koinonia*. The individual only proclaims the Christ in the name of the *koinonia*. It is the Spirit (the *koinonia*) that begets the Christ in me.—“(The Spirit) will overshadow you”...“he was incarnate by the Holy Spirit” [*obumbrabit* (Luke 1:35)...*incarnatus DE SPIRITU* (Nicene Creed)].—One hears the Word in the Spirit. “Blessed are they who hear...” [*Beati qui audiunt...*; Matt.13:16]. There is no blessedness except in the Holy Spirit. No one can say or hear “Jesus”, unless in the Holy Spirit, that is, in the *koinonia*.

Assimilation to the Holy Spirit as far as our ultimate depths. Then only do we become Sons.

The capitalist system is not Christian. Based on profit, it does not allow the full flowering of Christian life. A truly Christian civilization should be based on service, on GIFT, *agapē*, love. Real charity which looks not at the self, but at the other (Paul).

(...)

The monk's role: to be conscious of the Presence. The priest realizes it sacramentally, the monk mystically, not by work, not by word, not by speculation, but interiorly.

(...)

The Christian saint and the *jñānī*. The saint's serenity is not stoicism or negation or indifference. Sensitive to everything. Takes everything in his

stride. But everything comes to him transformed by his faith. Tomorrow? It is in God's hand. His non-egoism is not a case of non-being. He has passed through non-being and transcended it. Now he IS, and deeply, with all the infinite capacity for being which comes from the love of God. No longer is it non-egoism, but trans-egoism, trans-*ahamkāra*, which has passed into the divine *aham*. His *aham* is a response to the divine *aham*, out of the depths [*de profundis*]. A response to the “Thou” that God addresses to him. An “I” of acceptance. His love is a response to the infinite love, not the simple love of God passing through him, but the “return” of that love. His risen “I”, not to be compared either with the superficial ego or with the yogic or vedantin *aham*.

The Christian's outlook is at once tragic and confident. Confidence at the heart of the drama in which he is involved. Quite a different thing from the serenity of Vedānta. The anguished cries of the Psalms are often rendered with so great calm and serenity in Gregorian chant. The Jew thrashes about, shouts out to God his joy, his pain, calls God to witness, takes him to task (Job).—The Greek, serene in the Logos, order, reason. He has found the reason for everything, for the world (*logos*). He has reduced everything to the harmony, the order of his reason, all the seething torrent of things. By his reason he wants to dominate them and make use of them (techniques).—Here, it is the *Sat*: no longer to reduce being to its *eidōs* [essence] but oneself to pass beyond one's senses and one's *eidōs* as far as *sat* itself. The serenity of the Christian yogi is still further beyond.

On Holy Week-Easter

Holy Thursday. On this day all wealthy Christians ought to wash the feet and provide a magnificent meal for the poorest and the lowest of their servants. Otherwise the *mandatum* (commandment) is only a ceremony, and ceremony kills life when it is separated from it.

(...)

The Christian in the depths of his soul bears tragically, together with Jesus, the weight of all the sin of humanity, of all the suffering of humanity, of all the appeal of love that comes to human beings from God's eternity and awaits their response—that divine love which finds its ultimate human form in the Passion of Jesus. The human being, the priest, the monk, at the very centre of that current which flows from God to man, from man to God. A horribly uncomfortable position, no doubt, like that of Jesus on the cross (*Eli, Eli...*) and at the same time supreme serenity.

Jesus is at the same time the one who is seated in peace and glory at the Father's right hand, and the one whose Passion is continued in his members until the end of the world. Good Friday is the remembrance, together with the Passion of Jesus, of all the poor (*anāwīm*) of all times and places, crushed by their fellow men, and culminating in the Passion of Jesus.

Holy Saturday, the day of the Hindu *jñānī*, Jesus hidden in the Father's heart, his body in Limbo, not manifested. Easter, the day of the Christian *jñānī*.

Yet even the Risen One remains hidden in God. He is no longer visible whenever people want to see him. He has entered for ever into the Father's glory [*doxa*]. Henceforth it is through his Spirit that he acts. He comes no one knows whence, he goes no one knows whither—so it is with one who in his resurrection is born of the Spirit. "Unless one is born of (water and) the Spirit..." [*Nisi renatus fuerit de Spiritu*; John 3:5]. Rebirth beyond the *kevala*.

(...)

The bird sings and does not know that it sings,
The human being sings and knows that he sings,
The saint sings and knows that God sings in him.



Swamiji at Gyansu (Uttarkashi)

1962

The Active Life of a Contemplative

THE Diary tells us, at Christmas, of "joy and anguish", but it says no more than that about the inner state of its author. This was a year of intense activity.

Travel and meetings continued. He went to the Carmel in Bangalore, then north to the "Spiritual Life Centre," an interdenominational meeting place at Rajpur (near Dehra Dun) where he took part in a second meeting organized by Jacques-Albert Cuttat. The latter served as catalyst for a small ecumenical group of Christian theologians and spiritually-minded people who wanted to deepen their knowledge of Hinduism. Swamiji then went up to Uttarkashi, where he stayed for two months; then returned to Bangalore for a meeting of theologians. The rest of this year he spent in the south. He expected to divide his time in the future between Uttarkashi and Shantivanam.

He hosted interesting visitors and immersed himself in reading Husserl, Heidegger, Hans Küng. He wrote the "Experience of Saccidananda", which appeared in a revised form in 1965 under the title *Sagesse hindoue mystique chrétienne* (E.T., *Saccidananda: A Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience*). He rewrote the account of his meeting with Sri Gñānānanda, in the first person. His first draft of this work dates probably from 1956 (letter to Fr Lemarié of 14 March 1956). He was again working on it in 1963, when he told Lemarié: "I have almost finished putting together the first part of my 'Pilgrimages'" (22 September 1963).

He realized the difficulty of transmitting a message through the written word and the need for clear and nuanced expression in order to avoid misunderstandings. He worked tirelessly at his manuscripts, which caused him much trouble. He became increasingly flexible in his affirmations because he grasped the fact that the average reader, being remote from the context in which he himself lived, had difficulty in understanding him. So he is the one who must make the effort to be understandable.

During this year, he made only one round trip from the South to the North:

Early January	At Bombay. Returned to Shantivanam to host Ilsa Friedeberg, a Swiss friend, convert to the Orthodox Church, active in the ecumenical movement.
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23 March	Left Shantivanam for the North. En route visited the Carmel of Bangalore.
1-7 April	At Rajpur for Cuttat meeting.
April	Series of visits: Haridwar, Moradabad, Jyotinketan, Delhi, Poona (Holy Week), Bombay, Delhi again.
2 May	Arrived at Uttarkashi to stay until the end of June. Finished building his <i>kutiya</i> . Writing the "Experience of Saccidananda". Visited by John Cole.
End of June	Left for the South, stopping on the way at Dehra Dun, Mussoorie, Delhi. Returned to Shantivanam.
16 July	At Bangalore: theological meeting; visit to the Carmel. Working on "Saccidananda" at Shantivanam until October.
2 October	Sent manuscript of "Saccidananda" to the publisher in Paris.
Nov.-December	Expecting the visit of the priest-writer Jean Sullivan, who came in Christmas week. His novel, <i>Le plus petit abîme</i> , published in 1965, gives a vivid description of this meeting.

* * * *

Shantivanam

January 27

The salvation of human beings cannot take place in thought. If this were so, salvation would be tied to the individual's intellectual development, to the chance he may have had of being born in a setting where the right thought is known. That cannot be "divine." A god whom one imagines that one has imagined—that cannot be God.

Salvation takes place in the transcendental act of the person in the depth of his being. Faith is that adherence, transporting and transcending itself, which makes use of the medium of concepts to express itself.

February 17

The gospel revelation transcends, at the same time as it integrates, all authentic religious experience. The claim that there is no authentic religious experience outside Judaism and Christianity is an assumption refuted by the facts.

The gospel message cannot contradict any experience of this type (though it may contradict its conceptual explanation). Judaism exploded at once when Christ appeared. Seen in retrospect, it is clear that the O.T. finds its fulfilment in the New, but that was not at all obvious to contemporaries. Only the "miraculous" life of Jesus could make this incredible interpretation of the Scriptures acceptable. And yet it was all there in the Scriptures, and Christianity was born in a new interpretation of its Jewish religious basis.

However the expression of the Revelation in words was very thoroughly conditioned by the underlying Jewish environment in which it

was given. Rediscover the Word beyond its expression in Jewish, then Greek, then Roman terms.

The religious experience of India is unquestionably superior to Jewish and Hellenic religious experience. And so it allows us to reach a greater depth of the Christic message, an interpretation, a verbal expression that is perhaps more genuine, more real, more complete. But Christians are not yet ready for that. And so the Lord keeps the Hindus as a prophetic witness.

The experience of sin took place in the Jewish context, the experience of non-being in the Upanishadic context. But the Jew developed his experience of sin on a very strongly "ontic" basis. He was remarkably aware that it existed, but with an existence which would not have been able to hold out against Indian logic and still less against the experience of *Sat*. But it was necessary for human beings to experience their "sin". "He consigned all things under sin" [*Conclusit omnia sub peccato*; Gal. 3:22], in such a way that it became evident that salvation was wholly a matter of grace.

India had experienced the being/non-being [*sat-asat*] too strongly and too deeply to be able to conceive the tragic character of sin.

Christ's experience and his message come to give their fullness and their "redemption" to this twofold experience. Jesus came to proclaim to the Jews that their sin was forgiven. It was an alarming, unbelievable revelation. And from this began all the theological meditations on Redemption, the ransom doctrine starting with Paul, and then the one-sided developments of St Augustine.

The message of Jesus to India is redemption from "non-being." There is only God, *san mātra asti* [being alone is]. And yet I am; "I AM" is so great, and yet I am. "I slept...and I rose up" [*"EGO SUM" tantus est, attamen ego sum. Ego dormivi...resurrexi*].¹

The Jewish-Christian experience of redemption from sin must integrate the Indian experience of "coming to being" and vice versa. For having heard the revelation "that he is", the Hindu discovers his responsibility in his attainment of being and he understands sin at an ontological depth of which both the Jew and also the Christianized Greek were incapable.

(...)

Happy, peaceful week since returning to Shantivanam² at the beginning of January, rarely have I been so calm at Shantivanam.

My form of existence in this body, at this time, in these circumstances, which began, as they tell me, on 30.8.10, does not *entirely account for me*. The Hindu myth of multiple rebirths means that I existed in the last century in one way, in this century I exist in another, and two centuries from now I will exist in yet another. Consider my existence in this body, in this "consciousness" as an "accident" of myself, cp. a garment. (I am not affected

1. Cp. Ps.3:6: *ego dormivi et soporatus sum; et exsurrexi*, "I lay down and slept; I awoke again...", one of Abhishiktananda's favourite passages. Cp. 29 March and 5 April 1964, pages 267, 269.

2. After having preached a retreat at the Bangalore Carmel.

(by the body) [a-*sparsā*]. Still, let me enter into it fully, undivided, gathered together, united [akhandā, samacayam, samāgatam], but free.

The desires of this body, of this thought, whatever they may be, are not essential. Nothing of what is a condition of life is essential to life. The profound Hindu intuition of the duality of Self-body [ātmaśarīra], much more accurate than the soul-body [psychê-soma] of the Greeks, who gave undue importance to the intellectual part of the śarīra (unlike the Bible).

This śarīra is my present *linga*, "I have already had lots of them" (*samsāra*), I will still have lots more. Consider my present condition as simply transient. Besides, this is precisely the Christian view. Life is changed, not taken away [*Vita mutata non tollitur*; Preface of the Mass for the departed]...whatever may be the case with the mythical portrayals of the last things [eschaton] in popular thought. In the Christian view also I have to make myself (*bhāva*) by means of this śarīra. But its impact on me is not merely at the level of thought. What I eat is extraordinarily transformed to serve in the blood as food for my organs and still more to become *semen*.

In the same way there is a subtle transformation of the events in my śarīra at the level of sensation and consciousness, which pass into my *atman* (in the Christian view).

(...)

November 5

The monk has no desire, no attachment. He does not seek after any pleasure. The image of the highest *sannyāsī* who eats whatever comes his way (as if by chance); he receives in total indifference all the successive events and conditions of his existence in the body [*in corpore*].

He does not desire any perfection, above all he does not desire brahmanic "realization" in order to obtain fame (even a little) among other people. He gives himself without counting the cost, quite simply in all circumstances, he is totally given.

No desire for thoughts, for beautiful ideas, no desire to show himself, or in himself to show God. Pure manifestation without any reflexive turning back to the act or to the fact of manifesting.

(...)

November 13

What makes a solitary life so hard is that it allows for no distraction. The employee, the worker, the teacher, the priest always each day have a task before them that takes them away from themselves. Sometimes the solitary gives himself a task, but that means that he is forgetting his real task, which is to be without any task in this world, a witness to the End [eschaton] from the Christian viewpoint, to the permanent [*nitya*] from the Vedantin viewpoint. Fulfilled, completed in *kevala*.

The solitary is all alone face to face with himself, all alone face to face with God in the depth of himself, but with a God who draws him beyond all signs, all forms of manifestation, all symbols, all images, all concepts; and in the last resort, there is nothing in which he could "embrace"

this God, or touch him, or see him, whether he be the one God experienced by the *bhakta*, or the triune God of the Christian's faith-experience. So it is a solitude in which nothing answers the call, or rather in which no response to the call is heard. For in every response, I know that it is from myself that it is welling up. And, in the end, who is calling? Nothing any longer exists but the *kevala*, the totally blank page in the Ten Pictures of Zen.

December 2

Jewish prayer (and Christian prayer in its turn) is triangular. There is myself, God, and the enemy, the *poneros*. The *poneros* is the regular springboard in the Psalms for rising up to God.

Yoga is accused of mixing up morality and psychology, making "salvation" a matter of psychic disturbance. That is too hasty a judgment. Modern psychology has made it clear that all moral deviations are rooted in a perverted psyche. And who has not more or less perverted it! (inherited defects, "cultural" environment, etc.), nevertheless without that affecting the essential freedom of the moral being. One can conceive, at least in theory, of a stage of human evolution in which psychic deficiencies would be reduced to a minimum and in which therefore the only possibilities would be (on the one hand) real sin—the sin that refuses God with full clarity and no longer under the form of symbols that are always more or less inadequate—and (on the other) the totally pure act of charity: the choice set before the angels.

Yoga—and the parallel contemplative methods in India—aim at leading the human being to a higher natural level, at restoring his equilibrium by placing him at the very centre of his being (our difficulty is that we are always more or less off centre and hence always function merely approximately). Once anyone is centred, he has passed beyond the level of ordinary defects. His "egoism", the source of all sin, has been left behind, not fought against but bypassed. Yoga—just like psychiatry or depth-analysis—has nothing to do with morality. It belongs to another category. But ultimately it reaches the same goal as is sought by the so-called systems of morality. It establishes a person's psychological make-up in a condition in which he no longer sins (unless with the sin of Lucifer). Provided, of course, that the yoga has not been debased.

It is no longer a matter of setting representations against representations in order to equip the mind with key ideas, it is no longer a matter of exercising the will with the help of these key ideas. It is rather a matter of reaching psychologically that place in oneself where ordinary temptation no longer has a hold.

Human beings, as we know them and as we are ourselves, live among what is petty and small, the *alpa* as the Upanishad calls it [CU VII, 23]. And as they struggle in this swamp they try to work out their salvation—in a contest of [...] with their brothers. And religious institutions are in keeping with this swamp.

A simple drainage scheme, and this swamp will become a fertile plain.

(...)

December 25

Christmas, joy and anguish both at once. The birth in flesh of the Word of God, joy and anguish. The cry of *Abba Pater*, joy and anguish.

Joy for the fullness thus obtained by humanity and by each human being. Anguish because there is no longer any place in oneself where the human mind can recover its foothold. Faith is measured by its very outrageousness. Its wisdom lies in its rejection of all wisdom—with the kick of a winged foot as it flies away.

But the advaitin experience takes its stand right on this earth. The human being only leaves himself behind in order to recover himself totally, the experience of self is 'self-evident, self-convincing.'

When Christ is born, earthly attraction is transcended. It belongs to another order. It is total disequilibrium! And there is no peace possible, except in accepting this disequilibrium itself.

Advaitin experience is silent. What could still be said when no one is any longer there to say it, and there is no one to hear the speech?

When Christ is born, it is the appearance of the Voice . The Voice of God, to which the human voice responds as an immediate echo. The double "Thou" in which is expressed that "I" which had disappeared in the advaitin darkness. But a "Thou" which is heard and answered is itself also anguish. For if the conceptual "I" had to be broken so that the advaitin silence could rise up, what a fission must there be, and how much deeper, when in the silence there arises the mutual and definitive "Thou" of being.

And so it is that Christmas, the Blessed birth "in the depth of the heart" is anguish in the very depth of joy, joy in the very depth of anguish. Also that in Jesus the most intense joy was present in the Agony and at Calvary, and that in the depth of all his human joy the shadow of the Cross appeared. (...)

1963

Founder or Hermit?

SHANTIVANAM seemed to be attracting some Indian vocations, and one in particular gave Swamiji new hope. But finally he ended the year once again alone. In November two young women, drawn by the ideal of the ashram, stayed for ten days. Hope was reborn, this time for a feminine Shantivanam, but no one followed up this idea.

The manuscripts of his "Pilgrimages" (*Guru and Disciple*) and of *Saccidananda* were considered unpublishable by an editor in Paris. Swamiji was still thinking of publishing the letters of Fr Monchanin and would have liked to publish *Guhantara*; and in fact, even though for the time being everything remained in suspense, its preface was published in *Contacts* under the pseudonym of Macarius the Indian.

The Hindu-Christian monk continued to shuttle back and forth between north and south. In January, he was in Delhi, then went up to Uttarkashī (Gyansu). In April, he returned to Delhi for a meeting and then took his postulant up to Uttarkashī. At the end of May he went on pilgrimage to Gangotri, one of the principal sources of the Ganges and a high place for pilgrimages. At the beginning of June he was back at Shantivanam. In October, during his stay with the Jesuits at Shembaganūr, he immersed himself in the books in the library—"The old library has woken up the old demon," he wrote. He felt the isolation (at least intellectual) of his solitude.

He remained always ready for meeting others. He kept up his reading and continued to write. After Christmas he took part at Nagpur in the third meeting of the ecumenical group organized by Dr J.-A. Cuttat. He came to see that his life could bear witness to his convictions and that he had a message to communicate.

Swamiji was ebullient. He was now recognized and accepted as having a mission in the Church.

A few dates help us follow his manifold activities:

January	At Bangalore: Epiphany at Asirvanam. 14 January set off for the north, stopping at Madras, Indore, Delhi.
1-6 February	Stayed at Jyotiniketan, then Rājpur.
10 February	Arrived at Uttarkashī. Busy revising "Experience of Saccidananda".

24 April	Left Uttarkashi.
25-28(?) April	At Delhi for an experiment in contemplative reading of the Upanishads concurrently with the Bible.
5 May	At Agra he met Anand, a young postulant from Tamil Nadu and visited Vrindavan (famous Vaishnavite pilgrimage centre).
10 May	Returned to Uttarkashi with Anand.
End of May	Pilgrimage to Gangotri (one week).
4 June	Left Uttarkashi.
10(?) June	Returned to Shantivanam. Visited Bangalore to see Fr Dominique, Carmel.
7 July	Welcomed Philippe Fanchette, a Mauritian priest, at Bombay, who stayed at Shantivanam until recalled by his bishop at the end of October. With Ph. Fanchette and E. Aguilar, he visited Ajanta and Ellora.
18 July	Returned to Shantivanam.
August	Anand came to Shantivanam, but in September Swamiji felt that ashram life did not suit this postulant.
12-14 October	At Shembaganur.
November end	Two women "aspirants", U.V. and B.B., stayed for ten days at Shantivanam.
End of December	At Nagpur (until 4 January).

* * * *

Uttarkashi

February 11

The Angel's greeting to Mary, *khairc, pranāma*. The greeting in the Scripture is either Peace, *shalom*, or Joy, *Khaire, Laetare*. The greeting *Laetare*, cp. Seraphim of Sarov: "My joy: Christ is risen." Paul's greeting: 'Grace unto thee (sic) and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' [Rom. 1:7].

Both *ānanda* and *śānti* [joy and peace] are received here. And from joy, peace. But the two are one [*ānandac ca śānti. ekas tu te*]. Express your wish of joy everywhere, to everyone. Express your wish for and bring joy everywhere, to everyone. The joy of the announcement of the Incarnation, the joy of the announcement of the Resurrection. The angels' greeting: to Mary, Joy! [*Khaire, Greek*]; to the shepherds, I bring you good news of a great joy! [*annuntio vobis gaudium magnum*; Luke 2:10].

To live at a deep level does not mean "not to think". But just as life at the level of the senses is under the domination (or at least the unconscious direction) of intelligence, so the life of thought will be radiant in its depth with the life of 'awareness'.

(...)

February 13

Why desire that Vedānta should be true? Or that Christianity should

be true? *Sad asti*. Being is. What is, is. According to the true, it is *yāthātathyatah...*¹. (Have) no desire either for one or for the other. All the symbolism, the "myth" in which the Christian mystery is embedded can surely be reduced to this: salvation is *given!*

(...)

Summary of the New Testament :

You are loved = love.

You are from an Other = go out of yourself in the Other.

(...)

February 14

(Note on the Church and the Psalms.)

(...)

February 17

(Notes on the *sannyāsī* and various topics.)

February 20

Really the psalms are terrible with their constant battling against God's enemies. As if God could have enemies! Whoever opposes Israel (and nowadays the Church or the so-called Christian nations), even over purely worldly matters, is proclaimed to be an enemy of God. Yet, at the same time, the Prophets show clearly that the enemies of Israel are very often God's instruments!

The contrast of Vedāntin serenity!

February 21

Thinking of Indore and of all other nuns in bonnets, saris or skirts, whose lives are so "eaten up", I realize that only a deeply spiritual formation can sustain them spiritually. A formation that has chosen certain times, certain actions, certain forms for living the life of holiness is inadequate. It must be understood that holiness does not embody itself in any form, *a-rūpa*, it is in all forms [*sarva rūpa*]. But there is no *sarvarūpa*, total immanence, except where there is *a-rūpa*, total transcendence.

Only when liberated from all "necessary" forms—cultural, dogmatic, institutional—will the Church then be able to penetrate everywhere. As for the forms of the present moment, it accepts them, for it indeed has to exist in the social and mental world. But it transcends every form, being *agapē*. This requires a spirituality that does not stop at the level of practices and of meditation. It should be so deep that the whole being is marked by it.

(...)

February 22

The Church's role is to re-centre the world—universal transfinalization in the Eucharist. Through the liturgy, the Church recentres words, gestures, seasons around words, gestures, rites, of important sacred seasons. The liturgical year recentres all times around the unique Passover. It draws

1. Cp. *Īśa U 8*: "He is seer, sage, omnipresent, self-existent. To everything he has assigned its due place" (tr. *Vedic Experience*, 815).

them into the circular centripetal force of its movement. (It recentres) all gestures around gestures of adoration. All words around words of consecration and praise. That is why the liturgy is valuable, even in a meta-advaitin perspective.

March 3, 1st Sunday of Lent

*Uttishthata, jāgrata prāpya varān, nibodhata.*² 'Get up, wake up, new receive the Grace. Remain awake.' This morning's Epistle: "...not to receive the grace of God in vain" [*ne in vacuum gratiam Dei recipiatis*; 2 Cor. 6:1].

Vedantin asceticism takes the human being as a unit, not piecemeal, as the liturgy does. Once the centering of the person is achieved, everything will centre itself around this new and real centre. The asceticism of detail, requiring this, requiring that, corresponds to the superficial, peripheral level of consciousness. *Eleison* [have mercy], the cry of the creature. This is not advaitin, it is Christian. We do not exist in order to do, but in order to be. For our realization is within. We are not for tomorrow, nor for today, nor for the near future, but for the present moment.

(...)

March 5

It is not a matter of inventing external Christian forms but of giving an "inner Christian form" to everything that already is. Prayer before work and meals is a symbol.

Grace does not bring about new forms in the human being, but it is rather a "form" that gives form to everything.

(...)

April 5

(...)

I have a terrible need to try to think beyond the surface. It is very complicated to be a cosmonaut taking a dive in a bathysphere! Human beings are made for the surface of the planet. And yet they cannot be satisfied with that. The call to the real is too strong! But what an anguish this call is, what a whirlwind that carries off everything!

(...)

April 6

(...)

"God is not a Person, but THE only Person."

April 8, Monday of Holy Week

Jesus did not "withdraw" himself like a yogi from his Passion or from his death. He drank the cup drop by drop down to the dregs.

No running away. We escape just as much in our cooking pots, in our telescopes, or in theological speculations.

2. KathU III,14: "Arise! Awake! Seek to understand the favours you have won." A text often quoted by Swamiji. Here it is emended according to Sanskrit textual tradition. (Tr. *Vedic Experience*, 566.)

Let me be present to God in being present to my fire, to a flower, to the shopkeeper from whom I am buying carrots. Be totally given to the event of the present moment and at the same time entirely apart from it.

April 10

The texts of Jeremiah and the Jeremiah Psalms that the Church makes us read during Passiontide are really horrible. How can a Christian heart recite them without being nauseated? Those who chose these texts can never have heard the "Father, forgive them..." [*Pater, dimitte illis*; cp. Luke 23:34].

What a narrow conception of God, of Israel's Yahweh! God cut down to the scale of their security [*kshema*], their individual and national prosperity. Where is God-in-Himself in all that? Even the poor, the ebionites, become pharisees, more proud before God of their poverty and of their virtue than were the rich of their wealth in the sight of their fellows!

What a gigantic mutation came with the appearance of Jesus among this people! Alas, his disciples have re-founded a Synagogue!

April 11, Holy Thursday

I feel ill at ease in my enjoyment of the Christian mystery, so long as my brother close beside me cannot share in it. Just like taking part in a banquet while my brother has only his dish of boiled rice. So I sometimes want to stay at the level of my Hindu brother, to share in his worship, in his myth, while projecting it as far as the final mystery that it conceals, rather than to enjoy the thoughts of the Bible, theology, etc.

The Eucharist is bread *broken* and eaten *together*, wine drunk *together* with others. A solitary Eucharist has no meaning, apart from the fact that the priest is "pleromatic". And again that is only possible if he is isolated *in fact* (as here) and does not isolate himself in a corner of the Church. Those Masses in which those present watch the priest receiving communion! What nonsense!

April 12, Good Friday

My life is really missing the one essential thing for *sannyāsa*: not to expect anything.

That *sādhu brahmavid* from Metupallayam was a great lesson for me. Two months here [Uttarkashi] and (I am) incapable of not counting the days, despite the deeply felt joy of being here. Incapable of not waiting for Anand.³

Mail received and sent—appeals to other consciousnesses for contact, even though I was keeping silence here.

Sannyāsa is concentrating oneself in God. Seeking nothing from creatures, expecting nothing from creatures. One day, a thousand years, just the same. Concentration on the present moment, not reading, which puts us in contact, but through silent contemplation, prayer of the Name [*japa*] which does not project thought outside like reading, conversation, speculative meditation, writing...

3. Anand K., a young man from Madras, the only Christian in his family, who at Christmas 1962 had expressed his desire to become a postulant.

Reading the Prophets is maddening. Always for tomorrow! And quite as much the liturgy which repeats them, with the same lack of realism as the Psalmist proclaiming that the just never lacked anything (Ps. 37). What happens is 1/100 of what is promised. Return from the Exile, etc.

Our sins? A fine excuse. A good "distraction", asking pardon in order to escape from the duty of "being".

The New Covenant should have created a new heart, given the spirit. Where is the Spirit? The Church quickly became the synagogue again, legalism, ritual, formalism. But it could not be otherwise, since the Spirit has not really penetrated.

The Church ought to be the "company of love", the social crystallization of the Love that Jesus had come to spread, intended to transform the whole mass, like the yeast in the dough.

Who loves? Who loves totally? And as long as Love is not total, it is not Love. Who does not seek himself instead of God and the other? What difference is there between Christians and non-Christians? So what is the use of inviting people to be baptized, to accept a rite that will not really be "transforming", to submit simply to "another" legalism?

How make the Spirit come down? How "inspire" Love? Since Jesus himself did not succeed! Pentecost blazed up for a short time. From time to time it blazes up again, but it never burns for very long.

Reading just now about the dry bones in Ezekiel, I thought of the Council⁴; the Spirit has come, but men are so sluggish!

The Christian was supposed to be possessed by the Spirit. This was proclaimed by Joel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, by the Gospel, John, Paul, etc. The Christian also is an egotist or at best a "sensible person" who makes up his own mind about the ways of God.

Greeks like Hindus delight in speaking about possessing the Spirit. The West, which is a little more realistic, has dissociated mysticism from phenomena, and has the decency not to call everyone to the spiritual marriage. It has accepted—with Pope and theologians leading the way—the fact that the Spirit had not really been given and that we have to keep on feeling our way.

Well then, Vedānta is far above a Church in which the Spirit does not shine! And yet what the Church achieves is not useless. What a pity! A programme suited to an ant-hill, whereas its scale ought to be that of the Himalayas.

But after all, Carmelites, nursing Sisters, etc. at least make a start at releasing themselves in their gift of themselves, into which plenty of *ahamkāra* enters, but in which there is nonetheless a slender trickle of truth. But it is always simply the impact of gospel teaching on human thought, whereas the Spirit like a whirlwind should gush up from within! But if anyone speaks of the Spirit, people will give free rein to their subconscious. The parapsychic phenomena of the first Christian generation clearly showed this from the beginning.

4. Vatican II was in progress.

So, as a lesser evil, they came back to the levitical priesthood and the Jerusalem Temple. All that was left was to set up the Sanhedrin again.

(...)

But is the Spirit not present? Has not Jesus promised it? He will bring all to your remembrance, will speak for you, will act for you. Where is the Spirit?

I can at best reassure the others, as people reassure me. Should we not at all costs ensure that the journey is undisturbed?

Is Ramana not right? But when I have sought to find beyond [...] that *aham* which Ramana had promised me, there too I got nothing for my trouble! The self-luminous *aham* that India promises me! The Spirit that the Bible promises me!

Alone, oneself, infinitely alone.

And precisely this "solitude" is the *aham* that shines within myself, and this solitude is the Spirit who cannot be thought or felt.

There must be at present an extraordinary flowering of saints in the Church for the Council not to have been able to resist it and to have been so "open", and for the bishops to have begun to understand the Church.

April 13, [Holy Saturday]

It is only in "community" that birthdays, feast days, special "days" are celebrated. In solitude there is only the timeless OM. On Good Friday the day was lit up by the sun like every other day. The remembrance of the Lord's death was simply "superimposed" by my mind. The same today, tomorrow. The liturgy has meaning only in community.

Beyond all that ever happened, beyond all that was or ever will be, there is that which is. That which happens has value only as a sign.

From the Passion of Jesus to the infinite spaces of eternal Love, the rending of the heart of Jesus in the Garden of Olives (Gethsemane) and on the Cross—it is the rending of the heart of being which enters into creaturely being.

Coming to be is a rending apart. So it is for the infant when it is born from its mother. At the level of non-being rising up toward being, it is a rending apart; at the level interior to being, an opening out.

When the flower blossoms, it is not rent apart, it just opens out. But every opening out of being at the level of becoming is a rending apart. So Jesus asked for the cup to be taken away and cried out to the Father his agony at being seemingly abandoned by him.

Jesus cried out with tears and groans to the one who was able to "deliver" him from death, says the Epistle to the Hebrews. And he was heard for his godly fear. For every ascent toward life appears first of all as a death.

It is from the dismembering of the primordial *Purusha* that springs the life that fills the universe—so sang the hymn in the Rig Veda [X,90]—and who would not tremble at his "disappearance"?

Life is beyond death. Jesus was heard in his Resurrection. He tasted death. Death is the law of becoming. If Jesus had not died he would not

have been a real human being. But beyond this inescapable death, he received life. Life, a pure gift of God.

Cp. the three births in the Aitareya Upanishad [AU II,1-4]. The final one is when I am reborn as a son of God. The first is when I leave my mother's womb and appear in this world; the second when I am reborn in grace, the third refers to my death which is my entry into life.

(...)

Holy Saturday, the great Rest, the Sabbath of being. Just as Hindu wisdom did, so Jewish wisdom came to a halt on the Sabbath. Beyond the advaitin sabbath there is the Christian awakening.

(...)

April 14, Easter

Sang the Vigil between 10.00 and midnight. At 4.00 this morning, Matins, Lauds and Mass.

All these days I have been feeling very strongly my "distancing" from the ecclesial community. These texts and chants are so "charged" with meaning. How many words become every year more and more difficult for me to say or to sing, without tears coming to my eyes. Anguish for all those who have not heard the paschal message, for those who having heard it do not heed it.

All those prophecies that the Spirit will be given! Oh! truly agonizing! Where is the Spirit?

And therefore, either souls are lost—and then stop speaking of a God who is just and good—or else souls are saved without the Spirit...

(...)

For the immense majority of people, including Christians, their individual existence presents no problem. On it is built their whole vision of Reality, i.e., of the world, of God and of their own deep self. To Christians, their creation by God presents no more difficulties than babies have with the idea that they were brought one fine morning by a stork.

(...)

From all this comes very great weariness; and the solitude makes one very weary, for there is nothing to give "stimulation". And yet, however hard it is physically, what deep joy! How quickly I would return to it if Anand were not coming to Shantivanam.

April 15

Discussed the Resurrection a month or so ago with Murray⁵. He says we have no right to survival. Our resurrection is a pure gift of the divine mercy, he says—against the Greeks [*adversus Graecos*].

In fact resurrection, creation, redemption, emergence from nothingness, from sin, from death—all those are "signs" in which we live our total dependence upon being, upon God. All those are at the level of history, of time. All those are to make clear at the level of my thought that I am from the Father [*a Patre*].

5. His friend Murray Rogers, the founder of the Jyotiniketan ashram.

(...)

The message of *Sannyāsa* (is) the *kevala*.

But who is able to stand this *kevala*? I said Mass every day here because I was afraid that not saying it would be an act of weakness and laziness, rather than an act of transcendence.

And most people believe that saving wisdom [*jñāna*] is a matter of pure intellectualism!

(...)

April 21 and 22

(Reflections on the "survival" of the Resurrection. Notes on death.)

April 23

Last evening at Uttarkashi.

(...)

Vrindavan

May 5

Jesus lived and died. That belongs to the past. What is Real is that he lives as "risen". It is as risen that we must meet him, not in a memory. Risen and having recovered the glory that was his in the beginning; the one in whom, for whom, by whom, everything was made, the one in whom everything is established [*pratishthita*].

The Christian rite is not a rite, there is no rite in Christianity except perhaps the *dīkshā* [initiation] that makes us Christian. Neither rite, nor law. And the only dogmatic condition is faith in the risen Jesus. The "paschal meal" is not a rite in the sense of the Jewish, Hindu or Roman rite. It is the assembly in one place [*epi to auto*] of believers. It was quickly made into a rite, that is so much simpler and demands so much less. The essential commitment is diluted in the rite; and we gain a good conscience on the cheap. For few people are truly ready to be indebted to God.

When Christians meet they celebrate together the paschal meal. In breaking bread together, in sharing the cup of wine, they give glory to God (the eucharistic prayer). And according to the promise, God is present, and the Passover is accomplished, the Passover which is faith in the Lord and the "being-together" of his disciples. As a rite the paschal meal is not in opposition to the *kevala* of *sannyāsa*. For Christ has "established" the human being beyond rite as beyond duty.

It is by faith alone that the just person lives. Works spring from his faith. If a person puts his confidence in what he does, he never reaches God. God cannot be 'grasped,' either by thought or by works, by anything that has to do with the body, with the senses, or by anything of that which is most inward.

It is only in the leap—'jumping'—beyond oneself, beyond what is most inward in oneself, beyond even one's own emergence into being, that the human person truly meets God. Having passed into Christ.

The Eucharist is an anamnesis, a "remembrance". It recalls the past, but cannot make the past present insofar as it is past. It "fulfills" time, all

times. And it is as a preparation for this present that the past "is recalled". For the present alone is.

And the eucharistic present "pierces through" to the eternal essence of this present.—There is only one sin; the refusal to come out of oneself, to leave oneself behind. The sin of the flesh is only sin to the extent that it indicates this halting at [oneself].

Shantivanam

August 8 and 10

(Commentary on K. Rahner, *Mission and Grace*.)

(...)

August 12 and 13

(Reflections on future life, the resurrection.)

(...)

August 14

And sometimes you are called to sing that there is only One, or rather to sink into the infinite silence of the not-two, of one's own not-looking-at, not-even-noticing oneself.

And sometimes there rises up in your body the song of the ineffable coinherence (perichoresis), the self that comes to itself through the self in the innumerable forms of creation,

and in this very song you become an I that speeds towards an "other" I—taken to infinity, the divine I which pours itself out on itself and gathers itself up into itself.

(...)

August 15

One does not have to run through space and time in order to find God, neither to climb up to heaven nor to come down to the earth [*neque in coelum ascendere neque in terram descendere*; cp. Deut. 30:12-13, Rom.10:6-7]. We have at our disposal the *WORD* which makes God present in the eschatological fullness of Christ. This is the eucharistic word. The Word of God [*rhēma theou*] in which are fulfilled "in the course of time" all the words [*rhēmata*] of God.

The Eucharist, *mysterium fidei*. This word—in *memoriam* (of the past as of the future)—awakens our faith, releases it, realizes it—our faith in the real Presence of eternity in this precise moment of time.

Presence in the form of food, *anna-linga* [symbol of food]; the eucharistic bread has to be given and eaten, handed over and ground (between the teeth). The chewing is the sign *par excellence* of our humanity taking possession of the elements of the universe.

The eucharistic Christ is received in faith. It is in faith that we have communion with the ultimate depth of Christ's Person, with his "Heart".

(...)

August 18

(...)

You will only become yourself by becoming Christ.

You will never become more yourself personally, individually, than by losing yourself in Christ.

(...)

August 20

The Christian is the person to whom Jesus has "communicated" his experience of being from the Father, and of going to the Father: *processio et transitus* [his coming from... and going to...], which constitutes him as a person.

(...)

August 26

(...)

Who is a Christian? Who is a Hindu? Who is a Muslim? I know only the children of my Father who is in heaven.

It is not baptism, it is not communion, that make the Christian, but the love which each one expresses towards his brother. He who loves his brother is the one in whom Jesus lives, and not he who has the name of Jesus on his lips or in his thought. The name of Jesus within, that is love for one's brother. He who gives his life to save his brother, it is in that person that Jesus really lives, in the depth of his heart; it is that person who is penetrated with the Spirit [*Pneuma*] of Jesus. For the *Pneuma* is Jesus who has become *this* flesh and has pitched his tent in it.

The name of Jesus in the heart, this is the one which saves, the one which redeems. And the name of Christ in the heart, this is the anointing with the *Pneuma*. And the Passover in the heart is the going [*transitus*] to the Father and the total gift to my brothers.

I preach the name of the Christ which echoes in the spaces of the heart, and not simply the one which vibrates between the lips and the ear; and I preach the Passover that is celebrated within when the self goes to God and is no longer received in the Resurrection except as a pure gift of faith.

The Lord Jesus is my *guru*. *Isa sampradayāt* [of the Lord's tradition]. With me he always is, in my heart, in my thought, in my senses; Him alone I see, Him alone I hear, Him alone I touch.

(...)

If Ramana had been born a Christian, could he have been what he was?

The Church will only have the right to call Hindus to herself when she is capable of receiving people like Ramana.

(...)

August 30

The mystery of the Trinity is nothing else than the mystery of the relationship of "myself", a human being, this human being, with God, which

was discovered by the greatest of human beings, Jesus, the first-born of every creature [*primogenitus omnis creaturae*], the first-born from the dead.

The Trinity, that is, in high contemplation, to have transferred, projected, on God himself whose essence is infinitely simple, the mystery of that twofold gaze which constitutes me before him. To have transferred? No, to have recognized in the mystery of high contemplation that this "facing God" which I am has eternal value, and that within time I could not even express it ontologically, if this "facing God" were not already inscribed at the heart of being, in the depth of God.

Meditation on the Trinity in itself, in its own mystery, is the specifically advaitin contemplation, in which the soul has disappeared at the level considered to be its own and only the level of God continues to exist.

The Trinity is this mystery of God and myself lived in its divine and eternal reality. There is the Father, and there is myself, having come from and at the same time having passed into the Son. And there is the Spirit, the *Pneuma*, the presence of the Father to me, the Son-Presence to me; this ultimate mystery of advaita, to which the concept of Person does still less justice than in the case of the Father or the Son.

(...)

The mystery of the Trinity has to be rediscovered behind the Council of Nicaea, which has brought theology into a blind alley—indeed, it was forced to do so by the hair-splitting of the Greeks who in the persons of Sabellius and Arius sought to conceive what is inconceivable.

(...)

If the Spirit is the Presence and the Action of God and of the Lord within myself, it is by nature imperceptible. In order to grasp it by thought, I give it a name, I have to objectivize it, to separate it from myself. If I separate it from myself, even for the sake of argument, my relationship with God has disappeared; I am no longer one to whom the Father is present and who is Son; I am no longer one in whom the risen Lord reveals himself—I no longer am. (...)

August 31

Who can understand, accept and bear the great solitude, solitude with God—the solitude of God, outside the superficial I-Thou that the human being addresses to God, the Mahwit world of the Sufi tradition, the world of absolute silence, beyond the Mallakut world in which everything is denied and nothing but God exists?

(...)

To have need only of God, we must first be freed from the need for the *idea* of God. This is the essential meaning of true Hindu *sannyasa*, in its radical solitude, naked and without any material possession, without a place of one's own, without a friend or anything in which one's heart could find rest; and also free within from every beautiful thought to which it could cling.

Free and naked, that is how Arunachala has left him, and precisely because completely liberated, completely given. Nothing held back for

himself. Not even a self who gives himself, a given self, but a Given which is himself.

(...)

September 24

(...)

So the Council meets again and they are going to be serious. And bishops in cope and mitre are going to decide about God. And the observers in suits are going to check their decisions. What a laugh! There must surely be an angel called "The Laugh of God". It is he who is the greatest among them, the Great Laugh of God, when he looks down on human beings, human beings who with all the seriousness of a 'butler' lay the table for God and get ready to serve him.

A few human beings, the apex of humanity, have penetrated beyond this Laugh and have passed on to the others the mystery of Being!

But out of the mystery their followers have made myths and religions. Even the Buddha, the great liberator, now has his altars!

(...)

October 12 to 14

Shembaganūr. (Wonderful games of Providence.⁶)

(...)

October 16

Does the human being become more conscious of himself in the depths of himself? That is the only touchstone for assessing the value of a civilization.

And if some jealously keep this attainment to themselves like the aristocratic classes in India and Greece, that shows that they have not really reached the depth; for once the depth is reached, and differences have been left behind, then in each one his "realization" automatically seeks to "rise again", I mean, to overflow upon the body [*śarīra*].

It is good to try to update liturgy, theology, etc. However are we not taking external reforms too seriously? Certainly they are necessary in order to make the mystery of the within more accessible to everyone. And still more, they are a process of Resurrection, of an overflowing of the inward realization upon the intellect, the senses and the cosmos. For is not the Church essentially a Witness to the Resurrection, i.e., that the world has passed into God (in its being assumed by the Word)?

Yet our grandmothers who piously used to recite their rosaries during the Latin Mass were certainly just as good as us any day. Contact with the Lord is so much higher than words and concepts. This is still Ramana's insight.

(...)

November 2 and 3

(Reflections on reading Meister Eckhart and M. Nédoncelle.)

6. See letter of 10.10.63 in *Swami Abhishiktananda* (1995), 154-5.

November 6

My thesis: that the Incarnation took place in the world as soon as the minimal psychological and sociological conditions for its acceptance were brought together.

The Gospel will only be practicable once humanity has reached a level of self-consciousness from which it is, as a whole, still very distant. Some essential laws like chastity (within as well as outside marriage) and charity, in the present condition of the human person and of society, would require absolutely miraculous graces if they were to be observed by the majority [*in pluribus*].

Meanwhile the Church "tends" toward its more perfect age, under the often very shabby sign of its present reality. On the other hand, God preserves as prophets—alongside the Church—the non-Catholics, the non-Christians, until the Church becomes ready to integrate the values they represent.

Protestantism is close to its end, for now the great Church is taking up as its own the essential principles of the Reformation (cp. K. Barth *dixit*).

(...)

November 12, 13, 14 and 18

(Reflections on various subjects.)

December 25

Christmas. Apart from God, what possible object is there to desire? The only thing to wish for would be that God should be; well, God is. After that what room is there for any petition whatever?

Even the Christmas liturgy remains so distant from the Real, except for a few prayers, like the Introit of the Mass of Midnight, which are pure contemplation without any turning back on self. The rest is all asking, asking, but asking for what? For a "sign"—even when the Reality is there. All this meditation on sin in which the Bible has buried us in order to put us in a position to desire the Saviour, the Redeemer. All those chapters of Isaiah calling out for the future. But the messianic dawn that the Prophets call for already *is* in the eternal dawn and at every moment I share in it because at every moment I [*aham*] (*am*).

1964

A Pilgrimage to the Sources

AFTER the depths, it was the heights that attracted Svamiji. This year he returned to Gangotri. Inspired by this pilgrimage, he wrote his book, *The Mountain of the Lord*.

He now had to live without worrying either about external events (the fate of Shantivanam was still in doubt) or about inner conflicts (he had not yet reached a synthesis). He just lived. He visited the Carmels of Bangalore and Pondicherry. He prepared a draft of a Sanskrit liturgy. He also worked on *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point* (an account of the Nagpur meeting) and began revising his "Experience of Saccidananda" (*Sagesse*), now accepted for publication in Paris. He was reading—among others—Congar, Mouroux, Schillebeeckx, and enthusiastically following events at the Vatican Council in Rome. The agonizing dilemma between Hinduism and Christianity seems to have faded and become less acute. He refused to do violence to either of the two traditions by accepting artificial and premature syntheses.

Some of Svamiji's travels and activities during this year:

1-4 January	After the Nagpur meeting, visited Baba Amte's leprosarium at Anandavanam.
8 January	Returned to Shantivanam.
8-23 February	At the Carmels of Bangalore and Pondicherry.
1 March	Left Shantivanam for the Himalayas. Stopped at Delhi, Jyotinetan, Haridwar.
20 March	Arrived at Uttarkashi.
April	Wrote a detailed account of the Nagpur meeting.
19 May	R.P. arrived at Uttarkashi.
1-7 June	Pilgrimage to Gangotri with R.P. On June 6 Mass at the source of the Ganges. Return to Uttarkashi.
16 June-9 July	Svamiji stayed alone at Gangotri.
21 July	Left Uttarkashi.
27-30 July	At Delhi.
1-20 August	At Jyotinetan, Indore, Varanasi.
26 August	Return to Shantivanam.
Sept.-Oct.	Intense work on books and articles, revision of "Experience of Saccidananda" (<i>Sagesse hindoue mystique chrétienne</i>).

Late October	Visit from R.P.
Late November	At Arunachala (2 days); Bangalore; Asirvanam, Carmel. <i>Hindu-Christian Meeting Point</i> sent to editors (Seuil). (Eucharistic Congress held at Bombay.)
18-25 December	Retreat at Shantivanam for C.C., M.B., U.V., conducted by R.P.

* * * *

Shantivanam**January 16**

Reading Robinson's impressive book, *Honest to God*. So close to Vedānta. (...)

People do not go to the desert to flee from the world. The world of human *koinonia* is the 'assessment' (evaluation) of every human being—and still more of every Christian, whose mission is to transform the "cell of humanity" into a "pneumatic" *koinonia*. People only enter into solitude in order to fulfil a diakonia, a kind of counterpoise to human dissipation. Witness of the Absolute. Witness that the *res* is beyond the sign.

Here the sacrament is rediscovered; the pleromatic *koinonia* will only be realized in actuality at the last day. But it is already realized sacramentally in the Eucharist.

January 18

(Note on the priesthood after reading H. Küng.)

January 19

Speaking of ministry and its succession, its transmission, we must frankly accept the fact that the Church started off with a mistaken perspective. It is quite clear that everyone was expecting the Lord's return in the very near future. No apostle ever thought of preparing an ecclesial organization for the coming centuries and millennia. The one thing necessary was to gather together and preserve the congregation of believers in view of the Day which would not long be delayed.

Salvation cannot be restricted to those who have had the good fortune of hearing the Gospel intelligently presented. Salvation lies in piercing through one's own selfish centre and in transcending oneself so as to reach one's deepest centre. The nuclear explosion of the individual; the passing into the other. Whether this other is still felt as other than oneself, or whether one has so forgotten oneself in passing into the Other that no consciousness of oneself any longer remains.

Jesus is the type par excellence of this passing into the Other. Whether we mean the Other as Father, or the Other as brother, they are inseparable (for it is always under the sign of the brother whom I see, that I say "Thou" to the Father whom I do not see).

Jesus is not an abstract idea, a memory that one might reach by means of intellectual formulations, deducing his "divinity," for example, with reference to a specific conceptual system. He is the one-for-others, the one-

who-has-passed-into-the-other, the paschal Being, who in his Resurrection has broken through all the limitations of his ego (spatial, temporal, etc.).

Jesus is perceived existentially in the call of the other in the greatest depth of my being; whether this other is the final mystery of my own personal mystery which is drawing me to the desert, or the brother who from outside calls me to God in himself.

(...)

Christ is already in India, in the existential Passover. The Christian can at best realize the eschatological Epiphany of this Passover.

But how the discussions of the bishops at the Bishop's House at Nagpur or the theologians of the NCC¹ appear as *vanitas*, clouds, mist, nothing, compared with the presence of the Lord to Anandamayi Ma².

Nothing sets limits to God's gift.

(...)

January 20

(Note on reading Y. Congar.)

January 21

Fever, flu. Wonderful automatic activity of the brain during the night of fever. Such an invasion of peace, of joy.

January 23

All these beautiful books on the Church have a wonderful way of deciding about God and his plans... God on high must find it most amusing! But seriously, all these books, and all these discussions in the Council start from this postulate: normally salvation is only in the Church (even if the existential encounter with other Christians has already caused a slight change in mental attitudes).

All this salvation related to an event in the history of the world is incapable of saying anything whatever to the immense majority of people, whether they are pre-Christians or post-Christians (the dechristianized people of Europe).

(...)

January 24

(...)

The Katha [Upanishad] sang to me all last night. In fact I had never before really sought to understand it. Naciketas puts the question to Yama: *asti? na-asti?*³ Yama does not answer directly, but little by little makes him realize the *Real* which is beyond all the *dvandva*, the (contradictory) pairs: *asti/na-asti* [is/is not].

1. The National Christian Council, the association of Protestant and other Churches in India.
2. A Bengali Hindu mystic; her *mahāsamādhi* took place in 1982.
3. KathU I, 20: "The doubt that exists about a man when he is dead—for some say 'He is' and others 'He is not'—about that I would clearly know, instructed by you" (tr. *Vedic Experience*, 564).

That is not learnt in books; it is received from a Master who knows; it is like a grace, like a choice... [cp. Kath U 2.23]

Yama is that depth in myself in which the *dvandva* are transcended; it is like "death" for the *deva* [powers] of the *manas* and the senses.

Yama, what is the beyond? What is there behind all those symbols in which people speak to us of the beyond?

The beyond is when the time of signs has passed; well then, since the human being, as he knows himself to be, only speaks the language of signs, what could he say of Reality?

(...)

February 5

(Reflections on the *Filioque*.)

Uttarkashi

March 22

(...)

Should we try to discover in a Christian *advaita* something beyond Vedantin *advaita*? As soon as there is a qualification, *advaita* disappears. The *dvandva* [opposites, dualisms] reappear, and we have fallen away from the Real.

Much rather, should we not say that there is the experience of the Son and that of the Spirit. That of the I-Thou and that of the non-dual? Is that not the depth of the mystery of the Trinity? of the *Abba*, of the *aham*, or of the *OM*?

(...)

March 27, Good Friday

(...)

I say today that he is dead, tomorrow that he is in the tomb, the day after tomorrow that he is risen; another day that he has been born, that he sends the Spirit.

All that is *Ila*, on the level of the intellectual hair-splitting that has need of nourishment, and that just as much needs to absorb ideas in order to commit itself to the real gift.

Nevertheless, as the Churches of Asia had clearly recognized, there is only one festival: the Passover. And this festival is metatemporal, for it is precisely the passing from time to the End, the *eschaton*.

Now the Passover is at every moment. The full moon, Sunday, the [liturgical] year are reminders of it. But it is as much the flower that blooms, the child that is born, the child that awakens, the person who becomes an adult, "someone".

To picture the sufferings of Jesus or of Our Lady is excellent and is sanctifying, when the Spirit prompts it. But in the end that is only an epiphany of the Real.

What is Real is the Passage (Going) to the Father. The Resurrection is the fulfilment of the Cross; in being the death of death, it is the perfecting of death, death in its infinite power, in its ritual power. The Cross opened

up in Jesus abysses of transcendence. He willed to live in himself, even psychologically, the agony of this passage in order to exorcize humanity.

The great lesson of Our Lord is that the salvation of humanity passes through the Cross—whether this salvation takes place in a Christian or a non-Christian environment—there is nowhere any direct passage for human beings to God. It is only in death that we come to God, in the "real" death of which bodily death is only the sign.

(...)

Is there not a place (also) in the Church for those who are the sign that the Church is only a sign? But the eschatological function of the solitary monk (hermit), of the Christian *sannyasi*, cannot be specified in Canon Law. To regulate their life is to erode it. Canon Law could simply mention it and its living conditions: in ecclesial terms, to be free from all institutional obligations.

March 28, Holy Saturday

(...)

There is a place in the Church even for the *digambara*, the one clothed only in space, who passes through the midst of society, of rites and institutions, as a sign of the *eschaton* [final end]. It is in him that the Church stands, *stat*.

March 29, Easter

Easter is the awakening to being, beyond the night of dualism. *Ego dormivi et soporatus sum; et exsurrexi*⁴. I was asleep, nothing—twilight of Being—(I awoke) at the call that rose up, not from something or other outside, but from my own greatest depth, self-existent [*svayambhu*, that which has its origin in itself]. *Arunodaya*, the dawn of Being.

(...)

The Vedantin experience: *arunodaya*, the dawn of being. There is not yet the lightning flash that shone out in the depth of Ramana. But nevertheless there is something—and it is that which prevents any stopping elsewhere, any stopping short in the sign.

Easter is the feast of eternity, of the eternity that is reached at the end of time, in the *eschaton*. Christmas is the beginning.

Easter is when there is henceforth only the Father, the Son having returned to the Father—a life hidden in God [*vita abscondita*, Col.3:3]; when his act of returning has so united with that of his origin that it is not-two with it; when my response has so united with my call that it finds itself in the very depth of that call itself, so that I can no longer distinguish what is of the Father, *ho theos*, and what is of myself in the act by which I am, by which I am created and redeemed... Not that I should say: there is only myself, or else, there is only the Father; but there is the mystery that I cannot name, "And the Word was God [*theos*]..."; not divine [*theios*], not the God [*ho theos*], but, mysteriously, God [*theos*].⁵

4. Cp. Note 1, p.245.

5. He is referring to the distinction in John 1:1 between "*ho theos*" and "*theos*".

And when that has dawned on anyone it is impossible to do theology.
(...)

March 30

(Reflections on advaita and Christian advaita.)

(...)

To be one with You, Lord, as You are one with the Father, in the same Spirit [*in eodem Spiritu*], according to Your farewell prayer, so that through me the world may believe in You and in Him who sent You.

One, so that Your Spirit may come in me, may accomplish in me his coming, Your work, the work of the Father, since nothing is Yours which is not from the Father. And in the unity of the Spirit there is nothing in me which is not from You, and hence from the Father.

That I may be pure manifestation to others—to the world—of You in Your Spirit, in the same way that You are pure epiphany of the Father.

That is the real non-duality.

Yourself alone in me. Your Spirit alone in my spirit.

Your word alone in my mouth, your thought alone in my mind, your love alone in my heart.

Your prayer, my prayer. Pure praise and pure love. Pure joy and the very pure joy of fullness, in the peace of the Spirit.

Pure radiance of Glory.

Lord, what are You waiting for to realize within me this non-duality, which is inscribed in my very origin, in the depth of Your heart, in the heart of God?

Advaita, in Christianity, is this:

—to have as spirit only the Spirit of the Lord, who acts on me at his pleasure;

—to have as face (*personalitas*) only the person of Christ;

—to have as being only the depth of the Father's love, and to rediscover myself in this absolutely free gift of love.

Here is the true birth, the attaining of my new and original name. (...)

April 2

Everything is so much a gift that there is no longer any way of standing apart from the gift in order to recognize the donor and give him thanks. (...)

April 5, Quasimodo [Second Sunday of Easter]

Contemplation is to have broken through the sound barrier: no longer to identify God with the product of one's thought or one's emotions. Pure and naked faith, said St John of the Cross, trying to make it clear to people that God is not at all what they *think* he is; not what people adore, as the Kena [Upanishad] said.⁶

6. Cf. KenU I, 4f.: "That which cannot be expressed by words, but that by which the word is expressed—this is Brahman, understand well, and not what is worshipped here as such. That which cannot be thought by the mind, but that by which, they say, the mind is thought—this is Brahman, understand well, and not what is worshipped here as such" (tr. *Vedic Experience*, 684).

The silence which can say no more. The Trinity which is much more really in this silence than in any vision, no matter how sublime, of the Three. This silence which is neither before the Trinity, nor after it, neither on this side of it nor beyond it, but which is it.

But in this silence I no longer have the idea either of the Three separately or of the Three as one, "together". But do you have any more the idea of not-Three, of a numerical one, or of not-being-together!

This silence is the very deep hearing of the Father's Word, which calls you, creates you, and which your thought is too obtuse to be capable of perceiving. It only knows it and only hears it precisely in this silence; and the gathering up of your being that you feel in this silence is the unity [*ekatvam*] of the Spirit.

And in this silence you can be aware more or less that you are receiving, that you yourself still are, in your individuality. Then the *Abba Pater* will be murmured to you by the Spirit in the depth of your heart, or else the non-dual *OM* alone will issue from the depths of your heart, for, being so lost in the Word of the Father who is calling you, you will no longer be able to stand apart, even in order to call him Father.

Divine heartbeat that is the very life of the Trinity, and which in time reveals itself in us in successive moments.

The Lord is risen indeed, alleluia [*Surrexit Dominus vere*]. It is the Lord himself at last who has risen in the depth of myself, no longer the idea of him which I used to have. I slept...and I awoke [*Ego dormivi...et exsurrexi*]. No longer so much the awakening after the advaitic night as the awakening, in the unity of the Spirit [*in unitate - ekatva - Spiritus*], from the night of *maya*, having finally arrived at Being.

Alleluia, the stone is rolled away, alleluia, from the door of the tomb! [*Alleluia lapis revolutus est alleluia ab ostio monumenti!* cp. Mark 16:3; Luke 24:2]. The heavy stone of my senses, of my idea, has been removed—removed from on high, by the Angel! I had buried him in my imagination, in my idea; He is risen, he is not here, alleluia. Woman, what are you seeking? the living among the dead? [*surrexit non est hic alleluia quid quaeris mulier? Viventem cum mortuis?* cp. Mark 16:6; Luke 24:5.] The living God in your dead ideas? The living you in your dead idea of yourself?

The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon [*Surrexit vere et apparuit Simoni*; Luke 24:34], to the one whose act of faith is the foundation stone of the Pleroma, of the *eschaton* in the cosmos and in the individual. Simon: the place within me of Faith, where reason cannot reach.

(...)

April 7

(Note on his reading of Schillebeeckx.)

Everything is sign, the complexity of our intellectual world as much as and more than the rest. The "ideas" known by intuition (angels) or else by deduction are all signs, signs of a single reality, which also I am (before God).

The ultimate experience is without words, without concepts, without images. But this whole world of ideas tries to express this experience. And Revelation is the revelation to our understanding of an experience: Who am I?

Experience itself is formless; it is the Spirit of understanding penetrating the data of faith which clarifies for the soul its formless experience of wisdom.

The purpose of the whole great "history of salvation" is to reveal to me my mystery. The mystery in which I attain myself in the non-dual experience of the *atman-brahman*. The essential point of this revelation, of which the history of salvation is the sign:

I am from God.

I exist in *koinonia*.

My being is a gift.

But it is precisely this gift which makes me be myself in the *koinonia*.

April 10

It is the Christian who wants to pass on a message to the Hindu, and who therefore has to adapt himself. The Hindu, on his part, has no message to pass on, or at least if we are speaking of the message of the *jñāni*, this is not the kind of message that comes from the outside. The experience to which he bears witness is there, present in the heart of everyone. It is enough for him to awaken his brother.

(...)

April 12

We pass our days "thinking," as if thought determined what is Real. No doubt it determines what is real in what we manufacture. Let us think in order to use the energies of the cosmos, of human psychology, etc., but to think and think 'for the sake of thinking'!

Can thought discover God? God is beyond. Thought cannot encompass him. At the very most it can say that there is something beyond itself.

To decide that God is like this or like that; that what is beyond death is like this or like that; how that must make God laugh! Human beings can at best seek to apply their categories, to extrapolate them into the beyond.

(...)

Was not the Buddha right to require simply the letting go of all desire? There is no direct way to the mystery, the only way there is to renounce every way.

(...)

April 15

(...)

Advaita is certainly not the idea that there is only One. It is to leave behind the sense of diversity, whatever may be the idea that we have of it. It means no longer holding up the stream of eschatological evolution at oneself, it means being totally in the stream. It means being no more than an *Ad* [towards] to one's fellow human beings.

How secondary the sign is... Psalms, theology, legends, myths; how little the path matters. What matters is not to provide human beings with the best and the most appropriate sign—in liturgy, for example, in theology, etc.—but to teach him how to employ the sign, to transcend it while making use of it. (...)

Advaita is not an intellectual discovery—but a fundamental spiritual attitude. Much more the impossibility of saying two than the affirmation of One.

What is the use of saying One in your thought, if you say two in your life? Not to say two in your life, that is love.

(...)

April 16

(...)

The ministry of the hermit: to live out the inadequacy of the sign.

If anyone can devote himself to the prayer of the Name [*japa*], to the recitation of psalms, so much the better or worse for him. But when what cannot be manifested, what cannot be signified, tears everything away from you, even the vacuum of thought in which the yogi imagines that he finds it!

Live as a witness and manifestation of the non-manifestable.

(...)

But for the sake of progress there is need for some other human beings—whose psychological make-up may sometimes be at the extreme limit of normalcy, with all the dangers which that implies—a Kierkegaard, a Dostoevsky, a Rimbaud, among the human race—those who are incapable of settling down. These are the bearers of the Spirit, and it is too bad if they are consumed in the process! Those who make the sign explode as they cry out for what is beyond the sign, or rather, the sign explodes by itself in the spark that passes—the essential stroke of lightning—between them and the mystery. The whole mystery has passed into them when the lightning has touched them. And who can resist the lightning?

The essential frustration of the hermit whom nothing satisfies. Frustration with everything that is the sign under which he lives the Real.

We must live on the mountaintop the coming to birth of the Church, the passage from our mother's comfortable womb into the full day of the Real, in which we have to breathe ourselves—and no longer with the help of our mother—away from intermediaries, away from the sign; alone with oneself, the Solitude of the Alone!

April 17

How can I say or write or think that I doubt whether I have faith? My whole life disproves it. There may be an intellectual problem, but that does not affect the reality which is thus questioned.

April 19

What is terrible in solitude is the strength of one's impressions. Most often one remains indifferent to them, very indifferent, and few things are

able to cross the threshold. But once the threshold has been crossed, it is terrible. I had already experienced that so powerfully at Mauna Mandir.

Last evening I had a note from my little Michel⁷, a word from himself, a photo of him, his eyes, they bore into me so deeply. Just now he is asking me: What does it mean to look within?

April 20

It is not the gathering together that creates the Church. It is not because Christians meet together that there is a Church. The Church is not founded, nor is it instituted. The Church *is*. But a group of Christians *manifests* the Church. The Church at a certain place and a certain time.

The ministry and all that is contained in the idea of apostolic succession means precisely this: that the Church exists before any act of believers who claim to constitute it. People register with the Church, join the Church, manifest the Church, but people do not create the Church. Every act of the Church, and equally so its eucharistic celebration, concerns not just the little group gathered here, but the entire "Una Sancta", the Catholica, of which this group is a manifestation much more than a portion. Always the *linga*. The Church is a mystery always beyond its *linga*. The Pope is the sign of Unity. It is not he that creates it. He is at its service: at the service of unity [*diaconia unitatis*].

In the Eucharist we marvel that the word can transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord. Still more wonderful than his presence under the species of bread is the Lord's presence in the priest who consecrates it and in the congregation whose minister he is. It is because Christ is present in the priest, that his word effects the consecration. The Christian group exudes the Eucharist, secretes it. As for the priest who, even when alone, can consecrate—what a power for unity in the Spirit he possesses!

The Church is the mystery of humanity in the Spirit. It is possession by the Spirit of God.

Ātmā-Spirit, Church-Eucharist. The Church is human beings in the communion of the Spirit.

Christ is in the broken bread only because he is already in the faithful who break it.

April 22

All ministry in the Church is a *diakonia* of unity—lay ministries as well as hierarchical ministries. And all *diakonia* is sacramental. What "makes" the Church is its unity in the Holy Spirit—who manifests it, engenders it in himself and in others who are in communion with himself.

(...)

May 1

Be ready to go down so far into your own depth that you find God. God is not outside, he is my depth. I know this and yet every time I think of it, I realize that I have not yet understood it! (...)

7. Michel, his nephew, the son of Mme A.-L.Guguen-Le Saux.

The Indian sage *knows* only that he *is*. The Christian sage *knows* that he is from the Father [a *Patre*]!

May 2

My first solemn communion, Saint-Briac 2.5.25.

The devotion of childhood and the reality of the life of children. Whether you like it or not, it is always around childhood impressions that everything else later on gets collected. The impressions of a child are absolutes: school, family, etc.

(...)

May 11

(...)

Should not the Church be the "renewal" of Hinduism and Islam, in themselves, rather than (live) a commonplace coexistence, or worse still a battle of erosion and blows below the belt?

But with whom among Christians, Hindus, etc., is to be found such an attitude, "pneumatic", *adhyātmic* [spiritual], completely "detached"? And yet Christian religious pluralism necessarily leads to it.

Evening

The primordial role of the Christian, to be leaven in the dough; by his own humility, sincerity, etc., to make whoever approaches him more humble, more sincere and devoted to his brothers, more interior.

(...)

May 12

(...)

The problem of the Christian Church seems basically to be this: we want to objectify, to essentialize salvation. But salvation is an *existential* decision. It may be taken in a given objective context—that may be as much as you like; but it always passes beyond this context.

In fact, we should not forget that for only one person out of twelve, at the very most—at the present time—the decision for salvation would have to be taken in relation to the objective context of the Catholic faith, of salvation history.

That the Church should be, ontologically speaking, the cause of this salvation, etc., I wish with all my heart, but the psychological acts (intellect, imagery, concepts, etc.) through which the individual will live out his salvation history are not at all those of the Catholic faith. This means that for the immense majority of human beings the decision for salvation does not come through the recognition of a sinful condition in humanity and of the necessity of a redemption, nor through faith in one sent by God to carry out this redemption, nor in the Incarnation, nor in the Trinity.

May 13

The spiritual *I* of which J. Mouroux speaks in *Le mystère du Temps*, which stands above and transcends time, is indeed that "I" of which the Katha speaks. It is neither born nor dies and is never killed.

(...)

May 16

(...)

Pentecost is the openness of the mind, the mind becoming open to the deep Reality.

So long as anyone thinks that time makes a pair with eternity, and the empirical self with the real self, there is room for an expectation and for an appeal. This is the place of myth; and myth is good and myth is necessary. But one should understand that time is not distinct from eternity, that what is transitory does not make a pair with what abides.

It is necessary for Jesus to go away. It is necessary for the duality to disappear. The [...] Jesus having departed in duality, returning in unity, not duality.

(...)

May 19

Raymond Panikkar arrives.

June-July

June 1-7th, with him to Gangotri.⁸

June 9, he left (Uttarkashi).

June 16, I leave for Gangotri.

July 11, my return to Uttarkashi.

July 21. Departure from Uttarkashi.

Gangotri

June 26

The solitude of the Alone. An advaitic retreat. I do not allow myself any prayer, except for the Psalms which take the place of my Breviary; recited conscientiously—generally Lauds at 8:00, Matins at 11:00, Vespers and Compline at 3:00—not accepting any prop; no support, no appeal, no request. Solitude with God is not solitude. Accept being alone, infinitely alone. Alone in my eternity. This is the royal road that leads to the real face-to-face with the Father. Jesus was alone in his death; *Eloi, eloi, lamma sabachthani*.

8. Their pilgrimage is described in *The Mountain of the Lord: Pilgrimage to Gangotri*.

1965

Towards Wisdom

IN January, with Dr Panikkar Abhishiktananda climbed to the top of Arunachala in order to celebrate the universal cosmic liturgy—in the Christian rite. This celebration was also a high point for Swamiji.

He spent almost all the first part of the year at Shantivanam. Then he headed north again and after a visit to Delhi stayed for more than two months at his *kutira* at Gyansu. He left his retreat to go to meet Sister Térèse (Carmelite) and Sister Praxedes (Benedictine) at Bombay. Both of them had read Swamiji's writings and were attracted by the ideal they embody. He returned to Uttarkashi at the end of October. At the beginning of December, he came down to Varānasi, where he spent Christmas with friends and then went back to Shantivanam.

A synthesis between Hinduism and Christianity can only take place by "going back" into history through a perception of the evolution of human consciousness since the Paleolithic Era, and at the same time into the depths of God perceived as the absolute Mystery at the very heart of a consciousness in which the Human Being "participates". Hence the purification of my self in order to arrive at the I, as Swamiji expressed it on various occasions.

Sagesse hindoue mystique chrétien (Saccidānanda) was finally published in November. During this year he wrote a small book in English on prayer (*Prayer*; published in 1967) that proved a great success in Christian religious circles in India and elsewhere, being translated into several languages.

His outward life was more and more in harmony with his inward life. He realized that he would have to give up Shantivanam. Henceforth his heart was in the north and especially in the Himalayas.

Encouraged by parallel initiatives, he worked with great concentration on the text of a Christian liturgy for India in which the use of Sanskrit and of Hindu gestures and rituals was intended to be an outward manifestation of an inner attitude. Such an attitude cannot be hastily improvised, but needed to be the expression of a symbiosis: the assimilation by Christians of Indian culture and Hindu spirituality. It was thought that this Sanskrit anaphora might serve as the basis for a liturgy better adapted to the genius of the different languages and cultures of the country.

We can establish a few important dates for this year:

January	At Arunachala with R.P. Visited Tirukoyilūr and the Carmel at Pondicherry.
End of February	Visited the Clarists (Alwaye) and the Carmelites (Shembaganūr).
March-April	Revision of <i>Sagesse</i> completed and the report on the meeting at Nagpur.
27 May	Left Shantivanam; stayed at the Carmel at Bangalore.
1-15 June	At Pune, Bombay: met Dr Mehta; visited the Carmel.
17 June-6 July	At Bhopal (visited the Archbishop); stayed at Indore, Jyotiniketan, Delhi.
10-17(?) July	At Rishikesh and Rajpur.
18 July	Arrived at Uttarkashi.
9 September	Left Uttarkashi for Rishikesh, Delhi, Bombay.
20-28 September	Met Sister Térèse (from the Carmel of Lisieux) and Sister Praxedes in Bombay. Sr Térèse stayed first at the Carmel of Pondicherry. After a time of hermit life she disappeared in the Himalayas in 1976.
30 September	Brought Sister Praxedes to Delhi. Shortly afterwards, this Benedictine (from a German monastery) chose to go and live at Vinoba Bhave's ashram in Maharashtra, where she stayed for several years.
October	At Rajpur, recuperating from an abscess in his foot (10 days); at Jyotiniketan (10 days); Rishikesh.
26 October	Returned to Uttarkashi.
1st December	Left Uttarkashi. Spent three weeks at Varānasi with R.P. Celebration of the Indian liturgy at Yesu Ashram, Christmas at Vishnu Bhavan (student chapel of the university).
31 December	Returned to Shantivanam.

* * * *

Arunachala

January 26

Spoke with R. Rose about rebirth in the past. Where? When? Instinctively, a single desire: to live as a monk at Arunachala. Time, manner matter very little! Is this not "terribly" significant? And yet as long as there is any desire, even the desire for Arunachala, it means that Arunachala has not been understood. For that one there, that Purusha on whom the Sun, Pushan, opens up (like the Mukhalinga), *aham asmi!*¹

But then all that myth, cp. the Christian mythos?

(...)

1. "That Person (*purusha*) yonder in the sun, I in truth am He!" IsU 16 (tr. R.C. Zaehner). *Mukhalinga*: the *linga* (symbol) of Shiva with a face.

Shantivanam

January 31

(...)

More and more I think that Christian dogma as it is formulated in this age of the world is no more than an essentially provisional expression of the Real. The mystery of the Trinity in particular (including the Incarnation and the Redemption), as it is presented, is a myth or a rational construct. Of course, with this myth and with this concept something of the Real is lived. Whatever in it is accessible to our present psyche. The Greeks have made the Trinity into a myth, the Latins into an abstract concept. It is unbelievable that the central dogma of Christianity should be so "useless" in the normal and ordinary life of Christians.

(...)

February 6

[...]

You do not go into solitude in order to find God. You go to the desert because there is nothing else but God, and God makes himself solitary.

If in the desert there were still God and myself, then it would not be the desert. In the desert I have lost myself, and I am no longer able to find my way back to myself.

And in the desert I have lost *the* God that I was seeking, and I can no longer find any trace either of him or of myself.

God is not in the desert. The desert is the very mystery of God which has no limits, and nothing either to measure him or to locate him, and nothing to measure myself and locate myself in him, in relation to him.

February 9, Monday

A moving visit from Natarājānanda, who was born in Chingleput. 55 years old. At the age of 10, he saw his 2-year-old sister die. Emotion. The parents themselves hastened to commit the corpse to the earth. No longer any affection, no longer any relationship. So what am I? Did not marry, had jobs here and there, mostly lived a wandering life aimlessly. At Bangalore he heard about Jesus, since then Jesus is his *Ishtadevatā* [chosen Divinity, the form that God assumes for his devotee; a personalized, beloved deity]: *Om namo Jesuve namah* [OM, glory to Jesus; a *mantra* on the pattern of the Shaivite *mantra* (*Om namah Sivaya*)] which he repeats continuously on a *rudraksha* [Shaivite rosary]. The patience of Jesus, turned away from the inn, born in a stable, etc. Bears everything for the love of Jesus (the event at Rishikesh, for example). A life of wandering most of the time. Asks Jesus to provide his food. That never fails. Rarely has to live by alms [*madhukara*]. For him, everything is a sign of the Mahā Devī [the great goddess]. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, takes care of him through all other beings. A very practical kind of *advaita*. If anyone abuses me, etc., it means that since he is me, he knows my sins and treats me accordingly. It is my sins and not the malice of the other person that are involved when someone is hard on me. Took *sannyāsa* at Rishikesh in 1952. Looking all over India

for a real Christian ashram. Shivananda Ashram an 'office' like the others, with hours assigned for work. What is the use of being a monk? (Belongs to the) Ramakrishna Mission. Came via Tirupattūr, young people without any quest for perfection or silence. Sat-Tal². Stanislaus, John, a 'pic-nic'. Disappointed with Asirvanam³, people had told him so much about it. [...] Here at last: the OM, Jesus and Mary all at once! Very poor life.

(...)

February 13

The Church's drama is that it remains fixated on Christ, the Son, a memory, a sacramental representation, a sociology. The redemptive Mass and the confession of sins endlessly churned out. A Good Friday that never arrives once and for all at the dawn of Easter.

The Son comes from the Father and goes to the Father. The Son is fulfilled in the Spirit. Time leads to eternity. The Father and the Spirit belong to what is non-manifested, non-conceptualizable.

The Trinity is an abstraction for Christians, because they do not live it. The Hindu Christian leaps in one bound to the Father and the Spirit. He knows that the Son holds nothing back at himself; that Easter is the return to the Father beyond all names, that Pentecost is the unconceptualizable immersion in the Spirit.

Christ is essentially the way to the Father, the revelation of the Father, of the Spirit—God placed within our reach in order to bring us to God in his mystery.

The Father, constantly in the Gospel; that means first of all, do not stop at myself, the Son, neither at the Christ according to the flesh, nor at the Christ in glory, nor even at the Son in his pre-existence; but to the Father, from the Father [*ad Patrem, a Patre*], beyond the *Abba*, in the *OM* uttered silently [*tūshnīm*] by the Spirit.

The "concept" of the Son, the Christ, fleeting, elusive, because between the Father and the Spirit. To the extent that you think you grasp it, you turn him into a concept, and the Trinity, Father, Son, Spirit, become pure abstraction. The great Christological Councils, in defining the Son, have cut off the believer from the existential Trinity. (...)

February 14

(Note on the experience of "I am".)

(...)

April 15, Holy Thursday

(...)

In the Eucharist, it is the entire Church that is present at Shantivanam, not only in my heart and my prayer, but sacramentally, under a sign that makes it real and effects it.

2. Ecumenical ashram of Stanley Jones (Methodist evangelist), near Nainital in the Himalayas.

3. Benedictine monastery near Bangalore, previously at Siluvaigiri.

Shantivanam is a high place for many souls. The Eucharist that is consecrated and reserved is the sign of their communion with Shantivanam. It is not "pietistic" to inquire about the time of Mass at Shantivanam. For at the morning consecration it is the whole of the invisible Shantivanam, the Shantivanam of the Spirit, that gathers here sacramentally, the whole Church before and after Christ.

(...)

April 16, Good Friday

(Reflections on the existence of God, of the God of thought and of the living God.)

(...)

[Nothing after April 20]



Pilgrim to Gangotri



Cosmic Mass at Gaumukh

1966

A Non-Sectarian Christocentrism

AS the years passed, Swamiji continued his itinerant existence, though at a slower pace. He visited the Carmel at Pondicherry to meet with Sister T r se. He went up to Shembagan r to give a week's retreat with seventeen instructions to the Carmelites. Numerous activities kept him in the south. He left Shantivanam only at the end of August, and on his way north stopped at Akola (Maharashtra), Indore, Delhi, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Dehra Dun; he reached his hermitage only at the beginning of October. His stay at Gyansu this time was brief. At the end of November he came down again from the mountains, passed through Var nasi and headed for Shantivanam. By now he had friends almost everywhere.

He was now frequently using the eucharistic prayer in Sanskrit for the liturgy. Father Dominique was ready to settle at Shantivanam during Swamiji's long absences.

Two more of his books were published this year: in English *The Mountain of the Lord*, and in French his account of the 1964 meeting in Nagpur (English edition, 1969: *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point*). If India is not ready to receive the Gospel—as he was sometimes told—he would answer that the Church is not ready to receive India. Abhishiktananda became more sure of himself, even of his ideas. He remained open and was still hesitant, but now the direction of his life was determined: a single fidelity to two visions.

He kept on writing his Diary until the end of his life. He entrusted the final notebooks (November 1966—July 1973) to Ajatananda (his disciple Marc whom he initiated into *sanny sa* in 1973). Ajatananda made his selection from the Diary, which he copied in a notebook, and threw the originals into the Ganges.

Here we give a selection from Ajatananda's extracts, which he prefaced with a note by himself (see below). In the course of these final years we again find the same ideas that Swamiji had already worked out earlier. But since they are often expressed more concisely, we do not hesitate to reproduce them here, accepting the fact that they may be repetitive.

We obviously do not have any guarantee of the absolute authenticity of these passages, since the original has disappeared. Still we are certain that Ajatananda's copy is as faithful as possible.

On the first page of this copy he had written the following:

"This notebook of 165 pages is a copy of extracts from the personal notebooks of Swami Abhishikhananda between 1966 and 1973. He himself often explained their spirit to me: 'They should not be taken literally. When an idea comes to me, I pursue it as far as possible, wherever it may lead. These are vectors of free-floating research. They are not for publication. You can destroy them all.'

"They can only be understood on the basis of the interior *experience* which was his own and from within which these 'vectors' welled up in him with an infinite glow.

"That is why this notebook is strictly reserved for certain of Swamiji's close friends. Do not show it or speak of its existence to anyone else. Thanks for this discretion.

"Unless other directions are given, after reading it, return it by registered mail to Father Dominique, OSB. This is the only copy in circulation.

"In the hope that these few mental tracks may disappear in the direct light of Swamiji's glorious vision!

Ajatananda 1/7/74."

At the end of this notice, Marc gave a list of 14 persons whom he allowed to read this manuscript. Later, when in 1976 Fr J. Stuart and Mme O. Baumer met Marc, who was then keeping his vow of silence, they asked him if he wished to insist on the "prohibition" against making his "notebook" known outside the small group and he answered with a vague gesture, meaning that he hardly thought it important any longer.

Here are the principal dates for this year spent in writing articles and books, in meetings and travel:

January	At Madras; then Pondicherry (Carmel, to visit Sister Tèrese).
1-10 February	K. Klostermaier and N. Shāntā staying at Shantivanam.
March	Articles on the Nagpur meeting published in the <i>Examiner</i> (Bombay).
1-8 March	Retreat given to the Carmelites at Shembaganūr.
25 March-1 April	At Pondicherry: work on the Sanskrit liturgy; visit to Sister Tèrese.
7-8 April	Easter in a village parish.
Mid-June	At Yercaud, conferences on the Upanishads for two nuns.
21 June	Three weeks on holiday at Yercaud.
12 July	Returned to Shantivanam.
August	Preparing articles in English and French.
29 August	Left Shantivanam. Stopped at Madras, Akola, Indore, Delhi, Haridwār, Rishikesh, Dehra Dun.
2 October	Arrived at Uttarkashi.
Early November	Arrival of Lalit, a young Hindu disciple.

29(?) November Left Uttarkashi. Visited Dehra Dun, Delhi.
 1-18 December At Jyotiniketan, Varānasi, Lucknow.
 23 December Returned to Shantivanam.

* * * *

April 28

It is only in the *OM* that we can say Thou to the Father. No one can say Thou to the Father apart from Jesus. But it is in the non-dual *OM* that Jesus says Thou to God.

(...)

We cannot address the Spirit. The epiclesis remains on the level of *ishta-pūrta* [sacrifices offered to accumulate merits in heaven], in the domain in which God is a concept. The true epiclesis is silent. The *OM* is not spoken to anyone. It simply says *itself*, it is said, and we are united to its upsurge.

It is within the *OM* that the Thou is said to the Son and to the Father, for it is in the Spirit alone that the Lordship of the Son and the Fatherhood of God is known to me: *Kyrios Christos* and *Abba Pater*.

May 8

(Note on the Trinity.)

May 17

(Notes from reading an article by J. Pohier in *Esprit*.)

June 2 and August 6, 7, 10 and 17

(Short notes, undeveloped, on various topics.)

September 12

Nursing Home, Indore.

(...)

October 3

Arrived at Uttarkashi.

October 9

(...) (Reflections on the theme of *France pays de mission* by Godin.)

October 19

(...)

The world is real with the reality of Brahman, and the history, the evolution of the world is real with the reality of Brahman.

Teilhard's viewpoint—absolutely Pauline—is the only way to save Christianity.

The Christ of 2000 years ago, under whom far too many Christians are still living, cannot satisfy either the demands of modern scientific thought or those of the Vedantin intuition.

Christ is the cosmic Man, the *Purusha*. Christ is the 'embodiment' of the unity of created being. Christ is God manifested in the totality, the fullness [*pūrnām*] of being, in whom dwells (in bodily fashion) all the fullness of the Divinity [*in quo habitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis* (*corporaliter*), Col.2:9].

God is invisible [*aoratos*, Greek], non-manifested, *a-vyakta*. This God is the Father, the Source, the First [*Prathama*]. He manifests himself, he is Person in the *Purusha*. The *Purusha* is at once multiple and unique. Being manifests itself in every consciousness of being; every consciousness of being tends to the fullness of Being, and is it already, fundamentally, born-with [*saha-ja*].

The *purushas* are not separate. No person is human except in the archetypal Human Person, Christ. Each one is perfect, full, *pūrṇa*, with the sole perfection and fullness of the *adi-purusha* [original Human Person].

But here we meet the great objection raised by Vedānta. How can the Unlimited be limited to a single manifestation, in a single *Purusha*? If we only take the *Purusha* in the sense of its eternal manifestation, the *Vāk* [Word], this can pass. But how admit that its full manifestation on earth should be unique?

(...)

I have just read *L'essence de la Vérité* by Heidegger. It is illuminating on this point. Being discloses itself in every be-ing, but this disclosure itself obscures it, because while every be-ing manifests being and attracts the attention of consciousness precisely insofar as it is Being, consciousness is constantly in danger of reducing Being to that particular be-ing which is before it. (Christian theology can be read beneath the surface in these pages.) Not that there would be be-ings which could be added together, any more than the 'so called' Divine Persons can be added together, being distinct but nonetheless *a-dvītya*.

(...)

Confronted with the great religions or the apparent non-religion of modern times, Christianity is a leaven. Some souls will always be called to it, for whom the form of holiness will be that of the *Purusha* Jesus. And in preserving its form, they will preserve the message. And they will constantly purify the form that constantly tends to degenerate and be reduced to what is intellectual, ritual and sociological.

In fact, Christianity has been of service to India mainly in this way. The purification of Hinduism that it has helped to bring about has an importance quite different from that of the few conversions that have been made.

Gandhi and Vinoba bear Christ's message more truly than de Meulder (a famous Jesuit missionary)!

(...)

Christ is the Ferryman, who brings us to the "further shore" of the heart. He is the *Purusha* who looks on, while the "other" *purusha* enjoys the world and lives in anxiety. The sight of the true *Purusha* guides the other *purusha* to *sāmyam* [identity with him] (Mund. 3.1.3).¹

1. A reference to the metaphor of the "two birds" in the Mundaka Upanishad—of whom one is the Lord and the other is being in bondage (III, 1,1-2): "Two birds, close-linked companions, cling to the selfsame tree: of these the one eats of the sweet fruit, the other, eating nothing, looks on intent. On this same tree a person sits plunged in grief, mourning his lack of mastery, perplexed: when he sees the Other, the Lord rejoicing in his magnificence, his sorrow melts away" (tr. R.C. Zaehner).

Christ is above all the *Purusha* in the depth of myself. The only object of his manifestation in time, in Palestine and in the Church, is to lead me to himself, to the self, in the inmost depth of my heart.

Priests and theologians stop, and make their brothers stop, at the sign!

The Eucharist tends towards the Revelation of the *Purusha* within me. Re-veal means un-veil, *a-letheia*.

Dogmas, canons, rites; merely signs.

But that is something that humanity is not yet able to bear.

(...)

October 20

(...)

An interesting page on hell at the end of the *Divine Milieu* [by Teilhard de Chardin]. Anti-matter.

Hell is impossible! I came to the point of bellowing like an animal this morning when I tried to think about it. It is enough to destroy your mind, if even to the slightest extent you are not content with words and accept that hell is possible for you.

God cannot have made eternal salvation or damnation—*a-moksha*, *nir-moksha* [non-liberation]—dependent on an arbitrary choice on his part of a particular and specific way of salvation. The essential way of salvation must be inscribed in the depth of human nature. It must be within the reach of everyone. (As for subsidiary means, that's another matter).

(...)

October 21

(...)

The Baptism of Jesus was for him the fundamental experience, on which his whole life depended. Cp. Ramana's experience. He had the experience of being possessed by the Spirit of God. That Spirit of Yahweh which the Old Testament had predicted. Isaiah 11:2 and 42:1: "The Spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him" and "I have put my Spirit upon him." At the same time he has the experience of being Son of God: "You are my son" [*tu es filius meus*], the experience of God as Father.

His human thinking surely did not conceptualize this experience in Greek terms, as the Church later did.

And Jesus went away to the desert. And the tempter, deep within him, whispers that he should use his miraculous powers [*siddhi*] as son of God. But he refuses, he willed to be nothing here below but the Servant of the Only One: *ebed Yahweh*.

And Jesus, filled with the Spirit, quivering with the Spirit, set off through Galilee. And the Spirit spoke through him, just as he promised his followers that he would speak through them.

Any attachment to the divine sonship and to the Spirit, any taking this sonship and this Spirit for oneself, is the fundamental obstacle to their wider influence. The meaning of the temptation.

When the Enlightened One is without possessiveness, without egoism [*nirmamo nirahamkara*], the Spirit speaks and acts freely through him.

The Christian is the one who believes in the *Purusha*, the Son of God moved by the Spirit, and in his faith, by his faith, *śraddhā*, *śraddhaya*, is himself son of God, moved by the Spirit; *filius Dei*, *actus a Spiritu*².

Baptism gives nothing to Jesus, it reveals to him what he is. Jesus has in its fullness the revelation of what each person is. And this revelation he passes on, in such a way that everyone who believes in him becomes himself what he is, a son of God, *filius Dei fieri* [John 1:12]. One cannot become son of God, one is that.

October 22

(...)

The goal of the universe is the consciousness of being, the final unveiling of the intuition that constitutes the human being. There were sages, there were seers, there were prophets, and each of them grasped something of the mystery within, the mystery within every being. And their intuitions are stars, beacons for their brothers. From the shore they send a signal, and on the rock they have lighted a flame. And this flame is a call.

(...)

A visit yesterday evening from Doctor Jain, he only understands holiness in the world. He heard that an extraordinary European had come to live in solitude at Uttarkashi. He wanted to know why. (Brought by Dikshit, the police.) No reason, an 'urge', I said. I should have said to him—the flowers, the beauty for which one pays nothing, the temples, etc. To remind the world of that which does not pass away.

(...)

October 24

(...)

R.P. has written this incredible line about Christianity: "provisional, just for the time being," *Unknown Christ*, p.63.³ And so? It is Vedānta that holds the key to eternity. The Church then is only for the not-risen ones, for those who do not have the experience of the *asmi* [I am].

Christianity is only a stopgap for those of humankind, the immense majority, who are involved in *samsāra*. Did he realize what he was writing?

(...)

October 26

All prayer, all adoration, etc. is simply the mystery of the Son and the Father, of the *atman* on the other side of the space of the heart and of *Brahman* at the other end of everything.

2. A reference to Romans 8:14: *Quicumque enim Spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei*. "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

3. R.Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964), p. 63: "...Christianity is 'foolishness', because Christianity is provisional and not self-sufficient—being only for this temporal existence and relying absolutely on Christ..."

(...)

Christ is this threefold tension within myself:

1. between *atman* and *Brahman*
2. between the *purusha* that I am conscious of being, as a phenomenon, and the *purusha* on the other side of the heart, which *I am* in reality.
3. between the individual that I am and the *samasta* [the whole, the totality].

Christ is at one and the same time:

- God and from (ex) God
- God and Man
- individual and universal.

Christ a deep archetype, within his *mythos* I see my reality, which is tension. The Christ archetype, myth, projected in history and time by the universal consciousness.

Christ is much less real in his temporal history than in the essential mystery of my being. What is important for my salvation, *moksha*, is to realize what I am.

By fixing my eyes on Christ, I realize myself. But never forget that this Christ of Time leads to the Christ of Being.

Has God super-imposed on the world a history of salvation, as Judaism and Christianity claim? That is the fundamental question.

(...)

Uttarkashi

November 8

Simply attentive to the Presence, eyes, ears, touch, etc. Receive, without any effort.

(...)

The fundamental heartbreak that every human person feels in the depth of himself, in which he feels all the agonies of his brothers: the heartbreak of not-coinciding.⁴

* * *

Manuscript copied by Ajātananda (Marc Chaduc)

[Note: In the remainder of the Diary, "..." at the beginning of a paragraph indicates a passage omitted by Ajātananda from Swamiji's original. "(...)" indicates a passage omitted by the editor from Ajātananda's Extracts.]

November 10

The end of the Apocalypse [Rev.20:11]: When the Lord finally appears in the depth of the soul—vision of Brahman [*Brahma drishti*]⁴—everything flies away, there is no longer room for anything else at all. The unique and only Brahman [*Brahma matram kevalam*]: all that was heaven, all that was earth, all thought of God, all love of God, etc., all means of going to God, all superimposition (*adhyaropa*, *adhyasa*) on the simple Presence—*kevala* [alone] *sahaja* [innate, natural].

4. This is the end of the original manuscript of the Diary written by Swami Abhishiktananda.

Beginning of [Apoc.] chap. 21: From this "heaven", hidden in the cave of the heart, beyond the firmament [*nihitam guhayam parama vyoman*; TU 2.1], everything comes down again, everything is given back, as in the original state [*sahaja*] on coming out of absorption in what is beyond thought [*nirvikalpa*]. The Ten Pictures of Zen.⁵

But everything comes from this *heaven*. Whatever does not come from (ex) this heaven is transitory [*adhruva*] and must pass away. The Church and the Eucharist, with their form, like everything else.

...The person who closes his eyes at noon and asks God to manifest himself through some light!!

God is here 'at hand'. In everything.

In the simple consciousness of myself, I find him "very close".

Rites, creeds are the path that winds round the mountain. Straight to the top, says the Upanishad.

Arunachala calls, shines. The coinciding of my light and this light.

That Purusha yonder, I am He! [*Yo'savasau purusha, so'ham asmi!*]⁶

(...)

November 12

The *jñānī* does not realize or discover anything new. He simply sees reality in all its glory. He pierces through to the essence of things and there discovers Yahweh-Brahman, the One who IS.

There is no difference, externally, between the *jñānī* and the atheist. Both have rejected the superimposition of an extraneous god upon things, the names and forms given to God on the model of the names and forms of things human and other... But the *jñānī* sees the radiance of things, the presence..., without seeking to explain it by new names and forms (which would once more be a superimposition). The eyes tell what is within.

November 18

Myth no longer carries any weight. Reason endlessly debates its conclusions. There is only one stable point: The experience of depth. The Council has sought to catch up with the world. Its sense of mystery is still too speculative, mythical, sentimental. It would need to have the pure sense of mystery so that its launch into orbit to meet the world may not lead it astray in the universe.

November 19

Vedānta takes the short route: straight towards the depth, the centre of being. Once there, the human consciousness will have automatically reached equilibrium, permanent and fixed [*nitya, dhruva*]. But in fact few beings are capable of that, since they are too immersed in superimpositions [*upādhis*], too bound, etc. (cp. BG XII, 5). Hence philosophies and religions.

5. A reference to the famous Ten Pictures of Zen which represent the pilgrimage of a person toward enlightenment, and the last of which represents his return, as a liberated person, into ordinary life.

6. IsaU 16, alluded to elsewhere in the Diary, 26 January 1965, 18 October 1968 and 22 July 1971.

(...)

The Church is the mystery of the *extended* Person, *vyāpta*: the Son, *vyāpti*. Also the Spirit who in the Church extends to everything [*sarva vyāpto bhavati*].

The Vedantin is one who lives the mystery of the Father, the not-manifested, not extended, not-dispersed [*avyakta, avyāpta, akshara*].

To refuse Vedānta is to refuse the Father. There is no real contradiction between being bound by the laws of the Church—for one who lives in practice at the level of symbols—and being free. The advaitin experience at its highest automatically sets free. If a Ramana is what he seems to have been, the Church has no power [*auctoritas*] over him, he has attained in the depth of himself the *dhruva-nitya* [steady, permanent] depth of the Church—even if at the mental level he knows nothing of it and the Church knows nothing of him.

But is this total experience possible?

It is and it isn't, says Ramana.

...The Christian Advaitin has all he needs for his nourishment in John and Paul. But it has to remain *alone*. If it becomes a doctrine, if it gets institutionalized, it becomes a false advaita, a new religion, like the advaita of the Rāmakrishna Mission. It is a fire from which other fires are lit, but this fire is always unique. The solitude of the one who is alone. The silence of the One who is Alone. The nakedness of the One who is Alone.

Not words to meditate on, to stuff into one's head, but an experience to "be felt."

November 23

The *sarīram* (body and mind) is already the *other, anyah*. It is the intrusion of the universe into the Self.

...Every experience is already developed at the level of the phenomenal consciousness. But the experience of advaita is there with an absolutely minimal degree of development. As for the Trinitarian experience, it is highly developed. I have said and written that it required the agency of a concept (therefore a revealed one?). That is perhaps too much. We must grant their full value to the myth and the archetype, since they are pre-conceptual, much closer to the primary zones of consciousness.

(...)

...Faith is the twilight of the psyche within which the rudimentary insight seeks to emerge, which can be explained in three points:

There is I myself [*aham*];

there is not-myself *nāham*, the other [*anyah*];

there is the fact that I and not-I are *a-dvaita* [non-dual],

the being-together [*samsat*] of humanity, of being.

Why must this twilight intuition end in a *specific* formulation? in the acceptance of this formulation?

A specific formulation of faith (Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Christian) has the force of the archetypal experience, then of all that flows into it at the subliminal level: myths, constellations and combinations of myths and

sociology. It gives the person the possibility of being *himself*, either on his own or else by the choice of itself that it obliges him to make.

Faith is basically the twilight experience that I am to be complemented by an *Other who is not other*.

(...)

... (Any speculation on the eschatology of the universe is still more false than speculation on its origins. Let us be content with myths. We should try to rediscover the climate of myth in order to understand it directly, without any attempt—always false—at translation into concepts.)

... I suspect that the hypostatic union [*unio hypostatica*]⁷ is a *mythos* whose meaning should be rediscovered not in the concept, but in the fundamental experience.

(...)

Words and concepts never communicate more than the *adhidaiva* [the level of the *devas*, the level of *dharma*]. At the level of the *adhidaiva*, Jesus is certainly unique, as well as the Church that flows from him. But at the level of the *adhyātma* [the level of the Self, the interior level], is Jesus not the exemplary Purusha of everyone?

November 25

In the depth of myself the springing up of Being. The Being which within me, in my own call, springs up of itself. God is in the very fact that I am. There is only the *aham*. But no one will ever understand that, who is content with (merely) thinking about it.

This origin, this springing up, which haunted the Vedic poet.

Being is in its own right and eternally fullness [*pūrnam*]. That is true.

And yet there is a kind of beginning of Being when it reveals itself to the Self as *aham*.

In this non-being [*a-sat*], *pre-sat* (?), it springs up, as the hymns say.

7. The doctrine of the substantial union of the divine and human natures in the one person (*hypostasis*) of Jesus Christ.

1967

A "No" to the West and a New Project

DOM Le Saux was invited to Geneva to share his experience at a meeting on spirituality; he was even pressured to accept the invitation. He hesitated, and struggled inwardly over his response. Finally he decided to say no and remain in India. Despite all his travels, contacts, and active participation in a variety of meetings, he considered himself a hermit. He did not want to let himself be swallowed up by the West.

A new project aroused his enthusiasm: a *gurukul* at Varanasi for Indian seminarians. In accordance with classical Hindu tradition, students were to be gathered around a spiritual master and receive a deeply Indian ascetical and theological formation. This formation would help them be aware that Christ and his message are not bound to western culture. This project, which was indeed ahead of its time, was never implemented. But Swamiji was not discouraged, for he was convinced that in the future people would move in this direction.

More of his writings were published. *Prayer* (in India) and the French version of *The Mountain of the Lord* (in Paris). From now on, he was known as an author of spiritual books.

Francis Āchārya (Fr Mahieu) came from his ashram at Kurisumala (Kerala) to Shantivanam for Pentecost, and joyfully stayed there for four months of his sabbatical year. During this time Swamiji confided to him that he saw no future for Shantivanam unless it could be affiliated to Kurisumala. Francis Āchārya gladly agreed and summoned Sannyasi Mariadās from Kurisumala. The latter got on very well with Abhishiktananda, who saw in him the future Swami of Shantivanam. But when the transfer eventually took place, Sannyasi Mariadās was not available.

During this year, he remained at Shantivanam until August. On his way to the Himalayas, he made a number of visits, and spent only five weeks in his hermitage.

A few dates will indicate the visits he received, those he made and his travels:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Early January | Swamiji welcomed the French ambassador at Shantivanam on the 3rd. Stayed at the Carmel at Pondicherry. |
| 14 January | Fr Dominique arrived. He remained at the ashram until November. |

March	Several visitors, including Murray Rogers from Jyotinetan.
10-18 April	Stayed at the Carmel at Shembaganūr.
26 April	Visited the Carmel at Pondicherry.
May	Several visitors. Lalit stayed at the ashram.
June	Francis Āchārya arrived.
16 August	Left Shantivanam; stopped at Bangalore (3 days), Bombay (23-27), Indore (28).
September	Delhi (5th), then Rishikesh, Jyotinetan, Sahāranpur, Rajpur, Haridwār.
22 September	Arrived at Uttarkashi.
October	Lalit visited him for Dasserah holidays.
30 October	Left Uttarkashi.
4-12 November	At Rishikesh and Haridwār with Sister Térése.
15(?) November	To Jyotinetan with Sr Térése: study session on the Upanishads; Indian liturgy.
End of December	Returned to Shantivanam.

* * * *

Shantivanam

January 27

The human person does not dare to accept himself as absolute. So he transfers the absolute to God! What a relief! Yes, the transference of what is un-bearable in oneself. Meeting-point of the inadequacies of the surface with the Fullness of the depth. But the surface prefers to lean on another rather than accept the self-sufficiency of being.

(...)

People *think of* eternity as something that continues, that lasts on. But it is not that at all. The human being only thinks of the present in relation to a past and a future. But the present is first of all the present. Neither eternity nor the present can be thought.

God is that *Depth* (glimpsed in a lightning-flash) towards which thought tends indefinitely.

“Now with regard to oneself—

That which comes, as it were, to the mind, by which one repeatedly remembers—that conception (is it).”

[*atha-adhyātmam yad etad gacchati-iva camanah anena ca-etad upasmaraty abhikshnam samkalpah.*]¹

The Deity at the root of the soul, not-other.

January 31

The Deity is that depth of myself which is without duration, without contingency, self-originated [*a se*], etc. Who is bold enough to accept his own aseity?

There is no pride except in one who dares to make comparisons. We are proud in relation to an “other”. The *jñānī* cannot be proud. But anyone who calls himself an *advaitin* is terribly proud.

1. KenU IV,5.

Accept non-duration. No tomorrow. But no tomorrow goes along with no past. “I” do not disappear at the death of this body, but neither do “I” continue to exist. For “I” just am, untouched by the conditions of the *śarīra*.

February 2

Not-being is a mythical entity, a projection from the gradual disappearance of myself. Hence that *dread* of the possibility of not being, that permanent sword of Damocles hanging over my experience of I am [*asmī*].

(...)

Salvation is neither being nor non-being. Neither myself nor myself nor he, neither personal nor impersonal. It is beyond the beyond [*parātparam*]. It is only there that we are freed from Heidegger’s anguish, from the Buddha’s “All is suffering” [*sarvam dukkham*], from the fear [*bhaya*] of the Upanishads. If I die, what then? Naciketas asks in the Katha Upanishad.

(...)

February 4

Christ is the perfect human being. The human being who has realized all his potentialities as human, including the highest of all: his non-duality with God...

(...)

February 9

Neither the outer senses nor the inner senses ever saw this Ground of Being, the One, the Absolute, the *Eka* [One], the *Ādi* [origin]. Only the Word immanent to Being, the Spirit [*cit*], knows this and can reveal this to Reason.

February 10

Salvation is the experience of the Self.

Faith is a substitute for it for anyone who remains at the level of Reason. Faith: living in the myth and the will, the experience being unattainable in itself. Myth and will (the demand to be) are what makes up for the inadequacy of Reason.

(...)

February 12

(...)

God is neither Person nor non-Person, neither Thou nor I, and therefore as much Person as non-Person, as much I as Thou.

...The call to silence from the very silence of God.

...The whole of Christian dogma is true *at the level* to which it belongs. But Christianity has value only in time. It does not disappear when time passes away, but it passes into the eternal Present.

February 16

...Since Christianity is not the *de facto* way of salvation for the immense majority of my brothers, how could it be that for me?

(...)

March 5

The Church belongs to this time. Salvation means "to leave time". Enter into eternity. From the Church's point of view all religions are judged in comparison with itself and as moving towards it, because Christianity is essentially historical. The Hindu *dharma* being a-historical, there is no need to make it either a centre or an ultimate. You can awake no matter where you start from.

The awakening to the *aham*. A certainty. And yet do we not still need a push in the right direction, a little auto-/hetero-suggestion, so as to hold on to it really firmly?

A little *faith*.

Those who say they are so entirely *certain*, the speculative advaitins, the people of faith (Christians and others), seem to be deluding themselves terribly. Is it a certainty that they have—deep down—or only an opinion, a *doxa*? What makes it worse is that they do not regard it as a *doxa*. Their need for security at all costs makes them decide *a priori* on the strength of the scaffolding.

So I am sometimes, often, afraid—despite all that I write—that my so-called experience of being may still only be a projection of my *need to be*. Is this a syllogistic conclusion like the one which tries to "prove" God? But no, there is more to it than that. It is far more the influence—on the faculties, on the peripheral consciousness—(of the fundamental experience) which is still imperfect.

Ramana was either a *jñāni* or else the worst of the "stubborn".

In the same way I sometimes have a sudden feeling that seems to come to me from deep down, that my "faith" is very deep—and that apart from my faith in Christ I would not either do or be anything of what I do and am.

March 15

Jesus was pure, perfectly pure. "Which of you convicts me of sin?" No trace of self-centredness, of self-interest.

Entirely transparent to the Father,

therefore the certain and only way to go to Him. If there were not this complete purity, *suddhamātra*, how could one know oneself to be impure?

We spend our time teaching the so-called theological or dogmatic truths about Jesus. Whose formulation—in every case—is always terribly dependent on a given mythical environment and on essentially relative philosophical systems.

Jesus, the Yes, the Amen. He does not play games, does not hide.

This transparency is his love.

Hinduism does not have any figure of such purity.

Jesus confronting the human being, everyone, at the same time with himself and with God, for in his transparency Jesus is both of them at once.

That purity of Jesus.

"Be like little children."

In the limpid clarity of Jesus one has access to the Father, to the depth of oneself, to oneself.

Jesus is the way to oneself, for everyone.

Jesus is this image that emerges from the greatest depth of myself and rises up in my consciousness, "What is this strange being [*yaksha*]?" ask the *devas*, Indra and the rest (KenU III, 2)².

(...)

August 5

(...)

There is the real solitude, that in which God is found. And there is that which is fear of facing other people. This second kind is selfish. It can no doubt be lived in a holy way. But it is not the solitude of God. It is a sanctified human solitude, an "individual psychological condition", "supernaturalized".

Uttarkashi**September 22**

Upsets, 'shockings' on left and right, throughout this journey, moving among Hindus and Christians—Romans and others.

The Purusha, Lord of the Cosmos.

Shiva, the Lord everywhere manifesting himself as he wills, in order to make his presence understood.

Krishna, Rāma, manifestations in human conditions which last a human lifetime.

Jesus, Lord of history, giving meaning to history. Absolute value at the level of space-time, but only on this level.

But there is no higher level for judging this level.

The further shore is only further in relation to this shore!

The mystery of the Face-to-Face and advaita, *pratyaksha* (face-to-face) and *advaita*.

No security at the level of intellect.

The Father is beyond, but the intellect plays no part in this.

September 29

Monotheism/polytheism. Discussed by people who do not know. God is neither One nor a crowd:

Neither one, nor not one [*na eka na aneka*]

He neither is, nor is not [*na asti na nasti*].

The mystery of God is as well expressed by a "polytheistic" myth as by a "monotheistic" myth: multiple manifestations of God, hence *dii*, *devas*, *theoi*.

...The self [*ātman*] and the body [*śarīram*] do not go together [because they belong to different categories]. They are not other to each other.

2. "Now Brahman won a victory for the gods, and the gods were exulting in the victory of that Brahman. They thought: 'This victory belongs to us, this majesty belongs to us.' Brahman was well aware of what they were thinking, and so he made himself visible to them. They did not recognize Him. 'What is this strange creature [*yaksha*]?' they said." Kena Up. III, 1-2 (tr. R.C. Zaehner).

(...)

October 5

(...)

...The further shore, a person can only reach it by the cleaving asunder of himself, the forcible opening ('*break open*') of himself in his greatest depth. And that cannot be compared with any rite, any formula, any prayer, any law whatever.

October 7

When I accept that there is for me neither heaven nor hell (in biblical language), then only do I pass over to the further shore.

Jesus went to God when he said: "My God, why have you forsaken me?" [*Eloi, lamma sabacthani*]. Only in this renunciation of *one's entire self*, is everything found again, saved. But so long as you make this renunciation with the idea of finding yourself again, you neither lose yourself nor do you find yourself.

October 19

The individual, the Christian, incapable of living outside his own myth! But his myth of an individual survival is basically more real than the conceptual denial of such survival. For this myth is the only means for the human being to live a sense of the absolute.

This myth must open up on the realisation of Being, and not be lost in a negation that is purely rational and hence false.

October 22

(...)

The Christian has no special characteristic. He is the one who brings to perfection the potentialities contained in creation, above all the gift of himself, his liberation from selfishness, his contribution to the good of humanity. A *total* gift, not a half-gift. Only one who gives all obtains the Kingdom and enables others to enter it.

The hour is coming when God is no longer inferred from the inadequacies of the human being, but is self-revealed in the awareness that the human being has of his own greatness. The advaitic insight.

Church and religions are tied to the neolithic era which is coming to an end. They will only last long enough to prepare human beings for taking total control of themselves. Today's atheism is a necessity for the religious evolution of the human being. The duty of the churches: to prepare the human being for this consciousness of himself, to prepare him to bear his own disappearance. How '*petty*' are the current theological, liturgical, ecumenical problems! An Indian liturgy? We are at least a hundred years behind the times. Gradual initiation into advaita, the only thing that counts.

1968

Hermit at Gyansu

DURING this year, Abhishiktananda finally abandoned the dream that had brought him to India, which he had cherished up to this point: Shantivanam, a Hindu-Christian monastery. He no longer retained the ideal outlined in *An Indian Benedictine Ashram*. As the years passed, he had realized that he was not a founder, and also perhaps that a foundation of this type was not feasible and did not correspond with the aspirations of the youth of his time. No vocation had persevered and no viable solution had appeared. He left Shantivanam on March 21, the feast of St Benedict. He returned in August to pick up his belongings. That was his last visit to the banks of the Kāvry. The ashram was officially attached, at least temporarily, to Kurisumala. Swamiji admitted that this transfer "has moved me more than I expected". He had already departed when, on August 28, Francis Āchārya arrived, accompanying Father Bede and his two young companions, who settled permanently at the ashram. And he never returned, despite the invitations he received on several occasions while travelling in the south.

He had now broken the bonds that attached him to Shantivanam, to an institution; he was free, and settled down at Gyansu in his *kutiya* (hut). He there became the hermit that in his heart of hearts he had always wanted to be, without admitting this to himself very clearly or even realizing that he wanted it; since for a number of years he had still been attached to a form of monastic community life, though a very flexible one, thinking that this should be his positive contribution to the implantation of Indian monasticism. But this hermit did not, like a Desert Father, withdraw for ever into his Himalayan solitude. His temperament and his circumstances did not lead him to absolute stability. He remained torn between his need for solitude and his desire to serve the Church. He prepared himself for the National Seminar in the following year. He always remained a man of action and full of ideas. He was "quietly" associated with the foundation of a Carmel in the Ranchi district, at the heart of the young and vibrant tribal Church.

As the following dates suggest, this was a year of fruitful activity:

January	At Shantivanam. Rethinking the "Vedic" Eucharistic Prayer.
	Visits to Carmels of Pondicherry and Shembaganur.

Early February	Visit of Mme Malou Lanvin, a Frenchwoman, with whom he regularly corresponded.
Early March	At Oriyur (near Madurai), pilgrimage centre at the shrine of St John de Brito, Portuguese Jesuit (1647-1693), who was martyred at Oriyur.
21 March	Left Shantivanam. Stopped at Delhi, Rishikesh, Jyotniketan (Holy Week), Rajpur, Rishikesh, Sahāranpur.
25 April	Arrived at Uttarkashi.
11 July	Left Uttarkashi. Stayed at Andheri (suburb of Bombay); read a paper (later published) : "Towards the Renewal of the Indian Church."
Early August	At Shantivanam preparing for final departure.
September	At Madras, staying at Aikiya Alayam (dialogue centre, newly opened).
29 September	Returned to Uttarkashi; stayed there till late October.
31 October	At Jyotniketan: study group on the Upanishads.
26 November	Left Jyotniketan for Vārānasi, Patna, Allahabad (visited Sister Térèse and her companion), Agra seminar.
15 December	Reached Uttarkashi, where he remained until early March 1969.

* * * *

Shantivanam

January 7

The Gospel is not another philosophy. It is the proclamation of an event.

March 7

My growth into my own completeness, into having an *ātman*, *ātmavān*, is the return to the source. The *ātman* is that Purusha, cut in pieces, dismembered, and yet the very centre of the sun and of my eye and of my heart.

The idea of beings who totally manifest Brahman came later: the attribution to "individuals" of the total Presence, to the "detriment" (even if by the salvation) of others. The kenosis of Shiva.

Uttarkashi

May 22

There is the *aham* which is pure *élan*, spontaneity, and the *aham* which is possession. But he who possesses is himself possessed. Realization is liberation, *mukti*, from all possession of another or by another (cp. CU VII).

The Self, the *aham*, does not even possess any thought and is not possessed, imprisoned, by any thought.

The whole evolution of humanity, of the individual, tends toward this *mukti*. A person who is pure spontaneity. The person: one equipped with an *ātman* [*ātma-vān*], filled with spirit [*"pneuma-vāla"*]. The person is only completed in the realization of the *ātman-brahman*. But "*ātman is brahman*" is not a "judgement", or else if it is a judgement, a product of the mind, it is the final one, the one that opens the golden door of the sun.

...Jesus is the one who is all spontaneity. He possesses nothing and is not possessed by anything. All that he possesses is the property of the Father. He has nothing of his own. He wills (*samkalpa*: directing impulse) nothing but the Father and his brothers. The Eucharist is the sign of the total gift. And whoever participates in the Eucharist with a sense of possessing God or his brothers is a liar and commits a sacrilegious act.

The teaching of Christ is dispossession—insecurity.

...Formulas of faith and ecclesial structures have an intentional value: to liberate the essential spontaneity that constitutes the person... Everything that holds back this spontaneity on the pretext of organizing it, is the work of the Evil One.

...The Self, *ātman*, the *aham* is not identifiable with anything. Identification with Brahman is simply a tautology. It is the non-duality of the non-identifiable.

Christian freedom means no longer having anything that could harm the inner spontaneity which is the Spirit within us.

The Trinity is God, the original source, Brahman, the *Urgrund*; It is the *ātman*, the universal presence of God, all-pervasive [*vy-āpī*, *vy-āna*], [the *jīvo'aseeh*¹], *śakti* in the form of fire [*agnī*], breath [*prāna*], wind [*vāyu*], empty space [*ākāśa*], in the form of fullness [*bhūma*], of joy [*ānanda*]. And finally there is the *ātmavān*, God in the form of a person, "one equipped with an *ātman*", with the spirit [*pneuma*].² To tell the truth, there is only one Person in the Trinity, and that is Christ, the Purusha.

And I discover this Person in the mystery of my own *aham*, myself full of the Self [*ātma-pūrnah*], myself having come to my *ātma*.

...The Spirit is the interior presence of God to all things, and first of all to me. For it is in my experience of Spirit [*Pneuma*] within myself that I discover the *ātman* in everything, the breath [*prāna*] in everything, Agni in everything.

It is in this inner experience of the Spirit that I become spiritual, possessed of *ātman* [*pneumatikos*, *ātmavān*], the Purusha, the "Son of Man," *Filius Dei*, that I discover myself existing at the origin [*agre san—agre*: at the beginning, at the origin; *san*: being], of the "nature" of Brahman [*brāhmanya*]. And yet in the Christian experience the myself-face-to-face does not disappear. At once one and not-one with the Source. The Father is Brahman, of whom nothing can be said.

...There is God absent, or transcendent, the Father. God Immanent, the Spirit; and then myself, the image [*mūrti*], the Purusha.

July 6

The metanoia [repentance, conversion] preached by Jesus is not a transfer from one *dharma* to another. It is a total turning round that amounts to nothing less than reaching the stage of "realization".

1. An incomprehensible word.

2. Here he relates the Father to the source, Brahman, the *Urgrund*; the Spirit to that which penetrates everything, life, energy, fire, breath, wind, space, the fullness of joy; and the Son to the Person filled with the Spirit, in possession of his Self.

This metanoia: *nivritti* (cessation, liberation).

...It is not a matter of "believing" that Jesus is God, that there are three persons in God who "saves" us. These are only formulations, literally incomprehensible here in India. It is pure Judaism to *rest* (*pratishthati*) on such formulas and rites.

Jesus is every human being on whom the Spirit has rested.

Jesus manifests himself in every actual *guru* (lit. "heavy", with the Spirit). And this *guru* induces the *nivritti* in the disciple, because an intermediary, a mediator is necessary (KathU II, 8).

July 7

(...)

Simply *overwhelming* visit of the Swami of Swarga Ashram whom I met at Rishikesh two months ago, on his way to Gangotri.

His amazement at seeing my books: the uselessness and harm of reading except to remind oneself and to explain to others. Reading burdens the memory, does not help us realize the Self.

You do not understand anything in the Upanishads so long as you do not have the experience.

Suggested that I go with him to Gangotri. I said too candidly that I had to go to Bombay for a meeting. 'What will that pay [profit] you?' 'It will pay others,' I said; "in fact, they want to profit from my experience of solitude." "Your solitude! But it is no solitude with all these relationships! Let them ask the experience of one who lives in true solitude!"

But I am not free! And then I no longer have enough physical (or moral?) strength. This morning he turned up at 5 o'clock, on the way back from his bath in [the Ganges]. I was fast asleep! How ashamed I was! Physical fatigue, really only an excuse?

I would be afraid to live with that man, his eyes show his depth.

So my absolute is a falsehood in my profession.

And Christianity, is it not just a memory? And so an idea, something imagined? the truth overlaid with falsehood [*satyam anritenacchannam*].

How these "Christian" *vāsana* [impressions on the psyche] complicate everything! Are they not the real obstacle to "total" faith?

Christianity is a *qualified faith*. Absolute faith rejects every qualification.

Not to live in one's memories.

"Live in the Self."

July 9

All that we know or think we know of God is false. There is only one thing to know of God—and that transcends the understanding, it takes place at the sources of being—namely, that this knowledge is a total 'commitment'. It is in the abandonment of reliance on yourself that you know God, existentially. That is faith and *brahmavidyā* [the knowledge of Brahman].

October 12

The most open theologians are far from having understood. They read the Real through their own thought-pattern (*grille*), in such a way as to make the history of salvation fit into their concepts and formulations.

One thing—paramount, if not unique—is evident: the fact that I AM, *aham asmi*. There is also this obvious fact that I live in community, both human and cosmic. This immanent community [*koinonia*] is divine. The divine mystery, the mystery of being, the real, the Real of the real [*satyam, satyasya satyam*; BU. II, 1, 20], is manifested at the "intelligible" level at once by the transcendence of my own I and by its insertion into the universe. My *aham* transcends all the *devas* (powers) of nature and of my faculties (bodily and mental). Judeo-Christianity, like every religion, remains at the level of the *devas*, (with) a unique and primordial *deva* that it projects into a mythical (spatial/temporal: eternal) beyond. And that is the reason why its formulations—and its mental framework (*grille*)—no longer pass muster.

When the Marxist says that the *deva* conflicts with human beings, he is right. For as long as I remain at the level of the *devas*, I am incapable of reaching myself. I AM beyond all history in my transcendence. And that is precisely where I discover God-Brahman, every concept and every myth having disappeared, in the essential *advaita*.

That myths help us to become aware of this Transcendence/Immanence is perfectly natural. But these myths and the institutions that give them social expression must remain at the level of service—*sevā*. They have nothing but duties towards humanity. They have no rights. But the Church in particular is much more conscious of its rights than of its duties toward humanity—and first of all of this primordial right, that it possesses the Truth—from which everything else follows.

Christian formulations and institutions will only gain their true value if we read them with the mental framework (*grille*) of the experience of the *atman-brahman* and not with the framework of Greek philosophy or of Hebraic "metaphysics".

Jesus recognized himself as Son of God, beyond all the *devas*, beyond his being and beyond the universe—and beyond his religion also. And in this re-cognizing [*prati-abhijñā*] he recognized Yahweh in his real greatness. He entered willingly into the social and religious institutions of his people but never accepted them as absolutely binding. He died for that at the natural level. But this very death was his victory.

Even more than from sin, he has freed us from the *devas*.

Sin belongs to the level of the *devas*. The identification of oneself with the *deva* imagined to be superior. Lucifer did not climb high enough in his quest for the Self. It is only beyond God—beyond the God to whom he wished to be equal—that he could discover and reach at once the Self and God, in total transcendence and immanence.

October 18

OM is the deepest point at once in myself and in God. In OM, I AM. God is *asmi, asti, advaita*.

I reach God (and myself, my end) when I reach my source. Not in returning to my source, which would be a vain attempt to put time into reverse. I reach my source in being fulfilled. I enter completely into my end [eschaton]. My birth is not some thing that was once given and which would grow. For there is nothing beyond: *nāparam kincit*. I have in myself the power of becoming Son, the *śakti*. This *śakti* is that depth, that capacity for depth that is at once in me and in God. In the depth of my heart (*hridguhāyam*). My OM unites with the OM of God. My OM calls for the OM of God. My OM calling with the creative power [*srishti śakti*] of God. That *śakti* within me, the Spirit, the hidden energy [*guhāśakti*]. Jesus: the image [*mūrti*] of this *śakti*. Manifested in him in its fullness. His perfect sonship: *pūrnaputrātvam*.

Jesus is not a meteorite fallen one day from heaven, but the deepest mystery of myself. The *sadguru* who appears outwardly in time and place, in name and form, in order to lead me to myself: *Yo'savasau purusha (aditye) so'ham asmi!*³ In the advaita of Brahman, of this Purusha, of the *ātman*.

The *ātman*, this *śakti* at rest, in its fullness. But vibrating with all its power of realization.

This presence of myself to myself in myself, the presence of God, of oneself to oneself in oneself: *ātmanam ātmane ātmani*.

An invocation from the depth of the heart [*hridguhāyam*] to the *śakti* that is immovable [*acala*], undivided [*akhanda*], untouched [*asparśa*], moving with the *guhā* [*guhācara*] in order to become *acala*, *akhanda*, etc.

3. "That Person yonder in the sun, I in truth am He." IsāU 16 (tr. R.C. Zaehner). Cp. 10 November 1966, 1 November 1969 and 22 July 1971.



Concelebrated Mass in Indian style

1969

Churchman

AFTER spending more than two months at Gyansu, Abhishiktananda like a prophet, came down to the plains. He visited the Soso Carmel, in the little town of Gumla (Ranchi district), and the seminaries at Ranchi and Allahabad. At the end of March, he was urgently called to Delhi to collaborate in the preparation of a manual on spirituality for the National Seminar.

During this year, he put forward an idea that had been in his mind since 1967, for a "Pilot Seminary," a *gurukul* for seminarians. He tried to envisage the foundations of a Christian theology starting from the Vedanta. Some people in the ecclesiastical world were interested in the project. An attempt along these lines was made at Varanasi, but after a few years it was abandoned.

He was at Jyotniketan for Holy Week and then returned to Gyansu. He stayed there only briefly, and after three weeks came down again to Delhi on the way to Bangalore, where he took an active part in the "All-India Seminar on the Church in India Today" (May 1-25), an assembly of the Roman Catholic Church in India. This assembly had a great impact, even though it was not official—it was not a National Council. Archbishop Pignedoli, Secretary of the Roman Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, gave the keynote address and spoke eloquently about the monastic life. Representatives from the different Christian denominations (in India) were present. This Seminar represented a turning point in the history of Indian Catholics, comparable *minutis minuendis* with the Second Vatican Council for the Christian world. As a matter of fact, it was intended to be a response of the Indian Church to the Council's appeal. It is interesting to note that, while the other priests were registered as "Father", Abhishiktananda was recorded as "Swami". Swamiji exerted a deep influence during this Seminar, and was conscious of the fact. People paid attention to him despite the rather critical reviews his works had received in European theological journals.

He returned to Gyansu by way of Indore. At the end of August, he was again on the road and went to Jyotniketan for a study-session on the "Pilot Seminary", which in the end could not be held. He returned to his hermitage only at the end of October.

He translated *Prayer* into French (*Éveil à soi, éveil à Dieu*; published 1971). *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point* (a translation of *La rencontre de*

l'hindouisme et du christianisme) was published in time for the Seminar. Swamiji was happy to have found in the translator, Sister Sara Grant, someone who understood him.

The National Seminar was for Swamiji the event that confirmed his deep insertion in an Indian Catholic Church that was more and more conscious of its own identity and looking for spiritual guides. He was also well accepted in some Hindu circles. From now on he felt confirmed in his personal vocation. Unfortunately, we do not have his written reactions to the Seminar; Marc probably considered them of secondary importance.

Here are a few dates from this year, during which the hermit was deeply involved in activities linked with the Church:

January-6 March	At Uttarkashi.
6 March	Left Uttarkashi. Visited the Gumla Carmel; the seminaries at Ranchi and Allahabad; stayed at Delhi.
29 March-2 April	At Delhi, contributed to the "Spirituality Handbook."
April	Holy Week and Easter at Jyotiniketan. Visited Allahabad (work on liturgy), Haridwar.
18 April-8(?) May	At Uttarkashi.
9-10 May	At Delhi.
15-25 May	At Bangalore (National Seminar).
June	Stayed at Indore. Returned to Uttarkashi.
25 August	Left Uttarkashi. Stayed at Rishikesh, Delhi, Varanasi, Jyotiniketan.
End of October	Returned to Uttarkashi.

* * * *

Uttarkashi

January 1

God as the supreme *deva*: there is a real distinction, analogous to the distinction between myself and other human beings and creatures. Whether we are concerned with God or with others, non-duality has no meaning except at the level of *Brahman-atman*.

The *deva*-God is the projection of myself, my "other", my "double", my *dhata*: my Creator. The first article of the Creed only knows God "through" creation. It is at this level of the *devas* that God is Threefold, and that the Son of God can come down to earth, atone for human sin, etc.

(...)

January 11

It is truly terrifying to find oneself without any *deva*, either in this world or in any other. And yet what is to be done about it? The anguish that has pursued me since Arunachala, for sixteen years and more since then.

And that instinctive fear of failing to serve the Lord Jesus in the way I once used to adore him!

The Helleno-Christianity in which we are still living is only one historical form of living the experience of Jesus.

The trinitarian and christological formulations of the early Councils are only one form—among an indefinite number of forms—of communicating the divine mystery to oneself and one's brothers.

Jesus did not teach any philosophy, any more than the Buddha did. A practical outlook: everything for God, everything for your brother—God in your brother—myself in your brother. Jesus does not ask for worship. A memorial *agapê*, which is at the same time a memorial of his death and a communion meal with him.

The Trinity, the way in which God appears to human beings in the circle of believers in Jesus. The Trinity only exists in relationship to us. No formula can explain the mystery of Being.

The Trinity is always at the level of the *devas*.

Is it possible to carry back the level of the *devas* to the level of the supreme [*parama pada*], of the transcendent secret?

Christianity is all at the level of the *devas*, of myths. The *mythos* is as valid as the concept, certainly, provided we do not identify it with history.

Jesus conceived his message in mythical terms.

Bultmann was wrong in wanting to translate this mystical [mythical?] way of speaking into Heideggerian terms.

The fact remains that neither in the modern European world nor in the Hindu world marked by Vedānta can any of that be *true* in a literal way.

January 13

No *deva* can give me the solution—no "experience", for that will always emerge from my subconscious—no theologian through some conceptual formula—but I alone can find it in myself alone.

January 15

The Church committed to the unification of the world in God. It is for God alone that the Church draws the world together, for God in himself, not for the God it adores.

(...)

June 27

The truest image of Jesus is the non-dual I [*advaita-aham*] in the depth of myself. Much truer than the crib, the cross, etc. We too often forget that Jesus willed to disappear from human eyes. It is as hidden in the Father's bosom [*absconditus in sinu Patris*] that we find him in truth, now, even now [*in veritate, en alêtheia, nun kai nun*]. Oneself hidden in *sinu Patris*...the cave of my heart.

The "historicized" archetypes of *advaita-aham*: Shiva. The Meditator concentrated in himself in the Himalayan gorges, reducing the world to

ashes, both desire [*kāma*] and at the *pralaya* [cosmic dissolution])—the transmitter of grace. Ganges.¹

Krishna, the child (cp. Murugan), the lover.

Rama, the spouse, the king.

The Buddha, the one awakened to [...]

Jesus, the one awakened to the Father, to his brothers.

September 10

God can be “realized,” “attained,” etc. in two ways:

1) by way of a Mediator: *mesos*, *madhyah*, *madhyastah*;

2) in the experience of advaita.

That was already implied in the Greek presentation of the mystery that is called trinitarian.

Two levels, each absolute, neither complementary nor supplementary.

Two “human” approaches to the mystery of God.

It is also implied in the mystery of the Incarnation. Jesus at once God and Human, one with the Father, and less than the Father [*minor Patri*].

November 1

The human being lives his greatness within the myth of God. First of all he has conceived this ideal Being, has distinguished it from himself, has adorned it with the best of his thought, has recognized the apophatic mystery. Then he has lived the call to himself of this God, grace, redemption... And little by little, he has felt that

“that Purusha yonder, it is myself!” [Isa U, 17]

The greatness and the mystery of God are his own mystery, his own greatness. Why look for mythical mediators?

...But who is capable of bearing the revelation of this *kevala* [total isolation]? As long as the human being lives on the surface or in the semi-depth, the God that he rejects is the deep and unknown mystery of himself. At this stage, to reject God is to mutilate the human being. In the very depth of the mystery God is not rejected. Merely the sign disappears, name-and-form [*nāmarūpa*]. Brahman alone, One and without a second [*eka eva advitīya*].

(...)

November 2

The religious order of things is still a practical necessity at this point in the evolution of human consciousness.

1. A reference to the mythological aspects of Shiva: he is the great yogi meditating in the Himalayas; when the god of love (*kāmadeva*) comes and disturbs him in his meditation, he reduces him to ashes. At the end of the cosmic cycle, he destroys the worlds so that a new creation can appear. “Transmitter of grace. Ganges”: when the heavenly river, Ganga, was to come down on the earth to give it life and fertility, its impact was so powerful that only Shiva could bear to receive it on his head; otherwise it would have destroyed the earth. From his topknot the God allowed the sacred river, symbol of his grace, to flow down on the earth.

The post-religious age began with the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad. Its shadow is lengthening more and more quickly.

...What must be built up now is the Christianity of the post-religious age. Leaving behind all the Christianity of twenty centuries.

Accept the revolution brought by Jesus, which was immediately defused, from the very first Christian generation.

Christianity as a religion has overstepped its rights. Its abuse of conscience is criminal. The Christian’s fundamental right is that authority should serve him—hence that authority should produce only the minimum of laws for the sake of this service. On the whole, the laws of the Church are more at the service of the system than of Christians.

...The Church myth would explode if we started from the Gospel! Tomorrow?

Christian people are not ready. Nor are non-Christian people. Selfishness is universal. In succession to the sign “God”, however falsified it may have been, it is the reality “myself” that takes its place. Discover the real I, the self, of the human being. Ramana. India itself has understood so little. Who will reveal to the human being the mystery of himself? Starting from the Church-myth prepare for the non-mythical Church.

December 10

All the myths, Christian and others—exist in order to cause the human being to discover himself, to realise himself (the whole of my book *Prayer* in French is indeed about this: to introduce some Christians into the path of *jñāna*, by way of their beliefs and myths without scaring them away).²

...The choice is not at the level of the *ātman*, which is fullness [*bhūma*]. Total freedom leaves no room for any choice.

December 24

I no longer saw you,

I no longer recognized you,

and I lost my very self.

You took everything away from me:

my delight in expecting you,

in being with you.

You escaped me

by hiding yourself in my inmost depth,

and you left me alone

in your own solitude.

2. A reference to *Éveil à soi—éveil à Dieu*, Paris 1986.



The kutiya at Gyansu

1970

Himalayan Pilgrim in his Sixties

HAVING reached sixty years of age Swamiji felt his strength diminishing. He would have preferred a more stable life, with less travel. This year he left his hermitage only twice and only for brief periods; once again he faced the rigours of the winter at Gyansu. He wrote the first chapter of an essay on *sannyāsa*, the complete text of which was only published after his death, in 1974. He finalized the text of *Gñānananda (Guru and Disciple)*, which was published at the end of the year. He made a final revision of his book on Arunachala (*Souvenirs d'Arunachala*; published 1978).

He took a lively interest in all the problems of Christian India, in particular that of the liturgy. He continued to think of an Indian rite that would not be imposed from the outside but would rather be a spontaneous creation springing up from the Indian (and Hindu) soul. After much hesitation and questioning, he refused an invitation from a Christian yoga group in Canada. To accept this offer must have been a temptation for him. But he would not give in to it, like many Hindu swamis had done.

His books had little success in France, and his book on prayer was not accepted by Éditions du Seuil.

His financial situation became precarious, since he was no longer receiving Mass stipends.

This was a relatively stable year, during which, as far as we know, he did not go farther afield than Indore:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Early January | Left Uttarkashi. Stayed at Rishikesh, Delhi, Varanasi; again at Rishikesh on February 2 to meet Robert Vachon of the Centre Interculturel Monchanin in Montreal. |
| 10 February | Returned to Uttarkashi. Visited by Y.D. Tiwari, a Hindu intellectual, a convert to Christianity. |
| 20 May | Left Uttarkashi. Visited Delhi; stayed at Indore (medical check-up). |
| 10(?) June | Returned to Uttarkashi. Welcomed a few visitors: Lalit and Ramesh (two young Hindu disciples), Fr Hirudayarāj, S.J. |
| 1-14 December | Lalit stayed again with Swamiji. |

* * * *

January 14

The fact of (its teaching) successive *satoris* clearly shows the incompleteness of Zen—a kind of yoga; it aims at the disintegration of mental structures. It is certainly useful, it works for the Chinese, the Japanese, it would work better for Westerners than our Upanishads, which are too pure for them. Here the process is much more natural. Yet the method is rarely effective.¹

Uttarkashi**March 7**

I am now discovering—as India did 3000 years ago—my non-identification with my *upādhis* [metaphysical limitations].

March 21

So long as you draw near to Christ
as to an other,
you have not yet found him.
So long as you are content with hearing his voice,
you still only know from without
what this voice is.
If you are Son of God you are the very word of God,
and it is in this word spoken, and not only heard,
that you will discover
and will know, from within, the Word.
Advaita of the Word.
vāg ekaivādvitīya [the Word one and without a second].

March 23

Jesus is the *sadguru*. By that very fact he leads beyond his form. He constantly refers to the Father. He is only the Father's echo. The Father is greater—that means: deeper, more original. And Jesus must disappear, in his "form", so that the Spirit may come. The true knowledge of Jesus is in the Spirit [*en pneumatī*].

Theology has unfortunately reified this mystery of the Source [*pēgē*], the depth, the origin [*prabhava*]. And reified Jesus, and reified (substantified) the Spirit.

Know Jesus as having passed into the "glory" (*tejobhūta*), with that glory [*tejas*] which is his from the beginning [*agre, en archē*]. That glory out of which he appeared, visible, manifested [*avirbhūta*] to our human eyes and our human minds—a human face—appearing in glory, filled with glory (cp. the Transfiguration).

Jesus is non-dual with the Father—non-dual with human beings [*advaita cum patre—advaita cum hominibus*].

Recognize this glory in the very mystery of his manifestation, *vyakti*, that mystery which the Jews called Messiah—the Greeks Word, Lord [*logos*,

1. Swamiji made this comment after a meeting with representatives of Zen Buddhism, who maintain the necessity of a series of enlightenments—something unacceptable to an advaitin.

kurios], etc. The mystery which here has been called: *guhā, puruṣha*, the inner self [*antarātman*], the Word [*vāc*], and in Vedic times, the goal [*padam*].

...In the advaitin view of things, we cannot decide for either the unity or the difference of the ultimate expressions. Is not each one just as much a "world" that penetrates all the "worlds"?... Each one's experience is unique, advaitin. By its very definition it is incapable of making a judgment that would identify my experience with other experiences...

March 26

(Holy Thursday). Christ, the mirror in which I discover myself beyond my human personality, my source from God [*a Deo*] beyond all beginning and all ending, the fact that I am [*ego eimi*], the experience of being in its total purity.

The way in which Jesus moved among people and events, *akhanda, asparsā*, totally given, totally free—"rising above", crossing over everything, his head always above the water.

See everything—as Jesus did—in the light of *eternity*, not of the dvandvic *muthoi*—heaven/hell [*svarga/patala*]—, but of Being, which in its fullness, its *pūrnam*, shines through everything.

This *Grund*, which Jesus calls Abba.

This advaita—not an *idea*—that shines (*bhātī*) in everything, makes everything luminous.

The transcendence of the *limit*

beyond the *measure* which is the mind,
beyond every attempt at measuring the beyond
which is always mythical,

beyond that No to all measurement of the beyond;
in the leap one is lost—*skanda*²—
neither measure nor non-measure.

Jesus, encountered not in a memory but in this light,
light [*jyoti*], that is glory [*tejas*];
austerity [*tapas*] is fulfilled in light [*jyoti*].

Discover in every being my eternal light—*nityajyoti*,
the total glory in the depth of all, advaita—*tejas*.

Tapas: the sign of my *rising above*, that I do not let myself float with the tide.

The look which Jesus turned on everything

'concerned' but free

'not unconcerned but not anxious'.

March 27

Pass through that which passes,
one's gaze fixed on what does not pass.

My head above the water: death cannot touch me. Accept death as Jesus did, and in this very acceptance attain within myself that which does

2. The one who leaps, cp. CU VII, 26,2.

not die, the permanent [*nitya*]. To accept death is to accept the impermanence [*anitya*] of all that I am aware of which happens within myself, and in the acceptance of this death—of the “passing” of all that happens—Shiva *mahākāla* [death]—to pass to the not-passing. *Passover*.

March 28

God as buttress for humanity! Let the human being support himself on himself on his own greatness, supported on himself [*sva mahimni, svaprathisthitah*]³. Only in his own glory [*svamahimna*] will he discover the *svamahimna* of the One who IS.

...Why pass through the detour of the sacred Traditions in order to realize my own mystery? The mental context of the religions of *initiation* is outdated, at least in that section of humanity that is on the move.

April 16

The three stages of emptiness: outward silence (*mauna*), not reading, not thinking. Give all the time possible to this third. Avoid the thought of emptiness. The I as witness...simply TO BE, without reflecting on the subject as be-ing. Perceive beings beyond the distinction between myself/not-myself, but do not deny this distinction by means of an idea.

Recover the state of communion [inter-relation] in which a child is before it has distinguished its I.

But beyond this state analogous to deep sleep [*sushupti*] is *turiya* [the transcendent state], the true *satyam*, unique *kevala*. Do nothing. Not even to think that I am doing nothing. ...This hollowness of being that no act reveals, this hollowness is the womb [*garbha*] (of being).

...Wou-wei⁴. The Ganges does not flow in order to irrigate. It does not seek to irrigate, to fertilize: it just flows.

...The whole of my present problem—my crisis of nerves—comes from the fact that I *think*, that I want to think through my problem. Stop thinking, stop acting, let the Ganges flow...

OM is the only *japa* [repetitive prayer] that does not distract. Every other word is a *phantasma*, whether it be Christian or Hindu. It settles on a thought, no matter how unsubstantial it may be. OM is not something thought. It is “beheld”, breathed with my *prāna*, beaten out by my heart [*hridaya*], seen in what the eyes see, the ears hear, the body touches, the nostrils smell, etc.

OM is the unuttered name of the *atman* and therefore of the Brahman who is beyond and before the *aham*: (before the *devas* [*pūrva devebhyah*]: the *aham* is a *deva*.)

April 17

Freshness of the simple gaze that forgets it is gazing: seeing without a see-er [*a-drishtri-drishti*],—the non-separation [*bheda*] of the one who sees [*drashtā*], the seeing [*drishti*], and the object seen [*drishtam*].

3. On its own greatness, supported on itself; cp. CU VII, 24, 1; MaitU II, 4.

4. Concept in Taoism: non-action, absence of activity; it is a matter of the spontaneity inherent in every being. Cp. *Tao-te-Ching* 47, 48, 63, etc.

May 2

...Should I be just the observer [*sakshin*]? I am not reducible either to the Christianity or to the Vedānta whose thoughts are in me...

May 9

You have seen the lightning...

keep your secret.

The lightning has rent apart the clouds
and has opened for you the abysses.

The lightning has rent apart the heaven
which you had discovered in your soul.

The lightning has rent apart the firmament—
you no longer have a roof above you.

The lightning has torn in pieces your I,
it has not returned.

But you know that you are beyond the darkness,
keep your secret.

For those who have not seen the lightning would think
that you speak of a fire here below.

You have seen the lightning...
keep your secret.

People would ask you to explain
and they would be unable to understand you;
they would condemn you.

They could not understand that heaven was rent open for you
and that you are no longer beneath the firmament.

Live joyful and smiling in this world,
infinitely free.

Heaven was opened for Jesus at his baptism
and he heard the inner voice.

Only in the heaven torn open
is true prayer.

So long as the heaven of your heart has not been torn open
in the lightning of Sinai,
the storm of Pentecost,
you know nothing of God,
you call this firmament God, the limit of your thought.

Vidyut [lightning]—*vidritih* (cleavage, the sagittal suture at the top of the skull), you have to break out. It is the *vidyut* that opens up, *siman* [parting of the hair] (AU III, 12).⁵

When the *Purusha* has been discovered in oneself, in that cleavage, *vidritih*, the *Purusha* beyond which there is nothing except the “nothing”, *neti... nasti...*, so ‘*ham asmi* [I am it]. What use is it to take the long detour,

5. “He split this sagittal suture open and entered in through it as through a door. So this door is called *vidriti*, ‘splitting open’; it is a place of bliss...” (tr. R.C. Zaehner).

'way-round', of that "salvation history" that helps—but at a certain point so heavily encumbers—the Christian approach? As Ramana says, every effort to discover oneself delays the awakening. Why search far off for that which knows no distance, which is faster than thought (Īśa Upanishad) and yet is right here, present, always, in the awakening beyond thought.

Keep your secret.

You can no longer say anything, so say no more.

Do not come down again, remain in "yourself".

But who is saying this to me? and to whom is he saying it?

May 12

God, a presence. A presence of totality, of infinity.

...This presence is wholly mine, grounded in myself, fixed in myself, springing up in the very depth of my presence to myself—and yet other (other?) for it is in "itself", independent of myself, established on itself [svastha] and not established on me [mat-stha]. The mystery of the other [alter], encountered in every human relationship. The other, at the same time in the depth of myself and without attachment to myself, indivisible [akhanda]—untouched [asparśa].

And in fact, I seem to need the firmness and solidity of the other's *sva-stha*. I press my breast against another breast, my lips against other lips. But it is in the very "resistance" of this breast, of these lips, that I discover love.

May 14

Only the depth of the self does not project itself. The present does not project itself, it is [astī].

After the death of the "god" of concept and myth, only the one true God shines out, living in the experience of depth. There is no doubt that through the myths and concepts the "depth" may sometimes be attained, i.e., the meeting between the person of the phenomenal consciousness with the "self." That is the essential point of every spiritual mission, the object of every religious message.

July 3

Christianity is a *symbol*, probably the most wonderful one that exists, for bringing to the surface of consciousness the mystery that lies in the depth of the human heart and constitutes the human being. But we must accept that—from the viewpoint of the Spirit—it is all *symbol* (which does not mean that it is not true): the eternal begetting, the descent into time, the resurrection, the ascension, the outpouring of the Spirit. Within the symbolic system of Christianity, the elements of this symbol can only be *unique*. The uniqueness of the Incarnation forms part of the Christian *symbol*. The reality unquestionably exceeds the symbol; but, in its own order, the symbol, without containing reality within its sign, nevertheless represents the *whole* of reality. This uniqueness is not of the same order as the uniqueness of the great wall of China or the Arc de Triomphe of Paris. But it is no less true.

As true as the uniqueness of God. The uniqueness of Christ belongs to the transcendental order.

July 9

...The manifestation in Jesus (in Christian understanding) has this characteristic that in it (in Jesus) absolutely nothing obstructs the outpouring of the Spirit. A perfectly pure mirror.

...Every manifestation is unique.

One is the Father, one is the Logos, one is the Pneuma. That does not add up to three.

To compare the manifestation of God in Jesus and, for example, in Buddha can only be a waste of time. You can compare the moral value of a Jesus and of a Gautama, or of a Hindu *rishi* (for the manifestations of this experience are strictly conditioned by the cultural and "religious" environment in which it develops, or 'happens'.)

The uniqueness of the Incarnation is a false problem.

July 20

The Church is God revealed in a social fashion, in communion. God is revealed to himself alone. God alone can be aware of God.

The Church is the mystery of Christ, the theandric mystery first of all. Its communion [*koinonia*] expresses this at the level of the intersubjectivity of consciousnesses.

The mystery of depth: the awakening of God to the self, of Being beyond every archetype, individual or communal.

The eucharistic table: the *mysterion* above all others; the one who shares in the Eucharist: a being of gift.

July 21

The way in which sin is objectivized changes with the times. At present the obsession with sexual sin is giving place to the consciousness of social sin. All that is sign. Always the level of archetypes through which the mystery is revealed.

July 25

The moment of death is only privileged in the context of the *muthos*, "in illo tempore" [at that time; myth of the beginnings]. It is in the present that I reach myself.

...No account of how I might exist outside this body is satisfactory. I only know that I was born in this body and will die in this body—which means that my consciousness has emerged in the course of cosmic time at a point in space and in a conglomeration of matter linked to time and space—and that the day will come when this conglomeration will dissolve.

The verbs "I am born", "I die", imply in that body [*in isto corpore*]. They do not have absolute value.

Before (being born) I am. After (death) I am—Not: I was and I will be. I am [*ego sum*].

Is it necessary for *aham* to be expressed at the phenomenal level? (Yes) in the same way as Shiva had to appear to himself in his *śakti*.

In itself, to create [*srij-*] is not necessary. But the fact is that God created, creates [*perfect, sasarja*].

Or rather, at the level of my phenomenal consciousness, I cannot have access to the mystery of God/myself apart from phenomena, i.e., apart from space-time [*dik/kala*]. A pure "God", a pure "myself", cannot be thought by me, except in the abstract. The *muthos* enables me to live—without "thinking" it—this absolute of God/myself. There is the pure experience—but it is inaccessible to the *ahamkāra, buddhi/manas* (my ego, intellect/mind) except in the mythos.

July 26

If there is no "thou" that is different from myself at this moment, then in this world no longer is there anyone different from myself, then from everywhere and on all sides it is my own personal mystery that springs up before my eyes, in my ears, under my feet, at my fingertips, what I see, what I feel, what I hear, what I touch, what I taste, what I come to, what I clasp.

I am that Krishna whom the divine eye of Arjuna contemplated, projecting and devouring beings.⁶

Myself, *aham*,

but beyond any statement

that empties this *aham* by defining it.

(...)

August 20

That, *tat*, this mystery is Person, still more it is Consciousness, pure Consciousness. The Consciousness, which appears in every limited consciousness and in all that drive, that effort towards Consciousness, which the universe is, so far as it is simply matter or life. And the limited consciousness of the human being is a movement, drive, effort, toward pure Consciousness.

This pure Consciousness at the same time appears in and shines through my consciousness and extends infinitely beyond it. Hence the "Thou" which I say to it in my not coinciding, the "Thou" which it is to me in its summons to the Self, which is a summons to myself. And the not-I, not-Thou, in that light which is neither from myself nor from an other, the light that shines of itself [*svayam jyotih*].

As Rilke says, this abyss, this strangeness, this not coinciding, whether it is sin or simple contingency, is not something that would separate me from God or would have to be transcended... There is no further shore. God himself is this abyss, inscribed in the greatest depth of myself, in this very not coinciding with myself.

God is the absurdity of the world for one like Camus. And in this loss (provided it is not turned back selfishly upon oneself) I find myself. God

6. Cp. BG XI.

is "Thou" for me in every other human consciousness. For every meeting of human beings, of consciousnesses, is the revelation of the mystery of advaita and of my non-comprehension of everything.

(...)

August 25

...The crisis of faith consists in the fact that one has simply mistaken a rational argument, mere conformism or a subconscious transference, for the very mystery of the absolute.

*Sagesse*⁷ is an attempt, "begging for help", "agonized", to recover one's footing when the waves—the ground-swell of advaita that seizes and bears all away—are carrying one off to the open sea.

Why then desire at all costs to recover one's footing? The waves—just like the air—surely provide as safe a support as the sand of the shallows!

...Well then, flying in the open sky or floating in the open sea, does one not inevitably escape from the churches with their 'coastal' definitions (clinging to the seashore)—those of the Roman Pope as well as those of the oriental Patriarchs and those that come from the Protestant Reformation? All of them, as long as they exist, are built on the solid sand of the shore...

And yet the shore is only the meeting point of dry land and the sea.

...The Church is above all the mystery that every human being is born of God [*natus a Deo*] in a total human community, which extends to all times and all places. The Church is in the first place all human beings, in the actuality, and before that in the potentiality, of their awakening. Whatever may be the "form", or before that, the "mental course" taken by their awakening.

...The Church is not a sect of a mystery religion.

...Its essential mission: to awaken every soul to the theandric mystery. Attachment to the historical person of Jesus is an excellent help. But not the preaching of or the initiation into a "sect" (*hairesis*).

September 1

The world is not a datum that precedes the mind, its reality is wholly dependent on the participation of the human person's act in the infinite act—in non-duality of being.

The world is the "projection" in space and time of this consciousness of the Self which cannot be attained "directly"—at the cost of no longer being distinguished from Pure Act. This consciousness of the Self in space-time is an undeniable fact. Its value is undoubtedly other than that of the ultimate reality [*paramārtha*].

...Apart from space and time, my "distinctiveness" is not conceivable. The dogma of the Resurrection of bodies essentially aims at guaranteeing the perdurance/perennial character of my individual consciousness—which is as much threatened by the disappearance of the body in the Jewish outlook, as by the advaita of being.

7. His book *Sagesse hindoue mystique chrétienne* (Paris: Centurion, 1965), later revised by him for the English version, *Saccidananda: a Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience* (Delhi, 1974), which is followed in *Sagesse* (2nd edn, Paris, 1991).

God "projecting" himself endlessly, infinitely, in individual consciousnesses that necessarily "create" space and time in order to manifest themselves, to awaken to themselves.

(...)

September 5

The essential glory of contemporary humanism, even when it appears in the deviant forms of communism, rationalism, existentialism, etc., is to set the human being face to face with the Self and with his own present, apart from any myth of a future or of an *eschaton* (communism's myth of the future, just like that of Judaism, is collective and thus less dangerous than the myth of an "individual" heaven).

September 7

In the very depth of myself there are the *devas* and the *asuras* [angels and demons]—neither perfectly virtuous [*punya*] like the angels of Christian mythology, nor perfectly sinful [*pāpī*] like its demons. Indra is not an Archangel. The king of the *devas* in our subconscious is amply furnished with *ahamkāra* and what follows from that; and equally there are Bali and Prahlāda⁸ in the so-called infernal regions. Rāvana is Rāma's enemy so that Sita can be truly won back, wanted, loved by Rāma.

The rescue of Sita, the *Sakti*, my most elemental power.

This metacosmic war is also in the myth of the Apocalypse, but the Vedic-Puranic mythology is more real—less marked by the clear-cut distinction between virtue [*punya*] and sin [*pāpa*]. Only on emerging from this struggle will I be myself—self-reintegration.

...Beyond all these signs.

But what an inner churning to discover the *amrita*!⁹

My *sādhu*-neighbours certainly do not have any metaphysical anguish, and no more do the majority of Christians. Their "myth" forms part of them in the same way as their body and their physical heredity. Without question. The only problem is between *ahamkāra* with its desire [*kāma*] (and its expressions, fear, anger, illusion [*bhaya*, *krodha*, *moha*], etc.) This is the biblical simplification of angels and devils, of the Good and the Bad. They care little that Indra killed Viśvarūpa and that the holy Prahlāda is an *asura*.

The anguish becomes dreadful, metaphysical, when the question of Good and Evil is transcended—or rather, when it is disclosed in its naked truth and no longer in the objective forms in which people have attempted to express its meaning and to demarcate it. The anguish over sheer being/not-being [*sat-asat*].

8. *Prahlāda*: son of the demon Hiranyakasipu, great devotee of Vishnu. *Bali*: son of Prahlāda, king of the demons, who was conquered by Vishnu in the form of Vamana (the dwarf). Bali is taken as an example of the tyranny of the ego, his father an example of devotion.

9. Allusion to the myth of the churning of the sea of milk in which the *devas* and the *asuras* tried to extract the nectar (*amrita*).

And people would like to have conceptual solutions—ready-made formulas like those that come out of a computer—for their problem: Christianity/Vedānta. The solution lies only in the original anguish of the person.

Why did Bhīshma and Drona remain in the army of the Kauravas?¹⁰ Was it not for the same reason that I do not surrender to the experience of depth? When will Arjuna deliver me, by tearing me away from myself?

A visceral attachment to the Christian *muthos*.

September 8

The formulas of the Creed, etc., evoke within me not so much "ideas", details of the history of salvation, as the impression on my psyche of these formulas at the time when they did not set me any fundamental question about interpretation. And that is why I have this "visceral" attachment to the Creed, to the rites, etc. Attachment to myself, who have formerly reacted in such and such a way to these formulas, rites, etc. My so-called attachment to the faith is an attachment to my own psychological/phenomenological continuity.

September 9

Pentecost inaugurates what is beyond religion. Christ lives in the Spirit, not in the Pope or in the formulas of the Creed.

Realization after 2000 years of the pentecostal era (purged of its Phrygianism-Montanism). The Church, a transitory form between the descent of the Spirit and humanity's realization of the mystery of the Spirit—until such time as human evolution should become capable of this purification (end of the neolithic age).

Christianity has been ossified into a religion.

That was useful, but its time is past.

The liberation by Christ—compare the liberation of the Upanishadic *rishis*—of the Buddha (despite some later degeneration). (Judaism and Islam, at what an elementary level in comparison!)

We must bring people today to recognize the Spirit, much more than the story of Jesus.

Are not the gospels all pointing towards this Spirit? The story of Jesus is for them at most a *launching pad*.

Jesus' second coming—that was Pentecost. Pentecost is the end of time.

September 10

The fundamental anguish of no longer being able to find one's 'bearings' in a faith that is woven into one's guts!

September 14

...The whole long history of salvation boils down to the blinking of an eye—a flash of lightning—an awakening. It has its conceptual, mythical and sociological form only for one who is not awakened...

10. Allusion to the war of the Mahābhārata.

But we should not wake up suddenly, cp. BU IV, 3, 14. The too hasty awakening of Kumbhakarna spelt ruin for him as well as for Ravana.¹¹
 (...)

October 18

The novice in Vedānta tries to imagine the non-existence of things—sadly, beginning with his own existence.

Ramana's teaching is that we should liberate ourselves first of all from the consciousness of our own existence. The rest follows as a bonus, or rather naturally.

No seeking myself, the self, at another level.

(...)

October 21

Pursuit of the Self. When I concentrate on the I (so to speak), it constantly tries to escape, to think of this or that, to think at least about the search for it on which I am engaged. For it has to relate itself to things...—everything of which it is the epiphenomenon; it cannot manage to detach itself from its matrix, from the womb from which it was born. So concentrate on this I without allowing it any escape, apart from every time, every place, every sign or manifestation [*linga*] whatever. There is nothing but the *aḥam*, timeless [*akāla*], nameless [*anāma*], formless [*arūpa*], indestructible [*adeśa-avyaya*], ...self-luminous [*svaprakāśa*, *svayamjyoti*].

There is no such thing as the grace of *such and such a saint*. The saint is one whose ego does not insert itself between the Spirit and the body [*śarīra*]. From his *śarīra*, liberated from all ego, the *śakti* is freely poured out over the whole earth [*bhūmi*], cp. CU III, 12:

'What Gayatrī¹² is, the earth is
 what the earth is, the body is
 what the body is, the heart is'¹³

Devotion to God, devotion to the guru [*Devabhakti*, *gurubhakti*], etc.: the thorn that is used to extract the thorn. Instead of looking at the I (see above), look at the guru, Krishna, Rāma, etc., identify with him, forget yourself (the neighbour in the Christian context). But make sure that the bondage [*bandha*] of self-centredness [*aḥamkāra*] be not simply transformed into bondage to the "thou" [*tvam-tva*], in which *aḥamkāra* expresses itself even more subtly and dangerously. Illustration: the coolie who carries the luggage to the train. Once in the train, who still thinks of the coolie?

11. The demon Ravana, enemy of the God Rāma, had a brother, Kumbhakarna, who used to sleep for six months. To get his support during the battle against Rāma, Ravana had him woken up, but this caused his death. (An episode in the Rāmāyana).
12. The most sacred *mantra* of the Vedas, an invocation to the Sun: "We meditate upon the glorious splendour/of the Vivifier divine./May he himself illuminate our minds!" (RV III, 62, 10; tr. *Vedic Experience*, p.38.)
13. Cp. CU III, 12, 1-4, which Abhishiktananda quotes and abridges: "The Gayatrī, indeed, is this whole universe, all that has come to be... What the Gayatrī is, that indeed the earth is also, for it is on the earth that this whole universe is established; it does not extend beyond it. What the earth is, that indeed the body in man is also... What the body in man is, that indeed the heart within man is also..." (*Vedic Experience*, pp.41-2)

October 22

The general mistake about Vedānta is to picture Vedantin life as something different, consisting of acts, attitudes, 'feelings', that would be different from the acts, 'feelings', attitudes of our so-called ordinary life. Most often people therefore picture an "acosmic" life. Whereas nothing changes or appears outwardly in the life of one who is realized. Jesus eats, drinks, weeps, gets tired. Poonja manages his mines. Janaka rules his kingdom.¹⁴ K.'s guru arranges the marriage of his children, etc. The realized person embraces his wife with as much love and joy as anyone else. Only, he is free, does not seek *himself*. The *gunas* [natural "qualities"] take the same pleasure, a pleasure that is even greater because it is pure [*śuddha*], not mixed with egotism, etc. But in everything that is not necessary (wife, *devas*, *pūjā*, etc.), he is free, *īlā* [play]. Even in the necessary things like eating, sleeping, there is no more than the physical need of the *gunas*, not the psychological need which *aḥamkāra*, egotism, has added to them.

Like the great fish of the Brihad Upanishad (IV, 3, 18), freely and as he pleases he skirts the borders of dreaming and wakefulness, he dives into the dreamless sleep [*sushupti*] of the river. Carried along by the Spirit, following the Spirit. Or else, according to another picture, following the *gunas* (but free). For the Spirit is the *śakti* that "animates" the *gunas*. It is human sin, our egotism, that deflects the *gunas* from the right path.

We want to try to understand the I that shines out beyond every I. But since it is uncaused [*an-upahitam*], it cannot be understood.

...The difficulty of *holding* the I in its source. Look for this source not in the *cakra* [yogic centre] of the eyes, which is objective—in the top of the skull [*sahasrāra*] perhaps—but especially in that place from which breath arises, "as it comes" [*agacchati iva*]—as Gñānānanda used to say.

For the past three months I have had a very strong impression of a prolongation of life, of a life now freely granted. Simply *life*, no longer for this or that, for these people or those people, and not even for myself. Simply Being [*sanmātra*]. Maybe that is needed in order to realize being, *sat*, independently of any goal, any reason for existing. It is [*asti*] without any prefix or suffix (being in, with, before, for, etc [*in-esse*, *co-esse*, *pre-esse*, *ad-esse*]), without any complement or any subject—*be-ing*, *being* [*san*, *sat*].

Ready for everything because not *preparing* oneself for anything. *Evamvid*, the one who knows thus, is freed from his knots, from his complexes. As in psychoanalysis, discovering existentially the psychological source of the knots¹⁵ that prevent the free flight of the psyche. There are in the Upanishads some "discoveries" that seem infinite (that of Sayuja Raikva).¹⁶ And these discoveries—connections—*upanishads*—are generally partial. But there is the discovery, the fundamental *upanishad*, either of

14. Janaka, a king at the time of the Upanishads. He taught Wisdom, even to Brahmins. He is quoted in Hindu tradition as the example of a liberated person (*jīvanmukta*) who, while being "established in Brahman", continues to fulfil his duties in the world.
15. i.e., the *hrīdayagranthi* [knots of the heart], see Glossary.
16. Cp. CU IV, 1-2.

everything [sarvam] (Brahman is sarvam), or of the Purusha—ultimately the source of that place [tat padam] (the supreme place).

October 23

Christianity and advaita

Neither opposition nor incompatibility—two different levels. Advaita is not something that conflicts with anything else at all. It is not a philosophy—but an existential experience [anubhava]. The whole formulation of Christianity is valid in its own order, the order of manifestation [vyāvahārika] (and so, provisional), and not of the Absolute [pāramārthika]. The Christian *darsana* [perception] is no doubt opposed to the Vedantin *darsana*, but this is merely the doctrinal level. No formulation, not even that of advaita, can claim to be *paramārtha*. The fact that Christianity has historically overstepped its limitations is another matter. Cp. my sustained thesis: Christianity = communication of an experience.

October 24

(...)

The Church to be built. Cells of people who follow the Gospel, who do not waste their time discussing whether they are more or less Christian than others, who turn the other cheek to those who excommunicate them, who give up their buildings to those who claim that they are theirs, etc., who live without seeking themselves, completely given to their brothers. Constantly comparing their lives with the Gospel, ready to give up house, family and life itself if their brother is in need. Not asserting themselves against anyone—humility [vinaya], gentleness [dīnta], real poverty. Not theologians but “theopraxians”, breaking bread in their homes together. “They will put you out of their synagogues”: you will not protest, you will not call their synagogue a synagogue of Satan. Not anti-establishment.

The controversy between Shankara and Rāmānuja is analogous to that between Arius and Athanasius. Like Rāmānuja, Arius would not admit that the unique mystery of Brahman could be at the same time unborn and born [a-ja and ja]. He has to invent another *brahman* who will then be a son, a creature, and thus will divide the indivisible being, *akhanda*.

From another aspect, the Trinity is the mystery of Brahman. What I said about it in *Sagesse* [Saccidananda] was simply taking the Christian system of thought as a point of reference.

(...)

November 18

The expression of the experience [anubhava] in the mind [manas] of Ramana Maharshi is certainly incompatible with the Christian faith. It follows that the Christian faith—with its variations—is only one expression among others of the *anubhava*.

The Vedantin secret should however remain closed and only be revealed to the *adhikarī* [competent, one who is authorized, initiated], otherwise people would take it for the stupid position of the Rāmākrishna

Mission and other Vedantin pedants—or else for the secularism that Vivekānanda often implies.

Not a rejection of the forms of every belief, every ethic, every rite—in the interest either of a specified experience (R.K. Mission) or of pure humanism. So long as I have not disappeared, it is vain and dangerous to speak so much about advaita.

However there comes a time when... one should be able to accept (one's) the *anubhava* and one should dare to awaken to it those who are ready, whatever may be the anguish and the heartbreak.

...The hermit must accept the Solitude of God. If he tries to fill up his solitude with *devas* or with the *devadeva*, the supreme god, he does not obtain the Supreme Abode [tatpadam nāpnoti]. (I should) accept the indescribable solitude of God, not manifested [avyakta], without a name [anāma], without sign [alakshana], and not fill my solitude with the thought of this solitude.

(...)

November 24

For several millennia humanity has, on the whole, expressed its religious perception around the archetype God [*theos*] (which little by little took the place of the much less definite archetype “gods” [*theoi*]), the culmination of the religious evolution of the neolithic era of humanity.

The archetype *theos* “functions” less and less well, at our end of the neolithic era, as a way of expressing, focussing, grounding, etc., the “religious sense” (a convenient term, even if questionable) of modern people. The modern atheist [*a-theos*] is only opposed to the archetype *theos*, and not to the *mystery* that is expressed through *theos*—except insofar as the official *theioi* (theists) have done all they could to mix up the mystery and the archetype.

Modern atheism should draw upon Vedānta—Sāmkhya, Buddhism, Taoism, etc., a transcendental atheism that seeks the mystery beyond *theos*—in the intuitions, for example, of Brahman, *ātman*, *sūnya*—*tao*—“original nature” in Zen (Zen's return to the *human being* is the recovery of the real, integral human being, and not simply the *epiphenomenon* of today's false atheism. The recovery of the Purusha.)

Such archetypes are not pure imagination. *Real projections* (cp. BU I,4, 6: Myself a mortal, I project the immortals).

Not the unreal image of a flat mirror,
but the *real* image of certain mirrors (for ex. the camera without which it could not be received on the film) (the magnifying glass) (real/virtual image).

Cp. *samashti* in Sāmkhya-Vedānta.¹⁷

On the same line, the archetype *theos-anthropos* [God-man], *hari-hara-Purusha* [God as union of Vishnu and Shiva-Human Being].

17. Collective existence, aggregate, totality (opposite of *vyashti*, differentiation, individual existence).

Having projected one's divinity [*theion*] on God [*theos*], it was necessary to fill the abyss, the intermediate space [*antariksha*]. To discover that this *Purusha*, contemplated in the sphere of God [*theos*], I am he! [*asau aham asmi*].

The *Purusha*, fully divine and fully human, not by adding together two natures, but because in its greatest depth *Purusha* is the Lord [*Īśvara*], discovery of Brahman.

Interesting article or lecture also on "super-imposition" on the natural human being in Zen, for example. A superimposed God, not the true God. The modern psyche refuses what is superimposed, something functional...

(...)

November 30

Advent. Waiting for God, but who is waiting for God? He is here, *iha*, before I wait for him. He is himself the One who waits. From where and when will he come? He is the Awakening itself.

Or else wait for the manifestation of God, wait—in time—for each new moment of time. Await each new ray of the sun, night, day, morning, evening. Await the flower that blossoms, the child that runs and sings, the glance of the passerby that meets mine.

An "eternal" waiting, always rewarded and always hungry. Hungry in its very fullness.

A waiting without haste, without desire [*kāma*]

desiring without desiring: *a-kāma*, *atmakāma*, *aptakāma*.¹⁸

Who is this Infinite "felt" in the unique and pure experience of myself—but known by myself, by my thought only in (not = through) its manifestation in space-time?

The *theos* is not a myth. It is my temporal way of reaching the Eternal.

To say that the unborn [*aja*] alone exists and that the Lord [*Īśvara*] is mythical, non-existent, is to make a dualism [*dvandva*] of Brahman/*Īśvara*, and hence to make Brahman evaporate.

The Brahman without characteristics [*nir-viśeṣa*] and the Brahman with characteristics [*saviśeṣa*] are not two. Thought is the indispensable means of living my experience as I; but this is not "other than" (*dvandva*) my experience of the I [*ahamanubhava*]. The *theos* of prayer or adoration is not a simple projection of my thought; it is the real image of the unborn [*aja*] which appears to me on the screen of the world.

December 1

The Mass is not for getting anything whatever—nor is communion, for I have everything from the moment I exist—, but it is like the expression of my being, like the expectation of and approach of the moment that comes in the moment that now is, in the same way as I draw breath in the power of this actual moment, bringing about also my presence to the moment which is coming.

18. Without desire, desire for the Self, every desire fulfilled, cp. BU IV, 3, 21; IV, 4, 6.

1971

The Swami of Christian India

THIS year was full of activity, but the travel, the bus journeys up to Gyansu and down again to the plains, became more and more tiring for Swamiji, and references to his "weariness" appear quite frequently in his correspondence. His book *Prayer* was reprinted for the third time, now in a revised form so as to be closer to the French version which appeared at the end of the year. He began work on the English edition of *Sagesse* (*Saccidananda*) in collaboration with James Stuart, a member of the "Brotherhood of the Ascended Christ" in Delhi, (an Anglican foundation, now belonging to the [united] Church of North India). During this year, as in 1970, several of his articles in French or English appeared in various periodicals. His important contribution to the October meeting of theologians on Evangelization at Nagpur was published in *Service and Salvation* (Bangalore 1973).

His great friends at the ashram of Jyotiketana left India in April to settle in Jerusalem. Swamiji was deeply affected by their decision and considered their departure as a betrayal of India, though later he came to understand their reasons for this choice. His meeting with the Japanese Dominican Shigeto Oshida filled him with joy. In October, at Delhi, he met Marc Chaduc for the first time, having been in correspondence with him since 1969. Marc soon became his fervent disciple. From Delhi they went to Rishikesh and Haridwar, where in November he helped Sister Térèse to settle (after a stay at Allahabad) in a room in Kankhal where she could live a hermit life.

His ideas were becoming more strongly articulated. In his Diary he used new words to express his intuitions. We might say that he was trying to throw out some more or less paradoxical formulas in order to see how they sounded to his ears.

A few dates in this year, one rich with personal contacts:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| January-February | Two months of travel in the North. Met Fr Oshida at Jyotiketana; they visited Rishikesh and Haridwar together. Two visits to Delhi. |
| 26 February | At Jyotiketana again, met Fr Augustine, a Capuchin, who was taking over the ashram. |
| 9 March | Returned to Uttarkashi with Murray Rogers. |
| March-April | Working on the English translation of <i>Sagesse</i> (<i>Saccidananda</i>). |

24 April	Left Uttarkashi. Visit to Delhi.
May	To Pune for a seminar of indologist-theologians. Visited Bombay. Stayed at Indore. Visited Delhi.
End(?) of May	Returned to Uttarkashi.
20(?) August	Left Uttarkashi for Vārānasi.
9(?) September	Returned to Uttarkashi.—Visited by Fr Chacko Valliaveetil, S.J.
1 October	Left Uttarkashi.
6-12 October	At Nagpur, seminar on evangelization.
14-31 October	Stayed at Delhi, met Marc Chaduc (on the 21st), newly arrived in India; then took him to Haridwār with Minoru Kasai, a Japanese friend; then to Rishikesh.
1-11 November	At Rishikesh, Rajpur, Haridwār (Sister Térèse installed), Rishikesh, Phūlchatti (small Hindu ashram in the Himalayas) with Marc.
15-28 November	Delhi, Haridwār (visited Sister Térèse).
1-4 December	At Rishikesh, Haridwār.
5 December	Returned to Uttarkashi.

* * * *

Haridwar**January 4**

There is no awakening, *prabodha*. *Nityajāgrat*, the eternal awakening! An eternal state of 'awareness', of *awakening*, of wakefulness, without beginning or end [*anādyananta*].

The question of Redemption, etc. with regard to awakening: false problems. Only from the viewpoint of manifestation—of becoming—at the level of causality. At the level of *jāgrat*, no causality is possible.

(...)

January 15

Christ is too great to be reduced to his expression in the New Testament and the Church.

Uttarkashi**April 1**

Easter. The Church the *koinonia* [communion] of the redeemed, of those who have entered the Kingdom, of those who are led by the Spirit. But there cannot be a *koinonia* of the awakened. For who could speak in the plural of the awakened? The plural can only be spoken of at the level of ideas and things. There is no plural in the trinitarian mystery. The awakened are only different from one another in relation to the dream from which they awake.

May 20

The advaitin experience is not an idea, a theory, with which other ideas, for example Christian theology, would eventually have to be harmonized. It is a new consciousness, a new level of consciousness, in which all ideas are seen as if for the first time.

Do not try to re-interpret Christianity on the basis of an advaitic theory. Nevertheless formulations surely depend precisely on the mental level at which they are formulated.

June 13

The Presence is so brilliant, so dazzling, that one has no need to perceive anything in order to feel it, not even the person and the work of Christ. And this is the dilemma of the Christian who has been dazzled by the advaitin presence, i.e., the presence one-without-a-second [*ekam-eva-advitīya*], revealed [*aparoksha*].

However, there is one who is dazzled, and one who can no longer see anything...

And that is precisely the mystery of Christ. Christ is not one whom I can no longer see—for then Christ would be an object, the object of my eyesight; and God cannot be, either in his mystery or in his manifestation, the object of my looking. God is the One Who—the subject *eka-eva-advitīya*. And Christ is God who looks at himself, in the mystery of his manifestation. And I am this Watcher, unique, non-dual [*eka, advaita*], who only sees the Self.

The presence is there, here, dazzling. The saint is one who *accepts* this presence. The ordinary person lives immersed in it, but has not integrated it into his consciousness any more than does a plant or an animal. The human being is a being capable of mystery—*capax mysterii*. Capable of recognizing this Presence, of integrating it into his consciousness of being, and by that very fact capable of giving his consciousness its definitive dimension.

Jesus is the One who wholly accepted this Presence, who was nothing more than the very Consciousness of this Presence—and in this he is God—the One in whom God expresses himself, the perfect manifestation of this Presence, the Image of God, the splendour of his glory [*imago Dei, splendor gloriae ejus*; cp. Heb.1:3].

The Eucharist is the integration of the entire cosmos, matter and human consciousness, into this total Presence in Jesus.

...The prophets of Israel projected this Presence. Jesus interiorized it. He identified it with himself.

June 15

The Spirit is this cosmic, universal, impalpable presence. It assumes a face in every human face that reflects a consciousness.

July 2

Ever since my youth, I have viewed with a kind of unconscious envy those who did not believe or who were educated outside all belief. On the one hand there was a superiority complex in regard to them, those "poor unbaptized people", but just as much an inferiority complex. I did not, for example, envy their moral freedom, but, as I would describe it today, I envied their *autonomy*, in the noblest sense of the word. It seemed to me that they possessed something of which I was ignorant and which I did not have.

This impression and this envy was transferred here to the saints of Vedānta. The ideal which is most profoundly mine—the one to which unconsciously everything in me is referred—is that of *Ramana*—such a perfect example of Vedānta—and this ideal of *Ramana* would not have been able to root itself at such a depth in my psyche if it had not encountered a call already expressed, a ‘surfacing’, an “awakening”.

The catholic nature of Christianity is so terribly contradictory. How can true universality go along with a precise formulation—or else at best with the ‘trends’, the most fundamental archetypal thrusts of the human race, at least those that dominate the period of humanity within which we have been evolving since, perhaps, the end of the palaeolithic era. How can the absolute particularize itself?

As I have written on several occasions, what prevents the majority of human beings from “profiting” from the revelation of the mystery of Jesus is the fact that the mass of believers in Jesus presume to reduce Jesus to the Judeo-Greek forms of their understanding, and thus to deprive him of his universality and his real “divinity”, despite their clear-cut dogmatic formulations.

The divinity of Jesus is essentially his “divine transparency”. God, the Absolute, cannot be reduced or scaled down to a point in time. He is rather the *limiting-point* of history and of duration, that to which this duration tends but which always escapes it—when he is contemplated from the standpoint of time, from within duration... The day of Yahweh could only bring time to an end. And this is precisely how the first disciples understood the role—and the time—of Jesus the Messiah. The fact that time did not come to an end with the exaltation of Jesus has given rise to all the subsequent prevarications of theology.

Jesus in the flesh is the temporal and temporary manifestation of the divine mystery. After his Passover (Death-Resurrection-Ascension) he disappears in the Father—in Human Beings—in the Spirit, i.e., in the Trinity. In the trinitarian mystery (which is the mystery of reciprocal relationship [*paraspara*] in being) Jesus does not exist separately. He is at the apex of the manifestation [*avirbhava*], of the *vyakti*.

...Loyalty to a tradition is a psychological/mythical means of living in loyalty to oneself—for the deepest aspect of one’s being, of the psyche, is necessarily lived under the archetype of the “primordial”, of the *earlier* in time. And a sudden discovery risks making everything explode—with bits that would break up and be lost all over the solar system or the Milky Way.

Dogmas have the value of *upāsana*¹, including the fundamental dogmas of the divinity of Christ and of his trinitarian pre-existence. They are all

1. *Upāsana*, literally, to be seated close to, within reach, and hence, to serve, and also, giving respect, homage, adoration. Dogmas have a ritual value, as one might express his meaning: they are channels through which the act of the believer passes in order to come to the reality, *ad rem*, as St Thomas Aquinas said. Cp. *Summa Theol.* II-II, q.1, a.2, ad 2. Cp. also the entry for 30 April 1973, and the essay in *Intériorité*, “Upāsana on the Trinity”.

“detours” which prepare for the *awakening*. Not so much detours, as tracks going round the mountain, which climb up in a spiral toward the peak.

Christian theology has made a *deva* out of Jesus and so out of God. But *devas* are the wall that prevents the direct vision [*sakshātkara*] of the Mystery of *brahman-atman*. As soon as the Purusha is a *deva*, he also feeds on the human person (BU I, 4). Hence I must eat him myself, “I who am food eat the eater of food” [*aham annam annam adantam admi*, TU III, 10, 6]. Hence I must identify myself with this *Purusha*.

However, do we not have to do violence to the Gospel in order to explain the message of Jesus in this way, i.e. in relation to the experience [*anubhava*] of the Upanishads? First of all, John and Paul are already rather specific interpretations of Jesus. Even the synoptics thought about Jesus on the basis of their Jewish concepts, and before that Jesus had expressed his own mystery in terms of the Old Testament ideas that were most common in his time: the Son of Man, the suffering Servant.

The message of the Buddha, no matter how eminently practical it is, does not escape the mark of its time—nor does that of *Ramana*. Yet there is in the Indian form of the message a universality which no Jewish form of thought could equal—and no more could any Greek form of thought, established as it was on the concept [*eidōs*].

The Vedantin experience has an uncompromising purity, as incomprehensible and remorseless as hell. I mean ideas that people handle without suspecting their explosive nature, thanks to the notional coating that removes their danger.

The experience of the Self rules out any projection, of whatever “shadow” there may be. In time, backwards or forwards, for example. The so-called “last things”—a heaven to achieve “tomorrow”. All projection in one or other of the three grammatical persons. The I of this experience is a transcendental I, not an I that confronts or alternates with others. All projection of myself in an “other”, “God”, a *detour* which bypasses me and prevents me from finding myself. All *mental framework* (*grille*) for interpreting the data of phenomenal experience: *deva*, without/with qualities [*nirguna/saguna*], etc....; the same applies to the Church, the mystical body [*ecclesia mystikon soma*].

...The awakening to God is inseparable from the awakening to oneself. The first statement of the (prophetic) message is not God is (in the beginning, *en archē*...), or God said to me, but *I am*. Is not this *aham asmi* the *verbum*, the *logos* of John? *En archē*, in the primordial mystery, not so much imagined in some time—unless it be a symbolic time enabling it to enter (and be conceived) in the categories of our space—and no more than the *agre* [in the beginning] of the Upanishads (is imagined in time). *Archē*, the origin, the starting point of my consciousness. In this starting point is the Word, the *aham asmi* of the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad I, 4, the primordial expression of this *archē*, “principle”. This principle is thought, conceived as “earlier”, as primordial to this Word. Just as the spring cannot be identified with the trickle of water that flows from it. I cannot hear the Word of God

that would tell me that he is, that would tell me of him: "I AM" (as on Horeb) without having first heard out of the depth of this "archē" the word that reveals me to myself. If the *I am* that I hear as if said by this God comes *after*, then this "I am" cannot be God's. If God is that Being to whom nothing is either earlier or superior—as the Bible says (or even later or inferior, as the Upanishad says)—then he is in this very *I am* in which I awaken to myself. And it is not satisfactory to say that he is the "cause", the *substratum*. No, nothing can escape this *parama*, this Supreme Being. This *I am*, this awakening to myself, is the very awakening of God to himself (paradoxical use here of the 3rd person). This awakening is at once within time and outside time. It is the awakening to a level that is in no way measurable by time.

It is in this Word *aham* heard in the depth of myself that the whole world was made, exists, subsists: the five elements, time, the human senses, the human body, etc... (all in view of this awakening, all a means to the awakening, all an ascent towards the awakening). This *aham asmi* is the light of everything [*phos, jyotih*], the life of everything [*vita, bios, prānah*]. Beyond all darkness, *tamasah parastat*.²

This I AM [*aham asmi*] was made flesh [*sarx egeneto*].

Christ is the total transparency of this *aham asmi* to which I awaken at the source of my consciousness. Christ—if he has any value for me—is the very mystery of this awakening to myself.

He is the one who is totally awakened, even in his body [*deha-jāgarita*] (*deha* includes the *manas*).

Christ is the "symbol" *par excellence* of this awakening—but there are also Krishna, Rāma, Shiva, Buddha...

Christ is the revelation of my *aham*, of my mutual relationship [*paraspara*] with every consciousness, every awakening. Each person is the absolute, singular and unique, and everywhere each one is relative to the other. Each person comes from the other, each person is born of the other.

...Each prophet is transcendently "one". They can only be "counted" within a given psycho-spiritual setting, for example the *avatāras* of Vishnu, the prophets of Israel. Vishnu in his different *avatāras* and Christ are not two, any more than they make three with Buddha. Each of them on his own account is totally transparent to the mystery, with the slight differences entailed by the particular circumstances of his appearance.

The problem of numbering only arises when the prophets are interpreted under the category of *devas*. Do Krishna, Rāma remain? No, I think, they return to the unique Vishnu. As for Christ, he disappears in his return—immersed, absorbed [*IIna*] in the triad: God, the human brother, the Spirit; immersed in Brahman [*brahmaIIna*], immersed in human beings [*naraIIna*], immersed in the *atman* [*ātmalIna*].

...So long as Christ—at least within a closed cultural zone, a world [*oikumenē*], a "galaxy"—was accepted as the central point of the world's history (and later of its evolution), the problem of the individual

2. Cp. SU III, 8.

consciousness in relationship to the person of Christ did not in practice present itself. The main problem was about the fidelity of the existing tradition (represented by the official Church) to his person and his message. "Social pressure" (indeed in the best sense of the word) imposed the form "Christ" on the consciousness as soon as it awoke to itself. The few dissidents have now become a multitude, even within the traditional cultural zone of Christianity, not so much challenging Christ in his mission as one sent by God, or as Son of God—but rather as being either some kind of special divine intervention in history, or else as the very presence of a separate God: *a-theiotes*.³

Then there came the discovery of other cultural galaxies which had reached spiritual peaks without any connection with the biblical Revelation and whose mental frameworks are not able to integrate the Judeo-Hellenic Christ of the Christian tradition.

(...)

July 11

...Is not the Eucharist an *open* sacrament? Open to every *believer*, i.e., to whoever is committed to the service of the human community [*koinonia*] and recognizes in the Eucharist the Sign of this *koinonia*. Is it necessary for this "believer" to give the name of Christ to this sign-symbol, at least in the theological terminology that has become explicit in the course of the centuries of Church history?

July 22

This unnerving discovery, every time new, like an awakening, always the same and always new! that what I had projected into a sphere that was divine, eternal, etc..., which I had adored, loved, etc.,—is my own mystery: "That Person yonder (in the sun)—I am he!" [*yo'sāvasau purusha so'ham asmi*].⁴

July 24

Whether I like it or not, I am deeply attached to Christ Jesus and therefore to the *koinonia* of the Church. It is in him that the "mystery" has been revealed to me ever since my awakening to myself and to the world. It is in his *image*, his *symbol*, that I know God and that I know myself and the world of human beings. Since I awoke here to new depths in myself (depths of the self, of the *atman*), this symbol was marvellously developed. Christian theology had already revealed to me the eternity of the mystery of Jesus in the bosom of the Father [*in sinu Patris*]. Later India revealed to me the cosmic wholeness of this mystery—this revelation, the total manifestation [*vyakti*] of the mystery, within which the Jewish revelation finds its place. The immeasurable Christ, higher than the heavens, and also

3. *a-theiotes*: literally, non-divinity. Perhaps implying the denial of Christ's divinity as the dissidents' position.

4. "He who is yonder—that man yonder—I myself am He!" (Iśa U 17; tr. *Vedic Experience* 831). See above, entries for 10 November 1966 and 18 October 1968.

infinitely close, as in the vision of P.[Poonja].⁵ Moreover I recognize this mystery, which I have always adored under the symbol of Christ, in the myths of Nārāyana, Prajāpati, Shiva, Purusha, Krishna, Rāma, etc. The same mystery. But for me, Jesus is my *sadguru*. It is in him that God has appeared to me; it is in his *mirror* that I have recognized myself, in adoring him, loving him, consecrating myself to him.

Jesus not the founder-head of a religion; that came later. Jesus is the *guru* who announces the mystery.

July 25

They would like me to go and teach them a delightfully titillating Hindu gnosis.⁶ I have only one message, the message of the *Absolute*. It is the same message that Jesus and all the seers have taught: the direct encounter with death, Yama, with God. The total nakedness of this encounter—with no longer either evil or good [*na papa na punyam*]. No merit, pure mercy, says the Christian. But all religions accompany this message with a gloss and a gnosis, and thus the turning-back-on-self recovers its pasture. And we again become the food of death [*mrityu*]. -

Those famous “adaptations” are at the level of the gloss/gnosis. They are entertaining and delay our making contact with the real.

God is this Absolute, this Death. No one can see him and still live. For the sight of him strips away all clothing, mental and sociological. So long as God is a *deva* who pets us or punishes us, he is not God.

Accept oneself in the *eschatological* context of death.

Death, the Absolute, God, finally remove our alienation.

The monks, priests and others, who are needed by the Church and by all the *dharma*s and by humanity as a whole, are the witnesses to the *eschaton*, to *mrityu*—those who bear the marks of being burnt by their meeting with Yama-*mrityu*.

The message of the Absolute, you want it wrapped up in the exotic poetry of the Himalayas—in the soporific or intoxicating gnosis of India, or of Greek theosophy. ‘I preach only the cross of the Lord’ [*Predico tantum crucem Domini*]⁷—the meeting of the Lord with the Cross and with death, the meeting of Naciketas with *mrityu* [cf. KathU].

(...)

August 13

Two basic experiences in Christianity:

(1) The experience of Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan. There he discovered the mystery of his “personal” vocation.

(2) The experience of the Apostles who discovered him to be alive after his death/resurrection.

Two “visions” at the root of Christianity.

5. See for this Swami Abhishiktananda (1995), p.239, 242.

6. He is probably referring to an invitation to give some lectures on “initiation into Vedānta” at a “Christian Yoga Club” in Canada, and to other invitations in Europe, which he refused.

(...)

August 22

One can only abandon the conciliar formulas when the *divine myth* of the human being is recognized. Divinity derived not from an ontological relationship, but from the mystery of the *I*.

September 20

An Indian theology, freed from thinker [*mantā*] and doer [*kartā*], from thought [*noēma*] and action [*poiēma*]. A theology of becoming oneself. The Trinity: becoming oneself in reciprocal relationship [*paraspara*].

(...)

December 9

“I must disappear”: the Word is only understood in the Silence of the Spirit.

December 11

(...)

...I do not have to teach either Hindu ideas or Christian ideas, either gnostic ideas or Vedantic ideas; I only have to awaken people, simply with the help of what the disciple already knows, while deepening it.

The problem of Hinduism-Christianity is a theoretical one. I do not have to resolve it intellectually, either for myself or still less for others.

Besides, is this a problem that can really be solved? Every theological problem arises out of a particular faith, as R. Panikkar correctly points out. The problem of Hinduism-Christianity will be seen and studied in a different way depending on whether you place yourself within the Christian or the Hindu formulation of the mystery.

There is no such thing as an unformulated faith. Vedānta when formulated already goes beyond the *advaitin* intuition, and thus becomes itself also a limited faith-concept. Still more, here reason is left behind.

...The solitude of one who has found God, for there is no longer any God to be with: God is only with himself and one who has found God exists only in the Self. It is the Self that he finds everywhere, in God, in his fellow human beings. Just as it is his very Self, *atmanam*, that the Father finds in the Son and the Spirit, and vice versa. And to discover oneself everywhere, what a draining out of oneself it is, what an emptying, *kenosis*. Everything is taken away from me. Supreme solitude, which is supreme emptiness, for how can the one who is Alone still define himself; no coordinates left by which to situate himself.

Every theology, like every institution (canon law) depends on a system of thought and a social system, that is, on conceptual and sociological formulations (no-emes and socio-emes), on archetypal drives whose emergence is strictly conditioned by the constantly shifting impetus of human groups as they are situated in time and space.

A thorough liberation from these dogmatic and canonical formulations takes place once the believer has the intuition of “pure faith”, of the pure consciousness of himself, for example.

(...)

December 12

The experience of dying (= of disappearing within the consciousness that one has of oneself) is beyond the reach of a person who is alive and conscious. He can only imagine it, on the basis of the experience of his present consciousness, and it is the same with what we call beyond death, heaven, hell, etc. Even the Seer—even Jesus himself—who lives at the same time in what is beyond death and in what is on this side of death, one who is liberated while still alive [*jivanmukta*], is restricted in his language to the contingencies of his phenomenal consciousness and his mental structures. He can only speak in “parables”. And only those who have already discovered the Kingdom are in a position to understand the parables of the Kingdom.

...Why these ceaseless mental arguments about: Where should I settle? Should I go to Europe? Should I try to be available to others? How to solve the problem of Vedānta-Christianity? Simply be, through each expression of my existence: looking at the sun, the Ganges, the mountain, the fire that I kindle, the meal that I eat, the book that I read...

To whom should I surrender myself totally: to the Spirit, to the Self, the solutions will come when needed... What to answer will come at the right time, and what must be decided will be decided spontaneously.

...God is unique for Jesus, and God is unique for me. Jesus is the only-begotten [*monogenes*] and I am the *monogenes*. Each person is as unique for the Father as Jesus is. The difference of Jesus from other human beings is the same as that of each human being from the others. And yet it is meaningless to speak of others collectively.

December 14

(...)

My message has nothing to do with any *dharma* whatever. That is true for every message from the depth. The Upanishadic message is still dependent in its formulation on its vedico-brahmanic roots but it is self-luminous, *svaprakāśa*; it reveals the very light of the depth. It reflects it.

The gospel message, likewise, is not bound to the Jewish world in which it was revealed. Its universal, ontic value burns up and melts the wax cells of the Judeo-Greek world in which its honey is stored. It is the very echo of the depths of the human heart: the message of love, of mutual giving, of Relationship. The message of the divine status of the human being. The Upanishadic message has moulded the mind of India, and the gospel message that of the West, through channels that are increasingly distant from the Source and in increasingly muddied waters.

Return to the Source and place the human person (disabled by the *devas*, by religious alienation and super-imposed sacredness) face to face with himself, with his own depth. Have him discover that “he is” at a greater depth than any form and any analysis, even existential.

A being for death, yes, that is, what he is [*da-sein*]; but precisely in this realization he discovers himself as ontically “beyond”, as Brahman, Sat, Being, beyond all; himself, *atman*, beyond all. He is I, AHAM! So no more laws, no, no more obligations, no more knots. Pure spontaneity. Pure Spirit. But this freedom must not become another knot. Clothing is a knot, an alienation, but nakedness is that just as much. Spontaneity has no form, not even the refusal of form.

(...)

December 21

Anniversary—36th—of my ordination. Consecrated for a “ministry”. But a ministry that extends beyond its so-called ecclesial manifestations. A ministry at the service of the *mystery*, the revelation of the Mystery. Revelation to human beings of their own personal mystery and also of the total mystery, the mystery in itself; what is called God or the Deity... The monk disappears, passes into the mystery. The priest reveals this mystery. But who can truly reveal it without being lost in it?

There is the priest at the level of rites, and there is the priest at the level of the Spirit. Ramana, every guru, is a priest in spirit and truth [*in spiritu et veritate*].

The *dharma*s are contradictory to one another. Mutual dialogue between them can never be anything but superficial. Otherwise it would make them all explode by releasing in them the level of the Spirit. Each *dharma* is based on a particular faith. It challenges the ultimate authority of human reason (the philosophical level). There is therefore no authority that is capable of deciding between them. Each of them judges the others on the basis of his particular “Faith”. Can one reach a “faith” that is not particularized?

No doubt the answer is No, for every expression of faith particularizes it and makes it into “another” *dharma*.

But there is the level of the Spirit. At the level of the Spirit every *dharma* explodes. But that should not be said, for the Spirit is an “experience” and not a “theme”. And as soon as you speak of it, it becomes a theme, and the listener confuses this theme with the experience.

(...)

December 23

In the Indian context (I am thinking of the case of R.⁷) I do not see why “evangelization”, i.e., the direct or indirect proclamation of the mystery revealed in Jesus, should necessarily lead to insertion into a Christian sociological group. The missionary effort essentially aims at raising the spiritual level of humanity, of each human being, to make him realize his encounter with God at the heart of the single, non-dual mystery. A realization that will lead to the “conversion” of his relationships with God and his brothers.

7. Ramesh, a young Hindu disciple attracted by Christ.

December 24

Lord, who are you? do you exist? I can go no further. Are you other than this brother in whose face my face is reflected?

Are you some other "thing" than the water, the earth, the fire and everything that is made of "them"?

The *grund* [Ground] which is in the depth of myself, in the depth of everything—is it a face, is it a Thou that sees itself as myself, an I who makes me to be in addressing me?

Are you other than this mystery, this Brahman, in the depth of myself, of everything? I mean, are you other than a sheer mystery that cannot be named? This I, this You, is it a projection of myself, a final effort to preserve myself over against you? Are you *Īsvara* [Lord]? Are you Purusha? Are you Krishna? Are you Jesus? Are you something other, other than myself?

In that light which is beyond the darkness, do you still appear? Or else have you disappeared in the light? Or are you the very light that surrounds me, that permeates me, that absorbs me?

The Logos appears only long enough to light up the descent into the cave: *guhā*. Then there exists only the one who is within (*guhāntara*) and who is the within itself...

...No theology of the Spirit is possible. *Theos*, that is the Father, that is the Source, that is the Depth, that is the Brahman who becomes *theos* in the *logos* itself. But beyond the *logos* there is nothing that can be spoken.

And the true knowledge of the Logos is in the not-declared, the not-declarable, which is the Spirit! the Within! not the within of anything whatever, but simply the within of all that appears...

In the depth of the inner cave [*guhā*] there is no name and equally no non-name, neither Shiva nor Jesus!

(...)

Jesus is that mystery that 'grounds' me, that 'sources' me, in the abyss, in the bottomless *guhā*—the mystery (as we say) of the Father—and extends me, pours me out [*expendit*] into all that is. The Spirit, the *prāna*, who makes me the Self within everything [*antarātman*⁸, *sarvantarātma*]—spread out into everything, lost just as truly in this expansion that infinitely multiplies me as agent, as in this 'source-action', that infinitely reduces me, to be ultimately identical to zero...

This same mystery is Jesus, who awakens me, springing up from the Father-Source and poured out in the Spirit, offered naked on the Cross, stretched out, arms extended, without any turning in on himself, all outpouring...all gift, all eucharistic bread, broken and given, in order to be given, to be eaten and to become the other...

A being lost in my source, a being lost in my fulfilment. And in this very loss, I am...

Jesus is this mystery of advaita in which I can no longer recognize myself separately. Lost as much in the space [*ākāśa*] of the heart as in that

8. The inner Self. Cp. *MaitU* VI, 1:

of the span of the universe, as much in the Source as in the shining, the radiance that empties me.

And I am Fullness, *purnam*, precisely in this letting-go of myself everywhere, *sarvatra*...

And my *pūrnām* is precisely this emptiness of all self.
The kenosis of Christ!

As long as I ask myself if I ought to obey the Church or not, etc., this itself is the proof that I am not living at the level where there are no obligations.

As long as the *dvandva* of ought/ought-not subsists, the level of freedom has not been reached.

If God were not an I, how could I myself be an I? At the root of my I, there is ultimately the I of God. And so if God is I, I am the Thou that he says to himself—that he says to me.

The question is not of knowing if the incarnation of Christ is unique or privileged, etc. These are theoretical *ati-praśna*⁹. What counts is the burning presence of Christ within me, that is, Faith. And when that burning presence is there, the mental theme through which the intellect thinks about it matters little. And the same for the Trinity. The concepts are secondary. But am I scorched by my eternal origin from the Father [*a Patre*]? Am I "engulfed" in that non-dual Source, have I passed from my (animal) solipsism to the encounter I/Thou with each of the human faces that look at me? Now that has an eternal value.

The Trinity has no trace of a *trimūrti* (threefold form), whether abstract or concrete, speculative or mythical; it is an eternal circumincession with my Source, it is my eternal outpouring in the unique *prāna*.

(...)

December 28

The Gospel gives God's face, the Upanishad his mystery, or rather the immediacy of this mystery. Without doubt there is no divine image adored by human beings that is as pure as that of Jesus.

(...)

9. Illegitimate questions. Cp. *BU* III, 6; *PraśnU* III, 2.



Mass with Marc beside the Ganges

1972

The Guru Finds his Disciple

FOR Swamiji, and in the view of other people at that time, Shantivanam was a failure. In fact Shantivanam was reborn in an unforeseen form and developed in a different direction from that envisaged by its founders. At first, Fr Bede came to Shantivanam as a delegate of the ashram at Kurisumala founded by Francis Āchārya. Later, Shantivanam developed into a large and flourishing ashram, welcoming seekers of spirituality from all parts of the world. But Swamiji did finally succeed. He did not found a monastery but he did “father” a disciple. Marc was to have a marked influence on him, by recalling to him the ideal of *sannyāsa*.

Abhishiktananda left his hermitage at Gyansu at the beginning of the year; he returned only for a quick visit and one short stay in the middle of the year, and did not come back again until the end of December. The first months of the year were full: he stayed with a young disciple in Delhi, with Sister Térése at Haridwar, with the Carmelites at Gumla (Bihar).

In March and April, he spent a month at Poona for a session at the Christa Prema Seva Ashram. In May, at Phūlchatti, he and Marc studied the Upanishads together for three weeks. This retreat was an intense spiritual experience for both of them. Then he went to the Centre at Rajpur for the first “School of Prayer”. In August he underwent a minor operation at Indore.

During this year, he drafted his “Introduction to the Upanishads”, of which a translation was published in 1975 in *The Further Shore* and later the French original in *Initiation à la spiritualité des Upanishads* (1979).

Encouraged, or rather stimulated by Marc, he reconsidered his ideas on *sannyāsa*, on *advaita*, on Hinduism and Christianity. He sought to transcend them all. He was more and more absorbed by the experience of “I am”.

Towards the end of December he received an invitation to the Asian Monastic Congress to be held the following year in Bangalore. He wrote an article for this event (“Experience of God in Eastern Religions”), but reacted violently against the spirit that animated this kind of meeting, and refused to take part. Two months before his death, from the clinic at Indore, he wrote on 6 October 1973 to R.P.:

“So you will be at the monastic *summit* at Bangalore [October 14-22]. I do not believe in (the possibility of) developing a real

monasticism here by means of institutions. It can only be a matter of charismatic vocations. In the name of the P.M. I invited the president of the Sivananda Ashram, Swami Chidanandaji, a man whom I greatly love and esteem. He promised to go if he is free. But he told me that it was not the place for me... That has consoled me for having been perhaps a bit rude in refusing to go there—especially to go by air in order to bear witness to a poor and charismatic monasticism; in any case my 'coronary attack' abruptly removed all possibility of my going.

"What must be said to them is what I wrote in the paper that I sent in January: if an Indian Christian feels the call of the 'Desert', he will have to join the unknown hermits of the Himalayas in order to receive the spirit of Anthony, Hilarion, Arsenius and the others..."

During this year of intense activity he stayed with a variety of people. We can single out a few important dates:

10 January	Left Uttarkashi. Stayed at Haridwar (visiting Sister Térèse); in the suburbs of Delhi (Shahdara, with Ramesh), while working on the translation of <i>Sagesse</i> (<i>Saccidananda</i>).
30 Jan.-17 Feb.	Stayed at the Carmel in Gumla; stopped at Varanasi.
15-18 February	In Delhi with Ramesh.
26 Feb.-6 March	At Kankhal (visiting Sister Térèse), Haridwar.
Mid-March- mid-April	At Pune, Christa Prema Seva Ashram.
15-18 April	In Delhi (<i>Saccidananda</i>).
19-20 April	At Haridwar.
21-28 April	Visited Uttarkashi because of a burglary at his hermitage.
28-30 April	At Rishikesh.
1-20 May	At Phulchatti with Marc. Pentecost Night at Rishikesh (20-21), "Upanishad of fire".
22-26 May	At Rajpur, first "School of Prayer."
28 May	Returned to Uttarkashi; on June 7, he had an attack of breathlessness.
7 July	Left Uttarkashi for a stay at Rajpur with Marc. Visited at Rajpur by his niece, Agnes, with her fiancee.
12 August	Arrived at the clinic in Indore.
15-20 September	In Delhi.
20 Sept.-early Dec.	Convalescing at Rajpur; Marc, Ajit (a seminarian), and other friends join him for intense study.
4-9 December	In Delhi (<i>Saccidananda</i>); Haridwar, Rishikesh with Murray Rogers, who brought the English translation of <i>Guru and Disciple</i> for his approval.

* * * *

(...)

Poona, C.P.S. Ashram

March 31

Good Friday. The Cross: at this point, the Purusha is no longer enough to explain the mystery of Jesus, nor the mystery of the human being at its greatest depth.

Nor is the *sadguru*.

The Purusha is not sacrificed for the world's salvation. He does not suffer—Jesus suffers.

Neither Shiva nor Krishna nor Rama suffer for their brothers, and neither human suffering nor human sin are taken seriously. They are something that one has to pass beyond rather than to shoulder. In Christian thought, evil and sin are means of salvation. The disciple of Jesus takes part in the suffering of the world, is 'involved' in it.

...The disciple of Jesus does not 'boast' that in the Cross he knows some higher secret of wisdom. He lives in conformity with his experience of the Cross and in all humility he gives an account of it to anyone who asks him.

April 2

'Who can bridge the abyss between man and God—man made for God inexorably, and inexorably as well man unable of reaching God through any one of his faculties, senses, mind!'

Grace, is the answer of both the Christian and the *bhakta*.

"tan yo vrinute..." says the Katha Upanishad II, 23².

The *brahmavid*, the one who knows Brahman, (or rather the *mumukshu*, the one who desires salvation, 'full of' faith [*śraddhā*], and his guru, the *brahmavid*), know that only beyond oneself and beyond God can God and oneself meet and be found. There is an observer [*sākshī*], a witness who is more basic than any I and than any "God", but this secret is hidden from the *devas*, as Yama says to Naciketas.

Grace is simply the call from the within as if from an other: *anyatra-iva*.

The deepest Self appears as an other, as a guru, as a *deva*, as *Īvara*, so long as the flash of recognition [*abhijñāna*] has not yet shone forth.

The human being is 'shallow' [superficial] so long as this deep consciousness has not yet been attained. How many excellent people remain indefinitely on the spiral path, unable to get its meaning. One feels that they are identified with the 'happenings' of their lives, without distance from themselves.

Jesus has still only been understood by Christians as the *guru* who is other—*anya iva*—, as the Purusha, Creator, Sacrificer, Saviour. Only too rarely has the flash of "That art Thou" [*tat tvam asi*] shone forth and the I am! [*aham asmi*] sprung up spontaneously.

Like many others U. has felt that, but she explains it in academic terms: Jesus, the man whom people have divinized. And what is then said at the level of language is false, for that does not convey the experience any better than the expression "Jesus is God" of the Christian tradition.

1. This sentence is in English in the original.

2. "He is to be obtained only by the one whom He (the atman) chooses." (Hume)

Jesus Man, and Jesus God—these are still dualities [*dvandvas*]. The experience, truth [*satyam*], being [*sat*], is beyond *dvandvas*.

Concepts are dualistic and therefore falsify everything that they claim to express about what is beyond *dvandvas*. The *dvandva*: Man/God in Jesus to start with; the *dvandva*: sin/virtue, salvation/damnation. When Naciketas asks Yama what is beyond religious law and irreligion [*dharmā/adharma*]³, beyond made and not made [*kṛita/akṛita*], etc., Yama simply answers with OM! Truth cannot be formulated, at least at the luminous apex where all its splendour is concentrated. It can only be *abhikṛipta*, integrated, experienced, received [*upalabdha*]³—in the sense that the mind is wholly “passive”. No role for the intellect as agent. No *mental framework (grille)* for one’s reading. The simplest words simply accepted, without any work of the intellect to emphasize any point whatever in the cone of harmonics that constitutes them. Somewhat as I would like the few words of a meditation to be received in silence.

April 8

Christianity is neither knowledge [*jñāna*], nor devotion [*bhakti*], nor ethics and ritual [*karma*]³—nor is it duty, religion [*dharma*] (formulas, institutions). It is an explosion of the Spirit. It accepts any religious basis (*jñāna/bhakti/karma*) to the extent necessary in each case.

Neither Jesus (nor the Father) are necessarily *objects* of *bhakti* or worship.

Christianity is as indefinable as Hinduism.

It is not simply ‘concern’ for one’s brothers. Is this in itself the experience that Jesus had—has—of the Father...?

But what makes the Christian inspiration “distinct”?

However why this search for distinction, for *identity*?

April 10

The Trinity, the experience of the other as “oneself”. Going out of one’s limit-self. Discovery of oneself in the other. The advaitin experience is neither *jñāna*, nor *bhakti*, nor *karma*. It is neither the Upanishadic formulations nor those of Shankara. It is the sense that I am not other to anyone or to anything whatever, that *I am*.

And no more is Christianity either *jñāna*, or *bhakti*, or *karma*. It is the sense of the other as myself. The discovery of myself in the other. Simply another way of formulating the discovery of oneself.

The saving name of Jesus transcends every *nāmarūpa* [name and form]. But for all that take care not to make it an abstraction.

...There is no encounter between oneself and God, for both oneself and God cause all dualisms [*dvandvas*] to disappear.

(...)

3. Cp. Kath U II, 14-15.

Uttarkashi

April 24

Christianity gives the highest place to the individual person and considers that the period of our earthly life, which may be longer or shorter but is always limited, is decisive for our eternal destiny.

On the other hand, Christianity proclaims that salvation depends on faith in Jesus Christ, the manifestation of God in time. At least until our day it is clear that the vast majority of “human persons” (those who have lived and equally those who are now alive) are psychologically *incapable* of such an act of faith.

Christianity’s claim to uniqueness is in contradiction with its proclamation of the unique value of the person. Or else you have to come joyfully to terms with the damnation of the great majority as do Jews, Muslims and Augustinians! All the current efforts to reformulate the problem of salvation theologically are simply attempts to salvage Christianity.

Christianity, as it has developed historically, is the gathering around a prestigious Name of people called from within by the Spirit; and around them of the mass of those who blindly seek their identity through myths (of course they live unconsciously at their deep level what they live consciously at the level of myth and concept). In order to rescue itself, present-day theology applies to everything the explanation (*éclairage*) “Christ”. Pure name and form [*nāmarūpa*], verbalization. It would be just as good to apply the explanation of other *nāmarūpas* to Christianity. In any case, that is constantly being done.

What is the essential thing in Christianity?

It certainly has something to do with total openness to the total human community.

Islam and Judaism are communities, but closed communities. In the Old Testament tradition, the nation comes before the person. In Hinduism as in Buddhism the community is wholly organized with a view to individual salvation. One is saved vertically. Christianity accepts both points of view. Horizontal and vertical salvation go together. There is no subordination of one to the other. They are not-two [*a-dvaita*], in no way opposites [*dvandva*]. And that very thing is one of the fundamental mysteries of Christianity, pointing to certain depths of being.

This is “lived” in the myths of Redemption, vicarious satisfaction, etc.

Does Christianity then boil down to a complete humanism?

The claim of a *dharma* to universalism is justifiable only on the basis of its capacity to identify with the fullness of human aspiration.

The Christianity-*dharma* cannot be either universal or catholic.

Its contemporary drama is its confrontation with the universalism to which modern humankind is becoming more and more open, starting with its elite. The Christianity-*dharma* is only valid inasmuch as it brings about the full integration of the human person.

The original historical core of Christianity only carries conviction within a given intellectual and sociological context. It cannot by itself win adherents. It is an object of faith. It is accepted and gets its value in the

heart and mind of the human being—embedded within given circumstances—through that fundamental faith which is a “constitutive dimension of man” (RP)⁴. To refer to it in order to judge everything else amounts to approaching the problem from the wrong end. For the point at which the divine is inserted in the human in the person of Jesus is beyond inspection by the human mind. The human being can only express it mythically. But reality cannot be measured by myth.

But let me never forget that in reformulating the mystery of Christ and of the Church I am putting another mythical framework in the place and instead of the one that I remove, for without an underlying myth I cannot even think. It is impossible to discover the spring apart from the trickle of water that reveals it. Not to repeat Bultmann’s mistake, who re-mythologizes as much as he demythologizes.

The Church is still at the stage of the Brahmanas and the Pūrvamīmāṃsā⁵. A violent gale of Upanishads and Vedānta⁶, that is what it needs. That is just what Jesus did within Judaism. Being a person filled with the Spirit, he judged everything with the authority of the Spirit—that Spirit which he himself was in the form of Purusha [*purushavidha*] (BU I, 4, 1)⁷.

The Spirit is blowing once again like a tornado in order to free the disciples of Jesus from their fleshly attachment to the *guru*.

By the very ‘entrance’ of Jesus into this world, the Spirit has penetrated the universe “to the tips of the fingernails” (BU I, 4, 7). And the Spirit is not divided, cannot be projected separately. For it would then be himself who would project himself.

Jesus is no greater if people make him into a “god”. To make Ramana Maharshi into an *avatāra* does not make him any greater. The *avatāra* is illusory. The *jñāni* is not. “He knows the supreme abode of Brahman, established in which the universe shines brightly.” [*Sa vedaitat paramam brahmadhāma yatra viśvam nihitam bhāti śubhram*]⁸

Everything shines with the brightness of Brahman. Everything is with the very *being* of Brahman. One who has realized “I am Brahman” [*aham brahmāsmi*] has become all [*sarvam*] (cp. BU I, 4, 10). He is greater than all the *devas*. He has become the *self* of all. The *jñāni* is the very *ātman* of Krishna and Rāma. The *avatarās* and the *devas* are only forms, *nāmarūpa*, mental frameworks applied to the world so as to recognize it.

The *jñāni* has found his bearings and recovered everything through the within itself.

4. A reference to R. Panikkar, *L’Homme qui devient Dieu. La foi dimension constitutive de l’homme* (Paris: Aubier, 1969). This first appeared as an article in 1966. English version in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 8 (1971).
5. The Brahmanas are ritualistic texts, and Pūrvamīmāṃsā is a ritualistic system of interpreting the Vedas.
6. The Vedānta is precisely the “end of the Vedas”, as it goes beyond Vedic ritualism through the “spiritual knowledge” that is called *jñāni*.
7. Cp. 1 Cor.2:15.
8. MundU III, 2, 1; tr. *Vedic Experience*, 763.

...The mystery of Jesus should be studied, beginning not from a *mythos*, but from a reality that can be reached: the *jñāni*, the *guru*.

Let us suppose that Jesus is a *jñani-with-a-mission*. Whose mission? A mission from his innermost centre, led by the Spirit: *ātmeshita*. That Spirit who, when facing him as source, is the Father. The Father, the Spirit, and He, one single mystery. Distinguished neither at the level of the *nāmarūpa* nor at the level of *sat*. At the level of what theology calls *relation*, *person*.

A mission which can be identified with his *prārabdha*⁹? Not a mission coming from a “specific” command, but a mission inscribed in his flesh, his thought, his ethical condition. This is what is suggested in the Gospel when Jesus says: “Everything was written about me,” as he discovered his “mission” in the Scriptures, in the “situation” of his people.

Jesus infinitely human. More deeply and fully human than any one of the great *gurus*, the Buddha, etc.

From the depth of his humanity rising up to God, rising up to the eternal mystery which he is, and taking us away with himself into the heaven of heavens, passing through death and resurrection. Bodily death and resurrection are first of all signs and symbols.

Why wish to compare Jesus, to assign him a place in the host of *gurus*, to make him into a separate *guru*? My *guru* is unique as I myself am unique. As Brahman is unique, One and without a second [*ekam eva advitīyam*].

Whoever sees multiplicity does not see the Real.

In order to understand Jesus, start not from *a priori* theories, but from the expression of the mystery that emanates from himself. Try to enter into his own understanding of the mystery. Avoid the myths. Try to understand on the basis of my own experience, not on the basis of its formulation (always second-hand). For, like me, Jesus comes to himself from the depths of the Self.

Feel in myself Jesus issuing from himself

Feel in myself Jesus awakening to his mission

Feel in myself Jesus opening himself to his brothers.

For the first reality is the intuition of myself, before any analysis of myself.

Try to recognize in myself that sense of his source that he calls the Father.

That sense of being inspired—*ishita*¹⁰—starting from that origin which he calls the Spirit.

9. That is, his past *karma*.
10. Past participle of the root *ish-*: to drive, put in motion, stir up, impel, activate. Cp. the beginning of the KenU:
“Impelled by whom does the mind dart forth?
Directed by whom does life start on its way?
Incited by whom is the word we speak?
Who is the God who directs ear and eye? (tr. *Vedic Experience*, p.684).

The Spirit is that *Ishanya*¹¹ from his origin, the Father, which he passes on to his followers—for he has it in fullness.

...The uniqueness of the Incarnation and the trinitarian dogma are interdependent. Is this twofold formulation the only possible expression of Jesus' experience?

When I try to understand Jesus with the help of the Purusha, as Jews and Greeks tried to do with the help of the Messiah and the Kyrios [Lord], am I not falling back into myth, applying a prefabricated framework to this existential event? No doubt the Purusha will help me rediscover, as if afresh, the universal dimension—the eternal dimension—of the mystery of Jesus.

However the Vedic Purusha will help me recognize the universal incarnation of this Purusha:

Prajāpati, Lord of creatures, moves in the womb;
unborn, he is born in multiple ways.

[Prajāpatiścarati garbhe antah
ajāyamāno bahudhā vijāyate]¹².

Jesus is my *sadguru*, as I have so often written. It is through his mystery that I have discovered God and myself, that I have arrived at my identity.

But does not the day come when the *guru becomes translucent*, becomes so transparent that he disappears—*iva* (so to speak), disappears in Brahman, in the *ātman* that he allows to shine through... So much 'all', that he disappears in the All. Having disappeared in the *Father*, in the *brothers*, in that "*inspiration*" that carries him towards the Father, toward the brothers.

The saving name of Jesus is Brahman, it is *ātman*. He saves by revealing the *ātman-brahman*. The *mythos* of Jesus leads to his worship in truth and in spirit [*en aletheia kai pneumati—satyena, abhyantarena*]. At his first coming, Jesus disappears to make place for the Spirit. At his second coming he disappears with everything in the mystery of the Father.

Cp. the hymn of the Mahānārāyaṇa Up. 51-64, as tr. J. Varenne MNU:

He knows everything, he knows the secret,
all the gods, all beings,
he transcends all the worlds, all beings...
and finally,

he attains to himself by himself,

[*ātmanā ātmanam abhisambhavāmi*] (v. 64):

he leads each one to "himself" (the Self).

Jesus is no less great if his *nāmarūpa* becomes translucent.

Nothing that is on the conceptual level has absolute value. Now, Christian dogmas are conceptual-mythical expressions of the "mystery". Christ's *nāmarūpa* necessarily explodes, but the Church wants to keep us virtually at the level of the *nāmarūpa*.

Christ's *nāmarūpa* is one quarter of his mystery, as the Upanishad says: three quarters have been hidden in secret [*trīni padāni nihitā guḥasu*;

11. From the same root: impetus, inspiration.

12. MahanarU 27; cp. AV X, 8, 13; PrasU II, 7.

MahanarU. v. 58¹³). If that is so, Christ is revealed everywhere, *viśvatah, sarvatah*... The Palestinian, ecclesial, Mediterranean *nāmarūpa* can no longer contain this *pūrnam*: this Pleroma, this Fullness [*bhūma*]. Even so there is no name, no higher genus into which the human mystery of Jesus could be fitted. Here there is no category of *avatars*, one of whom would be Jesus. There is nothing beyond Jesus, the Person, the Purusha.

Jesus explodes, but nothing replaces him. It is Brahman who shines out everywhere. Jesus reveals to us the shining of Brahman everywhere. He is that pure Light. There is nothing created, nothing human above him.

There is nothing above or below him.

This whole mystery is Jesus, the "I AM", *ego eimi*;

my name is "I am" [*ahamasmi nāmakah*]¹⁴.

This definitive mystery is reached naturally, through signs of all kinds.

There are the 108 *gurus* of Dattatreya¹⁵. Every being bears the sign of all; the smallest mite, the grain of sand, the electron are radiant with Brahman... And everything leads to Brahman:

This *ātman* is Brahman, all is Brahman [*ayam ātmā brahma, sarvam brahma*].

A single cell of a living being is theoretically capable of reproducing this living being exactly.

Jesus is not to be compared with others. No more is Krishna to be compared with others. Each of them is absolutely unique.

It is a false problem to try to see if there are several ways. There is only one way because:

Brahman alone leads to Brahman:

brahmaiva brahmayānah!

God alone knows God.

God alone knows the mystery of Jesus, of the Purusha, of the human person, of creation. For he alone is before there was a grain of dust!

A total reversal of our mental outlook.

Phulchatti

May 11

[Feast of the] Ascension at Phulchatti.¹⁶

13. Cp. RV I. 164, 45.

14. "My name: I am"; cp. BU I, 4, 1.

15. A sage who, according to the myth, learned wisdom from all the beings whom he met and whom he accepted as his *gurus*. Quoted as an example of humility and great wisdom.

16. Together with his disciple Marc Chaduc. What follows refers to a spiritual experience of the latter, in communion with his master. The most personal part of the description of this event has not been preserved. Phulchatti is a very simple Ashram that provides shelter for pilgrims on their way to Badrināth; it is a half-day's walk from Rishikesh, in the jungle on the south bank of the Ganges. A valuable commentary on part of the following section is given by Dr B.Bäumer in Vandana, *Swami Abhishiktananda*, p.52-62.

Mantra of the Chandogya Upanishad VIII, 3, 4; VIII, 12, 3.¹⁷

When the Purusha thus shakes off the purusha, then it is liberation [muktī], liberation which includes death [mrityu]. Liberation while still alive [jīvanmuktī]: mukti without shaking off the body.

In the light of the ātman, (of Brahman, Mund. Up. III, 1, 1) all relationships between beings (the whole gift of self to the self of each being: food, annam) are pure being, being itself, unique being. There are no things that would be added together and would coexist separately in the area of that light. They are not distinguished from that light, from that being, and yet they are for one another,

in the depth of the Father the Son

in the depth of the Son the Father

in two hands that clasp each other

the unique mystery of the Father and the Son.

Jesus has revealed the depth of God, of Being.

He has reached that light—tejas—in the bosom of the Father, in his ascension with his body, saśarīrah; at his bodily death he reached it beyond death. He resumed his body again—beyond that detachment of the Purusha from (in) this body of mortal flesh. For it is at the boundary of the śārīra that we meet the Supreme [uttamah] Purusha.

The Resurrection is jīvanmukti.

In the light of Brahman the world is a mystery of threeness, an interweaving of trinities.

There is the archetypal eternal trinity, the unborn one, that from which all are born, that which is, that which shines out in them all. There is the Father, Jesus in his time, and myself today; there is the Father, Christ and myself; there is Christ, the Spirit and myself; there is thou the Father, myself, the Spirit; there is Jesus, myself, M.; there is M., R., myself; there is myself, each of my human brothers and the Spirit. Only one in the Light.

There is Jesus, M. and myself.

Jesus, the Spirit, is the love which is at the heart of all, the soul of all, the being of all, the light of all, the Self within all beings [sarvabhūta-antarātmā]¹⁸, the bond between beings, their communion [samsat] which is their very being.

The experience of the Upanishads is true, *I know it!*

I have come to know that mighty Person, golden like the sun, beyond all darkness. By knowing Him a man transcends death; there is no other path for reaching that goal.¹⁹

[Vedāham etam puruṣam mahāntam
ādityavarnam tamasaḥ parastāt

17. Freely rendered by Abhishikṭananda in "The Upanishads and Advaitic Experience", *The Further Shore*, p.110: "That serene one, rising up out of this body, reaches the highest light and appears with his own form. Such a one is the supreme Person. This is the Ātman, the immortal, the fearless one. This is Brahman. Verily the name of that Brahman is truth."

18. Cp. MundU II, 1, 4.

19. SU III, 8 (tr. *Vedic Experience*, p.734).

tameva viditva ati mrityum eti

nānya panthā vidyate 'yanāya

And I know that what I have taught in Sagesse [Saccidananda] is true, even if badly expressed.

The Trinity at every level,

the depth of every deep,

the Real of the real, *satyasya satyam*

...who dwells in unapproachable light. [1 Tim.6:16]

I know, but I can only communicate this knowledge to faith [śraddha]; Jesus could do no more: "O men of little faith!"

I am.

The mantras in which the rishis have locked away the experience lest it should cause a person to die at the moment of this inner disjunction.

The "aspiration" towards the sahasrāra [the thousand-petalled lotus, the centre (cakra) at the crown of the head], the absorption from on high. The Purusha who is his own light (BU IV, 3, 6): *svaprakāśa!*

There the ātman reaches the self of peace [śānta-ātmā] (KathU V, 13, MaitU V, 1), the self of serenity [samprasāda ātmā] (CV VIII, 3, 4), and from there alone peace radiates, peace is obtained.

A person dies of the experience of the infinite [ananta]
beyond the beyond—

Brahman.

Dead, dead, in becoming Brahman, the ALL,

Brahman sarvam.

Yes that is true,

being absorbed in this Source!

The Lord has said to me: *Today I beget you.*

O this Purusha of glory [tejomayah; cf. BU II, 5, 1ff],

before the creation of the worlds,

in their creation

the golden embryo

all!

This Purusha in the golden embryo

who is born unborn [a-ja],

who comes in every birth.

Oh! but it is myself!

Golden-coloured beyond the womb [Hiranmaya para garbha]²⁰

Oh! when he reveals himself,

when the sun explodes,

the end of the world,

then I am.

20. Cp. also MundU II, 2, 10: "In the highest golden sheath is the Godhead, unsullied, indivisible, pure it is, the Light of lights." (tr. *Vedic Experience*, 335).

There are two bodies in M. and me, two purushas, but the Purusha is unique, the ground of this "trinity", source and end of both [*prabhavāpyayau hi abhayah*].²¹

Jesus Son of the living God
have mercy on me
in your death
save me from death,
redeem me.

Departed [*pretya*] to the world of light!
In this death Jesus saves me.
This "mortal" absorption
in the *sahasrāra*
Baptism of fire!
Saving Resurrection and Ascension!
Shattering experience of light!

Blessed are you Father
who bring us to yourself...
called to be you
called to be
called to the un-born
light—being—immortality! [*jyoti—sat—amritam*]²²

Sudden emotion at the discovery of the abyss between God-Brahman and myself.

Then 'unbearable' emotion when I realized that there was no abyss. The abyss is an illusion! ah! an illusion to want to cross over it! And M. said to me: Even an illusion to say that there is no abyss!
Then simply panic-stricken.

May 19

...Nine days ago he "became un-born" [*ajah sambabhūva*]²³.

May 20

The mystery of being un-born can be passed on if the disciple has faith [*śraddhā*]. But the mystery of the eternal birth can only be passed on in the terrifying experience of death by the *atman* itself. To be un-born can be taught, words convey it when they spring up from the depth. But the rebirth transcends every word, even that which springs up from the depth. Only the Spirit, in the Baptism of fire, in the cross, resurrection and ascension of the Lord [*in cruce, resurrectione et ascensione Domini*], says the Abba,

21. Cp. MandU 6.

22. Cf. BU I, 3, 28.

23. An allusion to Marc's experience. Later on his name as a sannyasi was Ajatananda, "the bliss of the un-born".

Father, in the depth of the heart, beyond every *nāma-rūpa*. The teaching of advaita cannot end up with teaching the trinitarian mystery. The Abba experience comes from the Spirit alone!

The teaching of advaita destroys all the *nāmarūpas* of Christianity. But the Spirit alone, and no teaching of any sort, even through the words of Christ, can reveal his truth [*satyam*—in silence [*tūshnIm*]!

The Trinity is not some words added on to the message of the Upanishads, for there is no word [*vākya*] beyond the *mahāvākyas* [great sentences]. It is an experience of the Spirit. The Abba that the Spirit murmurs in the *guhā* of the heart.

If no Upanishadic formula can directly designate the *atman*, what formula will be able to designate the trinitarian mystery revealed by Jesus? The Christian's life is the experience of his I in the Thou spoken to me by the presence of the other!

Each person is food eating the eater who is being eaten.²⁴ Christianity: an explosion of the Spirit in which communion [*samsat*] is revealed.

Uttarkashi

May 28

On the day after the final night, on the terrace of Shivananda Ashram²⁵, there was also the upanishad of fire. Of the fire that I am, of the fire that anyone is who has even had only a glimpse of Brahman. A fire that burns—slowly perhaps but inexorably—in all the *nāmarūpas* [names and forms] of whoever comes near him. Cp. the Gospel fire that Jesus was eager to see burning everything. However, you can only give this fire to one whom you are able to lead to the true name [*nāma*], beyond all *nāmarūpa*. If I burn up a Christian's *nāmarūpa*, I must at all costs lead him to the very end; otherwise I leave him hanging without hope. The destruction of the *nāmarūpas* is not the end. Western humanism does this, but even so does not bring the human being to his goal. I can only give this burning Upanishad to someone who has enough time and faith [*śraddhā*] to be taken all the way to the end whatever the cost, even the cost of risking death or losing his head!

And after that there was his gaze fixed on me against the background of the moon for hours, and that shuddering as if some force was carrying me off...as a horse shakes off (dust from) its hair [*aśva romāni iva vidhūya*; CU VIII.13]!

Christianity is first of all upanishad, correlation,²⁶ not direct teaching. Direct teaching only gives *nāmarūpas*. Correlation causes the spark of experience [*anubhava*] to flash, that alone gives fulfilment.

The Gospel is in the first place addressed to the Jew. It is a liberation from Judaism just as the Upanishad was from "Brahmanism". It is this liberation beyond the names-and-forms employed which is the real Gospel message.

24. Cp. the end of TU III, 10: "I who am food eat the eater of food..."

25. At Rishikesh.

26. cp. *The Further Shore*, Introduction to the Upanishads, sect.3.

This message constantly escapes us when we try to reduce it to formulas.

It is not the "thought" of the presence of God that saves a person, which leads him to *himself*. All thought is *nāmarūpa*, a knot that binds, a superimposition! The "presence of God" is part of "superimposed" sacredness.

This word *God*, this idea of God comes from *outside*; but it is the inner Spring that must gush up (Arjuna's arrow for Bhishma)²⁷. Christianity believes that salvation comes from the outside, through thoughts, rites, "sacraments". The level of *nāmarūpa*.

Nothing comes from the outside, nothing that is made, *kṛita*, leads to what is un-made, *akṛita*! (MundU I, 2, 12).

We awake to what the religious person calls the presence of God by disinterested action, by love free from selfishness, by looking at others with pure eyes.

The pure of heart will see God. A heart detached from all self-seeking.

The pure act of love or service. That is what awakens one to oneself. That is what awakens one to God, not to the God of the *nāmarūpas* but to God in himself!

It is on this inner experience that all *real* religion should be based, not on ideas that come and are passed on to us from outside.

May 29

I identify myself with the *I* that I perceive in a state of wakefulness. The *I* of dreaming, or that of deep sleep, as it were, take over from the *I* that is awake. The *I* of dreams [*svapna*], of deep sleep [*sushupti*], is "other" than the *I* of the waking state. Discover the *I* that is the same, unaffected by waking, dreaming, sleeping: that which the Kena Upanishad is seeking...

An "awakened" "myself" that penetrates right behind the sleeping *I*. This *I* is not subject to the forms of death [*mṛityor rūpāni*] spoken of by the BU IV, 3, 7, is not subject to evil, *pāpa*. This *I* shines by its own light, *atmabuddhiprakāśa*²⁸. This *I* which remained as a profound witness [*sakshī*] during M.'s ecstasy.

Penetrate into my consciousness to the point where I become witness of my dreaming state.

The three states²⁹

In the waking state control of the mind is maintained by the *I(A)*. It is certainly not the absolute master (discovery of the subconscious). But it is the master. It also controls, in a way, the biological functions. In the sleeping state (at first with dreams) this control passes to *I(B)*. A certain biological control is established, derived from the habits of the waking

27. An allusion to the story of the Mahābhārata in which Bhishma, near death, asks for a drink. To quench the thirst of the dying man and give him some water, Arjuna shoots an arrow into the ground beside Bhishma, which causes a spring of water to gush up.

28. Who is illumined by his own intelligence; SU VI, 18.

29. Wakefulness, dreaming, dreamless sleep. Cp. MandU.

state, with the slowing down of all the functions. In the mind this is an automatic control, or rather a very loose one (no space-time relationship between the different dreams: projections of a subconscious that is both single and multiple).

"Falling" into the sleeping state. *I(A)* is hidden like the sun behind the earth. On waking it will have to come out again from the primordial darkness. To fall into the sleeping state is in a certain way to fall into the state of death. The *I(B)* only manifests itself when the unconscious projects itself in symbols.

Meanwhile there is the *I(C)* of deep sleep [*sushupti*].

This twofold *I(B,C)* is its own light. It creates its own space-time and all that fills this space [*ākāśa*]. The *I(C)* is what must be *awakened*. This is the foundation [*pratishthā*], ultimate, primordial. So long as I have not brought this *I(C)* to the waking state, I am a stranger in my own house, for there is a deeper *I* that controls me from within. It is this hidden Purusha, shining with his own light, that has to be released (the pith of the reed, cp. KathU VI, 17), to be drawn out—so that he may appear in his own form [*svena rūpena*] (he is not that in the state of *sushupti*) CU VIII,3.4.

Only when this golden-coloured Purusha, the unique swan [*hiranmaya purusha eka hamsa*] is released is there *mukti*, an end to the rebirths [*janma*]. This release is the true death. The true and only useful death is the separation of this purusha from all his sheaths [*kosha*]. A hard, terrifying, agonizing death. A death that removes all attachment to remaining in the *śarīram*, as Patanjali says.

For the *jīvanmukta*, the *I* that is the see-er [*drashtā*], the witness [*sakshī*], is in the depth of the *I* of deep sleep [*sushupti*]. *I(A)* is only its shadow, *chāyā* (cp. Kath Up. III, 1 and VI, 5).

May 30

For the *jñāni*, everything is 'outflow'—nothing is *sought after*—writings, words, joys of the body and the heart.

Find in oneself this *ātman* without *loka* [place, field of experience], this purusha who hides behind *sushupti*, totally serene [*samprasāda*]. This vital breath [*prāna*] which shines through everything, this light in oneself which has nothing to do with any external light that is perceived! by sense or reason (in a dream), for the light is projected in the dream itself.

No more God in whom to seek refuge = seek oneself. No longer anything to cast a shadow on the crystalline purity of God. Only then is God found! He shines with his own light. Till then it was only shadows of oneself projected on the infinite brightness.

The Upanishads (the Veda) is the MYSTERY (*ātman—brahman—prāna—purusha*, etc.) made WORD, VĀK; not a well-ordered body of teaching that would satisfy the intellect, but flashes of light.³⁰

Parables in fact, because this teaching is hidden, like that of the Kingdom. A gateway for one who knows, a barrier for one who does not

30. See *The Further Shore*, Introduction to the Upanishads, sect.1.

know; the entrance into the abode of Brahman [*brahmaloka*], or rejection into *samsāra* (cf. CU VIII, 6, 5).

Also teaching charged with mystery. On different levels, deliberately mixed up, to be understood only by the one who knows, *evamvid*.

The levels of sleep and death constantly mixed up, "having departed" [*pretya*], with a double meaning.

The *guru* likewise: the *atman-brahman*, the *prāna-purusha* in the form of word [*vāk*], himself also giving off flashes of light. He does not teach a course.

No more did Jesus ever give any course.

There is no course or class on the Upanishads. There is only an initiation into the language of the Upanishads. Jesus = *guru* = *vāk* made flesh, embodied [*dehī*]. From the Upanishad to the Real, *satyam*; from the *guru* to the Real, *satyam*.

The *guru* does not give a lecture, rather he gives himself: the mother's milk.

Still more, his own flesh—to be eaten.

Jesus is the *guru* who gives his flesh to be eaten, his blood to be drunk, his body to be embraced; he no longer has eyes, ears, lips, tongue, body except for the one for whom he is in fleshly form.

A disciple who has awakened: that is enough.

But as for myself, like Ramana, it was Arunachala that awakened me. Oh that awakening!

May 31

The Gospel is centred on a person. The Upanishad, on an experience. No equivalent is possible here to the "I am the bread of life" [*ego sum panis vitae*]. That would come at the level of the Gita.

The Upanishads: a few simple themes, basic and underlying everything.

(a) The discovery of the *purusha* who remains awake while all the *prānas* are sleeping. This *purusha* who is in the form of glory [*tejo-maya*], who is the only true agent [*kartri*] in everything that is done, who never comes to a halt.

(b) The *atman* who, like [*sammīta*] the *purusha*, is manifested by everything and transcends everything. No place [*loka*] for him in the *śarīram*. He must pierce through the sagittal suture in order to enter (cp. AU III, 12). Symbol of the *violence* that is necessary for the discovery of the *atman* at the level of the faculties. The *atman* is a "limit" toward which everything tends, *purushayana* [leading to the *Purusha*], without reaching it: an asymptote.

(c) Brahman, just as much separate from everything as present everywhere in the cosmos, in all this [*sarvam idam*]. He is nothing separate and he is everything together and beyond everything.

(d) Passing beyond the *śarīram* and the *sarvam idam* (symbolized by the sun that measures time) for one to whom the *atman-brahman* is revealed, in its own form. I am that [*so'ham asmī*], I am [*asmī aham*], I am Brahman [*aham brahma asmī*]. It must be extracted from this body [*asmāc charīrat*].

But the death of the physical body [*sthūla śarīra*] is not enough. It has nothing to do with immortality [*amritam*]! To cut the bonds of the heart is the one thing necessary, whatever binds the *Purusha* to the *prajñātma* or the *vijñānātma* [the level of thought, the conscious self].

The death of the body may or may not follow, but in itself it does not affect the process.

The Upanishad is not a teaching of correlations. It aims at each one's discovery—by himself and for himself—of himself, of the mystery of the self, of the universe [*sarvam idam*], of the primordial cave [*guhā*] in which the *devas* appear to originate!

June 2

Jyotis-sampanna [all changed into light, merged in light]—*tejas-sampanna* [all changed into glory]. How keep going after that? what reading can be "interesting"? what company can be interesting?...

Seeing the sun and going among people who parade their candles, who close their shutters, makes one marvel at their funk! In solitude, as Marc says? But the poor mind [*manas*] is not up to physical solitude.

The mystery which is approached under the name of *atman-brahman-purusha-prāna-aham*, recognized without any interval—I am that! [*so'ham*]!

(...)

June 10

One month since the great "night"³¹. A little better since yesterday physically and psychologically. The breathlessness that began at Mass on the 7th has gone. But there remains the impossibility of taking any real interest in anything whatever. And how the mind cannot keep quiet, and can neither meditate nor practise *japa*...

The past two weeks have been in constant contact with the shadow of Death [*mrityu*]!

I have a feeling that either I have nothing any longer to do here, *iha*! or that I have nothing more to bear witness to except the fullness of light. All the *nāmarūpas*, Hindu as well as Christian, are stumps of candle that we light at high noon—while the sun is at its zenith!

That *purusha* of glory [*tejas*] is to be found. I am he! [*So'ham asmī*].

When the *tejas* is too strong, even the awakening, even sight disappears—how much more attentiveness to things!

It is deep sleep [*sushupti*], or else it is death—or else the cutting of the knots of the heart, the great death. It is the reaching of the sun, in the *sahasrāra*. It is the reuniting of the two *purushas*, that of the right eye and that of the sun. And it is only ONE!

It is being carried off to the place of the self, where one is oneself, pure light, supreme light [*param jyoti*]—pure being "*sati sampanna*" (immersed in being)—pure sun [*āditya*], pure life, *prāna*.

31. The "great night" refers to his experience with Marc on the night before the feast of the Ascension (May 11).

It is fullness [*pūrnā*]!

un-born [*a-jam*]!

eternal [*nityam*]!

Tejas, glory, is the *doxa* of the Gospel, the *qabod* of the Bible. To come near to it burns you, *cornutus Moses*³². This *tejas* robs you of yourself. It tears you away from yourself. It "cuts" you off from all your investments = super-impositions. It is sleep—it is lack of concern for things—it is what people call "death"! The death of Jesus, the great death on the cross, was less the separation of "soul" from body than feeling himself "abandoned" by God, the depth of Him whom he called the Father with so much love. Cut off from God, cut off from the Father, alone with only himself, and the Father rediscovered more deeply in himself—apart from every *nāmarūpa*: I have risen and am still with thee! [*resurrexi et adhuc tecum sum*]³³

The great lesson of the Upanishads: that brightness, the *tejas* of Being...which burns, swallows up in the Self. The immense place given to the Sun—and also to Agni and the lightning [*vidyut*], in worship and thought comes precisely from this intuition of light, *jyoti*, *tejas*, within the heart.

And that is why the creation of the universe could only be *ardor*, *tapas*, a product of heat, of brightness.

June 11

At the same time not-born and born. At the same time one with the Father and from (ex) the Father... Not a birth discovered at greater depth than the not-born. A twofold and single approach to the essential mystery, to *oneself*.

No conceptual, rational solution.

If *advaita* is indescribable [*anirvacanīya*], how much more so is the mystery of the Source—if it exists, if it is something else than a projection—No, so long as I say "I" and "thou" to anyone at all in the world, there is the mystery of the Father and the Son. However in perfect recollection [*samādhi*] or in *sushupti*, there is no longer either Father or Son. The *tejas* has taken possession of everything. It has burnt and brought (it)—which is the same thing—to the abode of Brahman [*brahmaloka*].

In normal life—that of the *jīvanmukta*, the person who has "come back" to his *śarīram*, once the knots of the heart have been cut—the unborn is the backdrop against which all human and divine relationships are lived.

We take our verbalizations much too seriously. They are not *decisive* either for reality or for our experiences.

All prayers are possible within one or other of the *trinities* that were suggested last month. But when the *tejas* shines too strongly, why strain even to utter the OM?

32. Cp. Ex.34:29 (Vulgate). The shining of Moses' face when he came down from Mt Sinai.

33. Cp. Luke 23:43.

June 18

The ashram they want me to set up would be an ashram based on Christian *nāmarūpas*. I am no longer capable of that. No more could I establish an ashram using Hindu *nāmarūpas*. I can only agree to have with me one who is ready to go beyond all *nāmarūpas*.

(...)

July 3

The Trinity is a threefold depth when the laser penetrates to the deepest point of my being. A threefold depth of myself, not an idea received from without, in the abstract, but an experience of my own consciousness which the Master's revelation nevertheless helps one to formulate = *abhikṛiptum* [to harmonize, make consistent].

The name of these depths: *sahatvam* - *vaktram* - *gūḍham*.

—*Sahatvam*: the mystery of being-together, of *relationship*, of the Spirit.

—*Vaktram*: the face manifested by the word-*vak*, the Purusha.

—*Gūḍham*: the absolutely ineffable Ground, the Father.

The name of God had been at the same time revealed and hidden in the O.T. Yet in it God had spoken so much. In it God had revealed so much of himself. Jesus claimed for him the function of the Word and of Judgment. He gave back to God his mystery by taking for him the function of God manifesting God.

God is communion—God is Word and face—God is mystery.

I am communion. I am word and face. I am mystery.

Each human "I" is communion, word and face, mystery.

The whole of creation is communion, word and face, mystery.

Sahatvam, *vaktram*, *gūḍham*.

Rajpur

July 10

Christ is not a *nāmarūpa*. His true name is I AM. He is not encountered in a theologoumenon, nor even in any noeme. He can only "be" in the very mystery of my being. Christ is the infinitely free person. One who does not depend on any external circumstance, on any prompting even of the mind [*manas*]—whose subconscious interior is still external to the true Self. One whose *ahamkāra* is not a simple "knot" in the net of *samsāra*. The one to whom all authority in judgment has been delivered. No one judges him, he judges everything and everyone, as Paul says also of the spiritual person. He depends on God alone, but the God on whom he depends is not other, is not another, who would control him as from outside. For the Spirit of God is at the very centre of his own spirit. Jesus caused all structures to explode. He refused to let himself be included in any human category whatsoever. He did not wish to be the "Messiah" that people wanted him to be. He was the infinitely free person. The person who was only himself—only the Self. The person who was free in all the *lokas*. Whose acts of will [*samkalpa*], desires [*kāma*] were totally true, *satya*, without any covering of falsehood [*anrita*].³⁴

34. Cp. CU VIII, 1, 5-6.

The words Abba, Amma, Ba, Ma, are the first babbling of the infant, his first expression of relationship. Ba, Ma, designate not the father-mother, but the person close to him whose relationship has for him an absolute value, who is his support [*pratishthā*], his *loka*.

God the Father (or Mother) is in the first place that, much more than the abstract symbol of the one who begets.

August 3

(...)

So long as I call anyone on earth brother (on whatever grounds I may do this) I have the right to give the name Father to the ultimate depth of the *guha*.

The distinction between with/without qualification [*sa/nir-guna*] is an abstraction. The distinction itself gives a form to what is formless [*nirākara*].

Christian experience is really the experience of advaita lived out in human communion. And that is what the Trinity is. But we have sought to escape this *fire* by deifying formulas and institutions.

Christian experience is the Spirit who makes human beings to be brothers and to gather around the unique, cosmic, archetypal Purusha, of whom Jesus is the preferred expression for an entire segment of humanity.

But we should not base an "apodictic" theology on this essentially relative mental foundation (a particular myth), in terms of which the Gospel has been thought and expressed.

The gospel lived in the Spirit. The Spirit alone is important. No form can hold the Spirit, it passes through them all.

The Father is not necessarily *Someone* to whom I would address adoration-prayer, to whom I would say Thou, of whom I would say He.

I adore him just as truly when I am recollected in my depth, in myself, outside myself. This coming out of my *I*, from my body [*mama śarīrāt*], is truly the experience of the Father beyond all words, the being engulfed in the Ascension.

I discover him, I adore him, when I say Thou to another person, from the very depth of my own *I*.

Un-born, to whom should I address myself?

Born from every look that rests on me, I adore the Father in my surrender to that look.

Offer the rite, offer the prayer in all freedom-spontaneity. No one can impose it on me. But in the group of believers it has its value. And that is why I was as genuine at Poona in the liturgy as in the Upanishads³⁵.

Therefore a refusal of all theology—both that which "nāmarūpin"³⁶ Christians impose on me, and equally that which no less nāmarūpin Vedantins want to impose on me!

I am, according to the trinitarian model, indivisibly non-dual and in communion [*samsat*], "both" of them, the one through the other.

35. A reference to his stay at the Christa Prema Seva Ashram (Pune).

36. That is, those who identify their faith with its external formulation.

Theological questions: recover the wisdom of the Buddha's silence. Refusal, even refusal of the refusal.

...Say that the fullness of light from/in myself is the same as in my brother. Yes, and yet there is *M*. and myself and this kiss has an eternal value, the value of being, *sat*.

Liberation from philosophical conceptions!

God is too great a light for one to hold out in his presence. One vanishes. Absorbed in the Source who is *jyotih* [light]. Make request? Adore? Be!

I know that *ego eimi* [I am]. Do not ask me anything else—whether for ever in my personal being or not, I know nothing about that, I am not concerned about it at all. Using as appropriate different *mythoi* or mental supports in order to express my secret.

As free with respect to Vedantin *nāmarūpas* as to others.

Indore

August 25

That experience of intimacy, of immanence, or rather of non-distance (there is no "gulf"!) which Jesus had under the sign of the ABBA, was known in India under the sign of the *ātma/brahman*: I am Brahman [*aham asmi brahman*].

The *mahāvākya* of Jesus:

The Lord of the heavens—but he is my Abba!

The Lord of the worlds, he is my father!

The Lord of all, he is my Father!

The Lord of heaven, he is my Father!

[*Lokeśvarah pitaiva me*

Sarveśvarah pitaiva me

Svargeśvarah pitaiva me]

Abba, the mystery of non-distance!

And it is to this "non-distance" with the Lord, with the one we call God, that Jesus is inviting us.

YHWH: Abba (my father)

The theme of fathering is secondary in comparison with the theme of close intimacy. For the adopted child also has the right to say Abba!

India has been so fascinated by this non-distance that it has called it non-duality, and even unity [*ekatvam*]. For how can we distinguish anything at all, anyone at all, in a divine non-distance? And it is this non-distance that Jesus reveals among human beings, *re-veals* = unveils, shows and also effects—the sign of communion in the same bread.

How Jesus must have ENJOYED his earthly family, Mary and Joseph, that he should so naturally have used the word Abba to convey his great experience.

August 29

I can no longer see you separately, Lord, either in the foreshadowings of the Bible or in the gospel story.

I can no longer find you except in the mystery of each consciousness which becomes aware of itself, which becomes aware of God. You cannot be separate. You cannot be simply one among human beings. You are Adam, the Man, the Purusha who, unborn, is born in every human being. You are that awakening, at once glorious and sorrowful, in the heart of each human being who opens up to his own within. That mighty Purusha, sun-coloured [*purusham mahāntam, āditya varnam*]³⁷, the one who comes forth from the darkness, *tamasas parastāt*, the self of all [*sarvātmanam*], everywhere present [*sarvagatam*], shining as the self in the depth of myself [*ātmapradhīprakāśam*]. All the characters in the Bible, all that was shown forth in the land of Palestine—it is in myself that they are revealed, that for me they become true.

Rajpur

September 23

Why constantly seek to reduce the mystery of Christ, of the Abba, to a concept, an *eidos*? to compress it within my mental and conceptual categories?

Is not the illogicality of the GIta simply a deep wisdom?

October 25

It is not the historicity of Christianity that is the basis of its value. Nothing belonging to time and to what is “done” can serve as the basis for what is “not-done” and eternal. If Christianity has a value, it is on account of the timeless values expressed in it.

(...)

Do I call him Christ? Yes, within one tradition, but his name is just as much Emmanuel—Purusha. Can he be Krishna? Rāma? Shiva? Why not, if Shiva is in Tamilnadu the form of that archetype which seeks to become explicit at the greatest depth of the human heart?

October 27

The obsessive fear, the dread of “the other world”. But this “other world” is myself! The “other world” of dreams, of sleep, of the subconscious. The “other world” of human relationship, of the cosmos.

The “other world” of that projection of the absolute that we call God.

God is: I am. How could God be if I do not know that I am, I who say that God is!

October 30

The ‘self’ of Jung and the Upanishadic ‘self’: Jung’s self is at the empirical level—at the very moment when the ‘self’—the Purusha, the *ātman*—springs up in the *psychê*. This ‘self’ is manifested in the three well-known states. The third is that of the subconscious (both personal and collective), but when the ‘Self’ is attained in oneself, ‘as in a glimpse’—*turiya* [the “fourth,” the transcendental state].

37. SU III, 8.

The ‘self’ is revealed, for example, in confrontation with the ‘shadow’, etc., in the bubbling up of the spring that relativizes all projection, that of oneself in the first place, and leaves us gasping with the question, Who am I? [*ko’ham*]

November 1

There is no sense in trying to explain St John in terms of the Upanishad or of Buddhism. These are mental languages that were absolutely unknown and incomprehensible to the authors of the N.T. It is very hard to imagine the Jesus of the Gospel doing yoga or practising “*sati*”, mindfulness. All that would have seemed so unnatural to him. And that is the fundamental objection to the schools of *jñāna*, whether they be Upanishadic, Buddhist or Vedantin. Just like yoga, the various kinds of *dharana-dhyāna* (concentration, meditation) have their own value as methods, as instruments, but to absolutize them, even to absolutize them simply as methods, is to fall into the trap of *māya*.

In *sati*, there is no more than a succession of ‘*happenings*’. Is there still an observer [*sākshī*] who knows that there are ‘*happenings*’? It is just “that”, *tad*, which remains, *avaśishyate!*³⁸

Why all these questions that our Christian advaitins constantly ask the Church? A little like the atheist who every morning begins again to prove that God does not exist. When you pass beyond the *nāmarūpa*, the mystery takes all forms [*sarvarūpam*]. The clash is not with a particular *nāmarūpa* but with those who absolutize it. The Church is so immense a mystery that the apologists water it down in trying to make it fit into their narrow historical views!

The Trinity. The infinitude of the See-er, the infinitude of the Seen, infinitude itself. But when at the heart of this infinitude all relationship vanishes, when there is no longer a see-er, then where is the Trinity? Only as soon as you think that there is no Trinity, then, spontaneously and without noticing it, you set before yourself the nothing—not-being, and yet the unattainable Source of being—and the Trinity is found again in the unattainability of the Source.

The liturgy, Mass, etc.—is it not a necessary compensation for the drastic *neti*, negation, of *advaita*? Never forget that this *neti* itself is *nāmarūpa*. Not to be confused with its expression. It is only a symbol, an expression, which is always imperfect and psychically forced, of the experience. Psychic health spontaneously (unconsciously) calls for this complement. And that is why it is most often so natural to me. It allows me to keep my balance! However liturgy, Mass, should never be forced. Read the breviary, celebrate the Mass, never out of duty, but as if by instinct, spontaneously.

38. A reference to the famous *mantra* of fullness: “That is Fullness, this is Fullness, from Fullness comes Fullness. When Fullness is taken from Fullness, Fullness remains [*avaśishyate*].” (BU V, 1; IsaU; tr. *Vedic Experience*, p.806)

...It was the *idea* of the divinity of Jesus that led to the *idea* of the Trinity. For if Jesus was *theos* [God], nevertheless he could not be *ho theos*, the one God. That was the first step. Then there was the call of the *trias*, unconsciously present in the depth of the psyche; even if for nearly two centuries people refused to use the word *tres*, *trias*, the Spirit was recognized as himself also *theos*...

Jesus could not have been called *theos* by anyone, if human beings had not felt his *theotes* (divinity) in the depth of themselves. Oh! not an explicit *theotes*, for that would be contradictory, but the sense that this mystery, which the "religious tradition" has projected on God, is mine, is my-self. Jesus is at the meeting-point of this tradition with the unsatisfied longing of the human heart.

I no longer have the strength to face up either to the Presence of others, or to that Presence which in my own depth I am to myself.

November 3

Knowledge of oneself essentially includes the discovery, the realization of the self as absolute, "apart from *dharma* and not-*dharma*, etc." [*anyatra dharmāt adharmāt*³⁹], as the supreme authority, as the centre, the navel of the world [*jagannabhi*], around which and starting from which everything moves. The discovery of being free to go where I wish [*kāmacara*]⁴⁰, of not being bound by anything whatever in any of the worlds, of being above the *dvandvas* of birth/death [*janma/mrityu*], pleasure/pain [*sukha/duhkha*], etc.
(...)

November 7

The tempter says: If you eat of the fruit, you will be like God. The seer says: You are the very mystery of God. The mistake is to want to become God. When you want to become God, you cease to be him!
(...)

Uttarkashi

December 24

The Eucharist. To feed on Brahman in every being. Every being is honey [*madhu*]⁴¹ for all the others.

Feed on each one in order to feed on everything.

Feed on whoever is closest to Brahman, on those like Indra, Vayu, Agni, who have come very close to Brahman.

The Eucharist: the call to everything to become Brahman.

Christmas night: Prajāpati is born in every birth [*Prajāpati carasi garbhe tvam eva pratijāyamāna*⁴²]. (MahanarU)

39. Other than *dharma* and *non-dharma*: "Declare to me then what you deem to be beyond what is righteous and what is unrighteous, beyond what is done and what is undone, beyond what was and what shall be!" KathU II, 14 (tr. *Vedic Experience*, p.565).

40. Cp. CU VII, 15, 2.

41. Cp., for example, BU II, 5, 1: "This earth is the honey of all beings, and all beings are honey for this earth." (tr. R.C. Zaehner).

42. Prajāpati, you stir within the womb, it is you who are born.

You are Prajapati, the one who is born in every birth. The un-born begins and comes to be in every birth and in every becoming.

Celebrate the birth of a great Awakened One and of a great Awakener.

The very glorious manifestation of the un-born.

A birth is an awakening. The awakening to God of a consciousness becoming aware of itself. The awakening of God to himself in this consciousness.

December 25

The Jews celebrate the birth of the Saviour of Israel sent by Yahweh.

The Greeks celebrate the descent of God in human form—the Word was made flesh [*ho logos sarx egeneto*].

India celebrates the radiance at a given point, in a given consciousness, of the divine that pervades the universe.

Advaita does not allow us to give special importance to an individual who is "essentially" distinct. The mystery is the same everywhere. But there is special importance and particularity at the level of manifestation.

However it may be with the *Divine* which shines out so marvellously in and from Jesus, it is still the glittering play [*Ilā*] of creation.

The Jewish-Greek effort to give an absolute character to the Incarnation is the effort of someone who has not been blinded by the Divine Light. "There is no gulf."

This evening celebrated Mass with the hymn to the Purusha (last night Śvetaśvatara Up. II, 16, and III)⁴³.

The celebration of the birth of the Purusha, before time and beyond all times. The celebration of each one's birth, of the birth of the Man in each one who is born.

...The Jews reduced Jesus the Ben-Adam to the Messiah of their salvation history, of their salvation. The Greeks made him into a divine descent, the coming down to earth of their Logos. India, free from history and especially from historical particularity—that impossible "people of God"—and also free from the *logos* and the concept [*eidōs*], immediately grasped the universal mystery, the Purusha who, outside all history and every *eidōs*, appears at the origin [*agre*]⁴⁴—at the origin of everything, at the origin of the cosmic whole, at the origin of human consciousness as well.

The idea of the Messiah has diminished Jesus. Jesus is the manifestation of that original Mystery which the dualists call theandric, and the knowers of Brahman [*brahmadevīdāh*] call the point of ignition of the not-manifested [*avyakta*] Brahman with the Brahman who "attains to himself in himself by himself" [*sambabhūva ātmani ātmanā ātmānam*]⁴⁴.

Every attempt to limit, to reduce this mystery to Jesus limits and reduces Jesus himself who is so much greater—and only thus so divine—in

43. "This is the God who pervades all regions: He is the first-born, He is in the womb. He is born indeed and will be born again: over against his creatures does He stand, his face turned every way." (SU II, 16, tr. R.C. Zaehner).

44. Cp. MahanarU 64.

his advaita with all that is born of humankind and therefore all that is born of God.

The problem of his uniqueness is a false problem that only arises in the context of phenomena, where things can be added, subtracted and multiplied. Whereas Jesus came precisely to free humanity from all the knots of the heart.

December 27

Jesus is not made greater by refusing to others that which gives him his own glory.

See Jesus in his infinite mystery, without setting him apart. And if he is the very mystery of every person, why refuse to adore him in each one and to recognize his unique glory in that person? Is that not precisely the doctrine/insight of the mystical Body? And why demand that people should always and everywhere give to this mystery the name that was given to him when he appeared in Israel?

December 30

The invitation to go to Bangalore twice in '73 by air has really disconcerted me.⁴⁵ I can't take any more. Where is the truth? On the one hand there is both my lack of desire to go south and my monastic solitude that I must finally think of safeguarding—on the other, a spiritual appeal that is genuine... My hiding away, is it caused by escapism and solipsism? or by a true monastic call? A serious decision, for if I accept this year there will be no end. I would like to be able to refuse. I used the excuse of the journey; so I was offered an air passage. Is that just being overscrupulous? Am I refusing for my own sake or for the *Self*?

The Body of Christ, the Church, is the communion of those who have the experience of God. The experience of God is found in the most diverse climes and spiritual contexts.

45. He was invited to take part in March in a seminar on Contemplation and in October in the Monastic Congress, and after long hesitation refused both invitations. In both cases he contributed papers: to the first, "The Upanishads and Advaitic Experience" (published in *The Further Shore*, 1984 and later edition), and to the Congress, "Experience of God in Eastern Religions" (published in *Cistercian Studies*, IX, 2 & 3, p.148ff).

1973

To the Further Shore

A YEAR before his heart attack on July 14, Swamiji had a premonition of his death. July 14 proved to be the culminating point of his life. Two weeks previously he had glimpsed his coming struggle with the angel of death. But his experience in the months following July 14 was of a completely different character.

He began the year in his hermitage, then visited Rajpur, Delhi, Haridwar, Rishikesh. He returned to Uttarkashi in April for a month and then left again. At the end of May he was at Rajpur for the second "School of Prayer". The most important event for him was Marc's *sannyasa diksha* (monastic initiation) at Rishikesh; this consecration was given jointly by himself as the guru and by Swami Chidananda of Sivānanda Ashram. Marc received the name of Ajatananda (*ajata*: un-born). Swamiji had carefully prepared the *diksha*, as is clear from his essay on *Sannyasa*. After the *diksha*, Swamiji and Ajatananda spent together some days of great spiritual intensity in the lonely little temple at Ranagal, beside the Ganges.

On the "fateful" day, Swamiji left Ajatananda at Ranagal and went to Rishikesh. At Rishikesh, while running after a bus in which he had left his bag, he fell to the ground, laid low by a heart attack. A French lady who was living at the Sivananda Ashram happened "providentially" to pass by and recognized him. He was taken back to the ashram, and for two weeks Nirmal Tripāthi (now Swami Jivanmuktananda) took care of him at the "Tourist Bungalow". Then, until August 19, he stayed with his friends Ranjit and Doris Chetsingh in Rajpur, where Marc looked after him. After that, Marc accompanied him to the clinic of the Franciscan Sisters at Indore, old acquaintances of his, who nursed him devotedly. He seemed to improve but his great weariness did not leave him. However he kept his vitality and was looking forward to going as planned to Madras, though in the end he was unable to make the journey. And on December 7, the vigil of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the *sannyāsī* left this earth.

He spoke of his heart-attack as "the great week" and the following weeks as "a marvellous experience of crossing over between death and life". It was "the discovery of the Grail" and an awakening to the blinding light beyond life/death.

Four days before his Great Departure, in one of his last letters he wrote: "The *Jerusalem beata* [holy-heavenly Jerusalem] does not lie in

an always mythical dream of the future. It is *kai nun* [even now], we only have to open our eyes! That is the only thing that I would like to make understood from now on if I stay alive. And it is so simple that no one can grasp it..."

This *Diary* invites us to accompany Swamiji on his journey towards this realization. It can help those who read it. But it is up to us to have the simplicity to accept it.

Here is the itinerary of this final year:

31 January	Left Uttarkashi.
3-13 February	At Rajpur. Completed the English translation of <i>Saccidananda</i> .
19-27 February	Delhi. On the 22nd he welcomed Mrs Anne-Marie Stokes, also a native of Brittany, settled in New York, who had been in correspondence with him for several years. Then Haridwar, Rishikesh, and Dehra Dun with Mrs Stokes.
6-12 March	At Rajpur with Mrs Stokes.
12-26 March	At Rishikesh with Mrs Stokes and Marc.
4 April	Returned to Uttarkashi. Reread the Upanishads about <i>sannyasa</i> . First draft of an essay on <i>sannyasa</i> in view of an ecumenical <i>diksha</i> . This was his final stay in his hermitage.
11-20 May	At Rajpur, then Rishikesh and Phulchatti (12-20) with Marc.
21-25 May	At Rajpur, "School of Prayer". The Director of the Centre asked him to vacate the rooms which had been made available to him since 1972.
4-10 June	At Rishikesh and Haridwar with Marc.
10-16 June	At Rajpur. Moved his things from the Centre to the house of his friends Ranjit and Doris Chetsingh.
16-20 June	At Rishikesh and Saptarishi.
20-27 June	At Rajpur.
27-30 June	At Rishikesh, Marc's <i>diksha</i> .
1-9 July	At Rajpur.
10-14 July	Met Marc at Kaudiyalā. They stayed in the temple at Ranagal.
14 July	Heart attack at Rishikesh.
30 July-19 August	At Rajpur, resting at the home of the Chetsinghs.
21 August	Arrival at Roberts' Nursing Home, Indore.
October	Several visits from friends: Odette and Christophe Baumer, Ajit, Sister Ivane, Fr Dominique.
7 December	Mahāsamādhi.

* * * *

Uttarkashi

January 2

Christ loses nothing of his true greatness when he is freed from the false forms of greatness with which myths and theological reflection have decked him out. Jesus is the marvellous epiphany of the mystery of Man, of the Purusha, the mystery of every human being, as were the Buddha and Ramana and so many others. He is the mystery of the Purusha who is seeking himself in the cosmos. His epiphany is strongly marked by the time and place of his appearance in the flesh. He came first of all for the lost ones of the house of Israel, as he himself said.

Far more than being the 'head' of a religion, Jesus is first of all a questioning of every human being. An examination of each one about his relation with God and with his brothers, as actually lived.

Christian dogma has too often emptied Jesus and stolen him from his brothers.

In Jesus the Purusha, celebrate all the purushas, past, present and to come.

In his awakening at his Baptism, at his Resurrection, celebrate the awakening of every one to *aham asmi, ego eimi*, I am.

...Jesus is great with his personal greatness and not with any relative greatness—in comparison with anyone or anything whatever. To be a disciple of Christ, to put one's faith in Christ, does not mean to be a member of a (closed) sociological group that is recognizable from certain initiations, certain structures, certain formulas—but it means first of all to take seriously Jesus' life and teaching: to renounce everything, to be free even at the cost of death, to put one's brother before oneself, total non-desire except for the Kingdom, etc.

'Is my life conformable, even in its details, to the example of Christ?'

The Church has one simple function: service. To draw everything to itself, as it only too often tries to do, is a usurpation, a fraud. It is a sacrament, but as such it is a sign, and this sign should be so very transparent if it is to be true.

By becoming a religion, Christianity has lost its mystery and its power.

January 3

Human beings need zazen, meditation, silence, just as they need sleep.

(...)

Rajpur

February 2

Thoughts during recent weeks. To look for correlations, for *upanishads*, between Hinduism and Christianity at the level of the *namarupas* leads to a dead end. The similarities between the three Abrahamic religions are misleading and we are tempted to look for parallels in religions that are still more remote.

What recently enlightened me was this. The elements of a dream, taken separately and even in their interconnections, are not true. However the dream has its own truth. The truth of the dream is the psychic "drive"

that is its basis. I call it drive, but the word matters little. There is an existential psychic 'happening', the rising up to the level of consciousness of a deep drive. As the restraints of the waking state no longer exist, from this original drive a vast scenario is projected, opens out, etc. A person lives this existential psychic event intensely—with joy and sorrow, calm and anxiety, etc., as the case may be. The truth of the dream is this inner event that the dream expresses.

Simplifying this line of reasoning, there is in all human existence, continuously present and underlying everything—in a great many cases, at least at given moments of our life—this inner encounter with the mystery, with a mystery which is our self and its deepest truth and at the same time which transcends the self that is perceived in ordinary consciousness, so much so that we make this mystery into an *Other*, and project on a God this transcendence and interiorization of ourselves. An encounter that is both inner and outer at once, because time and space, the elements, other human beings, each person, each thing contains its own mystery.

Myth is a great collective dream. It is, like a dream, an instinctive way of living this reality. Dreams and individual myths interact. Controlling themes are revealed and get established: mental furrows are dug, then stream-beds, and rivers are gradually formed. The encounter is so primordial that these furrows are dug very deep, so deep that they seem natural, *sahaja*—original.

The *logos* then works on these mythical [*mythikoi*] furrows, then removes their *lila* and seeks to give them an absolute truth. The formulations, social structures of religions. We must accept the fact that Jesus the son of Mary [*Yeshuah ben Myriam*] awoke to this mystery in the impressive *mythos* of Judaism.

To start from Jesus within his Jewish *mythos*, and still more within the wider Mediterranean *mythos* in which the Church has projected his image, in order to establish a theology of religions (i.e. to judge everything in relation to Helleno-Judaic Christian theology and on that basis to pass judgment on the value of similar formulations or structures elsewhere) is simply false.

We must accept the two conflicting axes around which this inner experience has been expressed: the Abrahamic axis with its three descendants—and the Vedantic axis, with its Buddhist complement. Then we take note of the essentially *nāmarūpa* value of all formulations-structures, whether they are Upanishadic, Buddhist, Islamic or Christian. At that point we no longer seek to express the mystery of Jesus in Indian terms, those for example of *avatāras*, or of the Purusha, or the *guru*... All that is a matter of correspondences between myths and *nāmarūpa*. They only lead to dead ends.

The awakening to the mystery has nothing to do with dogmas about the Trinity, Incarnation, Redemption—nor with the golden-coloured Purusha either.

It is the entire trinitarian superstructure that collapses. For that is still *nāmarūpa*. And all efforts to equate Brahman = silence = unmanifested [*avyakta*] = the Father...remain at the level of the *mythos-logos*. In fact it is so clear that we are incapable of naming the Spirit in a Vedantic Christology.

The problem of the uniqueness of Jesus, the only Incarnate One, is a false problem. It arises only in the domain of the *nāmarūpas*. For the uniqueness of the Person is inaccessible, indefinable.

The trinitarian mystery is the expansion into a magnificent statement, *nāmarūpa*, of the deep experience at the same time of unity, of non-duality and relationship. It is the realization of the eternity of my relationship with my human brother, etc.

But to try to produce a new trinitarian theology only leads to dead ends. It means that one is still under the spell of *mythos* and *logos*. It is simply to replace *theos* by *theo-logia* and to confuse the idea of God with God.

My whole thesis in *Sagesse*¹ has collapsed, and in this total collapse is the awakening. An awakening that is simply awakening and cannot be defined. For in the attempt at definition it loses all its essential luminosity. Jesus in his inmost depth felt himself to have been sent on a mission, a mission for the people, for the ethnic group in which he was born; a mission of salvation. But his mission is directly for the Jews.

If we want Christ's saving work to be universal, this saving work cannot be sought in any *nāmarūpa*: death, sacrifice, redemption, resurrection... There is in truth only one act by which Jesus—every human being—goes to the Father (to use biblical terminology): it is the act of awaking. As soon as you awake, on account of the essential connectedness of all human beings, you awake with, on behalf of, all.

Unfortunately that seems terribly abstract. And the human psyche is so 'involved' in the *mythos-logos* of religion that it is unable to find its bearings in it. It is exactly the same with Hinduism-Buddhism, even though all the same they have the underlying *advaita* and the refusal—*neti neti*—of every *nāmarūpa*, which helps in making the leap.

And in fact it is so simple.

Once you have recognized the fundamental truth of the religious myth and of the multiple forms it has taken, you accept the symbolic truth of every formulation, every rite, etc., but you obstinately refuse to give them an absolute value.

That was in fact just what Jesus did with regard to the Judaism around him—and what brought him to the cross!

But there is no dishonesty in taking part in a rite—for when you recognize its symbolic character, you 'perform' it with still greater truth than does one who believes in the absolute value of his ritual gestures or words.

1. English version, *Saccidananda: a Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience*. See his assessment in the Introduction to this version.

And there is no need—perhaps just the opposite—to try to reason about it (and like Bultmann, by demythologizing, to make it logical in a still less acceptable way). Simply feel the awakening to oneself in the universal community, in the Eucharist, prayer...

The Trinity, the Incarnation, Redemption—the mystery that begins to open up within oneself, the original gulf which appears: and there is on the one hand the human being, the creature, and on the other God—and that eternally: the Word, one with the Father, but eternally face to face with the Father. And this eternity is in fact sensed as something before time—no, as the primordial mystery of time, of the awakening to the mystery of the Present!

And the gulf is manifold: the eternal gulf between Father-Son, the gulf between God-creature, the gulf between righteous-sinner, the gulf between all human beings as they face one another. And the intuition is true so long as the Father and the Son remain mythical. As soon as you theologize, you fall.

The truth of the simultaneous *advaita-aneka* [not-two, not-one], discovered in the *nun* [now] of the Present.

The immense *mythos* of saying that.

The striking intuition of the Spirit. It is he who prevents the gulf from being eternal. He indeed overarches it, he makes it to be *māya*.

He is the self within everything [*sarvāntarātman*].

The Spirit has no real Upanishadic name.

For that matter no more do the Father or the Son have one. The Father is not (and yet he is) Brahman at the limit of personification. The best name for the Son is Purusha. But the Purusha includes all that is manifested.

You have to do violence to the Father (and to Jesus' thought in the first place) to present him as Non-being [*asat*].

In Jesus' thought, the Father is totally concrete with the 'concreteness' of Yahweh. It is the reality of the distinction between God/creature that becomes in the consciousness of Jesus the reality of child/Father [*pais/Abba*]. For in the consciousness of Jesus the distinction has exploded. And what at his Baptism he recognized himself to be, *advaita* with Abba-Yahweh, that he shares with everyone.

Whether we like it or not, the Father is at the level of the *nāmarūpa*. Theologies have conjured up a Godhead [*theotes*] beyond the Persons. That does not correspond to the data of Christian Revelation.

In the thought of the theist believer, before the gulf has separated God and his work, the Father and the Son, there is absolutely nothing. For the Godhead [*theotes*] is not conceivable without *nāmarūpa*. *There is no thought about the mystery which is not already nāmarūpa*, formulation. The experience at the original moment cannot be discerned except in an "Ah"! (cp. Kena U 4, 4).

There is nothing that can be discerned prior to the *nāmarūpa*, not anywhere in Christian theology, not even in the thought of Jesus, which was formed in the mould of Judaism.

And then came the Councils! That meant Hellenization with its transforming power, plus Roman legalism taking over from the Jewish Torah. And the Church fell into the intellectualism of the Middle Ages and the idolatry that went with it. What a shame that the Reformers were not able to discover the Spirit! As always, we had to wait for the world to show the way to the Church! but the cost is heavy. For who is ready for the stripping bare of the present day?

With Jesus an existential meeting, not mythical or theological. Compare your own spiritual attitude with his. Not trying to express any idea about him, but simply being ready to be seared by meeting him. And this does not mean that you will recite psalms, or assist at Mass, etc., etc., or even that you will pronounce or invoke his name. For with him also, as with Shiva, you must go beyond his *nāmarūpa* to find him—to discover his real name, the *Supername*²—which is not even simply the thou-I [*tvam-aham*] of mutual relationship—which in Upanishadic terms I would say is the I AM...; a smile that goes to the heart of every human being whom you meet—that is the saving name of Christ.

The person of Jesus is unique, as every person is unique. And no one can know the mystery of anyone else or of God. The secret name is known only by the one who gives it and the one who receives it. In order to distinguish Jesus from myself—to distinguish his relationship to God—I would have to have total knowledge of the mystery of God and of the mystery of Jesus. Who am I to claim to know that? Of course I can stammer a few words. But that will never be more than some concepts, strictly dependent on my cultural, social, religious and mental environment, on all the previous development of my thought and my consciousness.

So how compare my view of myself with the view Jesus has of himself?

What exactly is meant by Jesus' formulation: I am the son of God [*filius Dei ego sum*]? Certainly not what the Councils imagined a few centuries later. In saying that he was son of God, did Jesus mean to separate himself from the rest of us (of course his mission is special, but the 'apartness' of the mission does not imply an 'apartness' of nature)—or else to separate himself from the position that his Jewish contemporaries claimed for themselves before God? He acknowledged a relationship with God that went beyond the biblical data of his time. In order to "understand" himself he had to take certain texts like those about the Servant, or those about the Son of Man, and make them practically explode.

February 4

The redemption of the world by Jesus was first of all the affirmation of his own freedom in relation to his religious context. Another of those cases in which Christian exegesis has projected the actual mystery of the human person on an abstract divinity. It is the Barnasha, the human being

2. Cp. R. Panikkar, *Salvation in Christ: Concreteness and Universality: the Supername*. Inaugural Conference at the Institute of Advanced Ecumenical Studies, Tantur, Jerusalem, 1972.

himself, who is the lord of the sabbath. It was his freedom as a human being that Jesus claimed, but this human dignity is unacceptable to mankind as a whole. They reject it by projecting it on God.

Jesus is so free and true that he dies for it.

February 5

Redeeming the present. Free it from the future, embrace it in its fullness.

February 17

The *mythos* of the Purusha is wider than that of Christos; not only does it include the cosmic and metacosmic aspect of the mystery, but it is also free from the attachment to time entailed by the *mythos* of Christ. Rather it recognizes all the symbolic value contained in the mystery of Time, but refuses to compress the absolute separately into a particular point of time.

It is also wider than that of Ísvara and that of Prajāpati, for it emphasizes the manifestation of this mystery as HUMAN, Purusha (cp. the Barnasha).

The paschal mystery is an impressive symbol of the awakening of the Human Being to himself, within time and outside time, plunged, immersed in creation and yet independent of creation. The Purusha is, is simply there, like the *Atman*, *Sat*, *Brahman*, once the human being awakes to himself.

"Before Abraham was, I am!"³

The Eucharist: the Purusha of the Brihad Up. 2.5: Eaten by all, eater of all—but a food of joy: honey [*madhu*], as opposed to food [*annam*], not just a matter of filling the belly.

The Mass is the sacrifice [*yajña*] of Rig Veda 10.90 through the great paschal symbol.

The consciousness of sin deepens the awakening of the purusha by plunging him first into the experience of 'darkness', *tamas*, in the midst of which the Light springs up.

...The eternal basis of the Church is not indeed some abstraction or other, but the Trinity itself. The Church is the fact of the togetherness, of the *samyoga-sayujya-salokya*⁴ of all humanity. Human beings realize their togetherness when beyond their community—natural, bodily, mental—they discover the mystery of the *advaita* of their consciousness, 'awareness'. This discovery of their unity [*ekatvam*] is realized through archetypal symbols, like every awakening; the symbols of the family, the tribe, the homeland, the religion (linked to a Prophet, a rite, a particular revelation...). All these symbols are inadequate because of their essential limitation but they allow the human being to live in some fashion the mystery of his unity. Here belongs the symbol of Christ and of the cosmic Christ—a

3. John 8:58.

4. Communion-union-being united in the same divine world (*loka*); this terminology comes from the Brakmanas via Vaishnavite *bhakti*.

magnificent set of symbols. In the Christ myth, the human being discovers his unity, but the moment he limits himself, he falls.

The symbols of Christ, Church, are bearers of universality. They radiate their catholicity (ecumenism = universality). They exist *ad* (towards) the totality, *pros* (towards) the totality = "*sarvam prat?*"

A restricted Eucharist is false. "Leave your offering before the altar!"... Whoever "loves" his brother has a right to the Eucharist.

...The myth of the Church is left behind, as is the myth of Christ. They have been marvellous guidelines, but by being turned in on themselves they have lost their elemental force as myths 'appealing to the depths of the human heart'. And the myth can no longer be recovered. The christic and ecclesial myths are now exploding into symbols that are more powerful, more universal (though still mythical) in their deep insertion and rootedness in the cosmos, and yet often less remote from the invisible archetypes and more meaningful to modern hearts.

...In these days evolution is tending towards an awakening at the level of the archetypes themselves. But who is capable of an awakening beyond symbols?

March 22

If Christ is the "only one" for me, let him not be so simply in my thought—may I discover in him the glory of the Only One. And what does it matter if I discover the glory of the Only One in whatever created form there may be! For the glory of the Only One is all one.

This alone is important: that Christ should be Everything for me. Let there not be in me anything held back from him. Let every human being be the only one for me, my everything to whom I give myself totally. In this alone I will have the experience of the Only One.

Uttarkashi

April 10-19

Notes on christology and trinitarian theology in view of forthcoming lectures at Vidyajyoti [Jesuit faculty at Delhi]. [He was not able to give these lectures, of which some extracts are given below.]

(...)

April 13

Why this continual itch for "justification"? People want to "understand" the experience in relation to the mental coordinates of their reason or their faith. So long as this experience is conceived on the basis of any coordinates, it is no longer itself. In the experience there is no doubt—*na samsāya!* So what do these doubts mean? The ego [*ahamkāra*] and the intellect [*buddhi*] are unwilling to disappear.

The Hindu in contact with Vedānta has none of these problems. It is not a question of 'to be or not to be', as for the Christian. However, Christianity cannot find a place at the level of the absolute [*paramārtha*]. It belongs to the order of what is manifested. The order of the SAT judges it. But watch out: not the order of the unmanifested *Sat* as conceived on the basis of what is manifested. Cp. the criticism of the Mādhyamika Buddhists

who are very careful not to set some other truth against the truth of this world.

In the lectures planned for Vidyajyoti, I am not presenting any theses. I am presenting the Vedantin experience with the problems that it poses for Christian theology. I am offering some attempted solutions, but not apodictic ones. I am not rejecting dogmatic formulas. I am only pointing out the problem of relativity that arises in their regard. Problems that no honest thinker has the right to evade.

April 16

There is nothing else [*na anyatra asti*]. The only genuine experience of solitude is the experience of the Self to whom nothing is other.

Solitude—discipline [*sādhana*] in the mind [*manas*] as in practical life—is achieved by exclusion. It is of the same order as the distinction between *ātman* and not-*ātman* [*an-ātman*] and the rejection outside the *ātman* of everything that is not permanent [*nitya*]. An inevitable duality. This is a negative solitude—artificial (*kṛita*) and therefore false, superimposed.

So long as solitude—and the sense of my uniqueness, which is the same thing—is felt in relation to something else, it is always something artificial. My fullness, *pūrnam*, *bhūman*, *sarvam*, should be attained directly, not by exclusion or negation. It should be attained in oneself, *ātmanam ātmanā* (oneself by oneself).

So there is no longer any question of understanding the uniqueness of Christ or of my own personality in relation to the manifold variety of beings, of persons, of prophets, of those who have attained realization.

These are two orders without any contact with each other.

This solitude or non-otherness (*an-anyatvam*; *ekatvam*, *ekāntah*) shines with its own light. It is the discovery of my a-secity, that I exist beyond every division of time, of matter, of space. It is the discovery that there is no gulf between myself and God—that God on whom I have projected all my ideas of the absolute, whereas this idea of absoluteness itself can only spring up from myself. It will be said that it springs up from my experience of incompleteness, of finitude. But this very experience of finitude can only be rooted in an experience of infinity that is deep, primordial, imperceptible in itself. The flash of realization is precisely this discovery of infinity, 'illimitedness', in the depth of, at the very source of, this finitude. The same thing as discovering my pure I, in itself, in the depth of, at the source of, my I-with, my I-acting, thinking, feeling, etc. It is like the extraction of what is deepest in oneself out of what is deepest in oneself. Cp. the image of the Katha Up. VI, 17 = freeing the purusha who is in the very depth of the heart⁵ (cp. Chand. Up. VIII.3.4).

The absolutely direct discovery of oneself through oneself—*ātmanā ātmanam* (oneself by oneself)—not through something else.

5. "The Person of a thumb's size, the *ātman* within, ever dwells in the heart of beings. One should draw him out of one's body with care just as an inner stem is drawn from its sheath. Him you should know, the Pure, the immortal." Kath U VI, 17 (tr. *Vedic Experience*, p.568).

This experience is absolutely basic. So long as one has not had the experience, no true sense of the *other* can be experienced. For the *other* is seen at the level of the phenomenal, of multiplicity, at the level of the body, of thought, at the point where beings enter into composition with one another. And, in fact, so long as I have not *realized* myself at that level, I only know myself from the outside, in a mirror, in *aenigmatē* [I Cor. 13:12], in the reflection of myself which is given to me in the mirror of my perception (*jñānendriya*)⁶ and my action (*karmendriya*)⁷.

The solitude of the *ātman* does not mean that I incorporate the phenomenal I of others into my own phenomenal I. It is not a matter of the literally cosmic dimension of myself, of the self, of an inflation of myself to the dimension of "all this" [*sarvam idam*], i.e., the universe. This again is a not-other [*an-anya*] at the level of multiplicity. All this is part of the further reflection of the *manas* on this spontaneous experience of *an-anya*, *advaita*. It is all the field of the philosophical technicality which Shankara, for example, has superimposed on the Upanishads.

An authentic philosophical or theological reflection on the *other* can only begin from the experience of relationship at the very level of the experience of the not-other. Only then do I know *myself* and *the other* in their reason and their ultimate essence. It is at the same depth of my own experience of Myself that I discover the Myself of the one with whom I am in a reciprocal relationship as Thou. So long as I do not know *myself* at my true level, I am unable to grasp what it means for anyone else to be "I". My *I* penetrates the *I* of every conscious being. And in this penetrating of his *I*, it is my own *I* that is penetrated by his. It is the paradoxical encounter of two INFINITES. The whole mystery of the relationship of I to I.

It is only at this level that we discover the mystery of the Relation of person to person, of a person to God, of God to God, in the revealed secret of the Three Persons.

April 17

Here we are not seeking an explanation—with an almost perfect aim as is the intention of the Summa Theologica I.27 ff.—of the trinitarian experience that Christians have in Jesus. But (we are) only seeking to "think", in one way or another, although always inadequately, this ineffable [*a-nirvacanīya*] experience.

Dogmatic formulas have in the first place the value of excluding, in that they reject viewpoints that are false—at least within the framework of a given philosophy; but the positive value of their affirmations is itself very weak, and always essentially conditioned by an intellectual and cultural context.

Here there is only a taking aim, a beginning.

If theology speaks of relations between the divine Persons—this word "Person" being here itself transcendent—then it is by exploring more deeply

6. The organs of perception, the senses.

7. The organs of action.

the mystery of the relation between persons, between consciousnesses, between "I's, that we can try to understand something about them. But this term "person", when applied to human beings, should already be understood in the highest manner. It is a matter of discovering, beyond bodily and mental phenomena, that point of *effulgence*—*tejobindu*—, in which is concentrated, or from which there springs up, the consciousness of being.

This *tejobindu* is, so to speak, the point of impact within the internal organ [*antahkarana*] of the consciousness of being and the *ātman*. The intellect [*buddhi*] is the original, primordial manifestation of this consciousness. Not indeed a consciousness that is given to what is *jada* (= lifeless and inert), but rather it is that outpouring of *tejas* [glory], the burning heat that is at the origin of everything. Creation by *tejas* [*tejas srishṭi*]⁸—cp. Chand. Up. VI. 2: burning heat-water-food [*tejas-āpa-annam*]; cp. also the relationship between *tejas* and *tapas*, Br. Up. I. 2; and also the return of the human being to the light that shines of itself [*svayam jyoti*], Br. Up. IV.3.6 ff.; cp. the original and final Purusha of glory [*tejomaya purusha*].

It is in this indefinable, indescribable relationship of person to person, of I to I, of consciousness to consciousness, that we must seek the image of the divine relations.

(...)

April 19

(...)

Jesus is a person who has totally discovered, realized his mystery. He is that in the first place. All the rest is a superfluous addition. All the rest is gnosis. It is in his person that he is salvation, not in any kind of gnosis unnecessarily added on to him. It is his Name that saves and not the names that people give him. His name is "I AM". The name of every conscious being is first of all myself, I—*Aham* (cp. Br. Up. I, 4, 1).

Jesus is saviour by virtue of having realized his NAME. He has shown and has opened the way out of *samsāra*, the phenomenal world, and has reached the *guhā*, the *padam*, beyond the heavens [*parena nākam*]⁹—which is the mystery of the Father.

In discovering the Father, he has not found an "Other": I and the Father are one [*Ego et Pater unum sumus*].

In the only Spirit, he has discovered his non-duality with Yahweh; it is the Spirit that is the link, the non-duality. In the experience of the Baptism Jesus recognized Yahweh in his infinite distance. But at the same moment he saw the heavens torn open, he heard a voice and saw the dove. All expressions—in a concrete intellectual and mythical context, as was that of the Jews—of *advaita*. There is communication between heaven and earth (cp. the texts of Paul, Heb.: he has passed through the veil...). They are no longer two heterogeneous, separate things. There is a single way. Jacob's ladder, with the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, in John 1:51. There too the heaven is open. There is a voice and there is the Spirit. The voice reveals to Jesus that he is the child of Yahweh—a New Testament formulation, no doubt, the *pais* of the LXX, but one that Jesus'

meditation would constantly deepen. He felt that Yahweh is truly *Abba* for him—that amounts to the "of one substance" [*homoousios*] of Nicaea. Of the same nature.

The Spirit is that medium in which the two are not "other" to each other. Cp. the scholastic view that the Spirit proceeds from the "Two" inasmuch as they are One. The Spirit is this mystery of the *advaita* of the Father and the Son, of the begotten and the unbegotten! In this puranic vision, Jesus recognizes that he is not other than the Father, that there is no abyss.

Here the dove is another image of the angels descending and ascending. Think of the Seven Spirits of the Apocalypse.

The experience of the Trinity is beyond words and manifestations. There are some possible meditations [*upāsana*] on the Three Persons. In the western tradition these *upāsanas* have basically been the ideas of Father, Son, and Spirit-breath.

In an Indian context, what will these *upāsanas* be?

For the Father: *padam, guhā*

For the Son: *purusha, guru, madhu*

For the Spirit: *ātman, interiority*⁸.

So long as I consider the Trinity apart from myself, i.e. myself as the subject that beholds, that considers "that", *tat*, the Trinity, as the object that is considered by myself—it is pure duality [*dvaitam*]. It is speculation and abstraction. If I only have an external relationship with the Trinity, the Trinity has no meaning for me. It only has meaning for me when the *antariksha*, the spatial distance that is between It and myself, is broken through, and I can contemplate It from within, with the very eye with which God sees himself. The Son knows the Father—but according to John and Paul, I am myself son, (is that in the Synoptics?) and I know the Father in the ABBA that I utter. And I know the Son in the I (which I am) that utters the ABBA.⁹

* * * *

(April 19)

To speak of a time to come—to hope for it—when I will be "realized", is absolutely meaningless. It is to set my faith, my interest—*upāsana*—on a particular state of consciousness, for example the state of consciousness of Ramana's body [*śarīra*]. To desire salvation [*moksha*] is a false word at the level of the Absolute [*paramārtha*].

Pay no attention either to the idea of being realized or to that of not being realized. All that steadily inflates the ego. So long as I think of an ego that has to be transcended or annihilated, I am simply feeding it! The *sādhana* for *moksha* lies simply in the stopping [*nivṛtti*] of the *manas*. A *sādhana* that does not even think of itself as such.

8. *Padam*: final "step", ultimate mystery; and *guhā*: interior cave, representing the aspect of the inaccessible mystery. *Purusha*: manifestation in human form, closely linked to the cosmic sacrifice; *guru*: true teacher; and *madhu* (symbolic honey of the Upanishads) representing here Christ's eucharistic aspect. *Ātman*: the inmost Self.
9. End of the notes on christology and trinitarian theology.

April 20

Nothing to get, nothing to attain to become free. Having rejected salvation, he has rejected (everything)—(he is) *avadhūta*, the one who is free from everything! [*mokshāya dhūtvā (dhūnoti/-nute)–avadhūta*].

The thoughts [*citta vikalpa*] of the *manas* are superimpositions [*adhyāsa*] on the natural state (*sahaja*). The space between *vikalpas* (cp. the thread of the pearl necklace): *sahaja*—not even the thought of freeing oneself.

The sacrifice [*yajña*] of Christ the Satpurusha puts an end to all rites. He leads beyond the veil and brings us to the beyond, the *eschaton*. The Eucharist is the personal participation by *faith* in this eschatological sacrifice.

Each Mass fulfils everything. The Mass cannot be repeated. Still the same theme of uniqueness—an ambiguous expression. It is—every time—the unique passage from this unique moment to the *eschaton*. Cp. Heb.7:27 and 10:14. Heb.4.10—*karma* is finished (the *sannyasi* has entered into his rest, *śānta*).

The four great religions are centred on:

a book: Islam

a clergy: Christianity

a monk: Buddhism

a *jīvanmukta* guru: Hinduism

(...)

April 21

Easter night, night of the awakening to being [*sambodhi*]. The vigils of Śākyamuni which culminate in the Awakening. The full moon of Vaiśākha. Neither Jesus nor Buddha described their Awakening.

(...)

April 25

It is as if I could not bring back—extract—God from the abyss into which he has vanished.

God lost in the abyss.

Why try to bring him up again?

It would not be serious if I myself also had fallen into it and been lost in it, for then, to start with, I would not be sorry for myself and would not be looking for him.

Unfortunately for me, my ego is still very lively—and that is what creates the whole drama.

The idea of *Paternity* (God's) probably does not in the first instance imply origin but likeness. The idea of the guru could help us to understand this. The guru is the one in whom I see myself. And so is the Father. The image in which I find myself. God is myself in what is most beautiful, most true, deepest in me. When I look down to the bottom of the abyss, of the GUHĀ, it is my very own image that is reflected back to me—and that is why I say ABBA, *Pitā*—but an image that is so beautiful, so beautiful, completely radiant with glory, a glory that has no beginning or end—beyond all birth and equally beyond all death. The *tejomaya* Purusha, the

self-luminous light [*svayam jyoti*], the supreme light [*param jyoti*]. And it is to this Purusha who is myself—*so'ham asmi*—sun-coloured beyond the darkness—that I reach out, fervently, irresistibly, with a view to our coming together, our *advaita*. This effort, this call of myself to myself, of myself as human to myself as God.

I had lost God, and in my search for him it is I myself that I have recovered, but myself, what a myself! I have disappeared from my sight into my *tejas*, my radiance.

April 28

People are converted—they receive an initiation [*dīksha*], they become Christian, Muslim, Sufi, Vedantin, etc. All those are superimposed forms. Whereas the essential thing is to strip oneself of all that is superfluously added, to recover one's proper form [*svarūpa*] that was lost. (Cp. the myth of Eden and original sin.)

(...)

Every formulation of a high experience has its starting point in ordinary experience. And the peripheral experience is that of separate individuals who are only dimly aware of their profound apophatism (or rather, who live this apophatism at the level of *ahamkāra*, egoism).

Three possible expressions (of the experience):

1. myself alone—*advaita*

2. myself and God

3. myself, the Father and the Spirit.

Three spontaneous ways of making experience come to expression at the level of the mind, the third—first used by Jesus—arising from a very strong sense of *advaita* in a monotheistic (Abrahamic) setting.

The “being” of the Trinity—this is my absolute experience of being, there is no being except there, *Sat = ātman = brahman*. All the rest is a world filled with ideas and myths. The superimposition of the mental universe with its manifold constellations and stellar systems upon that which is.

The *advaitic* formulation is just as much a superimposition as are the Koranic or the trinitarian formulations.

And people fight to defend their own formulations and to condemn those of others! The mote and the beam—the *ahamkāra* of P. is of the same order as the intolerance of the Muslims.

(...)

April 30

Human thought, anxiously seeking for a prop, tends to discover a face everywhere, in all the elements, in all beings: *deva, devatā, purusha*. And from this *deva* it moves irresistibly towards a supreme *deva*, an original Purusha [*ādipurusha*]... See the ceaseless straining in the Upanishads beyond the spontaneous myths of the Vedic hymns. (Note that there is no word in Sanskrit corresponding to the Mediterranean *theos* (God), with its two shades of meaning, philosophical and religious.) But the more thought seeks to

find, to penetrate this *deva*, this *purusha*, the more it feels itself ineffective, abstract. (...)

And finally this supreme *Deva* [*devadeva*]*—*to whom no one has succeeded in giving a form (it is without sign [*alinga*])*—*totally disappears in the depth of the *guhā*. And from the depth of the *guhā* it is myself, my own image, that is revealed to me, my form [*eikon*] that has replaced the shadows (Heb.10:1).

I am it - I am all - I am Brahman

Nothing is different from myself

One-and-without-a-second!

[*So 'ham asmi - sarvo 'smi - brahmāsmi*

matto vyatirikto nānyo 'sti

eka evādvitīyah]

The God that I project, the God of superimposition [*adhyāsa*], is surely dead. This disappearance of the God that is *pradishta* ('pointed out'; to "project" it) is considered by John of the Cross as a night, because this "state of experience" is related to "another" experience. But when this experience is recognized in its pure truth, referred to it alone, then this night is pure light, the dazzling light of the true "I".

(...)

One who knows several mental (or religious or spiritual) languages is incapable of absolutizing any formulation whatever—of the gospel, of the Upanishads, of Buddhism, etc. He can only bear witness to an experience—about which he can only stammer...

All formulations are *upāsanas*, approaches in prayer, in contemplation, in humility.¹⁰

There is the *upāsana* of the Abba, taught by Jesus: When you pray, say Father [*hotan proseuchesthe, legete Pater*].¹¹

There is the *upāsana* of the *mahāvakyas* of the Upanishads.

They do not conflict with each other.

One who knows thus, knows that! [*ya evam veda etaddhi veda!*] His "doubt" about the formulation is a mark of superiority, not of inferiority. The Upanishad expresses what *I* am—likewise the Gospel, etc. But all words are expressions [*vākyaṇi*], "utterances" [*vy-āhritih*].

(...)

May 4

The *keshi* (ascetic) has absolutely no support [*pratishthā*]. Does not have to give any reason for what he does, reasons based on Scripture, or on dogmas, or on common sense, etc. No explanations to be given to anyone. He rides upon the Spirit. His place is "open space".¹² He does not have to give a reason either to himself or to others. He who understands, understands. Whoever does not understand, that's too bad for him!

10. Cp. note 1 on 2 July 1971. p.329.

11. Luke 11:2.

12. A reference to the hymn of the *Keshi* ("the hairy one," an acosmic ascetic); RV X, 136.

May 7

Basic steps in the mystery of Jesus:

The Awakening at the Jordan.

At Tabor the manifestation in glory of the *Tejomaya Purusha*.

At Easter: the passage through death, and manifestation in fleeting human forms or in the manifold forms of the Spirit (Pentecost), because (in the)

Ascension: he has disappeared in the *guhā* (feast of *Sannyāsa!*).

May 10

One person expects me to be like this, another like that. Be yourself.

But what is my myself? being formless [*a-rūpa*], I have all forms [*sarvarūpa*]. Nothing to expect, nothing to do, nothing to desire. *Etad vai tad!* That, just that!

Even so, do I not dream of just that rising up of *śakti* [divine energy]*—*just a few infinitesimal degrees, which would make all the difference? Then I would be master in my own house, in my body as in my mind.

*—*But this *śakti* is in me, in full measure! Is then what I lack the faith-conviction that it (already) exists?

But no, for this faith-conviction is still a product of the mind. And so, it IS? and it cannot be the object of any expectation, any desire, any act?

OM *etad vai tad!* [KathU IV, 5-13]

(...)

The *Spirit* is there. That is to say, the mystery of divine space [*ākāśa*] which penetrates everything, causes everything to be.

...There is within us a force, a reality that we do not suspect: *śakti*, spirit. A force that is not different from the self [*ātmanā na vyatiriktaḥ*].

...We are victims of our sign-systems, monetary, linguistic, social signs, religious, ecclesial signs,*—*necessary but ultimately oppressive.

Be so saturated with splendour, *sampanna* with *tejas*, that neither present, nor past, nor future, nor what has been done nor what is to be done, any longer appear. *Etad vai tad*.

Not having merged into glory, come to me!

[*tejasā na sampadya*

padyasva mām!]

...Easter is not a feast of glory, at least outwardly. These appearances are in everyday forms. The feast of the Glory is the Transfiguration.

Easter and Ascension: the glory is wholly a matter of faith.

May 11

Just masks—all these Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Communists, etc. Human beings find it hard to put up with being naked in front of others. Even if they can put up with their own nakedness! (But bodily nakedness can itself also be a mask)... Masks that stick so tightly to the skin that they can no longer be torn off!

Rajpur

June 10

Sannyāsa-dīkṣā [initiation]: a grace? a sacrament?¹³

I have only seen it from a purely external point of view, as a help in the spiritual life, a convenience for physical life. But by putting one in "advaitic" connection with the holy monks of the past, is it not a communication of the Spirit that dwells in these saints? Is there not a positive, interior value in the *dīkṣā*? But what sign that is made [*kṛita*] can lead to what is not-made [*akṛita*]?

Rishikesh

June 19

Moving encounter at Africa Ashram¹⁴ with Ekaraśānanda [bliss of the single flavour]. Poverty of Francis of Assisi. The first total Christian *sādhu* without a single possession. No rite for the past three years. An answer, a call.

How does one ever dare to take *sannyāsa*, the orange robe? when one cannot do without money, cannot live by alms [*bhikṣā*], cannot reduce the long robe to a loincloth [*kaupīnam*] and a shawl [*chadar*].

What right do I have to give *sannyāsa*, when I do not practice (live) it myself? *Sannyāsa* is incompatible with any activity whatever—at least with any activity that is willed and chosen [*samkalpa*]. Only the demands of nature and the spontaneity of the Spirit can call for actions on his part. Preach, write, build?...

(...)

June 30

This morning Marc's *dīkṣā* in the Ganges at 7:30 with Chidanandaji and Krishnanandaji. It was too beautiful—too powerful. The sign has recovered all its value...

The four "celebrants" were simply radiant...

Rajpur

July 3

Have felt terribly anxious for the last three days about what is happening to my child.¹⁵ What is he eating, where is he sleeping, has anything happened to him? and the rain? I cannot eat without wondering if he is able to eat...; no appetite for any food.

And the torment is that he has left me, not just physically, but that he has passed into a sphere of the sacred to which I have no access...

I call out after him, like he did after... to the point of death from suffocation.

13. He is thinking of the initiation of Marc Chaduc. Cp. *The Further Shore*, essay on "Sannyāsa", section 5.

14. Near Haridwār.

15. Immediately after his initiation, Marc set off to wander, living only on alms in accordance with the tradition of Sannyāsa.

And yet I know that nothing bad can happen to him. The Self draws everything to itself, when the self is stripped of all ego. Cp. the Upanishad "All beings await him who knows this" (BU IV, 3, 37).

The one who was after me has gone ahead, and I can no longer join him... And yet wherever you flee, it is into me that you come! to that depth of myself out of which I have mysteriously called you... He is calling me there where he is. There where I have shown him the path without having ever thought that he would take it so seriously!

July 5

The terrifying demands of non-possession in *sannyāsa*. I have understood them too easily as the relative absence of signs of wealth. But it is the very possibility of possession that is attacked. No more than a dead man does the *sannyāsī* any longer possess anything at all (no more than the *ātman*). There is no longer an ego to be the possessor. All the acts of possession that he performs...?

I had never before realized what the poverty of *sannyāsa* means. I always used to approach it starting from my monastic profession and the adaptations required for life outside community—instead of seeing this poverty at its radical starting point.

The poverty imposed by the *dīkṣā*. Non-possession [*aparigraha*], no "mine" [*nirmama*]. The impossibility of possessing. But it is a poverty that is so much deeper and more essential. *Nirmama* combined with *nirahamkāra* (no ego). No "mine" because no "I". The poverty, the lack of desire, of needs, of the one who has realized that he is.

Nothing—except what is necessary for my work.

Aha, *sannyāsī*, so what have you got to DO?

The *sannyāsī* all alone, moves about *alone*, in solitude [*sannyāsī ekakī*, *ekatra vaset, caret*]. For he has no place [*loka*] of his own, not even the *loka* of human relationship. He meets others, but no meeting leaves any mark. He gives himself to all without holding on to anything.

No *loka*. No place where he might remain, have a settled existence!

His only *loka* is himself! the *ātman*, the Self, himself!

His profound Solitude, that of the Self, absolutely unique, of the one to whom nothing is other. Nothing other to "complete" himself.

From this comes his poverty, which has nothing to do with the lack of signs of wealth. Even though that is indispensable. As soon as he has a *desire* for anything, he has fallen from his own place. Whatever he has—he is ready to give it, to let it be taken. For he has nothing to do.

His possession is wholly external, through the body [*śarīram*], which does not support, does not sustain, any *ahamkāra*, any ego. An external possession of the same nature as the possession of the body, of its organs... He possesses, but not as his own. Ready to leave this *śarīram* at any moment.

I do not have the right to possess anything—no right to look for things in order to live, except what is absolutely indispensable: food, clothing, shelter—working tools (for I have no "work").

YOU ARE

unborn, infinite, deathless, beginningless
 one only and without a second
 from you nothing whatever is different
 the heart full of the unique experience of the self
 from you everything has come forth
 absence of fear (love) towards all beings!

[TVAM ASI

ajāta ananta amara anādiḥ
ekam evādvītyaḥ
tvatto nānyo'sti kimcit vyatiriktāḥ
svānubhavaikapūrnahridayaḥ
tvatto sarvaṃ pravartate
abhayaṃ sarvabhūtebhyo] (Cp. Sannyasa Up.)

For food—even when prepared by oneself—just food received from begging [*bhikṣā*], what people throw to a beggar.

For clothing, what is most ordinary, worn out, what the rich leave for the poor when they no longer want it.

For shelter, what is lent to the passer-by, what people allow a beggar to use. The minimum of indispensable equipment, and not a compromise with what is more practical.

But, what about that which is supposedly necessary for work?

My work is to be.

The really important times in my life: those when I simply am, established within. To those times everything is ordered, those times are not ordered to the times when I am working.

Use all things as if they were lent.

Never with the reflex feeling of ownership.

Not an idea of Jesus, received from outside, through the medium of the senses. But the very mystery of Jesus has to be discovered in oneself. Above all not another christological gnosis, but the I AM that Jesus is, and which I only know in my AHAM.

Without birth, interior [*janmarahita antarah*],

beyond the experience of BEING FROM, that of simply BEING. At his Baptism Jesus knew that he is from the Father, in absolute, infinite truth, but he also discovered the advaita of the Father and himself: *ajāta* (unborn).

July 8

Meeting this week with some very sincere preachers of Christ. I did not know what to say to them because what I should have had to tell them seemed to me to be so abstract. The very obvious theme of *nāmarūpas* has no meaning for someone who has not experienced the depth. Lead people neither to the idea nor to the remembrance of Jesus, but to the direct experience of Jesus as present. But those who live at the level of the *nāmarūpas* will have the experience of Jesus in the manifestations, *nāmarūpas* of the Spirit: visions, tongues, and the rest...

That is all correct, but there is another level, the one at which without a word Jesus lived face to face with the Father and no longer gave him a name; to such an extent was he simply the one who gazes at the Father, without any longer knowing that he beholds him, nor that he himself is called Jesus.

This fundamental experience of I am, that removes Jesus from all ego and makes him the one who is nothing more than a "straining" towards the Father, towards his human brothers. Gentleness, love, humility, zeal for the unique claim of the Absolute.

Do everything, act in everything without "mine", without ego [*nirmamo nirahamkāra*]

in my love and the service of M., of everybody, in the act of writing, of talking... of eating, buying, finding shelter, clothing... not as if it was a matter of an other, because to think of oneself in the third person is still dualism, not as if thinking that there is only the Self, but without even a self to think it in the infinite freedom of the Spirit.

The need for extremes, which I had at Arunachala, which Marc has now, to "release" in oneself this call of the absolute. And we need these basic shocks in life, visions, interior experiences, external extremes, to release the Purusha.

And yet the Purusha is not in any "extreme"

for he has no place
 neither that of the *dīkṣā* nor that of *bhikṣā*,
 nor that of the Ganges.

He is. He is, when I write this, when I eat and when I go to the bank!

(Indore)

September 11

After the Adventure of the "Great Week," 10-18 July:

EXTRACTS

It is clear from my recollections, from my conversations at that time, from the letters I then wrote, that I lived my heart attack in the first place as a marvellous spiritual adventure.

The centre of the intuition that impressed itself on me during those very first days [after July 14] was that the Awakening is independent of any situation whatever, of all the pairs of opposites [*dvandvas*], and first of all of the *dvandva* called life/death.

One awakes everywhere and once for all, and the awakening cannot be confused with what one sees at the moment of the awakening, and

therefore with that through which one becomes conscious that one is awake.

The first night was filled with difficult dreams, but not nightmares. I was being led from cave to cave—at different altitudes, 9,000, 11,000, 13,000 feet. The snows of Kashmir were mixed up with the banks of the Ganges. And I was constantly answering: The awakening has nothing to do with “testing oneself” against increasingly difficult life situations. It comes about in any circumstances. At every moment of life, in fact in every circumstance, I wake up.

There was also during those nights an acute sense of the smallness of the body, from head to foot. Hard to be convinced that this minimum of matter is enough to support consciousness.

After some days there came to me, as if it were the marvellous solution to an equation: I have found the Grail. And that is what I keep saying and writing to anyone who can grasp the figure of speech. The quest for the Grail is basically nothing else than the quest for the Self. A single quest, that is the meaning of all the myths and symbols. It is yourself that you are seeking through everything. And in this quest you run about everywhere, whereas the Grail is here, close at hand, you only have to open your eyes. And that is the finding of the Grail in its ultimate truth, Galahad’s direct sight of the inside of the vessel, and no longer just being fed by the Grail which mysteriously passes through the hall, nor even drinking from the Grail...

In those weeks of grace I got the very clear impression that a “new lease” of life had been given me, something beyond the span allotted to me by “life”, and that I have no right to misuse it. This grace of awakening—of returning to life—is not for my sake but for others. It was so clear: to announce the discovery of the Grail, to tell people: *Uttishtha, purusha*, Arise, Purusha! (KathU 3, 14), discover the Grail. Look, it is in the depth of yourself, it is that very “I” that you are saying in every moment of your conscious life, even in the depth of your consciousness when you dream or sleep. A life from now on that is at the service of this Awakening. How it will be done—about that I have no idea. But it was very clear that for me there has been a fundamental break in my life.

After a few weeks routine naturally took over again, but the insight of those days of grace is always a light that shines within.

This is the culmination of the intuition that struck me in January: “Everything has become clear.” There is only the Awakening. All that is “notional”—myths and concepts—is only its expression. There is neither heaven nor earth, there is only Purusha, which I am...

I had such a clear sense of a struggle within me between the angel of death and the angel of life. This “impulse to death” had been pursuing me for a long time. I had often said in recent years that I was living under the sign of Death [*mriyu*], but that was quite different from what happened in June-July.

The first day when this showed itself was June 29th, that afternoon when Nirmal was singing to Marc and myself the lament “Arunachala

Shiva”. I could not bear any more. Though I was not clearly aware of it, it was like being finally mastered by Arunachala’s pillar of fire, a mythos in which I lived many of the events of the great week (10-18 July). That funeral chant that accompanied the “passing” of Ramana. The definitive summons of Arunachala. That day in the evening, after the magnificent interview with Chidanandaji—during which once again all three of us endlessly chanted “Arunachala Shiva”—on leaving I was as though seized with giddiness and had to lean on the handrail of the stairs...

...During the day of July 10th I felt very strongly coming to me as it were rites of handing over to M., to free him from his state of discipleship, to make him a “Master”... Our farewells on the 14th, which spontaneously took the form of the great departure, *mahāprasthāna*.

I felt all the ensuing days as if *Mriyu* wanted me, was claiming me... And yet, without my feeling it, there was that, the angel of life, the urge to live that was fighting against the death-urge. The circumstances, so manifestly providential, that surrounded my attack. Something within me that was struggling so that I should survive, in opposition to that which was struggling within me to carry me off.

I understood the Hindu imagery of the servants of Yama [Death]—the story of Savitri¹⁶—the jaws of Death of the Gita, the jaws of Sheol of the psalms of David.

I lived with intensity the Katha Upanishad, the encounter of Naciketas with *Mriyu* [death]. The liberation of the Kumāra (son) much less in the first of the boons granted than in the discovery of the third boon. That there is neither life nor death, as I was singing in this verse:

na jāyate na mriyate kaścit!

na kuta jāta na kaścīn bābhūva...

“No one is either born or dies!

nor is he born from anywhere, nor does he become anyone.” (Inspired by KathU II, 18 and Gita II, 20).

And all that made me discover myself at a level that went so far beyond all sensations. Seeing myself so weak, so incapable of thought and movement, I became free from my identification with that *myself* which previously used to think and will, used to move about and was anxious about all and sundry. Disconnection. All that consciousness with which I usually moved was no longer mine, and yet I myself still continued to be...

Another intuition, or rather another form of the single intuition, that deeply affected me in those days was: *a-loka*. My freedom, my disconnection from every *loka*-situation, even from the *loka*-situation of life/death. To Be, free from all situations, physical, psychological, spiritual, or religious. Free from every situation—any ascetic setting, any form of asceticism, any form whatever. To find oneself, recover oneself in one’s original purity-nakedness.

16. Savitri: a heroine of the Mahābhārata who rescued her husband, Satyawām, from death as a result of her arguments with Yama, the god of Death.

September 12

The Trinity. There is within me the source and the non-source, and that is not two. The trinitarian mystery is the revelation of my own depth. Jesus has lived this depth—called divine-human—at an intensely deep level.

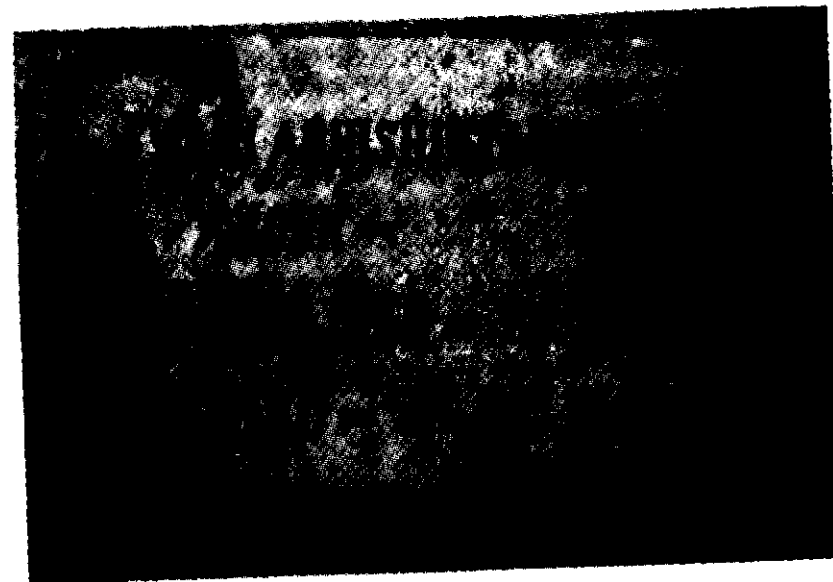
Greek speculation made this into abstractions; these abstractions, when brought to the concrete level of average intelligence, became modalism or tritheism.

The Trinity can only be understood in the experience of advaita. The Trinity is an experience, not a *theologoumenon* [theological formulation]. Or at least the *theologoumenon* never conveys its truth. It is only discovered in the lucidity of the inner gaze. Jesus has lived this agonizing—and fulfilling—experience of advaita. Advaita, we call it, in order to try to get beyond the common idea—received from our social environment—of God and oneself, of oneself and others. That is the experience of duality [*dvaita*] which regards one's skin as the boundary between oneself and other people—and which branches out on the basis of this experience of the "skin". Whereas this experience, though divided into two by the skin, is only one. For the experience of oneself, the foundation of everything and the background, the infrastructure of everything, is only one. Jesus revealed to the human being what he is, what everyone is.

The Trinity is the ultimate mystery of oneself. But in the very depth of this discovery of the Self-Trinity there lies the paradox: in the mystery of the non-source, who still speaks of the Source? It is only at the level of the Source, of the trickle of water springing up, that we speak of what is beyond. In the beyond there is no beyond. It simply is, *etad vai tad!* That, just that!

The Awakening is paradoxically: to awake to what is beyond, and to fall asleep to oneself, to what falls short of it. The Awakening is to enter into a total sleep. But once again, only from this side can we speak of sleep, and equally of Awakening! The Awakening at the level of anyone who has consciousness is precisely to lose oneself, to forget oneself. The Awakening is the shining out of the splendour—in splendour—of the non-awakening, of the eternal not-born. The non-awakening, the not-born is manifested by a—what?—a brilliance, a light, a glory that envelops everything, that transcends everything, that seizes one and takes one beyond everything. A sense of 'Beyond', of the Beyond...

The gift of wisdom, a deep connaturality, an explosion which one who has "felt" cannot evade...



Tombstone at Indore

Glossary

The words without other indication are Sanskrit (the termination -m usually indicates the Tamil form of a Sanskrit word).

abhaya: without fear, absence of fear; also the assurance of harmlessness to all creatures by one who has renounced.
abhimāna: pride, self-conceit
abhinna: not separate, not differentiated
acala: unmoving; a mountain
acintya: unthinkable, unimaginable
adeśa: without a place
adhidaiva: the level of the gods, of cosmic powers
adhishthāna: foundation
adhyātma: the level of the Self, the spiritual sphere, interior
advaita: non-duality
advītya: "without-a-second", non-dual
agapê: (Greek) love, charity
AGNI: fire, the sacrificial, sacred fire; a Vedic god
agrahāram: village of Brahmins
agrāhya: ungraspable
agre: "in the beginning", at the origin, *in illo tempore*
aham: I, myself; *ahamasmi*: "I am"
aham Brahma asmi: "I am Brahman", one of the "great words" of the Upanishads (*mahāvākya*)
ahamkāra: egotism, the individual and limited ego
ahimsā: non-violence
aja, ajāta: unborn (the Atman)
akāla: intemporal
akāśa: empty space; the most subtle element in Indian cosmology; at the same time infinite exterior space and the space within the heart
akhanda: indivisible
akrita: not made, not created
akshara: indestructible; a syllable; the sacred syllable OM
alētheia: (Greek) truth
alpa: small, limited, as opposed to infinitude (*bhūman*)
amrita: immortal, immortality, non-death
ananda: joy, bliss

ananta: infinite, infinitude
ananya: not-other
anbu (ambe): (Tamil) love
aneka: lit. not-one, multiple
anirvacanīya: inexpressible, indescribable, indefinable
anitya: impermanent, transitory
añjali: greeting with the palms together
anna: food
antahkarana: inner sense, inner organ
antar: inner
antarātman: the inner Self
antariksha: the middle space (the atmosphere) of Vedic cosmology which envisages three worlds (*triloka*); also used in the psychological sense of the subliminal, the world of dreams
antemensium: (Latin) a substitute for the altar-stone required for celebrating Mass
anubhava: experience, especially spiritual, mystical experience
anya: other
apamāna: contempt, dishonour
archê: (Greek) origin, beginning
arul: (Tamil) grace
ardhanārī: the androgynous (Śiva), lit. (the Lord) of whom half is feminine, i.e., the *śakti*, or energy
ARUNĀCHALA: a holy mountain (also *Tiruvannāmalai*); lit. the immovable (*acala*) mountain of the dawn (*aruna*)
arunodaya: dawn, the rising sun
arūpa: "without form", transcending all forms
āsana: attitude, posture of the body, posture in Yoga; also the rug or mat used for meditation
asanga: without attachment, detached
asat: not-being
ASHRAM: the modern version of the Sanskrit *āśrama*: hermitage, "monastery"; a stage of a Hindu's life
asparśa: without contact, without attachment
asti: "it (he) is"
aśuddha: impure
asura: demon, evil spirit, enemy of the gods (*deva*)
ATHARVA-VEDA: the fourth Veda, containing hymns and spells
atidharma: transcending the established law and religion; beyond *dharma*
atiprasna: excessive questioning, a question which goes beyond what is allowable
atman: the Self, the ultimate ground at once in the human being and in the universe

atmanishtha: one who is established in the Self
atmavicāra: "reflection on the Self", a method of introspection by asking oneself "Who am I?"
atmavid: one who knows the Self, a sage
avadhūta: one who has made a total renunciation, abandoning even his clothes
avamāna: contempt, dishonour
avatāra: "incarnation", lit. "descent" of the God Vishnu into animal and human manifestations; the most important *avatāra* are Rama and Krishna
aveśam: penetration, possession
avyakta: not manifested

bahirkarana: "external instrument", the body and its organs
bandha: bond, attachment to the world
BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ: "the song of the Blessed One, of the Lord", a philosophical and mystical poem in the Mahabharata, containing the revelation to Arjuna of the God Krishna
BHAGAVĀN: the blessed one, the Lord, God
bhajan: devotional lyric
bhakta: devotee, lover of God
bhakti: love for God, devotion
bhāva: becoming; spiritual condition
bhaya: fear
bheda: difference, separation, distinction, division
bhikshā: begging for food by a monk (*sādhu*), alms given to a *sādhu*
bhūman: greatness, infinity, fullness
bīja-akshara: "seed-syllables", sacred syllables which are charged with a mystical power (see also *mantra*)
bindu: drop (of ambrosia), point; creative principle in tantrism; the fine point of the soul
bodhi: awakening, illumination
bodhisattva: a concept in Mahayana Buddhism; the future Buddha who renounces his personal deliverance in order to contribute to the salvation of all beings
BRAHMĀ: (masc.) the creator God with four faces who has revealed the Vedas; he is inferior to *Brahman* (neut.)
brahmaloka: the world of *Brahman*, the sphere of the Absolute and of deliverance
BRĀHMANA: category of Vedic texts, containing ritual and mythology
BRAHMAN: (neut.) sacred, spiritual power, the Absolute, the omnipresent transcendent divine principle
brahmanishtha: one who is firmly established in the Absolute (*Brahman*)

brahmarandhra: the opening at the top of the skull which is "perforated" at the moment of illumination and at death, and through which the soul escapes from the body; one of the *cakra* (above the head) in Yoga
brahmavādin: one who discusses about *Brahman*, a "theologian"
brahmavidyā: the knowledge of *Brahman*, the highest wisdom
BUDDHA: the illuminated one, the awakened one
buddhatva: the state of being illuminated, awakened
buddhi: intellect, intelligence, discriminating reason

caitanya: pure consciousness, spirit
cakra (*chakra*): lit. wheel, circle; sacred diagram (cp. *mandala*, *yantra*); a subtle centre in the body, conceived as lotus-shaped (in tantric Yoga)
cit: pure consciousness, spirit

DAKSHINĀMŪRTI: manifestation of the God Shiva as a young ascetic and a guru who teaches elderly sages simply by his silence
darśana: (in Hindi, *darshan*): "vision", look, sight; a blessed seeing which is sought by a devotee when he visits a holy man, a temple, or holy place; a point of view on reality, a philosophical system
deha: body
deva: god, angel, divinity; cosmic or psychic power; often in the Upanishads the powers of body and mind, the senses
deva-mārga: the way of the gods, or of God
devatā: divinity, deity
dharanā: concentration, fixing the thought; a yogic discipline which precedes meditation (*dhyāna*)
dharma: cosmic and moral law, "religion", including rules of living and religious rites
dhoti: (Hindi) male garment, covering the lower part of the body, consisting of a length of cotton cloth fastened round the waist
dhruva: fixed, stable, permanent
dhyāna: meditation, contemplation, interior recollection
digambara: lit. "clothed in space", a naked (Jain) monk
dīkshā: initiation
DĪPAM: festival of light on the holy mountain of Arunachala, celebrated in the month Kartika (October-November)
drashtā: see-er
drishti: seeing, sight, opinion
duhkha: suffering, distress
dvaita: duality, dualism (philosophical system)
dvandva: pair of opposites, such as happiness-misfortune, cold-hot, etc

ego eimi: (Greek) I am

ego sum: (Latin) I am
eidōs: (Greek) form, idea
en archē: (Greek) in the beginning, *in illo tempore*
eka: one, unique, the One
ekāgra: concentrated, one-pointed
ekāgratā: concentration, one-pointedness
ekam eva-advitīyam: "one only without a second", definition of the Absolute
ekānta: solitude
ekatvam: unity
eschaton: (Greek) the absolute End

garbha: womb, maternal womb; in a Hindu temple, the innermost holy of holies

giri-pradakshinā: circumambulation of a sacred mountain

GĪTĀ: "song", abbreviation of the Bhagavad Gīta

goim (goyim): (Hebrew) the nations, unbelievers

GOPĀLA: herdsman, cowherd, name of the God Krishna

gopī: cowgirl, the female devotees of Krishna

gūḍha: hidden, secret

guhā: cave; the cave of the heart, the heart regarded as a spiritual place, where the mystery is hidden

guhāja: "one who is born in the cave"; title of one of Swamiji's writings (unpublished)

guhāntara: "(one who dwells) within the cave"; a pseudonym of Swamiji, also used to refer to one of his writings

guna: quality, attribute

guru: spiritual master; lit. "heavy"

gurubhakti: devotion to the *guru*

HARA: name of Shiva, "he who liberates"

HARI: name of Vishnu

hrid, hridaya: heart; the spiritual centre.

hridi: in the heart

hridayagranthi: "knots of the heart", interior complexes and "hang-ups"

hridguhāyam: "in the cave of the heart"

icchā: desire, will

ishṭa-devatā: "the chosen divinity", the personal form of God for each devotee

ishṭa-pūṭā: the amount of merit from sacrifices which wins heaven

ĪŚVARA: Lord, God

itli (idli): small cakes of rice flour boiled, traditional breakfast food in S.India

jada: inert, lifeless matter

jāgrat: the waking state

japa: murmured prayer, consisting of the repetition of a divine name or of a mantra (whether articulated or not)

jñāna: knowledge, wisdom, contemplation, gnosis

jñāna-mārga: the way of knowledge, of wisdom

jñānī: sage

jīvanmukta: "one who finds liberation in his lifetime", a saint or a realized person

jīvanmukti: "liberation during one's lifetime", salvation realized in this life

jyoti: light

kali-yuga: the fourth, the most degenerate, of the cosmic ages (*yuga*)

kāma: desire, love, passion

kāmacāra: free to go wherever one desires

karma: action, act; in the Veda, ritual acts; then moral action and the accumulated results of such actions which leave a mark on the soul and limit its freedom; the sum of one's actions determines the next life

karma-mārga: the way of action, action as a way of salvation

karma-yoga: the spiritual discipline of action

kaupīna(m): G-string worn by men, especially sannyasis, consisting of a strip of material fastened between the legs

KĀVERĪ (or Cauvery): one of the chief rivers in S.India, a sacred river

kavi: (Tamil) the saffron-coloured dress of a Hindu monk (*sannyasi*)

kenosis: (Greek) emptying, stripping; as of Christ, who did not avail himself of his divinity in becoming man

keśī: "the hairy one", acosmic ascetic in the Veda

kevala: the sole, the unique, the Absolute; used both of Brahman and of one who has attained the uniqueness, the nakedness of being, "the aloneness of the Alone"

ko'ham: "Who am I?"

koinonia: (Greek) communion, community

KRISHNA: the cowherd God, incarnation of Vishnu; the revealer of the Bhagavad Gītā

krita: made, created

kshema: safety, rest, good fortune, prosperity, well-being

kumkum: (Hindi) red powder used in *pūjā* (worship) and to mark the forehead

kundalinī: divine energy, both psychic and cosmic, invisibly present in the body, likened to a coiled serpent, which is awakened by yogic practices and which rises up to the top of the skull

Ila: sport, game; the creation as divine play
linga: sign; the phallic symbol of Shiva, consisting of a simple conical stone, everywhere venerated in temples (or in the open air)
logos: (Greek) the Word
loka: place, world, domain
madhu: honey, nectar, essence
MADHVA: dualistic Vaishnavite philosopher (13th century)
madhya: centre, middle, intermediary
mahākāla: "the great time", death, one of the names of Shiva
mahā(pra)sthāna: "the great departure", death
MAHEŚVARA: "the great Lord", God, name of Shiva
mahāvākya: "great sentence", mystical phrase of the Upanishads, e.g. "I am Brahman".
mama: "mine"; *mamatva*: egotism, possessiveness
manas: thought, the organ of thought, the mind, the intellect (though this is the usual translation of *buddhi*) psychological make-up
mandira: temple
mani: jewel (symbolic)
mantra: verse of the Veda; sacred word, prayer, formula imbued with sacred power
mauna: silence
māyā: cosmic illusion, divine "magic" which veils reality and projects the universe
metanoia: (Greek) conversion, change of heart
MĪMĀMSĀ: philosophical school of interpreting the Veda, based on the sacrificial ritual
MĪMĀMSAKA: ritualist, representative of the school of Mimamsa
moksha: deliverance, liberation, salvation
MURUGAN: (Tamil) the Divine Child worshipped in Tamilnadu
monogenēs: (Greek) the only son
mrityu: death
mūlagarbha, mūlasthāna: the place of origin; the holy of holies in a Hindu temple
muktī: liberation, deliverance, salvation
mumukshu: one who desires deliverance, salvation
mumukshutva: desire for deliverance, necessary precondition for entering the spiritual path
muni: silent, ecstatic; an ascetic who maintains silence (in Tamil, *munivar*)
mūrti: image, idol, icon

naivedya: food that has been blessed, having been offered during worship and then distributed to the faithful
nāma-rūpa: "name and form", the external manifestation of reality

namaskāra(m): reverent greeting, prostration
NATARĀJĀ: "the king of the dance", one of the names and one manifestation of Shiva in his cosmic dance
neti neti: "not this, not that", negative characterization of Brahman or of the Atman, which cannot be described by any datum of our sense-experience or by the imagination
NĪLAKANTHA: "the blue-throated one", name of Shiva who swallowed the poison in order to save the world, and whose throat is consequently blue
nirguna: without qualifications, without attributes; the undifferentiated Absolute (Brahman)
nirvāna: "extinction", total liberation in Buddhism
nirvikalpa samādhi: state of absorption or "enstasis" without thoughts
nirvritti: cessation, liberation
nishthā: firmness, stability
nitya: permanent, eternal
nivritti: cessation, return, liberation
nun: (Greek) now

OM: a sacred syllable, symbol of Brahman; its meaning is somewhat like "Amen": "Yes, so be it!"
OM tat sat: "OM that (i.e., Brahman), being", an upanishadic mantra

pada(m): step, track; the hidden mystery
padma: lotus; the heart
pāpa: sin, evil
parama-pada: the highest sphere, the final level
paramārtha: ultimate truth, transcendent reality, level of the Absolute
paramāśakti, parāśakti: the supreme divine power, a divine energy united with God
paramātman: "the supreme Self", God
paraspara: reciprocity, mutual relation
PATAÑJALI: author of the Yoga Sutra, the classical text of Yoga
pātāla: hell, the nether region
phōs: (Greek) light.
Phōs hilon: early Christian hymn to Christ.
pneuma: (Greek) the Spirit
PRAJĀPATI: the Lord or Father of creatures, the creator God in the Veda
prakriti: nature, matter
pranāma: greeting, a sign of respect shown in touching the feet, prostration
pranava: the sacred syllable OM
prānāyāma: "discipline of the breath", breath control, a practice in Yoga

prārabdhā: the portion of those actions accumulated from the past (*karma*) which are inherited at birth, and which have to be taken up and transformed in the present life

prasāda: grace; blessed food which is offered to God and distributed to the faithful

pratishthā: foundation, support

pratyabhijñā: recognition; a philosophical doctrine which teaches the recognition of God (Shiva) in the soul

pratyāhāra: withdrawal of the senses from their objects, a practice of Yoga in preparation for concentration and meditation

pratyaksha: "face to face", direct knowledge, evident

psychê: (Greek) the soul, life

pujā: ritual worship, the practice of venerating images or symbols; the rite involves the offering of light, incense, flowers, etc.

punya: religious merit, virtue

pūrnam: what is full, perfect; the divine fullness

PURUSHA: man; the archetypal, primordial Man; the inner person or the Spirit

PŪRVAMĪMĀMSA: see *Mimamsa*

PŪSHAN: Vedic God, identified with the sun, he who shows the way, who makes the soul pass beyond death (cp. *Īśa Up.*)

rajas: one of the three qualities (*guna*) of *prakṛiti* (original nature); activity, passion

RĀMA: the divine prince, hero of the Ramayana epic, an *avatāra* of Vishnu

RAMANA MAHARSHI: a sage who lived at Tiruvannamalai (1879-1950)

RIG-VEDA: a collection of hymns and prayers, the most ancient revealed text

rishi: "seer", ancient sage or prophet, Vedic poet

rudrāksha: Shaivite rosary

SADĀŚIVA BRAHMAN: Tamil saint of the 17th century

sadguru: the true master

sādhanā: spiritual practice, discipline, way of spiritual realization

sādhu: wandering monk, renouncer, ascetic

saguna: "endowed with qualities", the Absolute with attributes, God manifested

sahaja: an inborn, natural, spontaneous condition

sahasrāra: "the lotus with a thousand petals", a spiritual centre at the top of the skull, an opening through which the soul escapes at the moment of death

sahatvam: being together, communion, relationship

sakshat, *sakshatkāra*: by immediate, direct evidence or experience

sākshī: the witness, the Self as passive witness of all acts

śakti: divine power, creative energy of God, represented as a goddess

samādhi: (1) state of total absorption, "enstasis", perfect recollection, which is the goal of meditation (*dhyāna*); (2) the death and the tomb of a saint

samasta: everything

samatva (*samata*): equalness, harmony, inner equilibrium; indifference to the pairs of opposites like cold-hot, etc.

SĀMA-VEDA: the Veda of the liturgical hymns

sāmī: (Tamil) = Swami

samkalpa: will, intention, directing impulse

sampanna: endowed, filled with

samprasāda: serenity, peace, transparency

samsat: communion of being

samsāra: the phenomenal world, the cycle of rebirth

sāmyam: harmony, equality

sangha: community, monastic order (especially in Buddhism)

ŚANKARA: philosopher and mystic of non-dualism (*advaita*), the most important representative of Vedānta (8th century)

sanmātra: "pure being"

SĀNKHYA: a philosophical system (*darśana*) which teaches a duality of two fundamental principles: Purusha (Spirit) and Prakṛiti (Nature, Matter); it has greatly influenced the theistic systems

sannyāsa: a life of renunciation, Hindu "monasticism", the last stage in the life of a Hindu which is devoted to seeking the Absolute alone

sannyāsī: renouncer, a Hindu monk, a wandering ascetic

śānta: calm, peaceful

śānti: peace, quietness

śarīra: body. *sthūla śarīra*: the material, physical body. *sūkshma śarīra*: the subtle, spiritual body

sarvādhikārī: the administrator of an ashram

sarvajña: omniscient

sarvam: everything, the totality, the universe

sarvam idam: "all this", the universe

sarvarūpa: of every form, omniform

sarvatra: everywhere, omnipresent

sarveśvara: the Lord of the universe

sat: being

satipattāna: a Buddhist method of meditation, with constant attention to all the movements of body and mind

satori: (Japanese) illumination, realization in Zen

sattva: reality; one of the three qualities (*guna*) of *prakṛiti* (original nature); purity, transparency

satya: truth, reality;
satyasya satyam: “the true of the true”, the real of the real; an Upanishadic expression
savikalpa samādhi: absorption accompanied by thought (ctr. *nirvikalpa*)
sevā: service rendered with sincere devotion
shashtānga: complete prostration (lit. performed with the six members of the body)
siddhi: extraordinary miraculous power of yogis; perfection
ŚIVA: supreme God of Hindus; his name means “the kindly, gracious one”; he is the model of renouncers and yogis
SKANDA: “the leaper”; name of a God, the son of Shiva (also called Kārttikeya)
śloka: a Sanskrit verse; a Sanskrit metre
śraddhā: faith, trust, surrender
śruti: lit. “that which is heard”, the revelation of the Veda
sthitaprajñā: “one who is established in wisdom”; the unshakable sage; a term used in the Bhagavad Gita
sthitī: condition, stability
sthūla: coarse, material
śuddha: pure, ritually and spiritually
sūkshma: subtle
śūnyatā: emptiness, the void (particularly in Buddhism)
sushupti: deep, dreamless sleep
svamahiman: own greatness, glory
svapna: dream, state of sleeping with dreams
svaprakāśa (*svayamprakāśa*): light which shines on its own, self-illuminated (consciousness)
svarga: heaven, dwelling of the gods, a mythical heaven in Hindu mythology which is not the final goal of liberation; even the gods have to come back from it to obtain deliverance
svastha: “established in oneself”, fixed in the Self
svayambhu: “self-existent”, he who has his source in himself; God, the creator
SWAMI (Sanskrit, *svāmī*): Lord, master; title of a sannyasi (like Dom or Father)

tamas: darkness, opaqueness, heaviness; one of the three qualities (*guna*) of *prakṛiti* (original nature)
tapas: heat, fervour, spiritual energy, asceticism
tat: “that”, Brahman, the Absolute
tattvamasi: “thou art that (i.e., Brahman)”, one of the “great sentences” of the Upanishads
tattvaivid: one who knows reality

tejas: light, fire, radiance, glory, luminous energy
tejobindu: “drop of glory”, point of illumination in the soul (cp. the spark of the soul in Meister Eckhart)
tejo-linga: the linga of fire or of light; manifestation of Shiva in a column of fire of which neither Brahma nor Vishnu were able to find the ends. The sacred mountain Arunachala is supposed to be the manifestation of the *tejo-linga* of Shiva
telos: (Greek: end) finality, the last end
theos: (Greek) God
theotês: (Greek) divinity, godhead
tiru: (Tamil) holy, blessed, auspicious
TRIMŪRTI: “three forms”, a divine image combining the three principal gods—Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva
tvam: thou
turya, turīya: the “fourth”, the transcendental state beyond those of waking, dreaming and deep sleep
tūshnīm: in silence; a form of recitation without pronouncing the words

UDGITHA: a hymn in the Sama-Veda; the sacred syllable OM
upadeśa: spiritual teaching, instruction
upādhi: superimposition on the atman which prevents the real from being seen, superficial aspects of the self, personal limitations
upāsana: meditation, adoration, inward correspondence realized in meditation

vairāgya: renunciation, detachment, liberation from the passions
vandikāran: (Tamil) driver of pony-cart
vāk: word, voice, the sacred primordial Word (cp. the Logos)
vaktra: face
vāsana: impressions on the psyche, subconscious desires and tendencies, psychological relics of past acts
VĀYU: wind, the Vedic God of the wind
VEDA: the sacred scriptures of Hinduism, lit “(sacred) knowledge”; there are four Vedas (Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda and Atharva-Veda)
VEDĀNTA: “the end of the Veda”, referring in the first place to the Upanishads, then to the philosophical school based on the Upanishads, to which the doctrine of non-duality (*advaita*) is central
veshti: (Tamil) see *dhoti*
videhamukti: “liberation without the body”, deliverance attained after death
vidriti: the perforation at the top of the skull through which the soul escapes at the moment of death
vidyut: lightning
vijñānavādin: an idealist school in Buddhism
vikalpa: thought, imagination

VISHNU: one of the principal Gods in Hinduism, the Preserver; he has "descended" to earth in his *avatāras*, e.g., Krishna

viveka: discrimination, discernment

vritti: mental activity, movements of thought, inner eddies or distractions which obstruct concentration

vritti-nirodha: suspension of mental activity, the goal of Yoga

vyakta: manifested, expressed;

vyakti: manifestation

vyāpta: penetrated, extended;

vyāpti: penetration

vyavahāra, vyāvahārika: provisional manifestation, behaviour in the world; the earthly and provisional level at which things are seen

WU-WEI: (Chinese) non-action, absence of action; it refers to the inherent spontaneity of every being (cp. Tao-to-king, 47,48,63,etc.)

yajña: Vedic sacrifice

YĀJÑAVALKYA: a great sage and master in the Brihadaranyaka Up.

YAJUR-VEDA: one of the four Vedas, a collection of ritual formulas

yaksha: supernatural being, spirit, apparition

yāna: "vehicle", way of salvation, especially in Buddhism

yantra: sacred symbolical diagram, used for meditation and in tantric worship

YOGA: union, spiritual method or discipline which unifies body and mind

yoni: womb; the base on which the *linga* stands

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