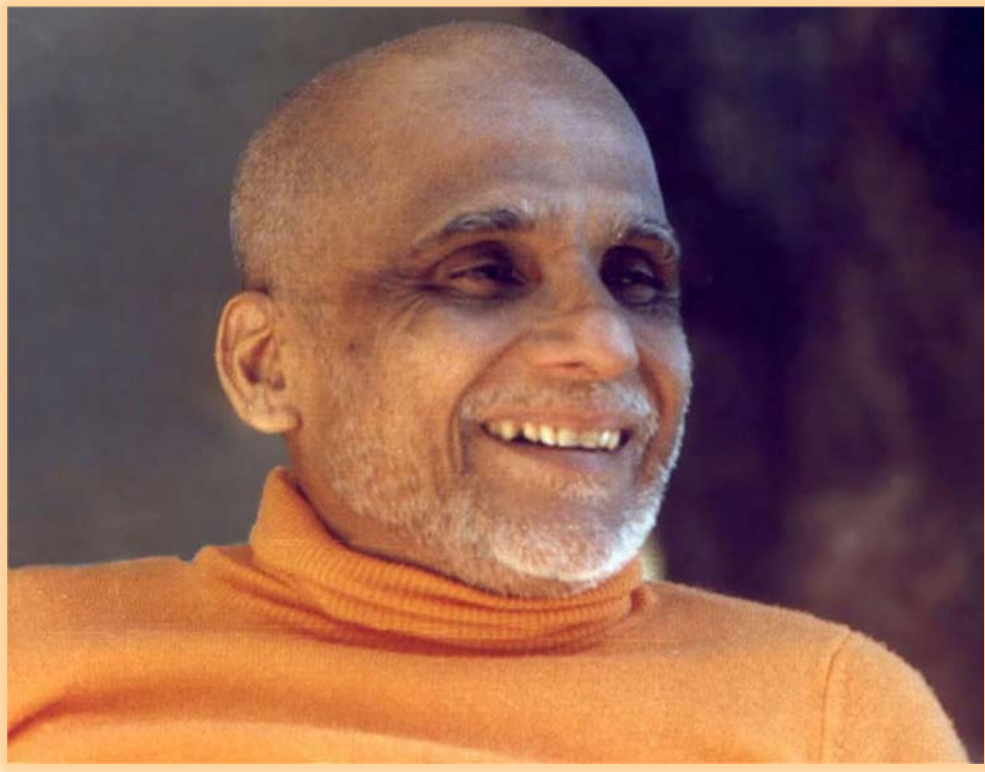


SESSIONS WITH ASHRAM RESIDENTS



SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

The Divine Life Society

Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India

Website: www.swami-krishnananda.org

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This is a unique series of 38 informal sessions that Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj held for residents of the Sivananda Ashram from January 1997 to December 1998, consisting of talks given by Swamiji and dialogues with ashram residents covering a wide range of topics regarding sadhana, meditational techniques and related subjects, some of which are not mentioned elsewhere.

May the blessings of Param Puja Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj be upon all!

Session 1

A MESSAGE OF DIVINE DELIGHT AND DIVINE LIFE

There are three great principles which govern everything, namely, the ideal, the organisation and the law. We may interpret these principles as either God, creation and the system of the operation of everything in the universe, or we may bring it down to a more practical level of human life, a facet which has been beautifully enunciated in the form of a prayer under the aegis of Buddhist psychology, this prayer being: *buddham śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi, dhammaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi, saṃghaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi*.

Actually speaking, there was no concept of organisation in India, especially in religious circles, until Siddhartha Gautama, Buddha, felt the need to bring together all his followers into a hierarchy of operation arranged systematically by degrees and stages so that his principles, his ideals, his teachings, for which he stood, lived and died, may find expression in the day-to-day lives of people, especially his followers, his disciples.

The ideal is conceptual, philosophical, spiritual and transcendental at the same time. But the organisation is what generally goes by the name of the system of the operation of this great ideal. We say that God created the world. Let it be. But the world that God has created is an organic manifestation, a systematised expression and a holistic presentation of the presence of God in the space-time world of expression.

We can see God in every little bit of operation in this world. There is an organisation which God has created. This body of operation is this universe in the form of the fourteen realms of being. There are fourteen levels of density of the expression of the creative process: seven above and seven below, systematically. God's existence itself is an example of the most systematic ideal conceivable, and so wherever there is a systematic presentation, an aesthetic vision, a perception of beauty, etc., we feel happy. Happiness, satisfaction and delight of any kind is an expression of God Himself. Unless the organisation of the perceptual process is able to reflect the organic existence of God Himself, we will not see beauty in anything in this world. Nothing can satisfy us.

Therefore, the law was also conceived at the same time. In Vedic language this principle of law is described as *rita* and dharma, or *satya*. In the concluding portion of the Rigveda we have a poignant, touching statement: *ṛtaṃ ca satyaṃ cābhīddhāt tapaso adhyajāyata* (R.V. 10.190). There was *rita* and there was *satya*. *Rita* is the law of God as He Himself is, independent of the creative process. God is something even if there is no creation. That something by Himself, the That which Is—*bhutatathata* or *dharmakaya* in the language of Buddhism—that is *rita*. The eternal time-transcending principle is *rita*, and when it manifests itself in the time process, it becomes *satya*. Hence, manifested law and eternal law are not two different things. The law of the world, the law of society, the law of the family, the law of government and administration are not different from the law of God. If they stand irrelevant to the law of God, and if one has no connection with the other, they will not succeed. The Roman Empire fell, the empire of Egypt fell, and the empire of the Mediterranean regions fell. There was a very strict law, of course, under Roman ordinance, but it fell in spite of that because it did not coincide with or set itself in harmony with the eternity of God. It was an outward beauty of an architectural structure, without a soul inside it. That is why the Roman Empire fell, and so is the case with all those empires that, grandiose as they appear to have been, are only in people's memories by reading history books.

But life is not a mechanical presentation of a govern-mental system or any kind of secular presentation. There is no such thing as secular and there is no such thing as spiritual, one differentiated from the other. To speak of the secular and the spiritual is like speaking about the world and God as if they are dichotomised and one thing has no connection with the other. If we are to create a segmentation between the world and God, then we can create a segmentation between the spiritual and the secular, which does not exist.

The outward expression of an internal reality is the same as the principle that operates as the internal reality. Our body cannot live in a manner contrary to the demands of our soul. It will fall sick because the health of the physical system is nothing but the manifestation of the soul inside, which is an organic completeness. 'Holism' is a word that is sometimes used these days. A complete perfection of every part of the organisation of the body is the symbol of what we call a buoyant, healthy physical frame, which is not possible by any kind of medicine or exercise. It is possible only by permitting this beautiful, organised, systematic *rita* and *satya* of the soul within us to permeate every cell of our body.

I mentioned that in Buddhist parlance three principles are emphasised: *buddhaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi*, *dhammaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi* and *saṃghaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi*. Wherever you want to achieve success, these three principles have to be in your mind. You cannot run even a family, let alone anything else. There must be an ideal or a purpose in the formation of the family. A purposeless family or a segregated, dichotomised and dissipated family cannot exist. The ideal or the principle behind the organisation of the family is the first principle. Then comes the method of organisation. What is the relationship between or among the members of the family? There is a father, there is a mother, there are children, brothers and sisters. So many people are there, one different from the other. What is the internal relationship among them? If this internal relationship is absent, there will be no happy family life. That internal relationship of an organised nature is possible only if the outward performance of the family manifests the ideal or the purpose of the existence of the family. Then there are regulations: do this and do that. That is the law. There are certain things which must be done, and certain things which violate the organic existence of the family. This principle can be applied to the district, to the state, to the nation, to the United Nations, and even to the whole cosmos and to our personal lives.

This is The Divine Life Society. This is an organisation conceived by the vast integrated mind of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, and we may apply the same principle here also. Whatever Swami Sivananda thought is the principle, the manner in which he conceived the operation of the departments and the functions of The Divine Life Society is the organisation, and the regulations necessary to maintain it in a stable form is the law. These are highly interesting things to conceive, applicable to individual life, family life, world life, universal life, and divine life. Everywhere this principle operates, the threefold commingling of these wonderful conceptual, spiritual, philosophical, integrating eternal principles.

Eternity masquerades in the form of world history. World history, right from the Palaeolithic Age till modern times, is a procession of various kinds of ups and downs and movements of human performance. They are all ultimately the movements of the fingers of God. If we can bring all these principles together into a concentrated point, we will find that the whole universe is God manifest, organisation manifest, eternity

manifest, perfection manifest, freedom manifest, joy manifest, and a buoyant existence and a healthy life of every kind manifest.

We do not have any kind of negative concept of life in India. *Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiṁ ca jagatyāṁ jagat, tena tyaktena bhuñjitha, ma gṛdhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam* (Isa 1). Here we have in this first verse of the Isavasya Upanishad of the Yajurveda the same principle enunciated as *buddhaṁ śaraṇaṁ gacchāmi, dhammaṁ śaraṇaṁ gacchāmi* and *saṁghaṁ śaraṇaṁ gacchāmi*. What is the Buddha here? Isa, the Creator of the universe, is the Buddha here. *Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*: Everything is pervaded by the principle of the Creator; *yat kiṁ ca jagatyāṁ jagat*: whatever is moving, whatever is not moving, living or non-living; *tena tyaktena bhuñjitha*: live a happy, buoyant and satisfactory life; *bhuñjitha*: enjoy life. The Upanishad does not say to suffer life. Life is not suffering. It is a joy, an abundance of God's beauty and glory manifest in the form of even a little green leaf in the tree that is smiling before us. That joy is *ananda-deva* or *sarvani bhutani jayante*. *Ānandena jātani jivanti, ānandaṁ prayanty abhisamviśanti* (T.U. 3.6.1): From joy the world came, by the joy of creation the world exists, and into joy it shall return. This is a message of divine delight, and this is the message of divine life.

Session 2

THE COHESIVENESS OF THE UNIVERSE

The other day I said something which is to be regarded as very fundamental, the very foundation of the organisation of life. I hope you remember the points that I touched upon. I also made reference to a thing called law operating wherever there is an organisation.

Many a time people consider law as dharma in the Sanskrit language, and dharma is a very misunderstood word. We have got Hindu dharma, Buddhist dharma, Jain dharma, this dharma, that dharma. Dharma does not mean any kind of denominational religion. Even if there are no religions in the world, law will operate, because law is just the rule of existence itself. One cannot even exist in a sensible manner unless some law is at the back of this intriguing thing called existence. It has nothing to do with denominational religions.

There are varieties of the manifestation of law, and it does not suddenly jump on our heads from the skies. In a systematic, orderly, harmonised manner law operates everywhere, from a particle of sand on the bank of the Ganga right up to the galaxies. Such is the wonder of the operation of law.

In its lowest manifestation, in its most visible form, law operates as what we call gravitation. Everybody knows what gravitation is, but it is a thing which is least respected by any one of us. We think that gravitation is only in textbooks on physics, and in what way are we concerned with it? But we must remember that we cannot even go for a walk on the road unless there is a thing called gravitation. We cannot lift our legs; we cannot move. The earth stabilises our motion in such a manner that we seem to be freely moving on its surface as if we are the masters of everything, not knowing that every inch of our movement is controlled by forces that are transcendental. This is physical gravitation.

How one thing is pulled in respect of another, determined by the distance between the two objects and the quantity of their bodies, is difficult to understand. But more than the law of physical gravitation there is another law called biological gravitation, which is also seen practically in everybody's life—the pull exerted by one living being in respect of another living being, mostly visible in attachment to the members of a family: the clinging of the parents to the children, etc. 'My family' are the words people use. If several families are travelling in a railway compartment, the 'my family' idea will be strongly felt by each group, who will not care for other families also travelling in the same compartment. This is biological attraction, a pull which is also sanctioned by the law of nature. A mother monkey clings to her baby monkey with so much love, because it is 'me'. The biological exudation in the form of the offspring oftentimes manifests itself in such an irrational manner that the mother will cling to even a dead child. "My child, my child, my child! It is only a corpse, but it does not matter. I hug it." Nature compels everyone to see to it that its work continues in the form of the propagation of the species. Every kind of human attachment or attachment of any living being to any other living being may be regarded as biological gravitation.

There is also what is known as psychological gravitation. The sanity of our mind, the cohesion of our ideas, the system that operates behind logical thinking is also something very interesting to know. Though we have many thoughts, they are all organised into a system or a pattern of logicity. Otherwise, each thought will fly off on

a tangent, and there will be no connection between one thought and another thought. A person can go crazy in a moment if this psychological gravitation does not operate. We feel a sense of wholeness in our way of thinking; a compactness and a system, and a meaningfulness is there. We cannot think in a meaningless manner because meaninglessness is an absence of logicity, cohesion, etc. Everywhere the cohesive force is operating. We cannot have only disparity, distinction and isolatedness. That is not possible.

Even to be aware that there are two things, there must be a third thing other than the two things. We cannot say here is A and there is B unless there is something to connect A with B. There is an intermediary awareness which permeates both A and B, and also rises above them. In Vedantic parlance we call these operations as *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva*. There is a subjective side, an objective side and a transcendental side. It is not that there is only the subject looking at the object, and only the object isolated from the subject. Such a thing is not possible because the object cannot enter into the subject, merely because of the fact that it is an object. If an object is something which is totally disconnected from the subject, we could not even know that it is existing.

There is something inscrutable operating between the perceiving side and the object that is perceived. This is a transcendental cohesive force operating in the field of perception, of which most people are not aware. The great secrets of life seem to be not our concern at all. We are happy with our business, with our give-and-take policy, shopkeeping and trading. Everything seems to be going on well without our knowing why it is going on well. There is a string-puller behind everything, a master who controls all the puppets of the show of this world, whose existence is totally ignored minute to minute, which always says: "I am here." But nobody bothers about it because the attachment to one side of things without any consideration to the other side of things rules life in such a poignant way that no one knows what is happening in the world.

There is also a law operating between this life and another life; otherwise, there will be no connection between the soul in this life and in the next life. Somebody would be living here now, and another person would be living in another world. That cannot take place. The transition between one realm of being to another realm of being is also caused by a wider cohesive force, without which there would be no transmigration, no rebirth. There would not be consciousness of even tomorrow. We cannot know there is a thing called tomorrow unless the present, today, is able to transfer itself to the possibility of a tomorrow. How do we know there is a thing called tomorrow? Who told us? Tomorrow has not come. It is not existing, and a non-existent thing cannot be a content of our consciousness, but yet we know there is a thing called tomorrow.

The idea of tomorrow, or the belief in the existence of a thing called tomorrow, is a miniature form of our belief in rebirth. We are sure that tomorrow we will be here. Who told us that? How do we know that tomorrow we will be here? We often say: "Tomorrow we shall look to it." Why do we make a statement like that? There is something in us which is transcendently operating which tells us that tomorrow is directly, cohesively, logically connected with today. If the tomorrow is not there, the today will also not be there. It will be meaningless. There cannot be a today unless there is a tomorrow, and there cannot be a tomorrow unless the today has automatically transferred itself to a position above itself. In every act of our thought concerning the

next day, the self transcends itself and goes above itself and says: "I am more than what I am."

These are some of the manners in which law in the world operates. But there is a further thing, which is most interesting: the law of the integration of the souls in the universe in a universal soul. The souls of human beings are like scintillating sparks scattered in different directions, as it were. But how are they scattered? Even a planet cannot be scattered in space unless it is connected to a solar system which controls its path. These little monads of the soul element, which are infinite in number, cannot make any sense unless they are made to cohere into a system of a transcendental organisational consciousness that we call God-consciousness. In traditional parlance we call it Ishvara-satta. The existence of Ishvara determines the manner of the operation of every individual soul in a similar manner as the central constitution of a government determines the function and operation of every citizen in the country. That is to say, no individual can go against the law of God, and God will not do anything which is contrary to the welfare of an individual. No citizen can go against the constitution, and the constitution will not harm any individual. They are interconnected. Similarly, there is a cohesive element between God and the soul. Everywhere there is law, dharma, operating: *rita* and *satya*. Without that, no organisation can stand.

I am touching upon this subject because we are now highlighting the Diamond Jubilee of The Divine Life Society organisation, which is also a cohesive force. In one way we may say the thought of Swami Sivananda is the cohesive force among all the activities of The Divine Life Society throughout the world. Whether they are branches, individuals, devotees, admirers, seekers, whatever they are, they all gravitate around this central sun of the thought of Swami Sivananda. That is why the organisation of The Divine Life Society sustains itself. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to say, "The branches of The Divine Life Society are not made up of brick and mortar, stone and steel. They are not somewhere far off. The heart of a human being is a branch of The Divine Life Society. In every seeking heart The Divine Life Society is operating." The Divine Life Society is not merely a secular registered body.

In the previous session, I mentioned that there is not much of a difference between the spiritual and the secular because such a distinction would be something like drawing a difference between God and the world, which does not exist. Therefore, there is no great difference between the inner operation and the outer performance. Here is also the secret of spiritual sadhana. We cannot do something which is contrary to what we feel inside us, because then it is not karma yoga. Our heart should permit the action that we are going to do. Karma yoga is not compulsory action. It is voluntary service that is done, not only for the welfare of other people but also for the welfare of one's own self. *Ātmano mokṣārtham jagat hitāya ca* is an old saying. All our activity is not only for the welfare of other people, but is also for one's own liberation. It does not mean that you go on working for the welfare of people and you yourself remain bound. That is not the intention, because you are also a part of the people who require assistance and service.

Humanity is a complete manifestation of a total performance. Human beings are not outside us. The person who sees humanity outside is also a human being by himself or herself. "Let me serve people," people say. Now, the person who says that is also a part of the people, so who is serving whom? Am I serving others or are others serving me? From the point of view of other people I am an other which requires service, and from my point of view they are the others. Who are the others, finally? There is no such thing

as others, and there is no such thing as individual action. It is not me or you that does service; it is a total action taking place everywhere.

The Bhagavadgita is a central gospel which says one person is doing work everywhere. There is only one person doing all activity. There is no such thing as 'I am doing' and 'you are doing'. There is no I or you, because this I and you are different souls that participate in a total action taking place simultaneously for all time. This activity of the cosmos is permanently going on endlessly like a cycle without a beginning and without an end. Who is responsible for it? It is neither me, nor you, nor anybody, but That which Is.

This is a great, lofty ideal that Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj had in his mind, and his mind cannot be read in any printed book, really speaking. His biographies and autobiographies do not clearly go into the depth of his mind. He sometimes used to say, "Work, work! Work hard. Don't be lethargic. Don't be simply sitting and rolling the beads." And then he would also add, "All work is a bondage. Don't get attached. It is the work that has bound you to this body." Both things he would say.

The same thing was told by Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the Bhagavadgita. "Do the work. Do! Go ahead, embark upon the war. Don't keep quiet. Rise up!" This is one side of the gospel of the Gita. The other side is, "I am doing everything. I have already done everything. You are only an instrument." Now, it looks like a contradiction. "I have done everything Myself. I am the only person who does everything." *Mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti* (B.G. 7.7): "Outside Me nothing exists. I am the sole actor in this universe." Having said that, Sri Krishna then says, "Do! Get up! Don't sit!" Both things are said.

Swami Sivanandaji had such characteristics in him, and he spoke what almost look like contradictions. We would not know what he was saying, whether he was asking us to sit and meditate and do *japa*, or he was saying we must do hard work. If we would go to one extreme he would say, "No, no good. The whole day you are sitting and doing *japa*? No. Idle man, work." And if we would go on working and working he would say, "No, you are attached to the work." He would never allow us this way or that way. Both ways we were caught. If we did hard work we were attached, and if we did only *japa* we were idle, lethargic. This is what Swami Sivanandaji would say. So how could we manage? It was very difficult. We cannot understand saints, we cannot understand God, and we also cannot understand the world. We cannot understand our own selves.

Submissiveness, humility and obedience to the law is the system that operates in all organisations. When I speak of an organisation, I do not necessarily mean The Divine Life Society or any organisation whatsoever in the world. It is a system of integrated being, that is all. That is called an organisation. Even a little particle of sand is an organisation by itself. Great scriptures such as the Yoga Vasishtha tell us that inside a little sand particle we can see many universes dancing, one inside the other. Every atom is a universe, every electron is a planet, and every nucleus is a sun. Everywhere there are universes, universes, universes, worlds within worlds. There are worlds inside worlds.

We think that we are a world ourselves. This body is a world. But this body that looks like a world by itself is constituted of many little worlds called the cells of the body, organic substances. Nowadays in medical parlance they say there are mysterious things called DNA and RNA. If we study these things operating in each cell of a person, one cell can tell what kind of person we are. Our entire history, our whole horoscope, our beginning and end are written in one cell. What we are from birth to death can be

seen in one microscopic cell. Therefore, largeness and smallness are not important; organisation is important. Everything should be cohesive, systematic and complete.

Spiritual practice is a complete way of thinking. Meditation is a complete way of thinking. Useful work is a complete way of thinking. Any kind of fractional, isolated, part-by-part activity cannot satisfy. Even when we take our meal, it should be a whole meal. We do not want a fraction of a meal, because it cannot satisfy us. When our lunch is over, we must feel a whole satisfaction. We cannot say that we are only fifty percent or twenty-five percent satisfied. Wherever there is wholeness, organisation and completeness, there is joy; and the highest form of the integrated organisation is Pure Existence, Sat.

Wherever there is existence integrated within itself in every level of its manifestation, there is happiness. Unless we are full, happiness will not be there. It is up to each person to know how one can be full in one's own self. Never say that you are unsatisfied. You say this because your thinking is partial. Why should you be unsatisfied? Find out what is lacking in you. What is lacking in us is not money; it is not any property. That is not what we want. What we want is a completeness of thinking. In modern days people call it holistic thinking. Every thought is complete in itself. It is like taking a good meal.

We can be happy only through our thoughts, not by eating, not by money and property, land, bank balance. They cannot make us happy. We can be happy only by the way in which we are thinking. We can think heaven if we want, and we can also think hell if we want. It is in our hands. "There is neither heaven nor hell, but thinking makes it so," said the poet. To be happy or unhappy is in our hands. I can organise my thoughts in such a way that in one second I can be happy, but I can also disorganise my thoughts in such a way that in one second I can be in hell. "Man is the maker of his destiny," is something well said. Our future is in our hands. We should not say that our future is in somebody else's hands. There is no 'somebody else' here. We should not use the words 'somebody else' because, as I mentioned, the concept of the 'other' being there is erroneous thinking. There are no other people, there are just people by themselves, because if each one is an 'other' to somebody else, then who is the 'other'? This is philosophical thinking, metaphysical thinking, spiritual thinking, divine thinking, holistic thinking, perfect thinking, or the yoga way of thinking, we can say.

We have to be yogis. *Tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu yogayukto bhavārjuna* (B.G. 8.27): "Be always in a state of yoga," says Bhagavan Sri Krishna. When he says "Be always in a state of yoga", he does not mean hold your breath and sit in a particular way. Be harmonised in your system, harmonised within yourself, harmonised with other people, harmonised with nature as a whole. Be in a state of harmony with the sun, the moon and the stars, with the forests, with the trees, with the river that flows and the green mountains. Be happy with them. And be happy with God Himself. If God exists, there is no occasion for you to grieve and curse yourself. The sorrow comes only if God does not exist. Then everything would be pell-mell; a devastating tornado, a whirlwind would immediately start in the mind of a person if God does not exist. That we are sane and healthy, feeling comfortable in our own selves, is itself proof that God exists. He is operating within us and outside us.

Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's teachings are very complicated in some ways, and they often look very simple also because nobody can write in such a simple way as he wrote. His philosophy and teachings are so simple that even a child in the eighth standard can understand what he has written, yet they are so deep because they touch all aspects.

The depth of his teachings consists in their integration and inclusiveness of all aspects of life. In his writings, he has not left any subject untouched. He has written on philosophy, spirituality, religion, medical science, political science, and aesthetics. There is nothing which he has not touched. His writings are encyclopaedic because he himself was an encyclopaedic superman. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was a superman, and he wanted to project to the people a system of living called super-individuality, higher than one's own self, to live not only for one's own individual life but for the larger life which is crying within each individual, saying: "I am not complete in myself."

We wish to be more than what we are. Every moment we wish to rise above ourselves: "I want to be wider than what I am, more integrated than what I am, by which I can be more happy than what I am." This impulse from within to be more than one's own self is the impulse of religion, philosophy, God-consciousness. Everybody has a feeling inside: "I must be more than what I am. I am not sufficient. There is an insufficiency in me. In everything I want to exceed the limitations of my existence." That impulse towards more and more reaches its culmination only in the widest expanse of comprehensiveness when the so-called individual becomes a cosmic person, when the *jiva* becomes Ishvara, when the soul becomes God, when consciousness becomes the Absolute, and when bondage melts into the freedom of moksha.

This is a wonderful message not only of Swami Sivananda, but of all saints and sages of that level. All saints and sages form a fraternity of themselves. They belong to a world of their own, a world of sparks of divinity. It is said that Masters are ranging over the whole space and can immediately manifest themselves at any time, at any place, if the call is there. But if you do not call them, they will not come. How will you call them? The soul within has to call them. You should not call them with words. When the deepest cry of your heart is summoning something, it has to manifest itself. In the greatest agony, people write the best poetry. The tragedies of Shakespeare are said to be his greatest works—the tragedies, not the comedies or the historical plays. In the deepest sorrow of the agony of the spirit, the depth of God often manifests itself. This is the spirit of renunciation, the abandonment of all that is incomplete and that is outside the purview of the soul.

The soul is pure subjectivity. It cannot brook any kind of externality or anything other than itself. It cannot think what is non-soul. This is another way of saying that it cannot think ungodly things, because the soul itself is a mini God. Here is the essence of religion, of spirituality, of yoga, of good work, of service, of humanitarian service. Anything that is worthwhile in this world is comprehended within this wonderful concept of an all-pervading inclusiveness.

Swami Sivanandaji was an inclusive person. He wanted nothing for himself. If anybody offered him something, he would immediately distribute it to all people. When a basket of fruit came, he would not take it to his kutir and eat it. Everybody must take it, and the whole thing was given to others. Any number of baskets of fruit—give, give, give, give, distribute it. You do not lose anything by giving; you lose much by taking. He who takes will suffer; he who gives will enjoy. This is not known to people. Everybody thinks if you give, you are losing something. No, it is not so. You do not lose by giving. "Give, and it shall be given back to you," said Jesus Christ. If you give, it will be given back to you not in the same measure that you give but filled, shaken and overflowing; abundantly it will come. If you give, you give with two hands, but if God gives, He gives with millions of hands. This is the difference between God giving and our giving. We cannot give more than what two hands can contain, but if God gives, millions of hands

start operating everywhere. There is a flood of giving everywhere. If God gives the blessing, you cannot contain it. There is an old Marathi saying: "If God with His infinite hands starts pouring blessings upon you, how much will you grab with your two hands? On the other hand, if with infinite hands He pulls out everything, how much can you grab and keep with yourself?"

Be humble, trust in God, and believe that everything shall be all right, and there will be no problem anywhere. God bless you!

Session 3

THE TAPASYA OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

As an acorn grows into a large oak, as thought expresses itself in action, as will resolves itself in decisions, as the soul beholds its own perfection in the beauty of things, so did The Divine Life Society find its expression in the austerity, the *tapasya* of its sage-founder, His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. The Divine Life Society organisation is an outer expression of the austerity, the concentration of consciousness of this mastermind, His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, a stalwart of the spirit, the likeness of whom it is not easy to find in the history of the world.

We are told in the Upanishads and the Vedas that God did *tapas*—*tapo tapyata*—and in this concentration of Himself, He beheld the potentiality of what was to be manifested in the form of creation. You would be wondering what kind of *tapasya* God was doing. We are accustomed to think that *tapasya* means not putting on proper clothes, not eating, not sleeping, not talking, etc. Actually, *tapasya* is the concentration of consciousness. This is the meaning we have to see in God's *tapas* before He contemplated the form of this vast manifestation which He beheld as total perfection.

It is said in the Upanishad that God beheld His own creation and felt, "Well done, well done!" He patted himself on His own back, as it were. God was fully satisfied with the creation of this world, an outcome of His concentration. The concentration of the spirit of God is the formation of this multitudinous variety we call the whole space-time complex in creation.

So is the case with this mini-universe, I may say, which is The Divine Life Society organisation spread throughout the world. The Divine Life Society is not only in Sivanandanagar, it is a spirit pervading all humanity. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to tell us The Divine Life Society is in the heart of every human being. It is not necessary to have brick and mortar, steel and cement in order to build a Divine Life Society branch. Your concentration of feeling, the integration of your purpose, the stability of your will, and the totality of your outlook—these constitute the foundation of The Divine Life Society and every one of its branches.

Suffice it to say that Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was out-and-out spiritual. He was an embodiment of pure spirit, and there was nothing in him except pure spirit. The externality of his activities and the variety of his performances in the form of writing, etc., are all manifestations of his spirit. If the whole world is spirit manifesting itself, The Divine Life Society, we may say, is also a mini-universe manifested by his *tapasya*. Where there is no *tapasya*, there is no success. You have to know this secret of success everywhere. Intense austerity in the true sense of the term is the road to every kind of success everywhere, in all fields of life. Even in business, even in industry, even in office work, even in management, everywhere this austerity is necessary. We should not think austerity is a kind of religious occupation of recluses. It is the world spirit itself manifesting its own need in this vast creation where every one of us is included.

We should not think that we are outside the universe, and God is somewhere high above, and the world is external to us. The world is not external to us, nor is God high above in the heavens. These ideas of the above, the below, the outward and the inward arise on account of a defect in the way of thinking itself. There is a basic lacuna in the very structural pattern of the human mind, on account of which it cannot see anything properly unless our perceptive faculty itself is purified by the *tapasya* that I have

made reference to, which is total dispassion, wanting nothing, because the spirit wants nothing inasmuch as it includes everything within its own self.

A devotee of Swami Sivananda, a member of The Divine Life Society or the chief of a branch of The Divine Life Society is an emblem of Swami Sivananda himself. There is Swami Sivananda in every one of your hearts, as God is present in everyone. If you think that only work is important, minus the spirit behind it, if you forget that you are basically a spiritual hero and are outwardly a man of work, if you forget the existence of God and are busy with outward performances as if you are the doer, you will not succeed finally.

Many people complain, "I have done so much. No result follows." Why should it not follow? It is because you have not done the work properly in the spirit of karma yoga. Karma yoga is a manifestation of the pure spirit in action. It is an abundance of your own spiritual perfection that reveals itself as your performance outside. Your actions are yourself seen externally in this world. The work that you do in this world is not something that is done by your hands and feet. It is a work of yourself. You are there in your work. If you are not in the work, that work will not bring any satisfaction to you.

But we are like mercenaries, mostly. We do work for the sake of somebody else, for earning money, reputation, position, etc. Nothing of the kind can be called work in the sense of freedom. If work binds, it is not worth doing at all. Who wants bondage in this world? But if you say all work is a curse, it is a suffering and brings nothing but pain and agony, it means to say the work has not proceeded from the total depths of your heart. You are not in the work; the whole point is that. You are doing the work, but you are not in the work, just as you have put on a shirt but you are not the shirt. You may look beautiful by the artistic, aesthetic presentation of your clothes, but you are a feeble skeleton inside with no strength of your own. The clothes are not yourself. Your outside demeanour is not what you are really. What you are has to manifest itself as your work. You cannot have work of one kind and yourself of another kind. You yourself are the work.

So each one should know what oneself is. Are you a poor nothing? Are you bankrupt? Are you an unwanted individual in this world, or are you a representation of the pure Spirit? Do you believe that God is everywhere? If He is everywhere, He is also everything. That which is everywhere has to be everything. Therefore, that which you behold with your eyes is not the world; it is nothing but the arms and the fingers of this Almighty. Remember the words of the Bhagavadgita: *sarvataḥpāṇipādām tat sarvato'kṣīṣiromukham, sarvataḥśrutimal loke sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati* (B.G. 13.13). All these heads that you see here, they are the heads of the almighty Virat Purusha. Do not think the Virat Purusha is sitting in the skies and you are different from Him. Your own eyes are His eyes. He is seeing through your eyes, He is thinking through your brain, He is walking through your legs, He is writing through your fingers. Can you accept this fact? This is the meaning of Bhagavan Sri Krishna telling Arjuna *nimittamātram bhava savyasācin* (B.G. 11.33): "I have done everything. You do work as an instrument."

Is it possible for anyone to be so concentrated in his spirit as to feel that your eyes are His eyes? In that sense, to behold the world correctly would be to behold it as God Himself sees. You see this building, you see that tree, you see the sun and the moon and the stars, you see the road and the marketplace, and God must also be seeing these things. God must be seeing that there is a building here, a road there. But do you believe that there is a difference between your seeing this building and God seeing it? He sees it as Himself, just as bricks feel this building is themselves. There is no house minus the

bricks and the mortar and the other constituents. This is the difference between your perception and God's perception. You see, and God also sees. What is the difference? Whose perception is correct? Is God's perception correct, or is your perception correct? You will be flabbergasted when such a question is posed before you, and you cannot answer it. Are you right in your vision of things, or is God right in His vision of things? Do you see dirt everywhere, squalor everywhere, evil everywhere, good-for-nothing things in the world? Does God also see that? Just touch your heart and see.

The great perfection, the Vishvarupa, was revealed in the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgita. Everything was seen there. What was seen there? Was there cow dung, dirt, squalor, poverty, sickness, hospitals? What was seen in that Viratsvarupa? You will be wondering how you can answer this question. Beauty, grandeur, perfection, majesty, awe, indescribable delight were seen there. But it included everything that you consider as the opposite. What a wonder!

I mentioned that Swami Sivananda was a spiritual master. He existed and operated for the sake of manifesting this spiritual vision of things in the minds of people. His intention was not simply to build kutirs and invite guests, write books and sell literature. That was not the intention. These are only external forms taken by his great, glorious intention of spiritualising humanity, awakening the slumbering spirit of people and telling them, "See, behold, you are sleeping. Wake up from this dream." When you wake up from your dream, you know what things are, and there is no need of further instruction.

To implant in yourself the vision that God has about His own creation in whatever percentage, whatever modicum, in any degree, that would be the extent of your spirituality. Everybody should aspire to be a Godman. You must take a vow: I aspire to be a Godman. I do not want to leave this world like a poor nothing. Why should I? I am as good as anybody else. Why should I not be a Godman? What is lacking in me? I shall set it right just now by turning the table around and seeing whatever is outside is within me.

Both the outward and the inward blend together in the universal. We look at our own bodies to see ourselves, and look outside to see the world. Can you bring the two together in a universalised perception of inclusiveness? That would be divine perception. That is God-vision. This was the teaching of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

Very few people understood him. Even those who were very close to him in the early days of his *tapasya* did not understand him properly. Many people thought he was an extreme type of person. Saints and sages sometimes look like extremely odd types of people. Their behaviour is difficult to understand. They say one thing today and say another thing tomorrow. God does one thing today, and tomorrow a beggar becomes a king, and the day after tomorrow a king becomes a beggar. Are these contradictions in life? No. What is God doing?

There was a sadhu, a saintly person, walking on the road. The king of the country was passing that way.

"Namaskar," said the king to the mahatma. "Please come, please come. I want to put a question."

"What is the question?" asked the mahatma.

"What is God doing just now?" This was the question of the king.

The king was seated on a throne, and the mahatma was sitting on the ground.

The mahatma said, it seems, "You are putting a question to me, and I am supposed to give the answer. That is to say, you are in the position of a disciple and I am in the

position of a Guru. The disciple is sitting on the throne and the Guru is sitting on the ground. Is it proper?"

Immediately the king said, "Please come." He put the mahatma on the throne and he sat on the ground. The king sat on the ground and the mahatma sat on the throne.

"This is what God is doing," the mahatma said. "He who is low is raised up in one second, and he who is high comes down in one second. This is the answer to your question."

Likewise, these actions of God—raising someone to the heights and then throwing him down to the dust—are not contradictions. They are part and parcel of His universal necessity in the process of what we call evolution. Evolution is the death of the previous condition and the birth of a new condition. So birth and death are necessary processes of the onward march of everyone from the lower degree of existence to the higher degree. This evolution is taking place everywhere—outwardly, inwardly, everywhere.

Suffice it to say that what is called spirituality is all in all. We should not make a distinction between spirituality and secularity. That would be like making a distinction between God and the world. Because the world is secular and God is spiritual, does that mean to say there are two things? Then the secular world would be totally dismembered, truncated, cut off from the spirit of God. No, it is not so. Action and thought, spirit and performance are identical. *Mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti* (B.G 7.7) says Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the Bhagavadgita: "Outside Me nothing is." If outside Sri Krishna nothing is, who is performing all the deeds of the Mahabharata war, and so on? Sri Krishna's actions were himself only. I am repeating once again what I mentioned a few minutes before. If your thoughts, your feelings and your deeds are you yourself, then everywhere you will feel happiness and delight.

It is necessary for every spiritual seeker to be happy. This happiness cannot come by bank balance, money, status, authority, because all these things are external accretions grown on a person in an artificial manner, and they can be removed at any moment of time. Authority cannot be there always, money cannot be there always, but you will be there always. When you leave this world, you do not carry your authority with you. You go as you came. You stand totally naked, as it were, undressed before God, the Supreme Judge of the universe. When you go to God and are asked what you have done, what will you say? "I was a prime minister." "I was a millionaire." Will you say that?

In the Kaushitaki Upanishad we are told that this question will be put to you when you go there. You will be taken to Brahmaloka, and the question will be put: what have you done? Can anyone have the courage to say that the dispensation of the great Judge who sent you to this world as an ambassador has been fulfilled? You have come to this world as ambassadors of the Spirit. You belong to another government altogether, which is the government of the cosmic operation of things. From there you have been sent here to do its ordinance, to execute its orders. Here, you do not do your work; you do its work. So to the extent that you are fulfilling the purpose for which you have been brought to this world as ambassadors of the Spirit, to that extent you shall be successful and you shall be taken back. The prodigal son will be taken back by the Father in heaven, as the biblical story goes. God will embrace you and take you back. But if you have lived like a forlorn, misguided individual with selfishness at the core, you will find that you will go poverty-stricken.

What did you bring when you came to this world, and what are you going to take when you go from this place? How is it that you have become so big and important in

the middle? An importance that was not there when you were born, an importance that is not going to be there when you go—how could it be there in the middle? It is not there in the middle either. You are in a state of illusion.

We are completely confused in thinking that we have some value and importance here. If that was there, it will be there even when we leave this world. Will you go satisfied that you are a very important person? Do not be misguided. Our idea of God's perfection is poor.

It is said that when the great ship Titanic sank in the Atlantic Ocean, an American millionaire went to his cabin and put on his dinner dress.

People asked, "Why are you putting on dinner dress now? We are sinking."

He replied, "Because when I go to the Almighty, I do not want to go as a poor fellow. I will go as a millionaire."

This is the idea we have got about ourselves and about God. What is the use of putting on dinner dress? He said, "I want to look gentlemanly before the Almighty." This is our idea of the relationship of man and God.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven—poor in spirit, not poor in money. He may be poor in money, but not necessarily poor in spirit. You may be filled with the spirit of God though you have no penny in your hand, and everything shall flow into you. Everything shall flow into you if the spirit asks for it. Ask, and then you will find everything is being given to you immediately. God, being a timeless existence, does not take time to give you what you want. He is not like a boss who says, "Come tomorrow, let me see." He is not a bureaucrat of that type. He has no tomorrow. He is timeless. Ask now, and it shall be given just now. Can you have this faith?

Swami Sivananda had this faith. People used to come and ask him, "How are you running this big Ashram, Swamiji?"

"It rains from above," he used to say. He did not say that donations come from people horizontally. "Vertically it is falling. It rains from above," he would say. Very rarely do people have such visions.

We are not sustained by the donations of rich people, but by the rain of grace from above. If that is not there, this horizontal connection will be severed at any moment of time. So do not trust anything that is outward, visible, sensory, but trust in that which is your true spirit, out of which you are made and into which you have to return.

We have to live the life of Swami Sivananda himself. His life was one of great *tapasya*. When he was living in the Swargashram for twelve years, he did one kind of *tapas* of not having any friendship with anybody. He knew nobody around him. He was all in all, a renunciate number one. And when he came to this side, there was no place to sit here. Where would he sit? The Divine Life Society did not exist. There was a cowshed. Nobody knew to whom the cowshed belonged. When I came here, I saw that very cowshed being converted into a kitchen of the Ashram. The early kitchen of the Ashram was an old cowshed full of straw and cow dung, etc., in which Swamiji sat as his office, his residence, everything. So this is the story of the founding of The Divine Life Society.

Before that there was no property, nothing. He had no money. One rupee donation used to come. When Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was in Swargashram, he used to receive one rupee donation from a schoolmaster in Nagpur who came to know the greatness of Swami Sivananda. One rupee was a great thing in those days. We did not think that one rupee was a small thing. And Swamiji used that rupee to purchase curds,

and gave those curds to poor sadhus suffering with dysentery, etc. He used to help them. Then he started the Satya Seva Ashram Dispensary in Lakshmanjhula to give medical assistance to poor sadhus, etc. The history of The Divine Life Society is very elaborate, and it is difficult to tell what it is all about. Some things I know, and some things happened even before I came here.

It is a long, long creative process of this wonderful manifestation of God's beauty and Swami Sivananda's miracle. Everything is working beautifully because there is *tapasya* behind it. If the *tapasya* of Swami Sivananda was not operating here even now, The Divine Life Society would not exist. We are only hands and feet of this great Master, and whatever strength we have comes from him only. And we trust in God first and foremost. Honestly I am telling you: we trust in God, and we trust in nothing else. Therefore, it shall be a success.

Session 4

THE NOT-SELF HAS TO BECOME THE SELF

Questions have been raised in philosophical circles, humorous though these questions may look, regarding whether God is a democrat, a monarch, a despot, a dictator or an elected president of the universe. How does God govern His creation?

Great thinkers along administrative lines, right from the time of the Greek philosopher Plato, categorised administration into several levels of hierarchy. Plato was fond of monarchy as the best form of administration. The idea behind Plato's concept of monarchy is different from our notion of the kings about whom we read in history books. His monarch was a spiritual genius and a perfected administrator. "Until and unless philosophers become kings and kings become philosophers, this world is not going to see the light of peace." This is an immortal saying of Plato in his wonderful work the *Republic*. His concept of perfect government was a towering vision of what is prevailing in the high heavens.

After listening to a great discourse given by Socrates on this subject, a questioner raised a point: "Socrates, where is this government that you are speaking of?"

"It is in the heavens," Socrates said.

We may laugh at this answer. If the best administration is only in the heavens, what is the use of Plato spending so much time in writing the book the *Republic*?

It is difficult to understand Plato. He has been considered as the greatest thinker of the West, and also a most impractical person who had no vision of the difficulties of practical existence. All criticism against him is unfounded because Plato's brain towered above the complexities of selfish thinking, and he even went to the extent of conceiving what is known as an organic society, or an organic statehood. This has been condemned by people who say that you cannot conceive of a state as an organism, meaning thereby that the individuals are subservient to the state. This is an abominable concept to any person who asks for individual freedom. Do you wish me to be merged in the state? This looks like totalitarianism.

But again we have to bring into our minds Plato's concept of the high heavens. Plato wants kings to rule this world by keeping their minds in the high heavens. He does not mean that a king should be a despot or a tyrannical person. When it was told to Plato that he is going too high, he suggested another system of administration, called aristocracy: only the chosen elected ones will rule. But this was unsatisfactory because who will choose the people? Who are the best among people?

Then there was another system, called plutocracy: only the well-to-do can rule. This also did not sound good, so Plato came to democracy. Democracy is a wonderful thing, and people today consider there is no better form of administration than that. But Plato had a poor opinion of democracy. He said it is mobocracy, rather than democracy. Anyone can give a vote and it is valid, as valid as the vote of a genius. An illiterate, unlettered, ignorant person's vote is as valid as a great mastermind's vote. This is why Plato thought that this abolition of the qualitative characterisation of the voting principle and the emphasis only on quantity is a defect in the democratic system of government. All said and done, Plato was a true philosopher—not a bookish man, but a person who could imagine in the depths of his soul and contemplation that heaven has to descend to the earth if there is to be peace in the world.

Latterly, Sri Aurobindo had this idea. He went on emphasising again and again that it is necessary for heaven to be brought down to the earth if the earth is to survive or if life in the world is to be anything meaningful. Ordinary people cannot understand what all this means. Who can bring heaven down to the earth?

Now, I raised the point whether God is a democrat. What kind of person is He? How does He rule this world, this universe of manifestation? Does He rule the world by a fiat of His will? "What I say is okay, and you should not talk after that." Does He say that? Or has He given freedom to the individuals whom He has created? Have we freedom, or have we no freedom because of the supremacy of God?

No answer has come from any corner of philosophical consideration. If God is omnipotent, omnipresent, all in all, then we are nothing. It follows from that. Then there is no such thing as individual freedom. But do you feel that you have no freedom? You feel you are a free person.

The relationship between God and the individuals is something like the relationship between government and the citizens. Therefore, the answer to the question: what kind of relation obtains between God and the individuals? also applies to the other question: what should be the relationship between an administrative authority and the administered populace?

This will also take us to the question of how we can be totally spiritual people. The life spiritual is considered as a perfect life. It is not an excess that we are leaning towards. A spiritual seeker is not going to excess by rejecting the practical realities of life. He cannot reject God; he cannot reject the world. In concepts of renunciation, many a time such mistakes are committed. "We cannot be spiritual unless we renounce the world" is something that we hear in scriptures, and from the mouths of saints and sages. Is it necessary to renounce something in order that we may be spiritually oriented?

The concept of renunciation arises on account of there being something in the world that is called unspiritual. That which is not spirit and is non-spirit is often called *anatman*, opposed to the Atman. We speak of the Atman and the *anatman* in ordinary language: the Self and the non-Self. What is the meaning of the non-Self? That which is not we, that which is not me, that which is not I—that is the non-Self. Is this non-Self existing, or is it not existing? Because of the difficulty in answering this question, people went to the other extreme of completely denying the existence of the non-Self, and saying that the world is an illusion. The best way of swallowing a problem is to deny the problem itself. You say it does not exist, and close your eyes like an ostrich. This is not a satisfactory answer. If you say the non-Self does not exist because it is an illusion, the very idea of the non-Self would not have arisen in the mind. Who told you that there is such a thing called the non-Self if it is really an illusion? So there is a self-deceit involved in the concept of the illusion of the universe. If it is an illusion, it does not exist. It cannot even appear to exist, because appearance is only a camouflage for a kind of negative existence.

So spiritual seekers find themselves in great difficulty, especially after several years of *japa*, meditation, etc. A sorrow descends on the heart of spiritual seekers. They grieve; something is wrong with them because they have achieved nothing. The achievement has not come due to a fundamental error in the concept of the Self and the not-Self. The not-Self is an opponent before you, and it is not an illusion. You cannot simply close your eyes to the existence of an opponent. You have to do something with it. What do you do with it? Some people deny the existence of a creditor and say that

they have no creditor. You have borrowed money, but then you say the creditor does not exist. You do not want to be pursued by the creditor. You do not want to be tortured by the not-Self, the objects and the world outside, and so you say it does not exist at all. Like a narcissist, you inwardise your mental operations and become a sick person psychologically, saying that everything is well with you. It is like going into deep sleep and then imagining that you are in a state of samadhi. They are two opposite things altogether.

Here again philosophers fumble, and there have been great Vedantins who thought that sleep is the same as samadhi. It is not, because from sleep you can wake up into the world of experience, but from samadhi you do not again rise to this world of experience. Sleep is a negative hibernation practised by a defeated mind which could not encounter the opposition of the not-Self. It becomes tired. By fatigue one goes to sleep. The opposition was too much. The war with the not-Self has not ended. It cannot end as long as the not-Self is existing.

The word 'not-Self', which is inclusive of the whole world outside, is to be removed from the dictionary of spiritual philosophy. It is like accepting a non-God in addition to God. There are schools of religion which think that there is a permanent opposition to God taking place, as in Zoroastrian circles Ahriman, an enemy of God, is always there, of whom God has to be wary. There is Lucifer, there is Satan, there is some evil, and God has to battle with this force. Spirituality is not a battle with any inimical forces. It is a sublimation of all that appears to be a contending opposition.

The Self is not existing inside the body. Here is a great point. This is the reason why it looks as if there is something outside the body, which is another way of saying outside the Self, outside the Spirit, outside myself. "The 'outside myself' is an abominable something. I cannot tolerate anything that is outside me." Now, what does this mean? What is the meaning of there being something outside me?

Spiritual life is a difficult life unless you reconcile yourself with this outsideness, with which you cannot reconcile yourself. It stands always opposing you, and you are fear-struck because of the very existence of that which is not you. You love yourself so much that you cannot love anybody other than yourself. So there is a permanent opposition and grief. Life begins with sorrow and ends with sorrow. This is the philosophy of spiritual pursuits. Most spiritual seekers are unhappy people. They are inwardly not composed, but they cannot be grieving inside always. Then they will not exist in the world at all. So there is again a camouflage of the sense of perfection. They take to a life of renunciation without renouncing anything whatsoever, really speaking. The world has been renounced, people say, but you forget that the world cannot be renounced because you are standing on the earth, and who will renounce the earth? And, as an individual, everyone is a part of the structure of the world itself. The creative process which contemplated the five elements—ether, air, fire, water, and earth—ordained, at the same time, that the so-called individual has to be composed of the very bodily substance of these five elements. Therefore, we do not stand outside the world. We cannot stand outside the bricks of which our body is made.

The concept of renunciation, namely, the abandoning of the world for the sake of the pursuit of God, involves a misconception; and very understandably, it is common everywhere. The externality of the world, the outsideness of the things that we perceive with our eyes, is the reason why we find this difficulty before us. Is the world outside us? Then it has to be renounced. But decide, first of all, if it is outside. In the process of the hierarchy of creation, you have come from it. The world came first, and man came

afterwards. We all are latecomers in the history of creation, so how are we going to renounce that which is our own cause? It cannot be done.

The renunciation of the world spoken of in religious parlance does not necessarily mean going somewhere, to some corner of the earth, and then imagining that the world is not there. It is the abolition of the externality of consciousness. It is the complete negation, from one's own self, of the idea that the world is standing outside. A spiritual seeker is a world person. He has imbibed the world into himself, and he stands as a representation of this world. He does not have any opposition because the opposing, contending party is also a part of his own structure. Otherwise, if the contending party is standing outside, there will be a not-Self once again gazing at you, looking at you and telling you that it also is.

The mistake of Lucifer was to assert divinity in his own self. He felt that he was as important as God Himself. There was an opposite to God. Now, this is a story of the fundamental mistakes in spiritual concepts, in spiritual thinking. We are grieved inside, unsatisfied, and there is no progress in our meditations. We are the same old guys that we were many years back, with the same appetites, the same anger, and the same impulses. They do not leave us, and when they are impossible to handle, they go inside the subconscious mind and tell us that they are not existing. They hide in ambush and become completely unconscious in the state of sleep, only to wake up to tell us that they are as much alive as they were once upon a time.

I began with Plato's concept of political administration, which is practically the same as the concept of administration in the Manu, Yajnavalkya and Parashara Smritis in India, and the Arthashastra of Kautilya, or Chanakya. Spiritual life is a reconciliation between the visible and the invisible, God and the world, myself and yourself. What am I thinking about you? Here is the spirituality. You are sitting in front of me. What is my opinion about you? This will tell me what kind of spirit I am maintaining, to what extent am I spiritual. What are you thinking about me? That will tell you how much spiritual you are. Are you not thinking something about other people, about things around? You do not have any clear concept of anything. Something is here, something is there, and you are having various opinions about yourself and other people.

What do you think about the people around you? Are they a nuisance, or is there some meaning in their existence? Are they only barking dogs, or are they friends of the spirit walking on the same journey? If I don't like you and you don't like me, is that spirituality? But if this situation should not arise, how will you reconcile yourself? How can I sit with another person near me? It is a terrible thing to be sitting with another person near me. Is there another person near me? That is the not-Self sitting. The not-Self is looking at me and saying: "I am also here. You are not the only person that is existing."

God descends into the dust of the earth when we think of these questions, and the heart will weep and cry that it is not fit even to think these subjects. The mind revolts against the concepts of unity and reconciliation. The word 'reconciliation' is something unthought of. When there are two irreconcilable things, we think of reconciliation. If there is no irreconcilability between two things, why should there be reconciliation at all? Something is gnawing into our vitals and telling us that something is dead wrong.

This kind of difficulty arose right from the time we were born into this world of creation. It is in the Aitareya Upanishad that we are told what has happened to us. Biblical stories, and stories of creation anywhere, tell us that the creation of the human individual is a topsy-turvy, headlong fall from the topmost level of heaven to the

lowest earthly level. When we fell, we fell with head down and legs up, so we see everything topsy-turvy. That which is really inside appears to be outside, and that which is outside appears to be inside. That which is everywhere appears to be above us. Why does God appear to be something very high above? How can everywhere, or omnipresence, appear to be far above us in high space? This is due to the topsy-turvy perception that came with us together with our fall from the heavens. The fall is a great subject in all scriptures. It is not falling like an apple from the tree, because while the apple was in the tree it was an apple, and when it fell down it was still an apple. It did not become a stone. But here, the fall is not like that. When we fell, we became something different. We became upside-down and totally different in substance and contour from what we were before.

We are not mini Gods moving in this world. People say we are made in the image of God. Well, if we are made in the image of God, a little bit of the godliness will be present in us. We will be shining like God's face. But does it look like that? We are not mini Gods. There is a total distortion that has taken place at the time of creation. We are not parts of God in the sense of parts of a flaming fire. A spark of fire is nevertheless fire only, but the sparks of God that we appear to be are not actually the element of God operating through us. Because of the topsy-turvy perception, we cannot think like God. It is not only a partition into segmented little particularities that has taken place; there is something worse, namely, the reflection of it. It is said that the individual soul is not merely a part of the whole, but a reflection of the whole, so that even a little of the original is not present in this reflection. Thus is an accentuation of the difficulty of understanding our relationship to the whole, which is God.

Suffice it to say that we are parts of the mighty whole. One dollar is good enough because that one dollar makes millions of dollars when joined together, but many people put together do not become God. That is the whole point. The entire humanity does not reflect God's existence, just as many fools sitting together do not become one wise man. So there is another difficulty here in understanding our relationship with God. We cannot fool Him so easily, and we cannot think Him also; therefore, our meditations fail. Our relationship with the world is also a catastrophe and a suffering, and we live losing everything.

A transvaluation of the whole of the values of life is necessary in every aspect, without any kind of complacency, disgust or despair in the mind. Neither should we be complacent that everything is fine, nor should we be in a state of utter despair that everything is dead wrong. Neither position can be justified. There is a *via media* between the two, a golden mean. Virtue, righteousness, which is so much praised, is said to be a means between two extremes. "I want everything." "I want nothing." Neither of these positions is correct. "Everything exists." "Nothing exists." These are two extremes.

The *via media* between two positions is virtue. Denying everything is not virtue. Grabbing everything is also not virtue. This admixture of the good points on both sides is the intriguing characteristic of virtue, which is difficult to understand. Can anyone define what is the meaning of a virtuous person? How do you find out who is a virtuous person? Can you bring one person and say "Here is a righteous person"? No, you cannot find one person in the whole world like that. It is a pursuit of a will-o'-the-wisp. You cannot find one righteous person in the world, because you do not know what righteousness is. How do you designate a person? What do you expect from a person in order that the person may be righteous? That is also a confusion. We live in a big,

blunderous confusion of thought, not only in our field of virtue and righteousness but in our daily life in the world, and also in our concept of spirituality.

Going slowly, step-by-step, is wisdom. Hurriedly running to catch God today itself is not wisdom. There is no hurry. Everything should be done stage by stage, as we have grown systematically minute by minute, second by second, from babyhood to childhood and to the adulthood that we are passing through now. There is no double, triple or quadruple promotion in nature. Everybody has to pass the test of every stage of life. There is no exemption for anyone. In this world of creation, nobody is superior and nobody is inferior. Nobody is good and nobody is bad. Finally, it is again a concept. You cannot find a bad person. Where is the bad person? Go around the whole of Muni-ki-reti and find one bad person. You will not find that person, nor can you find a good person, so what is this peculiar idea in your head? We live in a wilderness of thought which goes by the name of great understanding, education, certificates, post-graduation degrees, doctorates, and so on, all which are bunk finally, which lead us nowhere.

So, an inward investigation of the secrets of one's own self is important. "I must know myself carefully. I should not be a hypocrite about my own self. Am I a virtuous person?" If you are to answer this question, you must know what virtue is. It is a reconciliation between God and creation. That is virtue. What is meant by this reconciliation? Everywhere you are caught up. You require a great master's guidance in this. That is why it is said a Guru is necessary. Any amount of scratching the head will not bring an answer to this question. Who can say why God created the world, or how He created it? As no one has seen God creating the world, why do we speak of God creating the world?

We require the blessing of a great master who is impersonal, unattached, wanting nothing, and who represents a perfection or a balance in one's own life. These days we do not find such people. We hear of great masters in early days. We had Vasishtha, Vyasa, Sukadeva, Lord Krishna, Jesus Christ, Buddha, but now we are not able to find such towering personalities.

But when the nadir is reached the circle gets completed; then immediately the wheel goes up, and from the lowest Kali Age we will reach Krita Yuga, or the best of things. The world process is considered as a wheel. It does not remain in one condition at any time. If something is in one condition now, it will be another thing altogether the next moment. And every experience has to be passed through. Nothing should be renounced or abolished from our mind. We are to be friends of people, friends of creation, friends of even the opposite thing because there is no such thing as the opposite in spirituality. The contending not-Self has to become the Self.

Until and unless the contending not-Self that is sitting in front of me becomes me, I am not saved. The saving factor is sitting between the two individuals, myself and yourself. Between me and you there is somebody sitting. That is the saving factor, invisible, saying, "I am here, and I am your friend, and I am the friend of the other one also, so that I imbibe both of you and stand transcendently supreme."

These are some of the intriguing, interesting, very necessary notions which come to the mind of any seeking spirit, who has to be an all-around perfectionist. Dislike, hatred, rejection, not liking, or wanting, grabbing—these are not signs of perfection. Your face should tell you what kind of person you are. The spiritual seeker is an emblem of perfection, and it need not be advertised in newspapers or adumbrated anywhere by public proclamation. It shall speak for itself.

Session 5

INDIA'S ANCIENT CULTURE AND THE DISCOVERIES OF MODERN SCIENCE

Quantum theory declares that if anything happens anywhere, it happens everywhere. One example is, if there is a prick by a thorn in a person's toe, the pain of this prick will not be felt merely by the toe or the leg. The whole body will know it, and it does not take time for the whole organism to know that there is pain. Though there is a distance of some five to six feet from the toe to the head, that distance is completely abolished by the organic oneness of the entire system. Similarly, though the stars are apparently so far away, they are really not far. There is no space and no time; therefore, there is no distance. Even if there seems to be a distance between the foot and the head, organically speaking there is no distance.

The universe is like the human body. That is why we call the whole universe as the body of the Supreme Creator. There is only One Person in the whole universe. He is called Mahapurusha: *sahasraśīrṣā puruṣaḥ* (P.S. 1). Million-headed is that Omnipresent Being, whose form is described in the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgita. That Being alone is, and anything that happens anywhere happens everywhere in the cosmos. The whole universe is an integral operation, and there is no distance between one part of the world and another part of it. The stars know what is happening here on earth. The poet says that we cannot touch the petals of a flower in our garden without disturbing the stars in the heavens. The stars will know that we have touched a petal of a flower. Such distance, so many light years of distance, does not matter. Just as there is no distance between the foot and the head, there is also no distance between one place and another place. The whole universe is one living, integrated, complete organism which is the body of the Creator, the Absolute.

Quantum mechanics is saying the same thing as the Upanishads. Wonderful! Albert Einstein's brain manufactured the great concept of the relativity of space and time. We think that the physical world is inside space, which is Newton's concept. Newton's concept of the mechanised form of the relationship among things declares that the whole world of matter is inside space. But it is not so. Space is also a part of the world. Einstein's theory of relativity concludes, astonishingly, that matter is nothing but a dent in space. So matter is not existing independent of space. You will be wondering how space, which looks like emptiness, can create mountains and stones, and so on. Actually, space is not empty.

Einstein's great theory of relativity has been stated long ago in the Taittiriya Upanishad. In the Second Section of the Taittiriya Upanishad we are told that space manifested from the supreme Absolute. We should not consider space to be an empty vacuum. It is a subtle form of the future manifestation of the solid universe. From space came the vibration of what we call air. The friction created by the movement of air created heat, which we call fire. The condensation of the heat of fire became water, and the solidification of water became earth. And, once upon a time, this thing called the earth was part of the sun. It is said that a chip of the sun broke off long ago. The sun is a boiling mass of heat, so if the earth was once upon a time a little part of the sun, it must have been a flaming mass of boiling heat rushing out of the sun, revolving in space. It cooled and became the waters of the ocean, and the earth. Then little bodies called fungus, plants, etc., manifested. Then there were trees and other plants, which further

evolved into aquatic creatures such as fish, and then semi-aquatic creatures such as the tortoise, and then mammals such as boars, elephants and lions. Then came human beings. This body of ours is made up of the same five elements of space, air, fire, water and earth. There is nothing in us except these things. The earth principal in us creates hunger for food, the water principal in us creates thirst, the fire principal in us requires us to warm ourselves, the air principal in us wants us to breathe fresh oxygen, and the space principal in us requires us to have accommodation. So there is nothing in the human body except these five elements, which came from the Supreme Being. Therefore, the final conclusion is that we are not independent of the universe. We think that we are coming from Delhi, Meerut, America, and so on, but these are all false ideas. The earth's surface has no Meerut, no Delhi. It may not even be aware that there are countries like India, America, etc., just as the body is not conscious that it is called a hand or a nose. We call it by those names, but the body is one single, impersonal organism. Thus the earth has no coordinates, no differences of nation and so on. We created these differences.

All told, what I am saying is that the theory of relativity declares that space is everything. You may be wondering how space is everything. Space is not emptiness. When the dissolution of the universe takes place, the earth will melt into water, the water will get dried up by the heat of fire, the fire will get extinguished by air, the air will merge into space. Then no universe will be there. We will all go into it. And the space will enter into the Absolute so that after the *pralaya*, or the dissolution, this original Supreme Being alone will be there. That Supreme Being existed before creation, and that Supreme Being will be afterwards also, and in the middle we are playing the drama of independent existence, as it were. We have no independent existence. This is relativity and quantum put together. There is no independence of any person or thing. Everything is everywhere, and anything is everything, so that you become totally impersonal in your outlook of life. You are not just a human being; you are a superhuman individual, a representation of the cosmic existence.

This is a wonder which we hear of in the Upanishads, the Vedas and the Bhagavadgita, which declared these very same truths as Einstein's theory of relativity and John Bell's quantum mechanics, etc. We think that new discoveries are coming up, but these people were not born at that time when the Upanishad declared this. It is the glory of India's culture.

Session 6

THE INFINITE IN US HAS TO RESPOND TO THE INFINITE ABOVE

There is something in the midst of all things which may miss the attention of people, namely, where we are standing finally in the scheme of things. At the time of creation we are told that God perceived Himself as a universal experience of His own Self. The condensation of the will of God into the potentiality for the future of creation concretised itself in the form of the great picturesque description called the Viratsvarupa, which we have in the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgita. It was a gradual condensation process, as it were, of the interior undivided being of God Almighty. When the descent reached the stage of the Virat, a tripartite segregation is said to have taken place. Here the tragedy of creation commences.

I began by saying we must know where we are standing. It is no use foolishly being very active without knowing how it is that we are prompted to become active in any direction whatsoever. The tripartite segregation took place in the manner of an individualised, totally isolated fraction of this Virat in the form of a perceiving centre, called *jiva* consciousness, like that of any one of us. And all the rest was looked upon as an object, namely, the world of five elements.

What did God create? He manifested Himself in a gradation of solidification of Himself as space, air, fire, water, earth. This consciousness entered into all these elements and gradually came down to the level of the earth consciousness, and became body consciousness. We are told that, in this process, the perception became topsy-turvy. What is the meaning of topsy-turvy perception? That which was everywhere appeared to be only somewhere, and that which was a universally pervasive being looked like an object outside. That which came first looked like the last item, and that which came last looked like the first item. The last item is human individuality, but human beings consider themselves as the primary deciding factors in the destiny of all things. This is the topsy-turvy nature of perception.

Where we are heading finally is an important question. Who will answer this question? Where are we moving? People are born, grow into adults, pass through all these kaleidoscopic experiences of life, become old, and then prepare themselves for their exit, which is the final word of human experience. What is this exit? This is also a part of the biography of human nature. A total oblivion of one's future takes place. Actually, this oblivion of one's future takes place in the womb of the mother itself. It is not that we become oblivious gradually, when we grow old. The moment consciousness enters into the womb of the mother, that consciousness gets twisted into this topsy-turvy position and it begins to see everything as other than what it is. Here is the beginning of the sorrow of life. It commences not after we are born; it commences even before we come out into the world. The length of the life of a person, the experiences that one has to pass through in this life, and all the ups and downs, gains and losses, tragedies and joys of life are written when we are inside the womb of the mother, in a script which no one can read. This is called Brahma Lipi, the language of Brahma, who has recorded the past, the present and the future of every human being.

The entry of an individual into the womb of the mother is a consequence of a pressure exerted by its past experiences in the series of lives it underwent earlier, right from the time of creation. There is the pressure from behind to go ahead, outward, to externalise and lose ourselves in that which we consider as being outside us. On the one

hand, there is a pressure from the past. On the other hand, there is a pull from the future, from what we are going to be in the future. The present, so-called, is a transitory bubble. It has no substance by itself. It is a fleeting movement of an empty balloon-like content which is the individual's life, like any one of ours. In this little bubble-like floating experience of individuality, we are very much occupied with world-transforming activities, world uplifting, and so on. These are wonderful achievements—scientific, astronomical, astrological, psychological, and every blessed thing we are achieving—but these achievements will not be counted when the exit order comes. Remember very well, this exit can be tomorrow or today, and not necessarily many years in the future.

One of the very poignant results following from this topsy-turvy perception is that no one can know what will happen to oneself the next moment because if this is known, we would not be what we are today. That element of what we can call God-consciousness, from where we have fallen, which is maintained by an individual throughout his or her life notwithstanding the fact of these tragic experiences of topsy-turvy perception, will be the future of this individual soul.

Everyone—whether a disciple of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, a seeker of Truth, a servant of God, a yogi, a *bhakta*, a devotee, whatever one is—should be conscious of this fact. We seek liberation, but liberation from what? From what are we expecting liberation? This question one cannot easily answer. Liberation from what? From the bondage of life. What is the bondage of life? Let anyone answer this question. If life is a bondage, who will get oneself involved in the world?

The incessant merging of oneself in the processes of life, in activities of various kinds, in business, industry and other things, is a voluntary immersion of oneself in what one otherwise considers as something from which one wishes to be free. Is it not a contradiction in the very thought process of the individual? How is it possible for anyone to be free from the bondages of life, as they are called, since life vehemently persists in its demand for getting everyone involved in this process? Are we not voluntarily involving ourselves in activities which we consider worthwhile, beneficial to our own selves, beneficial to other people, beneficial in every way, in any way, in one way or another?

If we are really true to our own self and we honestly believe that life is a bondage, we must know why it is a bondage. In what way is it binding us? It gives us satisfaction; it gives us pleasure. Otherwise, who will involve oneself in any kind of work? Why should there be the birth of children? Why should there be any kind of endeavour on the part of a person to guard oneself, save oneself and ask for security and long life? Who wants a long life if it is a life of bondage?

That means to say, there is no real acceptance in our heart of hearts of the fact that life is a bondage. Life is also a satisfaction. Though it is a topsy-turvy satisfaction, it is a satisfaction. This is the reason why we cannot free ourselves from the bondage of life. One activity cannot free us from another activity, because a golden chain and an iron chain are both chains only. We should not be under the impression that we can bind ourselves with diamond chains, gold chains, and then be free from the prison of life, because life in a prison is still the life of a prison. Whatever be the manner, whatever be the glorified form of imprisonment, it is still that. So the joys of life are also the bondage of life. This must be known very well.

The great encomiums that people pour on themselves in all fields of life are part of the bondage of life. The glory that we are enjoying in life is part of the bondage of life.

The importance that we attach to ourselves is part of the bondage of life. The greatness that we see in ourselves or in anybody else, this is also part of the bondage of life. But who will realise this fact when bondage appears as heaven? The whole point is that. When hell appears as heaven, who would like to be free from that? This is the reason why nobody can be free from *samsara*. It catches us from every side by giving life a beautiful look by daubing it with a painting of colourful attraction called the grandeur of life, the majesty of creation, all looking aesthetically presentable. Here is the reason why we cannot free ourselves from bondage.

Deep contemplation on the centrality of that very Being from where we came down to this earth is very important. We do not carry our greatness when we have the exit order from this world. What is our importance? The importance is daubed with the topsy-turvy perception of futile imaginations of false importance attributed to our own selves. This will not be counted in the book of God. Very important it is to remember all these things.

Finally, you are your own friend. The glories that others pour on your head are not glories. What glory can you pour on your own head? Let each one touch one's heart and ask, "What is my glory?" Go into your bedroom and find out how much glory you have got, how beautiful you are, how important you are, how strong you are. You will find you are a miserable individual if you are not to the midst of those people who are giving you a false impression of your own self. When the order comes to quit, you go like a wretched vegetable, that is all. And who likes to be in that condition? This concentration of the mind throughout life is necessary in order that it is there at the time of passing which, as I mentioned, can be at any moment.

Therefore, the only solace for a spiritual seeker is to be really a spiritual seeker. The seeker of the Spirit is the seeker of That from where one has come. How can we maintain this universality in a little brain which is so small, containing a tiny tot of a thought? Yet, it is necessary by the practice of deep meditation to allow this little tiny tot of a thought of the human brain to effloresce into the widened dimension of God-consciousness. With all these difficulties, the ups and downs and the running about of things, this consciousness has to be maintained. A great phrase in the Bhagavadgita says: "Remember Me and go ahead with the bustle of this battle of life." Now, what is this "Remember Me"? We have forgotten that point, and we enter into the bustle of life like Abhimanyu in the Mahabharata getting caught in the Chakravyuh and being unable to get out of it afterwards.

We are disciples of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the mighty potentate of the Spirit. We have to remember that. This country has produced mighty masters such as Bhagavan Sri Krishna, Vasishtha, Vyasa, and Nara-Narayana himself who, in all his great might and main, is gloriously presiding over the destiny of mankind in sacred Badrinath. This is the land where we are seated.

We have to bear in mind always that we are alone in this world. Do not be under the impression that people are guarding you. Nobody will guard you. There is no such thing. What you deserve, that you will get. What you do not deserve, that you cannot get. This is very important. You cannot ask for things for which you are not intended. You cannot complain that it has not come, when it is not supposed to come because your heart is not made of that stuff which can summon the substance which you want. That thing which you want and for which you are asking cannot come unless that which you seek, the object, is commensurate with your own nature. The world as a whole will come to

you, provided that you are commensurate with the structure of the things of the whole universe and, finally, with God Himself.

Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj never tired of mentioning in the beginning of every book he wrote that God-realisation is the goal of life. All the earlier writings of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj start with: "God-realisation is the goal of life." Everything that you do, everything that follows, is a corollary to this great adventure of the Spirit which we are marching towards, that source of things from which we are descended topsy-turvy, unfortunately, for reasons which we cannot understand now. We have to turn the tables round and look forward—not backward, not sideways or horizontally, but vertically upward. This is meditation. We are born for that.

Meditation is not a discipline or a religious activity. It is not just sitting somewhere and thinking. It is a merging, an immersion in the total absorption of oneself in that which is inundating us from all sides. It is like the drop contemplating the ocean of which it is a part. This will protect us. If this point is maintained by us, no one can shake a hair of our body, and we will always be in a state of perfect security. "My devotee cannot perish," says Sri Krishna in the Bhagavadgita. But are you devotees? Your heart is the witness of your deeds, your thoughts and your feelings. Your heart is the witness of what you are. Let the heart say what you are. Let people say anything, but what does your heart say about you? The God in you, what does He say about you? This should be a standing witness before you to tell you what you are at the time of deep meditation.

The meditation should not be a hypocritical exercise of the kind of ritual that is to be undergone every day in a holy manner. It is not merely a holy exercise; it is an immersion of yourself in the heart of your heart, in the depths of your spirit, in the true spirit of what you are, and trying to dissolve yourself in that perfection which is going to summon you one day, and is calling you every moment. This perpetual calling manifests itself in the various forms of the restlessness of life, the dissatisfactions and the sense of nothing being all right, of everything being finite. This kind of feeling of nothing being all right arises on account of a call from above. The Infinite is calling the finite; therefore, it feels restless here, and you feel restless always, perpetually. Never will you be at rest until the summoning is responded to properly. The Infinite in us has to respond to the Infinite above. Then only can you immerse yourself in the nectarine ocean of Infinity.

Session 7

THE BEAUTY OF GOD

Do you believe that God is beautiful, or do you think that He is a bearded, terrible old man? You think that God is a bearded old man. Nobody in any scripture says that God is a beautiful person, and nobody thinks that He is a beautiful person. God is wonderful beauty, but we have not seen beautiful things in the world. That is why we cannot understand. We see only ugly things. Where are the beautiful things? We say things are beautiful, but that is only a way of speaking. Really we have not seen beautiful things. If we see it, we cannot exist afterwards.

Nobody knows what beauty is. We have seen some beautiful things, but these beautiful things are different from beauty, just as money is different from a currency note. A currency note is only paper and ink, but money is something different. Money is hidden inside the paper. It is an invisible power that is operating through the currency note. Like that, the beautiful object is not actually beauty. There is something inside which manifests itself as perfection.

Actually, beauty is the manifestation of the soul. The soul is beautiful. The more our soul manifests itself through the sense organs, the more things look beautiful. The rainbow, the full moon and the ocean all look beautiful. Even an elephant looks beautiful. We like to look at it. During the full moon, nectar is flowing. The nectar that is flowing from the full moon at night sustains all the plants, and they become happy.

There are no beautiful things in the world because everything has some defect. Even if there is something beautiful, there is some defect. Complete beauty cannot be imagined. The world does not contain anything which is so great as God, and therefore we cannot imagine Him. We are caught up with this bodily ugliness; therefore, we see ugly things everywhere, though there is a beautiful thing inside. We see a beautiful painting, but what is a painting? It is only some ink splashed on a canvas, so why is it so beautiful? Ravi Varma's painting, Michelangelo's painting, Leonardo da Vinci's painting—why is a painting so beautiful when it is only a little ink and canvas? It has arrangement, pattern, system, completeness, symmetry. A thing looks beautiful only when it is symmetrical, perfect, inclusive, rounded, proportionate, with no ugliness, no corners. That is the beauty of the soul. The soul is symmetrical, perfect equilibrium, inclusive, rounded, complete. When that gets reflected through this pattern of being, we say it is a beautiful painting. That is the power of music, painting, dance. They look beautiful because they attract the perfection of the soul by their gestures and arrangement of things. God is the original of this reflected image. If you can think that, it is wonderful. But it is very difficult.

When Krishna played music, the cows were dancing; everybody was dancing to the music. If you can love everything at one stroke without excluding anything, that is love of God. If you love one thing excluding something else, that is ordinary, perishable love. Can you love the entire thing at one stroke? Whatever you are thinking in your mind must be loved. The entire thing—space, time, sun, moon, stars, everything—love everything together at one stroke. Is it possible? You are thinking only one thing: something here, something there. Put all things together and, in one stroke, love it. The whole universe is a beautiful object. Love it as the body of God, and see the beauty. Lord Krishna showed the Vishvarupa. Is it a beautiful thing or a fearful thing? It is the greatest beauty, the greatest fear, the greatest wonder, the greatest

perfection. But the mind is unable to think that, due to our confinement in this little body and the daily harassment. We clash with something.

Sadhana is a difficult thing. It is not easily done. These devotees sometimes look like mad people, but they are not mad. They have various ways of dancing. There was a great sage in South India who used to think of God as honey. He could not think of anything else; that was the best thing for him. "Ocean of Honey, Honey, Honey. O Honey, please come!" What can you say about God? The best thing is honey because nothing is equal to that. The most tasty thing is honey.

What I am saying is, God is not a judge who hangs a person in the prison, and so on. He looks like that, but He is also beautiful. Nobody can equal Him. Whatever you think in your mind, you will find there. You will find wheat and rice and honey and firewood and matchbox there. You will find a supermarket there. Everything is there. The only thing is, you require time to think in this way.

Session 8

THE WORLD PROCEEDS FROM BLISS TO BLISS

The greatest wealth is the time for us to think correctly. There is no use of simply thinking in a hodgepodge manner. You have to think correctly. When you start thinking correctly along the proper lines, every other thing that the mind wants to think will also be included in it. As people say, all roads lead to Rome. So every thought, of whatever nature, is included in a central thought of the inclusiveness of all the forms in the shape of this world.

Whatever you want, you can have anywhere, at any place. The Upanishad says that the fruit of your longing will be fulfilled here itself, not at a distant place, because the world has no distance. Distance is your concept of measurement in terms of length, breadth, height, etc. But by itself, the world does not have these qualities. Therefore, everything is just here, at this moment. As spacelessness and timelessness are essentially the nature of the whole world, you can achieve your purpose in a spaceless actuality and a timeless immediacy.

Faith is the greatest qualification of a spiritual seeker. If you have no faith in anything, and you are a doubting Thomas, doubting everything—"Whether this is okay, I don't know. I go from this place to that place, seek this person, seek that person's advice, go to all places in pilgrimage"—you will fritter away your time and energy by thinking along these lines. A serious-minded spiritual seeker need not have to run from place to place. The world is ready to offer itself at your service if you really demand it. The world says, "Here I am." Even God says, "Here I am."

You are hearing me saying something here once in a week. Do you want someone to go on telling you these things every day? And who is that person who can take upon himself the task of saying the same thing every day? Is it possible? How long will you go on hearing it? How can you expect any person to go on pouring wisdom upon you? Once it is said, that should be enough for you. If your mind is sharp and your intellect is very acute, one reading of a book is sufficient. You need not read the book a second time. Endless are the scriptures and the books in this world; who will go on reading every sentence of every page? At a glance you can make out what the essence of the book is. If you read the seven hundred verses of the Bhagavadgita once, you will have a grasp of the total message of the Gita. But you must have the capacity to collate the different ideas expressed in the different verses. What is the connection of one verse with another verse, what is the logical sequence of ideas following from chapter to chapter, and finally, what is it that is being told to us in the Bhagavadgita? Can anyone say what is the final message of the Bhagavadgita? What are the Upanishads telling us? What is any scripture saying? What are the mahatmas, the saints and sages telling us? You go to *satsanga*; you hear the Ramayana Katha and the Mahabharata Katha. What are you hearing finally from them? What fruit have you gathered from these lectures, from these admonitions? The mind will repel every such admonition because of its prejudgement of everything and the habit of asserting one thing always, again and again, and looking at everything else in terms of this prejudged assessment. "I think it is like this, that's all. Whatever it is, finally I think like this." And you will not listen to anybody.

There were two farmers quarrelling over the water supply in their fields, and one farmer said, "The water should flow through my field."

The other farmer said, "The water should flow through my field."

So they put a petition to the magistrate to decide this matter. The magistrate knew that they were both illiterate fellows who did not understand anything. Simply quarrelling was the only nature they had. The magistrate said, "Now listen to me. I will say one thing. You have come to me for advice. You must agree to whatever I say, okay?"

One of them said, "I agree to everything that you say, Maharaj, but the water should flow through my field."

Then the magistrate said, "Then what is the use of coming to me? You have passed judgment yourself."

This is how the *ahamkara* speaks. "All right, I've heard all your lectures and everything, but I am what I am. I will not change my ideas. I want this. I don't like that. Whatever you say is all right, but I will stick to my own guns."

You should have a liberal heart and a charitable nature, and the capacity to feel in an expanded manner and be good in your heart, and be essentially a good person. Let everyone know you are a good person. If you are a good person, everyone will know it even by looking at your face. Goodness is said to be the visible form of godliness. Only a person who is godly in some measure can be a really good person.

Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was sitting one day and some visitors asked, "Have you seen God?"

"Oh, what is this question you are asking? Who can see God? Very difficult thing. I am trying to be a little good, that's all," he replied.

Nobody should say they have seen God. It was a humble answer he gave: "I try to be a little good." But you cannot be good unless you are a lover of God. Goodness is not a social morality or an ethics of the populace. It is something arising from your feelings. When you see something in other things that you also see in your own self, goodness arises automatically. What is the right thing, and what is the wrong thing? That has to be identified by your own conscience under a different context.

What is the sum total of all these considerations? That we are living in a good world. The world is not made of demonical forces.

There were two Western thinkers. One of them said, "God made the world, which is so beautiful, wonderful and grand in every way."

The other one said, "If at all this world has been created by somebody, it must have been a devil that has created it. There is so much wretchedness everywhere, so much ugliness, so much evil, so much corruption. Everything is good for nothing. Such a horrible world is this, and if this world has a creator, it must be a demon."

The first person said, "If a devil had created this world, do you know what would have happened? If you took one step while walking on the ground, the ground would break into pieces and you would go into the pit. If you touched a leaf of a tree, it would cut you like a blade. If you drank water, it would burn your throat like fire. This does not happen. Therefore, we conclude a demon has not created the world. It is a good world."

The world is good if you really cooperate with it as a friend with a friend, and do not treat it as an object of your senses. Never consider anything as an object of your senses. Nobody would like to be designated in that way. Would you like to consider me as an object of your senses? I would not like to be considered that way. Nobody is to be considered as an object of sense perception because the idea that someone is an object of perception can retaliate upon oneself with the same feeling, and you will also become an object of perception of somebody else.

Because of this subjectivity present in all things everywhere, without objectivity anywhere, great thinkers have opined that this world is a kingdom of ends. This is a kingdom of ends, and not a kingdom of means. Nothing here is a means to another thing. Everything is an end in itself. Would any one of you consider yourself as a means for the fulfilment of the wishes of somebody else? Nobody wishes to be a slave for all times. The pure subjectivity in you prevents you from accepting this position of utter slavery. So is the case with everything. Even an insect would not like to be crushed by anyone's feet. It is a very valuable life to its own self. There is a subjectivity in it. Everyone protects oneself, guards oneself, because of the subjectivity that is predominant in every person and in every thing. If this subjectivity is expanded into a cosmic area, it becomes a large kingdom of ends. This means to say that only subjects exist in the world. There are no objects in the world, so there is no question of attachment and revulsion, and so on. The whole world is a big ocean of subjectivity, and that universal subjectivity is called God. This is the concept of God you can draw from an analogy of there being such a thing called a world of ends, not of means.

What a wonderful concept! Nobody is subject to somebody else. There is no somebody else in this world of inclusiveness. As somebody else does not exist, nobody is a part and parcel of somebody else as if by means of service. The world is a cooperative kingdom. Everything merges into everything else; everything touches everything. Earth and heaven meet each other every moment. There is no exclusiveness anywhere. The inclusiveness patent at the heart of all things makes life a wonder and a joy. The bliss of God manifested itself as this world, by the bliss of God the world is sustained, and into the bliss of God the world will return one day. As we are not outside creation, we have also come from the bliss of God, and are sustained by the bliss of God. That is why we love everything. Everything is pleasurable for us because the essence of the bliss of God is present in the very ability in us to sustain ourselves. And in the end we return to the bliss of God.

God has not created the world from sorrow; He has created it out of His bliss. The world does not proceed from sorrow to sorrow, but from bliss to bliss, if only we are agreeable to cooperate with this inclusiveness of God's creation and set aside the egoistic exclusiveness of keeping ourselves apart from the things of the world. If you are a friend of the world, the world will be your friend, and God also is your friend.

Session 9

TRAINING THE MIND

What do you want? Let anybody answer this question. What do you want finally? No one can answer this question. You have come here to the Ashram and will give a hundred answers: "I want rest. I want peace of mind. I cannot stay in the house." All types of answers will come, and nobody knows what they want finally.

The greatest quality is *mumukshutva*. Sankaracharya has mentioned four qualities: *nitya-anitya vastu viveka, ihamutratha phala bhoga vairagya, shamadi shatka sampatti* and *mumukshutva*. The last one, *mumukshutva*, means 'wanting it'. You may to some extent achieve discrimination between the real and the unreal in an intellectual and philosophical manner, and to a large extent you may reduce your desires—you can want nothing and not get attached—but what is the last one? Do you want it or not? You say that you have come for realisation of God, that you want God. How much of God do you want? Do you want the whole God, or some little God? Do you want a small God or a big God or an entire God? This asking also has no meaning. If you can imagine what God is, you cannot really want Him. It is impossible.

You say that God is everywhere, but what does that mean? Who is saying that God is everywhere? Can you prove that God is everywhere? When you cannot prove it, why are you saying it? Can you prove that God exists? That also you cannot prove. Is it because your heart is permitting it, or because Swamiji is saying so and therefore you think it must be so? Does the heart accept that God exists? Even if it is accepted, do you know what kind of God it is and where He is? How far is God from you? Is it possible to accept it? The heart will rebel. It will say, "Don't ask such questions."

Your idea of God must be very clear. Where is God sitting? Where are these gods—Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, the Devatas? You go on asking every day: "Can I get them? Can I see them?"

Muslims know where their God is, and so do Christians. They have got some conviction, and that conviction drives them to activity. We have no conviction, so we are not driven to anything. We have many gods, whereas they have one God. They have one aim; we have many aims. We know so many things, whereas they know one thing: "This is the only thing for us."

A cat and a jackal met together in the jungle, and the jackal asked the cat, "You are a small fry sitting here. If the hunter attacks, what will you do?"

"I will jump to the top of the tree," said the cat.

"This is all you know? Hopeless! Only one *vidya*, jump to the top of the tree? I am acquainted with hundreds of tricks. Nobody can attack me," said the jackal.

As he was saying that, the hunter's dogs surrounded them from all sides. The cat jumped up the tree while the jackal was thinking, "Which method will I adopt?" He was thinking of this method, that method. By that time, the dogs attacked him.

So instead of going on experimenting that meditation is good, *japa* is good, *jnana* is good, take to one thing, and it will take you there. Any river will take you to the ocean. You need not go to some other river to reach the ocean. The only thing is, you should not curse yourself that you have done a mistake. If it is not all right, rectify it yourself or go to a place where everything is all right. Inner satisfaction is the source of health and of any kind of achievement. An unsatisfied person will get nothing. "Under any circumstance, this is okay. I have chosen this course, and I am fully satisfied. I have here

everything that I want.” That is one way of looking at it. The other way is, “Here I cannot get anything. Everything is useless.” It depends on how you look at it.

At the cinema, you are at a distance from the screen and it looks very beautiful. But if you go near the screen and put your nose to it, then you will not see anything there. All the beauty goes away merely because you change your position, so it is a question of position only. You are seeing things from a wrong position, so everything looks hopeless; if you see from the right position, everything is good.

Everything is artificial. Our joys are artificial. Therefore, do some self-investigation, some analysis of yourself. There is neither good nor bad anywhere, neither beautiful nor ugly; the mind makes it so. Therefore, train your mind properly.

Session 10

HEGEL'S CONCEPT OF ABSOLUTE UNIVERSALITY

The origin of law has been discussed by thinkers such as Thomas Hobbs, Rousseau, John Locke, Plato, Aristotle, and others. Now, it may be true that the historical origin of law is based on a contract because Thomas Hobbs held the view that every person is a wolf, and no one is better or worse than the other. In this condition of the law of nature in which people were living, ready to pounce upon one another, the wolves joined together and decided: "This kind of unsafe existence is of no use. We should not live like this with such insecurity, so we shall have an agreement among ourselves." Now government started.

What was the agreement? They selected one wolf. "You will be our ruler. We shall do whatever you say. If we are on the right path, you may reward us; if we are wrong, you will punish us."

The wolf said, "You are so many in number, so how can I do anything for you?"

Then they said, "We will give you a group of wolves. They will be the army and the police. With these wolves you can protect us, or you can punish us."

Thus the law of administration, government, started. This is contract theory. Why did the necessity arise at all that there should be a law of self-restraint? Who put this idea into the mind of man?

Secondly, it is said that law is above the individual. But who made the law? It is a group of individuals. Especially in a democratic setup where parliament rules the country and makes the laws, the law can be changed. So though it may be true from one point of view that law is somewhat impersonal and the human being is personal, and so the impersonal is superior and stronger than the individual, one point is forgotten—that these individuals in a social-istic pattern of democratic setup who created a law among themselves can also undo the law. So this kind of law is no good.

The necessity for having a law at all arises not because of the contract, because the contract arose on account of a need. Now I am asking why the need arose. That is the beginning of real law. There is a cosmic arrangement of things, which is the cohesion of the parts in a larger whole. The whole system of administration is centred in the necessity of the parts to cohere into the whole. This is taken up in the West by the great German philosopher Hegel. He supersedes Thomas Hobbes and other people because it is a metaphysical foundation of law, and with the others it is an empirical and social pattern of law.

The necessity to survive is at the back of every kind of legal administration. I have to survive, and you have to survive. But in what manner do we want to survive? Do we want to survive like wolves, like pigs? No. Survival should be with a value attached to it. Our desire to live comfortably, and for as long a time as possible, is coupled with another desire for a qualitative enhancement of this very existence. That is, there must be knowledge attached to this existence.

Survival is concerned only with existing, but we would not like to exist like a stone, a plant, a beast, a cannibal or a highly selfish individual. Even among human individuals there are varieties. There are cannibal individuals. Would anybody like to survive in that condition? Better than the cannibal is the tit-for-tat man. He will not eat you, but he will do the same thing to you as you do to him. He is a dangerous person. Better than that is the selfish man: "If you give me, I will give you. If you do not give me, I will not

give you.” Higher than that is the really good man: “Even if you do not give, I will give.” Still higher is the saintly man, who looks at you with the eye of God. Still higher is the Godman, who thinks as the Absolute thinks.

Coming to the point, the survival instinct, which is the instinct for existence, is coupled with a simultaneous desire to enhance knowledge. Existence should go with knowledge. In our traditional parlance we say *sat* and *chit* should go together. We cannot have *sat* without *chit* or *chit* without *sat*. Consciousness minus existence is unthinkable. Consciousness must exist, and existence should not be minus consciousness. When *sat* and *chit*—existence and consciousness—combine, we feel that we have achieved our purpose.

Now another question arises. What is the dimension of the existence we are asking for? Do we want to live only like an ordinary individual with a six-foot length and a two-and-a-half-foot width? No. No individual will be satisfied with that finite state of affairs because there is a fear of other such finite people who constitute the vast ocean of humanity, so there is an added desire of having suzerainty over other people: “Why should I be a little one among the many? I must be more important than others.” Then arises the desire to rule, the desire for authority, for power, for control, for subjecting other people to one’s own jurisdiction.

The idea is, why should you want to subject other people and convert them into objects with yourself as the subject, as if other people are qualities and you are the substance? This is a highly philosophical subject. Everybody wants to be the pure subject, and thinks that others must be qualities only—additions, adjectives. You are the noun, and you want to convert the whole world into an adjective of yourself.

Why does this desire arise? It is because basically your pure subjectivity, which is *sat*, is all-pervading. There is a universal survival instinct in each person. This basic hidden potential for an unlimited existence contradicts the existence of other people, so you want to defeat the very possibility of the existence of other people. This is done either by war and destruction, or by friendship so that they will not harm you and they will agree that you are a very great man. Either by love or by hatred you can subjugate other people. In hatred you violently put them down; in love they become subservient to you. For everything that you love, everything that you hate, you are adopting a methodology to convert them into an adjective of yourself. The desire for universal existence is persisting everywhere.

Now, the desire to be non-finite, the desire to overcome the limits of finitude arises on account of a large space around us which defies every individual. Such a big thing is there, and we cannot control it. So we would like to subjugate not only human beings, but even space. What is the meaning of this? We would like to be as wide as space. Though that is a tall desire, we try to approximate ourselves to that desire by widening the jurisdiction of our property. The desire for property, land, money, etc., arises on account of a basic instinct to overcome dimension itself. Space is dimension, so we want to be head of the village, or a minister of a state, or a prime minister, or a president. We would like to be king of the whole world, if possible. It looks impossible, but the desire is there. If it could be, we would like it. Even if one is granted rulership of the whole world, there will be a desire to know what is above the earth. People fly to the moon and to other planets. They want to abolish space and time. We do not like this conditioning of our existence by the time process, because the time process is another name for subjection to death. Time kills, and space limits; neither of them is all right for us, so we want to overcome them.

Now we come to the point, which is Hegel's concept of absolute universality, which is the only thing that everybody desires, and all law depends upon the law of universal dimensionless infinity and infinite knowledge, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence. This is what we want. Omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence—without this we cannot be happy. So until we reach God, we feel miserable. The whole point is this.

An ashramite: When I read in Swamiji's book about desire, it is the first time I have heard that desire is an aspect of God.

Swamiji: It is actually a call from God, and it manifests itself as an object of desire. These objects are only the fingers of God operating.

Ashramite: From what Swamiji says, even the smallest desire is actually a miniature form of that highest desire.

Swamiji: Right. The whole universe is filled with God. Therefore, any operation is God's operation, but due to our subjection to the sense organs we externalise them and make ourselves feel that they are objects. There are no objects of sense. They are spatialised contortions of the very same omnipresent existence, and they make us feel that God is outside and that the object of our desire is outside. It is not outside; it is not inside. It is everywhere. This is the whole point. So how will you make that which is everywhere your property? Desire has no meaning. Your desire can be fulfilled only if you possess that which is everywhere. Now, how is it possible, when that which is everywhere includes you also? Who is to possess what? So man is a fool, finally. He doesn't understand anything. He requires a new education.

Session 11

THINKING AS GOD THINKS

Aloneness in this world... Even the state of liberation is called aloneness. Because of that term, in Sanskrit it is called *kaivalya* moksha. To be alone is to be in a state of liberation. That is called moksha.

But what is the meaning of being alone? Suppose a person has no relations: no father and mother, no children. That person may feel that he or she is alone. They complain, "I have nobody. I am alone." That is one kind of aloneness. There is another kind of aloneness. A person has lost all property; all his belongings have gone. He is stranded on the road. He cannot purchase even a ticket. All his money has gone, and he cannot even drink water. There is nothing. He feels alone. So these are two different kinds of aloneness.

When a person loses all things, all belongings, all property, all relations, he says, "Nobody is there. I am alone, I am alone." When a person is dejected, grief-stricken, upset, he will not even eat food. He may be a very rich person, a millionaire, but something shocking has happened. In the stock market everything has gone. He lost everything. One person immediately died when the stock market failed. Everything went away. For people who fail in the stock market, their experience is terrible. They can have a heart attack and die. They feel alone.

Sannyasins who renounce everything go to a mountain top, sit there and calmly meditate. They feel alone. So how many varieties of aloneness are there? But there is a strange type of aloneness which is connected with our freedom. A limited aloneness and an unlimited aloneness are two kinds of aloneness. A perfectly free person has no limitations of any kind. He has wealth, he has family, he has authority. Nobody interferes with that person. He is enjoying life alone.

There are some people who lose their sense of individuality and want to commit suicide. At that time there is nobody around them. "I am alone. I have nothing here. I am going." They go and drown themselves.

These are all tentative, empirical, pragmatic types of aloneness, through which practically everyone passes. If today it is one kind of aloneness, another day it is another kind of aloneness.

But why is moksha, liberation, called aloneness? It is something quite different from the other types of aloneness which I mentioned just now. Moksha means perfect freedom. Perfect freedom is not possible if there is another person sitting near you. The expectation for a hundred percent freedom is diminished by the freedom expected by another person sitting near you, so two persons cannot have one hundred percent freedom. We are a free society. We are democratic. Everybody is free. But your freedom is limited to the extent of the freedom that you would concede to other people also. You cannot say that all the freedom is yours only. That kind of thing is not democratic. Everybody is free to the extent that they give equal freedom to other people also. So this is not perfect freedom because it is limited by the freedom to be given to other people. But moksha is none of these things. It is the non-existence of another thing beside me. It is not that I am unaware of the existence of another thing beside me; another thing does not exist at all.

The Sankhya philosophy made a mistake in thinking that pure consciousness attains the liberation of its own existence if it is detached from the consciousness of another

thing outside, which is called *prakriti*, or matter. But the unconsciousness of the existence of something is not freedom. A snake is nearby, and you are unconscious of the existence of the snake. It is not a very happy thing. You must be conscious of the non-existence of the snake. They are two different things. People who are perpetually ill may not even be aware that they are ill. There is a continuous trouble in the whole system which persists for such a long time that they take it for granted as normal. So the idea of Sankhya is not correct. It imagines that when the detachment of consciousness from its awareness of another thing called matter, or *prakriti*, is achieved, it is free. It cannot be free, because there is another thing. Just because you are unaware of a trouble, it does not mean the trouble does not exist. This kind of aloneness propounded by Sankhya is not correct. It should be absolute aloneness.

There is a difficulty in understanding this. You have never had any experience of this kind of aloneness. If you are spiritually inclined and are doing meditation in an isolated place with nobody around you for five hundred miles, you may say you are alone. But even the consciousness of space outside is a limitation to that aloneness. Your consciousness that you are existing is due to the limitation imposed upon you by space and time. They should also go.

Can anybody search one's consciousness in such a way that space and time are included in consciousness itself? "I am aware, not as one person among many other people, but as the only person." You may say there is no such thing as 'the only person'. This difficulty in knowing what being the only person can be arises on account of an eternal limitation imposed upon us by the extension of space outside. This space outside terrifies us. It divides everything. It creates distance. Even if no one is there around us, the stars are there. They also cause limitation. The sun and moon are there. The mountains and rivers are there. They should also not be there. There should not be even the utmost possibility of something being there outside us.

This great technique of meditation is the ultimate solution for our misery in this world. Our misery is not due to poverty of money, land, and so on. Our misery is due to the terrible, inextricable bondage of limitation created by space and time; that is all. Can you include space in your consciousness so that you will never feel that there is space outside you? Here, you have to exercise your will very powerfully. Nobody can think that he is space itself. Can anybody think "I am space itself"? There is no limitation there. How long, how wide is space? What is the extent of the dimension of space? Can you imagine how wide space is? Space is endless. Space does not end anywhere.

Now, that unending space is yourself only. If you can imagine that space has a consciousness of its own, just imagine space knows that it is there. You should not think that space is a dead thing. Space is conscious of its being: "I am space." But what is the meaning of space being conscious that it is an unlimited expanse of being? If that unlimited expanse of being becomes conscious of itself, what will be the experience at that time? Meditate like this: "I am not conscious of space; I am myself space. And who is this 'I'? It is space itself. Where is space? Unendingly, expanded everywhere. So on what am I meditating?" A shocking answer will come.

It is said that moksha is a shocking experience. It abolishes every kind of convention, every kind of logic. Any kind of calculation will not work there. Nothing that has any sense in this world has sense there. All the values of life are abolished at once. You say this is nice, that is not nice, this is good, that is bad. Nothing of the kind will be there. Everything that you consider as meaningful in this world ceases to exist there. Then you

say, "Oh, I will lose everything." The mind is such a trickster. Whatever you do, it will put an obstacle. It is very difficult to think like this.

This kind of thinking is actually God thinking. If you want to reach God, you have to think like God. You cannot go on thinking like a foolish person and then attain God. Only equals meet each other; unequals cannot meet each other. If you are equal to God, you will meet God. You will be terrified and think, "How I can be equal to God?" This is because you forget that you are included in God. If God is everywhere, you are also inside Him.

Can anybody think like this? You will simply shudder. Your whole body will tremble. You will have a jerking feeling if you try to think like this. No virtue, no good work, no charitable deed, no philanthropy can equal this thought. This one thought is equal to all charity. All goodness and any service that you do will pale into insignificance before this tremendous earth-shaking thought. It will shake up all your karmas, all the sins that you committed in all the world, and the whole thing will be wiped out like a debt that you incur in the dream state is wiped out in the waking condition. When you wake up, you need not pay the debt that you incurred in the dream state. You may say, "I borrowed so much. I have to pay." But by the very fact of waking, you have paid the debt.

Unimaginable is this. No human being will be able to think like that. You cease to be a human being. Otherwise, this thought cannot arise. A human being's thought cannot contact God-thought. It is only God-thought that can contact God-thought. All this is shocking. The whole body will tremble, as I told you. Nobody has heard such things. Nobody has seen such things. Nobody can imagine such things. If this can continue, if you do not forget this idea and are drowned in this thought, in this birth itself you will get liberation. There is no need of going on doing *japa* and running about on *yatras*, pilgrimages. The whole world will melt into you and the doors of heaven will be opened instantaneously.

The body may continue due to the persisting old *prarabdha*, which has given birth to this body. Even a liberated soul cannot shed the body because liberation is a conscious condition and the body is the result of the karmas that you performed in the previous birth, and that has to continue until the time when the effect of those actions which have given birth to this body cease and the body is thrown off. You need not throw off the body. It sheds automatically. But you are liberated.

You will be overjoyed. You will sing and dance. You will exclaim, "Oh, wonderful!" The Upanishadic seers used to say, "Oh, wonderful! Oh, wonderful!" They had no words. They could not say anything except: "Oh, wonderful! Oh, wonderful! Oh, wonderful!"

So here is the glory before us. We are not meaningless persons. There is a great heritage hidden inside us. God is calling us, and everything will be well. So be happy.

Session 12

THE LIFE OF A HOUSEHOLDER IS INTEGRAL

Everything is controlled by something else. 'Something else' means everything there is, so that you appear to be existing by the pressure effected by comic forces from all sides in a particular manner. Because of the particular manner of the impact of these forces, you look like one person. If the impact was different, you would look like another person. You may be anything. You may be a human being, a man or a woman, or even a tree. Anything can take place. Therefore, neither a tree exists nor a mountain exists nor stars exist; nothing exists.

Everything is a shape given to a pressure of a particular kind, exerted from every nook and corner of creation, so even the existence of a little thing is the action of God. Nobody works. Nobody exists. That is why Buddha said there is no soul. When he said there is no soul, he meant there is no individuality. There are only relationships or pressures like magnetic influences from outside, and they make things appear as if they are standing because of the pressure from outside. But they are not standing. The river is not existing; it is flowing. The flame of a lamp is not existing; it is moving. We are also like that. We are a moving cosmic operation taking place, and we do not really exist by ourselves.

But there is a kind of ego, an assertion of the individuality of an otherwise mere floating bubble. The bubble is asserting its individuality, which makes it feel that it is existing as a person. But it is not existing. It is blown off by the operation of another force, and that blowing off is called death. The force can blow another way, and it is called rebirth. Every action, every birth, death or experience is an operation of the centre of the cosmos. We do not exist here. The ego, or *ahamkara*, is the reason why we understand nothing. This great stigma is on everyone, and it will not allow us to think properly.

Therefore, you must enter into deep meditation and expand your consciousness to the existence of everything in the universe so that when you think, you are thinking the whole universe at one stroke. You are not thinking any particular place: neither a place, nor a country, nor anything. The entire cosmic distance is yourself. In the Vaishvanara Vidya of the Upanishads it is said that you enter the cosmos, and the cosmos enters you, so that you do not exist at all. When you meditate, the cosmos meditates. The cosmos meditates on itself like a river entering the ocean, and there is no river afterwards. When the ocean thinks, it does not think like a river. The rivers are inside it. Though all the rivers are inside the ocean, the ocean does not think: "I am so many rivers." It thinks: "I am one mass of existence."

An ashramite: Swamiji, when a little understanding comes, why does it not go deep down and take charge of it?

Swamiji: I told you there is a thing called the ego. The ego is a pressure inside us which retains the idea that this shallow, balloon-like existence is existing. It is called *maya*, *avidya*, and so forth. The ego is a kind of devilish influence which makes us feel that we are independently existing. Even the stars are controlling you. The sun and moon and space-time, everything is controlling you. So what is your importance? That false imagination of importance is the ego.

Ashramite: How does it go?

Swamiji: By this kind of meditation.

Another ashramite: When one meditates, one has to be satisfied with oneself.

Swamiji: There is no 'oneself'. You should not use all these words. You must know that things are not moving according to our prejudices, according to our religion, according to our customs, according to our cult and the cultural background into which we are born. All these have no connection with the truths of life. You do not want to know these truths. You are men and women, you are from India and America, you are religious or not religious, you are philosophers, you are businessmen, you are merchants. These things have no meaning if you look at things from the point of view of the whole world.

You must transfer your mind to the total world, as if the world is thinking. You should not think like a person belonging to any place. You should think as the whole world is thinking. The world has no men and women. It may not even know that they are existing. The world has no differences of any kind within itself. The world is a big organism, like our body. It has no caste, it has no religion, it has no philosophy. It is just what it is. Can you live a life like that—just being what it is?

I am telling you all this because there is a sutra in the Brahma Sutra which is very intriguing, which no commentator has properly explained. *Kṛtsnabhāvāttu gṛhiṇopasaṁhāraḥ* (B.S. 3.4.48). The meaning of this sutra is, the life of a householder is integral. Unfortunately, all the commentators of the Brahma Sutra are Sannyasins. No Sannyasin will accept that the householder is leading an integral life. They say Sannyasa is higher. Here also, there is some prejudice. We should never bring ideas of higher and lower in the scheme of things. All the commentators are Sannyasins, and they abhor the word 'householder', so how will they write a commentary on this sutra? They are handicapped in saying anything. They cannot say that the life of a householder is wholesome. The general idea is that the life of a householder is one of attachment to family, property, etc. Then what does this mean? How is the life of a householder integral? Neither can Sannyasins accept that the life of a householder is integral, nor can they say that the Brahma Sutra is saying something wrong, because everybody has high respect for the Brahma Sutra. It is like saying the Bible is wrong, the New Testament is wrong, Christ is wrong. One cannot say that. They are all holy words. One may disagree with it, but one cannot say it is wrong. So what these commentators do is, they glide over this. They write only two lines that, according to the Upanishad, the householder's life is considered as integral. They won't say anything more.

You have prejudices. That is very important. Cultural prejudice, linguistic prejudice, ethnic prejudice, anthro-pological prejudice, man-woman prejudice—you cannot get over it. In this condition, you can never reach God. It is not possible. God is not a man or a woman. He is not a Brahmin or a Kshatriya. He is not an Englishman or a Frenchman or an Indian. In what capacity are you going to God? "I am Christian. My God, I have come." God will not know what is the meaning of 'Christian'. He is just 'I am what I am'. If you think "I am a Brahmin. I am coming to attain salvation", it will not cut ice.

In what capacity will you go to God? Any idea you have got about yourself is wrong. It is not possible to free ourselves from this prejudice as long as we have got a preconceived individuality that we are born into a particular family, culture and morality. Morality also differs. It is not a universally unanimous thing. There is a village near Mussoorie where each lady has five husbands. There are many social workers in India. They said, "These villagers are fools. We must go and educate them." The village is

very far, beyond Mussoorie in a far-off place, and nobody wants to go there. Some ladies belonging to a cultural group of India went there, and were discussing with them.

One lady said, "Listen. You should not have many husbands. I am also a lady. I have only one husband."

They all laughed. "Oh, poor lady! She has only one husband. What are you going to teach us? You are a very selfish person. You have only one husband. I don't want to talk to you. Go."

The social welfare workers came back defeated.

Now, do you think these ladies are ethically right? Draupati had five husbands, and we adore her as a divinity. What is all this, finally? There is a free life in America. Everybody is free; unconditioned movement is allowed there, except for what is illegal. In India there are terrible restrictions. There is one restriction for eating, another for washing, for moving, for standing, for sitting, and even for looking. Everything is restricted here.

I am giving you an example of Western culture. It is a free culture. Because of the instinct of every person to be free and unshackled by anybody, everybody wants to follow the trend of Western culture. Even an orthodox Brahmin does not like his religion. He crops his hair, and wears a tie. Why should he wear a tie? He thinks that Western culture is higher. He dislikes speaking in his own tongue, and speaks in English only. What is it that attracts him? It is freedom, indeterminism, a kind of non-restriction of behaviour.

Who does not like freedom? You want to bind me completely? The whole world is following Western culture. Everywhere, whatever country it is, all have the same Western dress, the same tie, the same way of thinking. Why?

There is something deep in us which is not in accordance with our adopted religions. We have two prejudices. One is, our religion is the best. Every Christian thinks Christianity is the best and that Hindus are pagans and Muslims are fools. That is why they are hell-bent to proselytise and convert people into Christianity by any means. Hindus think that Hindus are the greatest people and that no religion is equal to Hinduism. Muslims think that Islam is the best and all others are foolish people.

What kind of people are we? Are we fit to attain God? A universal, omnipresent, indeterminable absoluteness which is God—can that fate be set in tune with our way of thinking? What is liberation? Where do we go when we reach the state of perfect freedom and immortality? All sorts of answers are given. Some say we can only be near God, some say we can be in the vicinity of God, some say we can be in the kingdom of God, some say we can sit near God, and some say we can be God Himself. All these ideas arise on account of our way of thinking. As we think, so we will become. The kind of freedom we expect will be the freedom we will get. As the kind of freedom we are expecting is conditioned by our empirical way of thinking, we cannot answer the question of what liberation is. We have a logic which is pragmatic, empirical and practical. We cannot go beyond it. Does God think in the same way? Has God a logic which is differential or deductive? Does God argue? Does God require an argument to establish His existence?

Now I am coming to the point of the householder. All this that I have said is an introduction to this intricate subject. A householder is not to be considered as a man of attachment. He has truly an integral level. He is a highly disciplined person. A married man need not necessarily be a man with attachment. Attachment is prohibited. A person should marry for reasons of a different nature, but he cannot be attached to his

wife, to his property, or even to his son and daughter. That this is not practicable, and that parents are attached to their children is a great travesty.

The word 'householder' has a unique meaning in India. There are four gradational achievements, or attainments, for the development of the person, which were arranged in ancient times in India. The first is the conservation of energy, and is called Brahmacharya—studying holy scriptures, serving the Guru, and maintaining self-control. Ancient Brahmacharis were great, powerful people. If they uttered a word, it would immediately take effect. Brahmacharis were feared. One did not dare irritate them.

There is a story of a Brahmachari. Parikshit was a king. He went hunting, and on the way he felt thirsty and searched for a place where he could get water. He saw an ashram, and went there. He saw a sage sitting and meditating. He said, "I want water." But the sage was in deep meditation, and did not hear anything. The ego of the king started working. "Oh, great man, meditating." In anger, he lifted a dead snake lying nearby with the end of his bow, hung it on the neck of the sage, and went away.

The students, who were all under the tutorship of this Guru, came and saw a snake around their Guru's neck. They ran to the son of this sage and said, "Come here, and see what is happening to your father. A snake is on his neck."

The son wept and cried, "My dear boys, see my power today, the power of my words." The son took water three times and said, "Whoever has done this misdeed, he will be bitten by a cobra within seven days." What power he had!

Brahmacharya is the initial stage of the conservation of energy. In ancient days it was believed that a person would live for a hundred years, so the calculation was that for twenty-five years one must live like a Brahmachari with great energy arising out of self-control, study of holy scriptures, and service of the Guru. After that, he would enter married life and fulfil the duties of a householder.

The duties of a householder are interesting to know. It is not attachment to family; that is far from the truth. In Indian culture, attachment is never allowed. Duty is necessary. The fulfilment of the needs of personal and social relations is the duty of a householder. In the early days of a Brahmacharyi, he is concerned only with himself. But it is not possible to live only by oneself. There is also society outside. There are impulses of self-restraint, there are impulses of social relations, there are impulses of acquiring wealth, there are impulses of seeing beauty, and there are impulses of being charitable to people. This is why the Brahma Sutra says the householder's life is integral. The householder is a highly respected person not because he has a family, but because he is doing his duty without attachment. Such a person is difficult to find. Everybody is attached. But the principle is not at fault merely because it is not followed due to the insistence of the lower instincts.

Nobody has thought over these matters, as there is no one without a prejudice. One thinks "I am a pope", another says "I am a Sankaracharya", and third thinks "I am a saint". Why do they think like that? There is no such thing as a pope, there is no Sankaracharya or anything else. There is only an individual associated with the whole cosmos. Everything else is nonsense. If they carry nonsense before God, they will achieve only nonsense. Nobody can attain God with a prejudice in the mind. Integral life is a life of non-attachment on one side, and freedom from hatred on the other side. That is why it is called integral.

When the social relationships are well fed and taken care of, and the needs of the instinct of living a family life are also very well matured, then systematically,

impartially, the householder retires from this duty of having relations with society, relations with anybody. Retirement means freedom from the necessity to be involved in social relations. Social relations are very important, and nobody can be free from that. But once one has passed through that stage and has graduated from it, then a super-individuality creeps in. Up to this level, people were individuals. A Brahmachari is an individual of one kind. A Grihastha, a householder, is an individual of a different kind. Then there is the concept of a super-individual who does not think in terms of personal self-restraint, study, *seva*, etc., nor does he think of social relations, but engages himself in uniting his mind with universal relations. This is a higher stage.

It has nothing to do with the dress. Whether you put on white cloth, yellow cloth or Sannyasi cloth, it has no meaning. God is not afraid of all these cloths. They are all useless. You must be very careful and impartial in your thinking, and highly dispassionate, true to your own conscience. There is an interest in universal relations. All that the Brahmachari did in his individual capacity, and all that the householder did in his social capacity, are transcended in the mental operation in terms of universal relation. That is Vanaprastha. People do not understand what this is. It is highly scientific, mathematically correct.

Then comes Sannyasa. Sannyasa does not mean a person who is wearing an ochre cloth. This is again social restriction, social distinction, differentiation, etc. A person whose mind is centred in the indivisible Absolute is more than a super-individual. He is cosmic relation; he is God Himself. Sannysins are respected as God Himself, not because they have a shaven head and wear an ochre cloth, but because their mind is centred in the Absolute.

This is the reason why the Brahma Sutra says the householder's life is integral. But no Sannysasin goes deep into it. They just bypass it. I was thinking I must touch upon this point. It is better to be a little impartial and free from prejudice. Do not be afraid of all these limitations set by religious and cultural distinctions and patterns, etc. You must be a hundred percent honest before God. It is very difficult because we carry ourselves there. I am Mr. so-and-so, I am Mrs. so-and-so; I go to God. No Mr. and Mrs. can go there.

Such is the great commentary that one can write on this intriguing sutra, most difficult to understand. Even to understand these implications will purify your mind. You are not what you think you are. You belong to another kingdom of values altogether. You will be thrilled to think like this. "I am living in the kingdom of God now itself. Why should I aspire for it? I am living in it. O glory!" The sages of the Upanishad exclaimed, "O glory!" There is no other word for that. "O glory, O wonder, O wonder! How beautiful, how grand, how magnificent! O joy, O joy, O joy!" These are the words of the great masters of the Upanishads.

Session 13

CONSCIOUSNESS ALONE EXISTS

We read in the medieval history of India that there was a mighty and glorious empire in the southern part of the country, called the Vijayanagar Empire, though now its glory is dead and gone. It appears that the architects employed by the king of that country had hung an iron statue in mid-air. Nobody could understand how an iron statue could be hanging in space. Nobody bothered about it; everybody admired it, praised it, and went away. Later on, when history changed, modern scientists came to India. They were curious to know what this mystery is. By investigation they found there were four magnetic pillars on the ground, to which nobody paid any attention. These pillars were holding in unison, with equal force, the iron statue. Because of the equal force exerted on all four sides, the statue did not fall.

Now, the existence of the statue in mid-air is a question which is similar to the question of our own personal existence in this world. I am not talking of the statue, but the existence, the location of the statue in the air with no support, really. It is only a propelling of that statue by several forces contributing to its apparent stability in the air.

We are none the better. We appear to be existing as solid bodies, and totally independent. This solidity of our existence and the total independence that we assume in our own selves would be something like the statue assuming an independent existence of its own in mid-air and assuming the stability of its existence, all of which were contributed by other forces.

We have been studying a lot since months and years, but what have we been studying? The point I am emphasising is that we are just locations, not existences. What does it mean? When forces from every side impinge upon our so-called apparent individuality, they create the illusion of a solid individuality. We have seen moving pictures. We are not going to see the pictures, actually speaking. Nobody is interested in the pictures. We want to see the people and the things which look solid and three-dimensional. How can there be a three-dimensional presentation on a two-dimensional flat screen? Nobody bothers. Let it be. We want to see the moving picture. Why does a two-dimensional feature look like a three-dimensional object? If this question can be answered, we can answer every question in the world. This will answer the question of why we appear to be solid objects.

People ask whether God created the world, and why God created the world. Without going into the theological aspects of this question, I may briefly say that God created the world in the same way as the four-dimensional reality created the three-dimensional world. Can anyone imagine what a four-dimensional reality is? This is a deep scientific secret, and ordinary minds cannot understand it. A four-dimensional reality is what is behind the appearance of the three-dimensional solidity of the world, and the appearance of every one of us.

This means the world is an appearance, just as the solidity of the people and the things on a cinema screen is an appearance. They are not there, really speaking, but they can entertain us. We can smile, we can weep, we can curse, and we can jump in joy over a thing which is not there at all. They are only shadows moving on a flat screen. Are we such idiotic people that we can dance in joy by seeing shadows moving on a flat surface? Illusion has no rationality. It defies understanding. "When I see a thing, I am seeing a

thing; that's all. Don't argue further. I have seen it." Whether we have really seen it or not is a different matter.

So is the case with our existence. This is a kind of analysis that I am conducting for your benefit. It is no use moving like a fool throughout one's life. We can go on dancing in joy every day as if everything is fine, in the same way we can go and see the moving pictures every day. "Oh, beautiful!" There is no beauty there; there is nothing existing but a kind of transfiguration of location through the optical act of the sense organs in terms of space. The spatial distance between the screen and our own eyes, which is difficult to explain, creates this illusion of there being a huge palace with people moving, etc. A locational magic is taking place in this, what we may call the world. We cannot call it the world because it is not there, in the same way as people are not there in the screen. But they are there enough to make us weep or dance in joy. How can things which are not there affect us to such an extent that we seem to be hanging on them? Just as we cling to the people on the cinema screen, in the same way we are clinging to our own bodies.

I briefly explained to you why the shadows look like human beings. It is an adjustment of optical operation through the association of space in between. So is the case with all things. The world is said to be an illusion. What is the use of saying that the world is an illusion? You can go on chanting this mantra, but it makes no sense. You must have the brain to go deep into the question of why people always say that the world is not there, really speaking. What is there, then?

I will quote some ideas from the modern scientific philosopher Alfred North Whitehead. He is one of the best we can find, but nobody reads him because nobody can understand what he is saying. But it is necessary to understand what he is saying. He uses a term called 'actual occasion' to describe the existence of an individual. We are occasions, not existences. We are circumstances, prevailing conditions, and not actually human bodies. Why are we only occasions? An occasion cannot be called a person, and we are confident that we are very solid individuals. But this is not the case.

The universe is not made up of stones and bricks. It is not made up of earth, water, fire, air. It is made up of a law that is operating. The universe is a law, and not a thing. Can a law look like a thing?

I will give another example. If you touch a high-voltage electric wire, it will create a sensation which is difficult to explain. At that time you will not feel the shock of the electricity. You will feel as if some huge, heavy stone is hanging on your hand even though nothing heavy is there. The operation of electricity in a particular manner can give a shock to your nervous system and create a sensation of there being a huge stone hanging on your hand. There is no stone; it is a law that operates on your hand.

What is the meaning of 'law'? Law is a system. It is difficult to find words to explain what is actually there. It is a performance which has no logical reason. You must have seen magicians performing tricks. The magician can produce things that are not really there. A magician can appear to eat broken glass, drink nitric acid and spit fire from his mouth, though actually that does not take place and it is only a peculiar psychological trick that the magician is playing. It is just a trick, but a trick, which is just an operation of a particular kind, looks like an existent thing—a creation, as it were. This is an attempt to explain whether God created the world.

Do you believe that three straight lines positioned in a particular manner form a triangle? There are no triangles there. There are three straight lines that have been kept in a particular way to look like a triangle. A non-existent triangle can be seen to be

existing by adjusting three straight lines. Mathematics is a mysterious law. It is not just adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, and so on. Mathematics is a principle of operation not only through the sense organs, but also through the mind. The whole thing is a chaos which looks like a system of order.

I mention once again the manner in which a four-dimensional realm looks like a three-dimensional solid world. A four-dimensional realm is unthinkable. The only example of the unthinkability of this phenomenon is the appearance of solid objects on a cinema screen. In a similar manner, how does this huge, stout, heavy object looking like a physical world emanate from a non-existent mathematical equation? You must learn the laws of modern physics. Sir James Jeans, the great physicist and philosopher, wrote a thesis to prove that God is only a mathematical mind. A mathematical mind does not mean a mind that totals and deducts figures, and so on. That is a very initial, rudimentary state of mathematics. Mathematics is a magic which can topple things and create things. A great German physicist called Max Planck wrote only a few pages, which led to what is called the quantum mechanics of today. He got a Nobel Prize for three pages of writing. It was just an equation, but who can understand what this equation is? God has magically produced an equation which cannot be understood by a mind that cannot calculate in a super-mathematical manner.

These astounding revelations in science have compelled a non-believing, mighty scientist like Sir Arthur Eddington to conclude finally, against his scientific will, that the stuff of the world is consciousness. The world is not there; there is only the thinker that the world exists. It is not the world that is existing; there is only the mind which is thinking that the world is existing. That mind we may call the mind of God.

Suffice it to say that there is a great scientific reason to believe that only God exists. Only a mathematical central mind exists. It is another way of saying consciousness alone exists. The mighty waves of consciousness dashing one over the other, creating a huge tumult, as it were, in the form of space and time, present this magical show of this wonderful world, not knowing that we are included in this wave-like dashing of the sea of consciousness. Since consciousness cannot see itself, it gets befuddled and confused, and creates a network of a false operation of there being another thing outside itself. We are living in an utterly foolish phenomenon not even worth mentioning. If consciousness is the utter truth, it is everywhere. We cannot have consciousness only in one place because if that were the case, the consciousness should be aware that it is only in one place, and it should be aware at the same time that it is not in another place. To be aware that you are not in another place, you have to already be there in that place where you think that you are not. This analysis goes to prove that consciousness is universal existence. Nothing else can exist.

Then who are we? Once again we raise the same question. We are fools. There is no better word for us. In one of the Upanishads, God Himself is considered as a magician. *Māyām tu prakṛitiṁ viddhi, māyīnam tu maheśvaram* (S.U. 4.10) is the sloka in the Upanishad. The visible, solid world is the magical show performed by God, who is the magician. The question of whether God created the world does not arise.

We say two and two make four. Do two and two create four? It is a law. If two and two cannot be said to be manufacturing a thing called four, God cannot be said to be manufacturing this world. But yet, four comes out of two and two. This obsession with the causal law makes us confine ourselves to an idiotic conclusion that there must be a cause for everything. The question "Why should there be a cause for everything?" cannot be answered, but this belief in a causal law is instilled into our minds. Our minds

are made up of the operation of such a thing called the causal law. Therefore, whatever we may learn, we apply this causal law to it. Why should one thing cause another thing? Who told us this? Have we seen the world being produced by a Creator?

Because these terrible truths cannot enter the mind of anybody, the scriptures tell stories: There was God in the beginning. He thought, “Let Me manufacture the world; let Me become manifold.” We have to say that. We are like kindergarten students who can understand only kindergarten pictorial presentations. Abstract things are not told to children. It will not enter their heads.

This is a kind of self-analysis which will be astounding to you. You will no more pat yourself on your back. You will not want anything afterwards. If you are dancing like a wave in the cosmic sea of consciousness, what do you want in that condition? The question does not arise. What is this life? The question does not arise. What do you dislike? The question does not arise. Where are you existing? The question does not arise. Every question—philosophical, theological, religious, spiritual—falls flat before this conclusion.

This is a very in-depth analysis of ourselves as persons, and of everything, of even a particle of sand. This vision may be called God-vision. If this vision arises in our consciousness, we are actually visualising God Himself, the astounding majesty that we call God. God is not a huge man sitting on a throne in heaven, as some scriptures say.

The more we speak on this subject, the less we find words to say what it is. Great sages keep mum. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says that after learning every-thing and becoming a great scholar, we should become like a child: *bālyena tiṣṭhāset; bālyam ca pāṇḍityam ca nirvidya, atha muniḥ* (B.U. 3.5.1). To become like a child does not mean becoming ignorant like a child, but being a simple, innocent, flexible, beautiful, contented existence. That is a child. That state must also be renounced, and then we become silent. We become silent not merely in words, but we also become silent in our mind.

All sorts of examples are given. It is like a person getting drowned in an ocean of nectar. Well, getting drowned is not a very happy thing, but it is getting drowned in a nectar which immortalises everything. You are drowning yourself in that. Do you want to drown yourself in God? Even that you do not want. You want to meet God, but drowning, no. “I cannot drown myself in anything, even in God Himself.” This is what we are—inveterate egoists, self-esteem raised to the heights, and non-receptive to any kind of good advice. This network of what we call the egoism of the personality should either be broken open, like cutting the Gordian knot, or it should be reduced to liquid so that the knot does not exist. When the knot is liquefied, the bubble enters the ocean.

Session 14

EVERYTHING IS GOD OPERATING

An ashramite: Swamiji, you once told us about Lord Siva showing the Vishvarupa wherein a number of Krishnas were coming out of him, and in the same Mahabharata Krishna showed the Vishvarupa with a number of Rudras coming out of him.

Swamiji: It is only one Being appearing as two things. There is no Siva and there is no Krishna; there is only one Being appearing as this and that. He can put on any dress and manifest Himself. There are no two Gods. There is only one, and you can call Him by any name. It is the Supreme Being. On this side it is Siva, on that side it is Krishna, and on another side it is Devi. In the Devi Mahatmya, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Indra, everybody started coming out from Devi's body. So God can manifest from anything.

Ashramite: But there have been times when these gods have been confronting each other.

Swamiji: They do not confront each other. You do not understand them properly.

The sun is creating so much heat, and that will create so much flood afterwards. Now, why is the sun doing two contradictory things? There is such a burning heat, and then there is such a flood that everything is destroyed. They are not conflicting; they are two interconnected things.

The whole complex of space, time and causation which God has created is operating systematically, like an organism of the body. Due to that, this finger is moving. So where is the vainglorious importance of a human individual? The universe is operating—not me, not anybody else. If this consciousness can be maintained by us, the world shall be our friend. If the body is not a friend of the finger, it will not be able to lift it. The finger is not a property of the body. It is not a belonging; it is me. I am lifting the finger. I do not say my body is lifting the finger. Nobody says that. We say: "I am lifting the finger." "I am coming."

This cooperation between the physical organism and its parts is to be seen everywhere in the universe. The world operation is a mystery, and it is the basic controller of even our breath. We breathe, but who is causing this movement? Are we paying any tax to allow us to breathe like that? When we sleep, the heart is not sleeping, the lungs are not sleeping. Can anybody answer the question of why the heart is not sleeping when we are sleeping? Suppose the heart says "I will also take rest", and the breath says "I will take rest"? There is a cosmic force which keeps the individual intact for a purpose which is beyond the understanding of human nature.

This is high psychology, cosmology and creational philosophy, which is simply stunning if you think over it. You will hold your breath in admiration: "I am living in a miraculous universe where everybody is my friend. I am a part and parcel of this cosmic setup. I am an official in the government of the cosmos." You are an official in the government of the universe which orders the local governments to operate in a particular way. Just as a *patwari* is controlled by the *tehsildar*, the *tehsildar* is controlled by the sub-divisional magistrate, the sub-divisional magistrate is controlled by the district magistrate, the district magistrate by the commissioner, the commissioner by the state government, the state government by the central government, the central government by the international setup, it goes on like that—expanding, expanding, expanding. So whose servant is the *patwari*? He is the servant of the central

government, finally. The ordinance of the constitution immediately affects him. In the same way, all operations in the world are internally connected.

These little things that I am saying are like a healing balm to the troubled mind of a person. It will calm your heart, and make your mind peaceful. You will be confident that, after all, things are not so bad as they appear. There is some benefactory influence operating in the universe. There are friends in the universe. It is not true that all are enemies. The sun and the moon and the stars and the Ganga and the Himalayas, they are our friends.

There were great saints who could speak to the trees and to the leaves. In Italy there was a saint called Saint Francis of Assisi. Birds would gather and perch at his feet when he gave a sermon—sparrows, mynas and little birds. Wolves and jackals used to come when he was giving lectures. He was speaking to Jesus Christ, he was speaking to God, but all these came from the forest.

Sri Krishna blew the flute. That flute drew all the cattle and all the people. Men, women, children ran to him because it was the flute of the cosmos—God calling. When God calls everybody runs, like rivers running to the ocean.

Ashramite: We do not find in our actual life all these gods, flute, and...

Swamiji: How will you see it when you are not opening your eyes?

Ashramite: My eyes are wide open.

Swamiji: You are opening the physical eyes, but the inner eye is not opening. Your intellectual eye, emotional eye, spiritual eye should open. You are not seeing yourself with your eyes.

Ashramite: I may not be of that level, but...

Swamiji: Now that you are able to understand what I am saying, it shows that you are on that level. Otherwise, you would not have understood one word of it. You are intelligent enough to understand what it means. The only thing is, you are unable to coordinate your daily life with the universal life. You are creating segments, a separation between the secular and the spiritual. There is no such thing. There is no secular, and there is no spiritual. They are one only. Life is one. You cannot cleave your body into a secular part and a spiritual part. You cannot separate them. They are one organic whole. It requires a little bit of meditation, deep thinking.

There is a need for every person to be alone to oneself for a few minutes every day. You cannot be so busy that you forget your own self. When you get up in the morning, you should think: "Who am I? From where I have come? What kind of person am I? Before I became a very important official, what was I? When I retire, what am I going to be? Who took care of me when I was a little child in the cradle? Who is going to take care of me when I am old and unable to walk? How in the middle I have become very important?"

These forces which are playing a great drama of this creation are utilising us for their purposes. We are the ambassadors of God. We have been sent here for a purpose. The purpose is not to violate the law of the universe and assert an independence of our own. The ambassador is beholden to the government which sends him, and if the government calls him, he has to go back. Though he is stationed in one country, he belongs to another country altogether.

So we are on the earth, but we belong to high heaven, another realm from which we have come. There are levels of existence: earthly, astral, celestial, cosmical, causal, the Absolute. There are many levels of being, just as there are molecules, atoms, electrons,

magnetic forces, and then powers which are commensurate with all things. If you go on diving deep into the material objects in the world, you will find that basically they are one. Though millions of bubbles may be there in the ocean, at the root they are one ocean. All these individualities of ours—animate, inanimate, whatever—are like bubbles in the sea of cosmic existence, which is ruled by a supreme intelligence.

You are intelligent, I am intelligent; we have intelli-gence in us. This intelligence is a drop of the cosmic intelligence. Just as a drop of water is a part of the ocean, our intelligence, our intellectuality, our rationality, whatever it is, is a drop in the sea of the universal intelligence. We are called *jivas*, individuals, because of the droplet of intelligence that we have got; and the universal intelligence is God. So we cannot stand without it. Without the organic cooperative activity of the body, no limb can operate, and whatever you are today is due to a blessing you have received due to the good karma that you did in the past. If you are enjoying life today with status, with finance, with power, with good health, and everything is okay, it is because you have done some good deeds in the past. You cannot deserve comfort which you have not given to other people. There is no such thing as free service. It is not possible. All of you are great people today because you have done great deeds in the previous birth, though you may not remember what deeds you have done. Now, if you want to become still greater in the next birth, in this birth you must do good deeds because you are exhausting all your virtuous deeds of the previous birth by enjoying them in this birth. What about the next birth? Whatever you have done now will come there.

You belong to the kingdom of heaven, as it is called. The kingdom of heaven is not in the skies. The whole universe is the kingdom of heaven, and you are living inside it. You are within it immanently. You are breathing it, you are enjoying it, you are happy because of that. The joys of life, the happiness you feel in your own heart is the *pura punya phala*, the result of good actions that you have performed. You have done great charities, great good deeds and great services in the previous life. Therefore, now you are like a king. And if you want to become a greater king in your next birth, you must do some more work now in this birth.

What can be a greater service than prayer to the Almighty God? Be grateful. You have to show your gratitude to the Creator of the universe, and He will show you His willingness to serve you. It is difficult to get a thing in the world; it takes time. But to contact God it takes one second because eternity does not require time to come here. That is the blessing.

Session 15

GURUDEV SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI'S BLESSINGS

You can go to Uttarkashi; you can go to Rameswaram. Anywhere you go, the mind will temporarily be a little calm. You will forget all your sorrows, but the sorrows will not leave you permanently. They are sitting inside in the form of a dislocated type of psychological consciousness which cannot be set right. It requires *svadhyaya* of holy scriptures. When you read the Srimad Bhagavata, you are thinking of Vyasa Bhagavan. You are not reading stories when you are reading the Bhagavata, you are reading the great mighty brain and personality of Bhagavan Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa. When you read the Bhagavadgita, you are not reading some instruction "Do this", "Do this", and so on. The mighty personality of Sri Krishna is there. The author is present in the book. In any book that you read, you are actually reading the mind of the author. It is not a printed matter that you are reading; you are remembering the author. That is why even when you chant a mantra it is said you must remember the source of it: *rishi, chandan, devata*. You should not forget the author. When you read a book, you must know who the author is.

If you remember an author such as Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa or Vasishtha, their blessings are there. The moment you think of such mighty beings, an energy flows into you. They are not like human beings. They are a pervading influence. Honestly pray: "Mighty Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa, incomparable in power, omnipotent, I am studying your great teaching in the form of the Srimad Bhagavata."

Vyasa had very great power. He was born on an island; that is why he was called Dvaipayana. He told his mother, "When you remember me, I shall be there." After his birth, he simply vanished from that place. Many times she remembered him, and he was there. You establish a mighty telepathic communication with these people when you intently pray. These people are wonderful. They are not human beings. Vasishtha, Vyasa, Suka Maharishi, Janaka, Bhagavan Sri Krishna—what power, what strength, what infinite capacity! The moment you think of them, you establish a connection. You can think anything, and you establish a connection with it.

One lady is doing pranic healing here. It is a kind of psychological process. Her mind is concentrating on something. If the mind is not operating, it will not work. "I am drawing energy from mahatmas," she told me. There are masters who are moving in space. Angels are there. Your guardian angels are sitting here now: one here, one here. They are guarding you. Angels are everywhere, and they are with you. You have only to think of them, and they will come. If the mind is not working, the healing cannot take place. It is not a physical act; she concentrates energy. She says, "Energy is coming from somewhere, whom I am invoking and feel." Energy is coming from the sun, for instance, and then you feel the energy entering into you.

I am coming to the point of *satsanga*. You must be very friendly, cooperative, loving. Here we are, children of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Freely we get food here, freely we get treatment and medicine, freely we have got wonderful books to read. You will not get this in any other ashram. If someone comes here, they are told to go and take food. Here, everything is given. There is nothing that is not given. The Ashram management, which is following the footsteps of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, is so generous. Any genuine request is not denied. If someone has an urge

from inside to go somewhere, we do not deny that. We give the travelling allowance and tell them to go and come.

There are ashrams in Haridwar and in Karnataka which have much wealth, but people who come from there have no money in their hand. They came and asked me, "I want to go to Badrinath."

I said, "You are coming from such a big ashram, and they won't give you any travelling allowance?"

"No, no. They won't give. When we sit there, they give food. They won't give even clothing."

It is very difficult to be so very generous and charitable as we are here. We give things as if it is water that we are giving. We don't deny anything. Anybody comes and eats food here. Would you give food if anybody comes to your house and sits there and asks for food? Sometimes they go on eating for days together, and we don't even know that they are here.

The person who serves food is a god himself. With love you have to give. Swami Sivanandaji used to say, "Roti Bhagavan, Dahl Bhagavan, Sabji Bhagavan, Kheer Bhagavan, Laddu Bhagavan, take, take." Gurudev used to say, "You should not simply give. You should not give food with disrespect. Then it is equal to not giving at all. You should give with loving care, giving sufficient time for them to eat and not telling them to go."

If you take the essence of the whole thing, all is well here. We are blessed with security. We have hundreds of people staying here, and they are all secure due to some grace operating. Gratitude is the greatest virtue. If you have received some blessing in whatever way, some gift or charity, and some comfort has been given to you, you must be grateful. You must be grateful to God Himself that He has brought you under the umbrella of a great saint like Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

Even now Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji is very kind. Whenever we have some problem, Gurudev solves it in some mysterious manner. I myself had all kinds of management problems, sometimes unsolvable. I used to simply sit and wonder what to do, and I would pray, and some mysterious operation would take place and the problem would be solved. So all is well with you. Be happy. Om Namo Narayanaya. God bless you all.

Session 16

THE VAISHVANARA VIDYA

Swamiji: What happens when you meditate?

An ashramite: You become one with the Cosmic Being.

Swamiji: Then who is meditating? The Cosmic Being is meditating on itself. You are not existing anymore, because you have gone into it. It includes everybody, including you and me, so there is nobody to meditate on it. It itself contemplates. Do you understand this very subtle technique? But you will assert your existence separately by thinking you are meditating. As long as you feel that you are meditating, you are not meditating because you have put it out as an object of your perception.

An object cannot enter into the subject. It is separate. The object has to melt into the subject, and the subject must melt into the object. Therefore, meditation means the whole universe is aware of itself. You are not there anymore because you have gone into it. You should not assert yourself too much. Actually, you should not be there at all. You have to become one with it. And so, meditation is the consciousness of the Cosmic Being of itself, by itself, for itself. Do you catch the point? When you think like this for five minutes, your whole body will vibrate. The whole universe enters into you. Can you bear it? This is meditation. And if you continue it systematically, you will never be born again into this world. You will enter into it.

You cannot meditate on it because the moment you start meditating on it, you stand outside it. Then it ceases to be the Cosmic Being. The Cosmic Being includes everything, including yourself, so who is actually meditating then? Who is meditating?

Ashramite: The Cosmic Being itself is meditating.

Swamiji: That is it.

Ashramite: Then what is the necessity for the Cosmic Being to meditate?

Swamiji: But you are only saying it. Your heart is not accepting it. You are only saying it orally, and the mind refuses to accept it. It will take one second. *Japa* and prayer take time. This does not take time. It is like a matchstick. It happens suddenly.

Ashramite: Even then, communion will not take place.

Swamiji: That is because the mind has not been purged of desires. Your heart should say: "I want God and nothing else, and everything I want I will get in one second."

I will tell you why the mind is not concentrating. It has a fear that you are losing some glory of the world. But it is stupid to think like that. The glory of the world has gone into it. You will find in it greater glory, and whatever you want, you will get there. So why are you worrying?

Ashramite: Even though the heart and mind appreciate it and want it, yet there is...

Swamiji: That is because there is a desire that is quite different from the desire for God. And it has no meaning, actually speaking, because you think if you reach God, what have you got there? The whole universe is inside it, so what is the difficulty? It is like the meaningless cry of a child. It has no meaning. In one second you are there, and the whole body vibrates.

Ashramite: Cosmic consciousness should vibrate with that power but, as Swamiji says, the mind is not fit.

Swamiji: Because it wants something else. It doesn't want God. You must accept the fact.

Ashramite: Yes, Swamiji. Then what is this wanting, aspiring, weeping and wailing?

Swamiji: It has no meaning. There is the bird's path and the ant's path. You can go to God like an ant crawling or like a bird flying or like a high jet. This is the jet method which goes immediately, whereas the other methods will take several births to reach.

Ashramite: Swamiji, intellectually...

Swamiji: There is no intellectually. Your whole being should go there. Why are you using the word 'intellect'? Are you an intellect or are you a person? What are you?

Ashramite: Consciousness.

Swamiji: Pure Being. Don't bring intellect, mind, emotion, and all that. The whole thing goes. "I am coming," people say. Does it mean an intellect is coming? The whole being is coming. That being should meditate. The whole problem is, there is no acceptance of the fact that you can find everything there. There is some doubt: "I cannot find it. I have a bank balance, I have fixed deposits, I have property. What will happen to them there? Will God throw them away?" God will not throw them away. All your fixed deposits will be there on a gold plate. Instead of paper, there is gold. Which is better?

Ashramite: It is not what is better, but at present, as Swamiji says, our mind is having more faith in this paper.

Swamiji: That is because you don't have time to think. You foolishly believe in silly things, unnecessarily chatting and wasting time, and running about here and there. You need not move an inch from the place where you are sitting in order to reach God. You need not go to Rameshwaram, Badrinath, and so on. These are all simply unnecessary distractions of the mind. The sense organs are more powerful than the intellect, the reason, and everything. They will not allow you.

The first chapter of my book called *The Chhandogya Upanishad* is an exposition of this matter. I have given lectures on the Chhandogya Upanishad, and they are there in the form of a book. The first chapter is the Vaishvanara Vidya, and that goes together with the Panchagni Vidya in the sixth chapter.

There were some mighty people, established in meditation. They sat together one day and discussed among themselves what the Atman is, and they could not come to a conclusion. The king of that country, called Ashvapati, knew a *vidya* called the Vaishvanara Vidya. They were Brahmins and he was a Kshatriya, and usually Brahmins do not go to Kshatriyas for study. But here they were very humble, so they all went and sat outside the palace. Usually Brahmins go to kings for *dakshina*. They are invited for *yajna*, *pravachan*, so the king thought they had come for that and said, "Tomorrow I am performing a sacrifice. I will employ you."

"No, we have not come for that," they replied. "We have all the earthly things with us. We want to know what you know."

"It is not a proper practice," said the king, "for Brahmanas to come to Kshatriyas and ask such questions."

Then they said, "We do not consider ourselves as Brahmanas. We are disciples of a great soul like you."

"All right, let us see tomorrow," replied the king.

Usually Gurus do not give instruction abruptly. They put the disciples to so many tests, like Prajapati putting Indra to so many tests. But here, in this case, the king did not follow that method because he realised the greatness of these people, that they were fit for instruction. So he asked one of them, "On what are you meditating?"

"I am meditating on the sun as the Atman," he replied.

"This is why you have got so much glory in your house, you have got plenty of food in your house, your family is shining like the radiant sun. But it is the eye of the Absolute. If you had not come to me, you would have gone blind due to this erroneous meditation," said Ashvapati.

Then he asked another person on what he was meditating, and the reply was, "I am meditating on space."

"That is why you are very famous in the world. Your renown is as vast as the whole of space itself. But space is the body of the Supreme Being. If you had not come to me, your body would have cracked by this time."

Like that, he asked them one by one.

One said, "I am contemplating on the earth." Another said, "I am contemplating on water." Another said, "On air."

Ashvapati said, "All of you are making two mistakes, which is the crucial point. The Atman is not earth, it is not water, it is not sky, it is not fire, it is not the sun, it is not anything. One thing is, you are thinking the Atman on which you are meditating is outside you; it may be the sun or space, or whatever it is. How can the Atman, which is the Self, be outside you, and how can anyone meditate on one's own Self as something external? This is the first mistake you are making. The second mistake is, you are thinking that your Atman is in one place only because the sun is in one place. You cannot find the sun everywhere. So you have located the Atman in one place, while it is everywhere. And you have made the mistake of thinking it is outside you. If the Atman is outside you, it is like yourself being outside yourself. What you are doing has no sense. The whole mistake is this. Your meditation is no good."

Then he mentioned what I told you just now. It is an inclusiveness, inconceivable by any kind of human thought. There is no human being there at that time. There is no individual at that time. That which includes everything includes the meditator also. The meditator is the Cosmic Being itself. It is aware of itself—*aham asmi*: I am what I am. The first feeling in the process of creation was 'I am', not 'you are'. There is no you. I am. If any one of you is able to centralise the consciousness in this inclusiveness to include all space, time, stars, sun, moon, galaxies, whatever you can think of, as melted together into a single mass of existence without making the mistake of thinking that you are outside and looking at it, that is exactly what Ashvapati said. Ashvapati said that you should not think that it is outside. You have gone inside it. The most difficult thing is this point. This is the most difficult thing.

Another ashramite: Swamiji, at that time, identification of body and mind will be there.

Swamiji: Body and mind will not be there. Then your being will be there. Everything is all right. You can meditate on anything, but the last crucial thing is frightening: "I am also going." That is why Arjuna said, "Sufficient! Now you come down. Let me see you as you were once upon a time. You want to swallow me also? No."

The most dear thing is ourselves. You can forgo any dear thing in the world but 'me'. The last desire of a person is: "Permit me to be alive." That is all you want. You must be alive and existing. You don't want anything else. If all things are taken away, even the cloth and raiment and food, even then you don't mind it provided you are allowed to exist.

If this can be accepted by the mind, all the purificatory processes will take place simultaneously. You take long years of purifying yourself—so much *japa*, so much *pranayama*, so much *asana*. These are all included in one single concentration. All the sadhanas will get bundled up and enter the fire of this meditation, and you have done

all the sadhana in one second. It is sufficient to burn all your individuality. In an instant you will be there. This is instant meditation. And this can continue for at least five minutes every day. I don't say that it is possible to think like this for more than that. If for five minutes every day your heart is vibrating in this way, it is sure that you will not take another birth. This is the last birth.

But the trouble is that you think: "I am also going. No! I will live in the world for some time. What about my family?" Like that, a question will come. Even the wisest of people will put this question: "Am I leaving the family and going? Have I no duty towards them?" Who will answer this question? Again and again that difficulty comes. "I have a lot of land and property and so much of money, so much of wealth. I have earned it with great difficulty. In one second you want me to throw it away. Can I do it?" The mind says, "Be careful, you are going to lose everything." This is the whisper of the devil, as they call it. In one minute you will lose everything.

And then another doubt will come: "I am going. I understand what you say, but what about my people? What will happen to them afterwards? What will happen to my family after I go there? Who will answer this question?" You will find your family there. They will all be transported completely. Your land, everything will be there. The whole empire will be inside that. It is a mistake to think: "My family is here only, and they will be suffering without me. I am going for moksha, but what about my family and my relations? I have got so many responsibilities and pending works." Again and again this will come, but again you must tell the mind that you will find all these things there. You will find your pending works transmuted into liquid gold there in that place, and all the family will be there.

In the eighth chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishad this is also said. All your forefathers, all your grandfathers, all the kings of this earth, all the emperors right from ancient times, whoever is there, everything will be there. You should not think: "They are all dead and gone, and I am going somewhere after so many years." In eternity there are no years. You will find the whole history of the cosmos inside.

"Look at Me," Sri Krishna said in his Vishvarupa form. "All that you see, all that you cannot see, and whatever you have not seen, see here." Because eternity is not a time process, the whole history of the cosmos has gone into it. We are space-bound, time-bound, objectivity-bound; therefore whatever Sri Krishna says, the same doubt will come: "What about my duties? Will I leave my father and mother also? Am I going to moksha with my father and mother crying there?" Sometimes people ask this. But your father and mother will be sitting there, before you go. It is a great joy.

Ashramite: In which sense, Swamiji?

Swamiji: There is no sense. In one second it will be. Everything will become a molten liquid of gold.

Ashramite: If everything is found there, there will be some variety. Variety is not liberation.

Swamiji: Because you want variety, I am telling you this. If you don't want it, you will not find anything, and if you don't want it, that also is good; but a man who wants variety will go mad if I say that is not there, so I don't want to say that. The Vishvarupa is known as the great multiplicity. If that is also gone, then what will you see there? You will go crazy in one second, so why should a man become crazy? Therefore, I said multiplicity. Let it be there. At least some consolation must be given; otherwise, you cannot cut off the whole thing.

Kleśho'dhikataras teṣām avyaktāsaktachetasām, avyaktā hi gatiṃ duḥkham dehavadbhir avāpyate (B.G. 12.5). Krishna says this kind of meditation is not possible for any person with body-consciousness. It is terrible because you are clinging to this individuality so much, and then you are trying to cut it off by meditation on the Absolute. You will go mad in one second, so don't try this. "Consider Me as Lord Krishna, as Mahapurusha, as Purushottama, as the Supreme Person who created the world." The mind will be happy to hear that. "O great God, great Master of the universe, Creator, protect me." You feel very nice. But if you are told to cut off everything, nobody wants to hear that, not even the best of people. There is an old saying, "Nobody can see God and then be alive afterwards." So this is the Vaishvanara Vidya.

Ashramite: Why is it named Vaishvanara Vidya?

Swamiji: Vaishvanara means Universal Man, Universal Being. Nara means Being; Vaishvanara means Universal Person, Cosmic Person, the One Person. It requires a little bit of determination of will, and an acceptance of the fact that you will find whatever you want. The idea and fear that you are losing something should go away. "What happened to all my earnings?" This question should not arise.

Ashramite: It is very much contradictory, Swamiji, to say that everything will be found there in that oneness.

Swamiji: There is no oneness. Multiplicity is also there. You will even find a bank there, the State Bank of India. [Laughter] I am not joking. The original State Bank is there, and here you are seeing only a shadow of it. You are seeing a shadow of a railway train, a shadow of a motor car. The real motor cars are there only. You will be laughing at me, that it is not like that. This is a shadow of you; the real you is sitting there. That is why you are being pulled up every minute. You are restless because the real you is somewhere else, and he is pulling you. Otherwise, if the real you is here only, you will be always happy because a real thing cannot be unhappy. But you are always unhappy: "Something is missing; something is lacking. This is finitude. It is no good." You are feeling that way because your real self is somewhere else.

They are called the archetypes of being. Every tree has an original tree there, every river has an original river there, every person is there, but in its originality. We are all shadows of our own selves; therefore, the shadow is miserable. It wants the original of itself.

But the mind is educated improperly. You have studied physics, chemistry, geography. What is the good of all this? The real thing is the problem of life itself. Everybody is existing somewhere else, in eternal reality. We are now in the process of time. The time-bound individuality is a shadow cast by the eternal archetype. 'Archetype' means original. Everybody has an original and a duplicate. These are all duplicates, and the duplicate can never be happy because it is a shadow. You don't want a sun reflected in the water. You want the real sun. Everything which is reflected has no meaning. I will give you a plateful of food to eat, but I will give only a reflection. Will it be all right? [Laughter] You want the original itself. So you are not sitting here, you are sitting in high heaven, beyond the seven planes of existence; beyond Brahmaloaka you are sitting. That is why nothing can satisfy you.

Ashramite: Then Swamiji, what is cosmic play and world play?

Swamiji: There is no world play. The whole thing has gone into it. To see the world play, somebody should be existing. Who will see the world play? The seer of the world play has gone into it. There is nobody to see it because the seer has got into it. Either you will

become a god by hearing this, or you will become a fool, one of the two. [Laughter] Either one of the two will take place. So you must be ready for that.

Your moral stuff, ethical conduct and desirelessness for anything must be very strong. It is not desirelessness in the sense of rejecting something. We have got a wrong idea of renunciation, that renunciation means throwing away something and coming here. "I have left everything in Orissa and have come to the Sivananda Ashram. This is renunciation." It is nothing of the kind. You cannot renounce anything; you can only include it in the perception of wholeness. The whole of Orissa will be found in the Absolute. Then why are you renouncing it? Your father, mother, everybody will be there, all land and property, all harvest, everything, but in a different sense altogether. You lose nothing. There the greatness will be multiplied a hundredfold. So renunciation does not mean losing something, it is not rejecting something, it is not abandoning something, it is not giving up anything. It is getting everything in the real sense. So now you will be happy. What do you say? Are you happy?

Ashramite: [Remains silent.]

Swamiji: He doesn't want to be happy. [Laughter] There is a fear of being happy also. It takes many days of exercise like this. What I have told you just now has to be told every day, every day, every day. Whether you are eating food, whether you are going for a walk, whether you are doing work, this is the thought. The whole thing is there. This is the highest meditation, called the Vaishvanara Vidya.

Those who cannot understand what I have said may decide that I have said nothing. "We have sat with Swami Krishnanandaji, but he has not said anything." That's all you should think if you have not understood it. But if you have understood it, be grateful to God that you have heard this message. You will be highly purified, and God will take you like a dear child. He wants you much more than you want Him. His love for you is greater than your love for Him. You don't understand that. He is waiting for you to come, but you say you will not go.

Ashramite: More explanation is necessary, Swamiji.

Swamiji: The explanation I have given is sufficient, only you must hammer it in every day. I cannot go on telling this every day, but I am mentioning it to you. You can keep it in your memory and go on repeating it. What you have done now is *sravana*, hearing. Then comes *manana*, to go on thinking of what you heard, what it could be, what the implications are. Go on thinking again and again, analysing, scrutinising; and then when the heart accepts it, it is *nididhyasana*. You just collapse your individuality into the Cosmic Being, which is inside you. The Cosmic Being is not sitting outside; it is inside you, vibrating. You enter into your eternal Self. Every day you must do *sravana*, *manana*, *nididhyasana*. It is your only duty, and everything else will follow.

Ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate, teṣāṃ nityābhiyuktānāṃ yogakṣemaṃ vahāmyaham (B.G. 9.22): If you start meditating continuously like this, whatever you want will come to you. Even a spoon of sugar for your tea will come. You will say that God is giving such a small thing, but there is no small thing for God. It will come. If you find one day there is no sugar for your tea, immediately somebody will bring some sugar and give it to you. You will not know why it has come. You must have some conviction in your mind. The mind is so powerful that whatever you want, you will get. I am not speaking like a pundit, I am speaking from my personal experience.

Another ashramite: What *vidya* was given to Nachiketas by Yama? Vaishvanara Vidya?

Swamiji: Yama refused to give it. He gave two things out of three. The first boon was the

glory of the earth, the second boon was the glory of the high heavens, and the third boon was what happens when the soul enters the Absolute. Yama said, “Don’t ask this question. Take whatever you want—long life, as long as the world lasts. All the glories of heaven which even human beings cannot dream of, I give you, but don’t ask this question.” This question should not be asked because nobody can bear the thought that you yourself are entering into it, and such a thing Yama did not want to tell the boy Nachiketas. He did not want to trouble his brain. Yama put him to the test. This thing that I told you is not explicitly explained in the Katha Upanishad. An explicit answer does not come there, only indications are there. The explicit answer comes in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad when Yajnavalkya speaks *yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati, tad itara itaram paśyati* (B.U. 2.4.14): Where there are two things, you can see something. Where you are alone there, what are you seeing? This is the answer to Nachiketas.

The mind must be highly purified and honest in its feelings, and not want anything else. The mind does not want anything else—not because they are useless things, but because they are all reflections of the original. You will find them there. Tell the mind: “You are not losing anything. You will get all things in their reality, in their completeness, in their eternal non-perishable nature. These are perishable things, so why are you clinging to them? There you will find the very same things in their original, non-perishable, eternal nature. Are you not happy?”

God bless you all.

Session 17

WHAT WE REALLY WANT

Living, existing—that is the greatest desire. You want only to exist. You don't want anything else because if you do not exist, all the other qualities have no meaning. But what kind of existence? A stone also exists, a pig exists; trees, animals, everything is existing. Do you want to exist like a pig? That you want only to exist is not a complete answer. It has to be qualified. Now you are putting a condition: you want to exist not as a tree or as a stone or as a pig, but as a human being.

Would you like to exist as a human being with nobody wanting you in this world? They spit at you, condemn you, throw stones at you and drive you out wherever you go. Would you like to exist as a human being in that condition? So it is not that you want to exist, merely. First you modified it by saying that you want to exist as a human being, and now you are saying that is also not sufficient. You must exist as a human being recognised by other human beings. So you want to expand your consciousness of existence to the social atmosphere. That is also not sufficient because your existence may be recognised by all people, but you are so poor that you have no food to eat. Now there is another condition. If they recognise you as existing but you are starving, that is no good. You also want food to eat because you have to live.

Now the question is, suppose people recognise your existence and give you food today, but tomorrow you are going to die. Is it all right? Then again you are putting another condition. You want to have a long life. How long? Three hundred years? But when two hundred and ninety-nine years are over, you will want to live longer. A person would like to live a hundred years, but when ninety-nine years are over, he is frightened in the same way as he was before. Even if you live a thousand years, when the time comes, you will not want to go. So it is not true that you want to live long. This answer is also not correct.

Yamaraj told Nachiketas, "I will give you such a long life, as long as the world lasts and the sun and the moon and the stars exist."

Nachiketas replied, "My great Lord, you are very kind in giving me such a long life, but when the sun and moon and stars don't exist and the world also goes, what will happen to my long life? It will come to an end. I don't want it." Even the longest life is short when it ends. So how long do you want to live?

One by one I am mentioning that firstly, you want to exist. Then your existence must be recognised by others. Then it must be a comfortable life. Then it must be not for a few days, but a long, endless life. You want to defy time itself, finally. Even then, you don't want to exist like a tall tree existing for a long, long time. You must be recognised by all people everywhere, and you must control the whole world, if possible. And what is above this earth? That also you want—the sun, the moon and the stars. You want to expand your being to universal dimensions. 'Universal dimension' means defying space itself. You want to defy space and defy time. This is what you want, finally.

I have never seen a person like Swami Sivananda, and we cannot hope to see another like that. He is not Sivananda, but Givananda. Give, give, and it shall be given unto you pressed, shaken and overflowing. You will weep at the greatness of this wonderful mahatma, Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. We are alive, comfortable here. We have got full security from the government. We have no problems. Every kind of medicine for treatment is here. A wonderful library is here. And daily, unasked, we get food. We need

not ask for food. Sivananda is everywhere—in North America, South America, Europe, Africa and Australia. Everywhere they know Swami Sivananda.

Tomorrow is the birthday of Sri Gurudev. For thanks-giving, as an offering of gratitude, we should try to be as he was, at least in a small modicum in our own selves, knowing at the same time what we want. The answer has already come. We want perpetual existence, universal existence, and eternal existence. That means to say, we want God-existence, Brahma-sakshat.

So we shall pray to the Almighty to give us strength to remember this great master of the twentieth century who has shaken the minds of all slumbering people everywhere and awakened them to the consciousness of the existence of a higher life. Our obeisance to Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj!

Session 18

THE SUBJECTIVITY ENTERS THE OBJECT

Have you an idea about yourself, what kind of person you are? Do you feel anything about yourself? Every day you are seeing yourself, so what do you think about yourself? You have a lot of ideas about other people, but what do you think about yourself? Do you think you are a good man? You think others are not good, and you are very good. Is it so? "Everybody is bad except myself." Do you think that?

When people say that God created the world, here is the whole thing. This is creation. When you have some idea about another but you have no idea about yourself, creation has taken place. That is why God has no quality, because you yourself have no quality. You can't say anything about yourself, but you can say everything about other people. So a definition is necessary for what is other than you, but a definition is not necessary for yourself. God has no definition, and creation has a definition.

People ask whether God has created the world or not. Every minute you are creating the world, but has anybody thought about oneself? You have no idea about yourself, but you have an idea of another. This is called creation. When God faces another, He has an idea, but He has no idea about Himself. That is why God has no quality, and everything else has qualities. This is not a joke; it is a very serious matter. We are out of track, actually. That is why we are suffering so much. Why don't you judge yourself in the same way as you judge your brother? Why can't you do that? You think there is no fault in you. Does anybody accept they are full of faults? Even if there are faults, you cannot say so. You keep quiet.

'Yoga' is a word which means thinking of yourself in the same way as you judge another, and seeing yourself in the same way as you see another, and behaving with another in the same way as you behave with yourself. This is the essence of yoga. Patanjali says the same thing: *purusha* and *prakriti*. *Prakriti* is another person, and *purusha* is yourself; that is all, simple. Anything other than you is *prakriti*, so there is a clash between *purusha* and *prakriti*. You should not think that *prakriti* means something like a stone or a huge mountain that is sitting outside, and *purusha* is shining somewhere in the sky—that you are the *purusha* and another person is the *prakriti*.

In terms of Patanjali, when *prakriti* stands in union with *purusha*, it is liberation. When *prakriti* is opposed to *purusha*, it is creation. Now, everything is *prakriti* for us—stones, trees, animals, the sun, moon and stars—because all are outside us. If you can stand in union with them, there is liberation.

Here is one example. Suppose there is a tree in front of you. It is *prakriti*, because you are seeing it in front. A thing is in front of you; that is the whole point. You cannot see that the thing is behind you. You will never believe that. The thing which you observe is not behind you, it is not to the right side of you or to the left side of you. It is in front of you.

I was saying that you have an idea of everything in the world. Have you an idea about yourself also? Are you something, or are you nothing? Everybody is something. This man is like that, this thing is like that, a cat is like that, a dog is like that, a horse is like that, an elephant is like that. And what are you like? What is your description about yourself? You have something to say about another person. Have you anything to say about yourself? No.

I was thinking we should have a meeting where everybody will speak about oneself only. You should not talk about another man. Let us have a conference. Generally, in a conference one talks about something else. Each one should speak about oneself only. When subjectivity arises, objectivity vanishes. The whole conference will be a huge subject, and not an object. There will not be any controversy afterwards, because how can you have a controversy about your own self? Suppose a hundred people hold a conference and talk only about themselves, what will be the outcome of the conference? They will all be in a state of yoga at that time. The whole parliament, each member, will talk only about himself and not say anything else. What do you say?

The whole universe is a subject. It is called the kingdom of ends, and it is not a means. You think other people are a means to you, and you are an end. Yoga is nothing but a consideration of ends, and not of means. But everything about which you have some idea is a means; otherwise, why do you hold an idea about it? Suppose you don't do that; what kind of connection have you got? Suppose there is a tree in front of you. You can never imagine that it is behind you, or to the right, to the left, and so on. What you should do is, you should remove the idea that it is in front of you. The first stage is to stand parallel to the tree. Now, let us say here is the tree. Instead of looking at it, you be beside it. Now you are not looking at the tree, you are parallel to it. Then fifty percent of the problem is gone, because you will never see it as an object afterwards. It is in your own line, in your own group, in the same party, your own party. You don't criticise a person who is of your own party. The tree that is being looked at is outside, so it is another party, but I am saying you should convert it into your party. Then you will never have any complaint. You will have no complaint about anything afterwards. You stand parallel to it. That is the first stage. This is a yoga practice I am telling you. It is not a story.

The second stage is, it is coming nearer and nearer. The distance between you and the tree is diminishing, diminishing. When the distance between one thing and yourself diminishes, the character of the object in that thing also diminishes. It slowly tends to become a subject—nearer and nearer, nearer and nearer. Then it touches you. Then the fear you have got about the object becomes less and less. You feel it is entering into you, that the tree has entered into you. The root of the tree is the same as your legs. It has become one with you. The trunk of your body is the trunk of the tree. The hairs on your head are the branches of the tree. What opinion will you have about the tree at that time? You won't have any opinion. This is called *samadhi*. *Samadhi* is only this much: you have merged in the tree. Then the tree will think in the same way as you think. I am giving an example of a tree, but it can be anything, even a fountain pen or a pencil. Yogis can shake a table, and it will move because they have become the table itself. You yourself are the table. It may be any person or any thing—the sun, moon, stars, whatever it is—if you stand with it, and do not have it in front of you, and allow it to enter into you, you become that very thing. This is called *savitarka samapatti* according to Patanjali.

There are three ideas about everything: the idea of the object, the name that you give to the object, and the object by itself—*shabda*, *artha*, *jnana*. Three things are involved in everything. You have an idea about a thing, and you describe it with some words, but independent of both it is something by itself. Now, the name that you give to it is not its real nature. A cat can be called by some other name. Why should you call it a cat? You can call it something else. And your idea of the cat may also not be correct because the idea that the cat has got about itself is a better idea than your idea of the

cat. Then comes that which is actually there. With that you have to identify yourself. When the idea and the descriptive characteristics are withdrawn from the thing, then you don't see the thing as an object outside; immediately it is the thing as it is. The thing as it is, is only one in the whole universe. There are not many things as it is, because if you say there are many, one becomes the object of the other. So the idea of many things goes away. There is only one thing which is by itself. Then a great wonder, a miracle, takes place. You don't know what happens at that time. You feel a strength inside because the strength of that object enters into you so that it is a double strength.

A sutra of Patanjali says that if you contemplate that an elephant is identical with you, you will feel its energy entering into you, and you will feel as strong as an elephant. If you think of the sun, you yourself are the sun, with all its energy, strength and force. The sun controls all the planets. In Patanjali's sutra it is called *Surya samadhi*. For a few minutes, think that you are the sun. It is great radiance, great energy, great force, health, power, an indubitable thing, pure subjectivity, because the sun is the pure subject of the solar system. The sun is not an object; planets are objects. Everything goes around the sun, but the sun doesn't go around anything. So you feel the whole universe is going around you, and you are in the centre. You are in the centre of the cosmos.

The idea of the object must be removed, the description in words that you have about the object must also be removed, and then the thing as it is will not be there as an object in front of you, because you are also that thing. The thing as it is appearing to be outside becomes one with the thing which contemplates it. People say that *samadhi* is the union of the subject and the object. But *samadhi* is not actually the subject and the object coming together, because they cannot come together. It is the subject in the object entering into the subject that is in you. The subjectivity in the object enters into the subjectivity in you, so that it is a large subject. If you go on expanding infinitely in this way, the Supreme Subject comes up. If the subject in the object becomes the same as the subject in you, and if you apply this technique to every other object, the Universal Subject will arise. That is *Ishvara*.

An ashramite: So name and form will not be there.

Swamiji: That is why it becomes an object. Name and form create the objectivity of the subject. Remove that. That is one sutra, *savitarka sampatti*. If you contemplate a thing and get rid of the idea and the description and go on looking at it, it is one kind of concentration, the lowest kind of *samadhi*. If I can go on thinking of you continuously, and the mind is filled with you only, that is also a kind of *samadhi*, but it is not complete because the subjectivity is not touched. The objectivity is still there.

So stand parallel to the object, bring it nearer and nearer to you, and when it touches you, enters into you, the idea of it vanishes and the descriptive characteristic of it also vanishes. The thing as it is becomes the thing yourself. The subjectivity in everything becomes the subjectivity in the meditating consciousness. This is the final truth about yoga. There is no need of reading any book, no need of Patanjali or anything else, if you understand these simple words that I have told.

But it is a terrible thing to think like this. It is frightening, though it is the most glorious thing. The most glorious thing can frighten. If God sits near you, you will be frightened. You cannot tolerate His presence. You are sitting here, and the Almighty is sitting. You will simply shudder. Why should you shudder before God? It is because you are afraid of everything.

Ashramite: That is why love should be there.

Swamiji: No, you cannot love. You cannot love God due to fear, because He is the object. You are seeing Him sitting outside. He has not become you. It is like a lion sitting there. How will you tolerate it?

Another ashramite: Swamiji, this technique was tried by Swami Ramakrishna, and it was practised by him.

Swamiji: All saints do this. It is a purely practical technique. Every day you must do it. What other work have you got? You are doing some *puja*, somebody is cooking some food, and a third man is cleaning some vessel. All right, do that, but it is all secondary. The main thing is this only; otherwise, a serious problem will come one day. Beware of old age. You are all young people and you can run about, go to Rishikesh and come back. Afterwards, you cannot move one inch. You will be doddering. Who will take care of you at that time? You have no father or mother. Nobody is there. You have no property and nobody to take care of you, and you will simply collapse in utter agony. Why should you invite such a condition? Nobody has got any friend here.

You say, "It is a very difficult thing. I will try my best." Don't say that you will try your best. Say you shall do it now, today. If the idea that I have explained to you has entered into you, you will be happy anywhere, even in a dustbin. Even if you are in a dustbin you will be happy, no problem. You will not even talk. At that time, you will not like to talk to anybody. You will feel that the person to whom you want to talk is with you only, so why should you talk to him? You do not go on chattering to your friend; he is well known to you. Your own brother, what do you go on talking to him? Too much talking is not good. Chattering and gossiping are a waste of energy. People sit together and talk. What do they talk about? They talk about somebody else, not about themselves. Why don't they talk about themselves? What is the harm? What do you say? Why such a partiality about oneself?

Otherwise, what is the use of staying in the Sivananda Ashram? You can stay in the railway station and do some work there. You can be a porter carrying luggage and earn some money. Why are you sitting in the Sivananda Ashram? Because you thought you will be a different person. A person who has been trained here in thinking like this is not like other people. Even when you walk on the road, people will know this is a different person. You need not say anything; they can see it from your face. But you don't practice.

Ashramite: I am doing *japa*.

Swamiji: *Japa* is only another way of saying the same thing. Because you cannot think properly, you are uttering some word. I have told the whole of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. Have you understood?

Another ashramite: Swamiji, what will happen if a snake comes towards you?

Swamiji: There is no snake. It doesn't exist. It is an object. A snake does not bite itself. It is very difficult to understand all these things. It is frightening. Yoga is a frightening thing to think properly. But you have to pass through a frightening thing in order to become better. Before you enter into heaven, you have to pass through hell.

This sense of identity with that which you wrongly call the object, and converting it into the very existence that you are, is samadhi, and that is described by Patanjali by the terms *savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara*, *nirvichara*, *sananda*, *sasmita*, *savikalpa*, *nirvikalpa*, and so on, according to the gradation of the intensity of the feeling of identity with the subjectivity in the object. The identity of the subjectivity in the object with the subjectivity in you is gradually felt. As you cannot feel it immediately, it goes stage by stage.

The first stage is *savitarka*, then it becomes more intense, more and more, more and more, more and more, until you simply become possessed. It is impossible to describe what it is. It is indescribable transcendence, shuddering. People call it madness, almost. People become God-mad, shuddering, impossible to understand. They dance, they cry, they sing, they kick, they do anything because it is impossible to control that experience. If the whole universe has entered you and God is dancing in your own heart, how will you control it? That is *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

Kaivalya moksha is the purpose for which you have come here. You have not come here to quarrel and talk nonsense and waste your energy. You can go on talking and quarrelling, I have no objection, but one day Yama will come. Who cares for your quarrels? You will gain nothing. "There is no death except heedlessness," said Sanatkumara. People are careless about others, but if there is carelessness about oneself also, then you will ruin yourself. Now there is no question of carelessness in any matter, as the subjectivity enters the object. This pure subjectivity of the object is what is called the thing in itself in the philosophy of Kant. He doesn't go into all these matters, but that is the thing in itself. The thing in itself is God only, and it is identical with the thing in itself inside everything.

Session 19

AN ACTION IS A VIBRATION

If one man borrowed 75 rupees from some person who had borrowed 50 rupees from him, they can make an adjustment. That man has to repay only 25 rupees to the other man. But when he did that, the other man did not like it. He said, "You must give me 75 rupees. Why are you giving 25 rupees when you have borrowed 75 rupees?"

"No, no, it is adjusted," the man said.

"I don't know anything. You pay your 75 rupees, and I will give you 50 rupees," the other man replied.

This is the method of their thinking. It looks as if God is also having that kind of arithmetic. If a person does 75 good deeds and 50 bad deeds, it doesn't mean that he has done no bad deeds and has only 25 good deeds. You can tell God, "I have done 75 good deeds, so why don't you cancel the 50 bad deeds?" Is it like that?

An ashramite: God may want us to suffer.

Swamiji: God is not interested in punishing you. There is some great secret behind it. An action is not a thing. You cannot count actions the way you count things. It is not like rupees and dollars that you can make an adjustment by balancing. An action is a vibration that you are setting up in your personality. This is a new thing I am telling you. Whenever you do something, you are creating a vibration in your whole system. This vibration has some connection with the total cosmic vibration. As we are part of the whole universe, our vibrations are somehow or other connected to the total vibration. What we call a good action is not actually the action as such, but a vibration. Unless a vibration is generated, action cannot be done. We call it thought, mind, etc. The mind is also a vibration only. You set up an attitude of your whole personality; that is action, actually speaking. If this energy quantum of our body, which is the vibration, is totally opposed to the vibration of the whole universe, we may be said to be doing a bad action. God is not sitting in the heavens and wielding a rod, seeing who is doing what and hitting you on your head. It is not like that. The whole universe automatically acts and reacts instantaneously. You cannot hide anything. It is not possible.

Instantaneous action takes place because you are inseparable from the universe, so you are punishing yourself, in one way. Therefore, it is not that God is punishing you. People say that God is punishing and God is rewarding. There is no such God. The whole universe is God only, and your vibrations punish you, and your vibrations also reward you.

So this issue of 75 rupees and 50 rupees, that kind of thing will not work here. We are our doers and undoers, both. But human beings have got a habit of finding fault with others. Whenever any unpleasant thing is seen, we say another person is the cause of it. So we also say that God is creating all this. We say, "My neighbour is such a bad man. He is spitting on the floor." Similarly, we say about God, "Why is He creating thorns and mosquitoes and troubling people?" This is our stupid idea of God, and therefore incalculable problems arise in the world. Who created evil, bad things, unhappiness? Many learned people have come and asked me who creates happiness, who creates unhappiness, etc.

There are no things called happiness and unhappiness. They don't exist. What happens is exactly what I told you just now. The whole universe evolves in some

direction. In that evolutionary process it drags with it everyone and everything. It will drag even an insect towards some great destination. We need not touch that subject now, as to what that destination is. Every second it evolves. Everything is moving. So just as the universal evolution drags everything—even a plant, even an insect, everything is pulled—some peculiar situation arises. What is your relationship to this universal evolution? Are you sitting outside it or are you inside it?

Your body is not inside you, nor is it outside you. Such words cannot be used. It is you. You cannot say that your body is inside you. Saying that your body is outside you is also not correct. So you cannot say that you are inside the universe, and you cannot say that you are outside the universe. When the whole universal evolution takes place, what happens to you at that time? The whole thing goes up. But you are accepting this fact just now because of the logic of argument. You have to accept that you are neither inside nor outside, you are that only. But for how many minutes in your life will you think that you are neither inside nor outside the universe? Will anybody think like that? The whole life is wasted in wrong thinking in the sense that it is opposed to the fact of the evolutionary process of the universe. That vibration that you are creating by your opposition to the cosmic evolutionary process creates a kick from that evolutionary process, and that is unhappiness. Happiness does not come from anybody or any thing. It comes from your cooperation with the cosmic process of evolution. It is not coming from any person, it is not coming from money, it is not coming from authority or power, it is not coming from anything in the world. The whole thing is a mistake. It is coming from your cooperation with this cosmic evolutionary process.

But nobody can cooperate with it because everybody says “I am this man”, “I am that man”. If you say that, it will not tolerate it. In the Taittiriya Upanishad it is said that if there is even one millimetre of difference between you and That, you will immediately suffer. In one second hell will descend on the head. *Sa hanisthan maha chidhram sa chantha jada mudatha, yan muhurtham kshanam vapi vasudevam na chinthayeth* (Pandava Gita 70): The moment you forget this great Vasudeva, the pit leading to hell opens. The moment you forget it, you find yourself in trouble. That is a theological and religious way of putting things. There is also a philosophical way and a scientific way of explaining it. The moment you are aware of your inseparability from the process of the evolution of the universe, the whole universe sends a vibration of cooperation and power. You feel energy. The whole thing comes into you, so immediately you feel happy. The moment you feel that you are an individual, the whole thing goes.

An ashramite: But in daily life, how do we get on?

Swamiji: Why are you bringing daily life? Why has this question come now? Is daily life outside this? Again you are bringing some unnecessary point.

Ashramite: I understand intellectually, but practically it is difficult.

Swamiji: Why is it difficult? You have no time to think like this. Each one should consider this matter. People say, “I am a very busy man. I have no time to sit and do all these things. I have got so much work. Day and night I am working.” Nobody says you should not work. In the Bhagavadgita, Bhagavan Sri Krishna says, “Do work.” But if you say doing work is an obstacle to this kind of thinking which is for your benefit, then why is Lord Krishna telling us to do work, and so on? What is the purpose? There is a great contradiction here.

You must work in the same way as the universe works. Do you say the universal evolution is not working? You cannot move even a finger without that. If you have a

feeling inside you that you are perpetually backed up by the force of the evolutionary process and even your fountain pen is held by it only, and your mind is a part of the cosmic mind and all actions are done by it, action becomes meditation and meditation becomes action. They are not two different things. It is only a question of attitude.

Sri Krishna said, "Having been established in the state of yoga, do." He has not said simply "Do", but "After having established yourself in the state of yoga, do." Though he mentioned it briefly, I am explaining the situation. Therefore, you should not say you are very busy. By foolishly saying that, you are harming your own self. You be busy. Who said you should not be busy?

Great attention of the mind is necessary. You must live in the world and do work in the world as if you are performing a circus feat of walking on a wire. Have you seen people walking on a wire? A little imbalance means they will be down. In some places there are rope bridges across the Ganga. Villagers tie long ropes. Two ropes will be there, and you must walk on them. It will swing, and if you disbalance yourself, you will be down in the Ganga. How much concentration is necessary?

The Upanishads give another example. There is a particular dance in which a lady dances with a pot filled with water on her head. She makes gesticulations, gestures, but she does not forget that there is a pot filled with water on her head. Otherwise, she will go on making gestures and forget that pot. That concentration on the pot on the head is establishment in yoga, and the gestures are the actions. But we do not know what she is thinking in her mind. We are only seeing her gestures.

Lord Krishna is the most active person you can think of. He does not keep quiet even for a minute. Read the life of Sri Krishna in the Bhagavata and the Mahabharata. There was not a time when he was simply sitting and wool-gathering. There was always something going on. "Though I am doing everything, consider that I am doing nothing." You are doing everything. Nobody denies that you should work. But you are not doing anything, because it is impelled by another force. There is only *mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti* (B.G. 7.7): "There is nothing external to Me or outside Me. I am doing everything." Together with that he says, "You do work."

Now, they look like contradictions. Having said: "Nobody does anything except Me", Sri Krishna says: "You should get up, go!" An ordinary commentator will not understand it, and we will also wonder what he is saying, as they seem to be two opposite statements. But the "do it" applies to an inseparable part of himself only. Arjuna could not understand that, and we also cannot understand what these two opposite statements are. Sri Krishna could not convince Arjuna even till the Tenth Chapter of the Bhagavadgita. Again and again Arjuna was asking, "But how, but how?" Then Sri Krishna actually demonstrated the unity of things, and Arjuna must have seen himself also inside it, as well as the Kauravas, the Pandavas, and everybody. Now, who is doing what work?

You are disciples, followers, admirers of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. You are students of yoga, religious people, spiritual aspirants, but you have no time. You say, "Day and night I am working." What that person says can be appreciated. He is doing hard work, but he is not benefited by his stay in the Ashram. Doing work in the Ashram and for the Ashram may look like a wonderful thing. Everybody praises that person: "See how hard he is working!" But he does not benefit by that action because he complains, "I have got so much work." If it is a beneficial thing, will he complain? He feels that this is not a proper thing he is doing. One or two departmental heads came

and told me, "The whole day I have to work, and at night also. There is no time to attend *satsanga*."

You are here in the Ashram, comfortable in every way, not merely to do service and to do good work, but also to have some education to the mind. The Ashram is educating students; one thousand children we are educating, but you are not educating yourselves. You are the same guys as you came. In the house you were also working. You go to the fields, to the office, to the factory, and are very busy. The same thing is here also, but the difference is the mind. In the house you have got attachments to father, mother, sister, husband, wife, relations, uncle, and so many people, always thinking of them only. That attachment is not here. We all love each other. Everyone in the Ashram loves each other and is deeply concerned, but we are not attached to each other. I like you very much, but I am not attached to you and I completely forget you when you go away. But I am still concerned with you. That is God's attitude towards man, we can say.

A manager of the State Bank of India has a lot of money, but he is not attached to that money. But if it is your money, you will think of that only. Now, what is it that causes attachment? Is it the thing? Otherwise, day and night the bank manager will think of the crores of rupees in the safe. He has no such idea at all in his mind, but he will not make even one paise mistake in calculation. He will not say, "What is there? It is not my money. Let it go." This is how we have to work.

People say, "What is there? It is somebody's work, and I am doing meditation. Why should I do all this stupid work? The work has no connection with me." It is like the State Bank manager saying, "It is not my money. Why should I drudge unnecessarily? Let it go. If some two hundred rupees go away, what does it matter?" No, like that it cannot be. The State Bank manager is not a foolish man. He cannot lose five rupees, though it is not his money. So the whole problem is the 'his' and the 'my'. That is the problem. Even God is not your property; God is not your relation. You are That only, inseparably existing.

Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to say, "My disciple who is a yoga student will clean the floor better than a sweeper. He will not allow any dirt to remain, because he is a yogi who is cleaning. If you ask him to clean a vessel, he will see that the vessel is spotlessly clean and shining. And when he speaks, he will speak useful words, beneficial words, measured words, and only when it is necessary to speak. In every field, my disciple will be expert, number one."

To think like this, you must have time. Though all the time is your time only, since you are beginners and unable to catch up with the speed of the thoughts of the mind, and cannot think in this wonderful way, you think only complaints against somebody. You always think against somebody, against somebody, against somebody. Nobody is good; everybody is bad only. This kind of habit you have created. But to think like this for the immortal benefit of one's own self, for the treasure that you have to carry into the next world, you should not say you have no time.

Well, it is true that even in the midst of all the work you may not be able to think like this continuously, but if you cannot train your mind to such an extent that even in the midst of calculating figures you can meditate like this, then what to do? Swami Sivanandaji used to say, "You are an accountant. You know how much concentration is necessary. For half an hour do the calculations, and then put the fountain pen down. Take a breath. Collect yourself. Then start the work again." It is not that eighteen hours of the day you do calculation and completely forget yourself. But it is easy to forget

oneself, so after half an hour's work put the pen down. Even if you are doing cleaning, spadework, digging, for five minutes keep the spade down and take a breath and repeat: Bhagavan Narayana. Then start the work again. If it is not possible to maintain the stability of the mind throughout activity of any kind, because that is a very advanced stage, stop your work now and then and do your concentration for a few minutes, and then continue your work.

If even that is difficult, do work as you are doing it, but for one hour in your day be alone to yourself. When you are a little free for one hour, generally you like to go walking somewhere to the market, and so on. This is not going to benefit you. If you go to Rishikesh and see all the shops and come back, you gain nothing by that. You have wasted your time.

Twenty-four hours you have got, so twenty-three hours you are busy, and one hour is for yourself. What do you do in that one hour? These thoughts must come. Usually it is difficult to think like this. Even if you tell this any number of times, these thoughts will not arise in the mind. Why happiness comes, why unhappiness comes, why poverty comes, why richness comes, why this, why that? These questions arise because you have completely severed yourself from the cosmic process, and from the point of view of that wrong position of separateness from the whole you are arguing, questioning, reading philosophical books, etc. What is the use of philosophical books? They are all written by people who are outside the universal process, and they cannot answer any question. Those people who uttered the words of the Upanishads, for instance, were not professors of philosophy speaking. The Upanishads were expressions of the author's direct experience with this unity of the cosmos, so when you read those sentences, you are simply thrilled. But if you read a textbook of a professor, you will not be as happy as that.

Another ashramite: I have a question.

Swamiji: I have spoken much. What did you understand from what I said? Why are you asking questions when I have answered all your questions? Why are you still existing outside? I told you, you should not exist outside. You are still cutting yourself off. 'But', you will say. People hear all this and then say 'but'. This 'but' is the mischief-maker. Okay, tell me what you want to say.

Ashramite: Swamiji told now one should keep silent for five minutes during work or for one hour in the day.

Swamiji: You have got better facility than others because you are a librarian. A librarian has no work, really speaking. It is simply keeping the books, so there you have got no problem. You are not so very handicapped like an accountant. He cannot meditate like that, but you are free. What is your problem? Can you not get five minutes?

Ashramite: It seems that ultimately non-doing is the end.

Swamiji: It is not non-doing, it is unity with doing. Again you are mistaking the point. When the doing becomes your being itself, it ceases to be action. The sun is not doing any action; his very existence is action. The solar system is trembling before him, but he does not go on giving lectures to people to do this and do that, and so on. Nor does the sun have hands and feet. When action becomes your being itself, it ceases to be action. This is the whole thing. Action and being are not two things. That is why I said meditation and action are identical. Action does not proceed from some aspect of your personality outside; it is an emanation of your being itself. You yourself are entirely moving. The whole person is moving in that action, so the action is you moving.

Therefore, who is doing the action? Then nobody is doing the action, and you yourself are sitting there. The whole action is your being. Do you understand me? It is a very subtle point, and very difficult. That is why I said again and again that you must find time to think like this. It is subtle, like mathematics. You cannot understand this.

There is no such thing as action; it doesn't exist. It is a movement of your being itself, actually. But as you have separated yourself from space and time, it looks as if the action is taking place somewhere outside, and you are doing it. "I am doing action," you are saying, so you are the subject and action is the object. This is not like that. The action is the subject. It is doing itself in the sense that you yourself are involved in that action and you are yourself the action. That is the meaning of Bhagavan Sri Krishna saying, "I am doing everything." "I am doing everything" means not with the fountain pen, computer, and so on. Lord Krishna does not have any clerk and computer and so on, so how does he do work? He does it simply by his being. The existence itself is action. This is how God works or anybody should work, so you should not have any problems.

Another ashramite: Can we meditate standing up?

Swamiji: Provided you don't fall down, because unless the mind thinks of the legs, the legs cannot move, and if part of the mind goes to the movement of the legs to stabilise the motion, the percentage of mind allotted for concentration or meditation may be comparatively less to that extent. So it is up to you to decide the matter. You cannot give one hundred percent of the mind to the meditation because then your legs will totter.

You can chant a mantra and walk on the road, but you must be cautious of the trucks coming from both sides. Your mind is thinking of some mantra, and a truck hits you from behind. Are you going to be conscious of the movement of trucks, or are you going to be conscious of the mantra? It is not a good habit, especially on the road. You can walk in the jungle; that is all right because there are no trucks there and nobody troubles you, but on the main road where there is traffic, why should you risk your security? Of course, you can just casually have a noble thought, but actual acute concentration cannot be done. And where is the necessity to meditate when walking? Why not sit somewhere? You can sit on the parapet on the roadside and meditate. When you meditate, why are you walking? Where is the urgency?

Ashramite: Unless I am doing some physical work.

Swamiji: Why should you do physical work? Labourers who dig the ground on the road can think, because it is a crude work they are doing. But you have got plenty of time. You are a retired man, so you can sit in the room and meditate. Why do you want to meditate while walking? When you walk, you walk; when you think, you think; when you eat, you eat. Why do two things at the same time? When you eat food, you must think only of the food, not of the railway train and other things, and when you write, you think only of writing. When you meditate, you think only of God. When you walk, you think only of the atmosphere around. You should not think two things at the same time. That is not good. Anything that is done with a hundred-percent concentration will work. Whenever you do anything, you must think only that, not another thing; then it becomes beneficial. So this is my answer.

Life is a progressive process of the evolution of the human individual towards Godhead. That is life. Do you understand what I uttered? A progressive evolutionary process of the individual towards the realisation of the ultimate Godhead—that is life. So take this sentence with you as my gift.

Session 20

SANKARACHARYA'S COMMENTARY ABOUT PRAKRITI AND PURUSHA

The problem of *prakriti* and *purusha* looks like a very serious problem, but actually it is a simple matter. The way in which people write about it makes it complicated. The same thing is said again and again in various words in different scriptures and philosophies. In the Isavasya Upanishad, the words *vidya* and *avidya* are used. *Anyad evāhur vidyayā anyad āhur avidyayā* (Isa 10). The Isavasya Upanishad says *vidya* and *avidya* are there. By *vidya* you receive one benefit, and by *avidya* you receive another benefit. I am not discussing the Isavasya Upanishad now. I am coming to some other point.

Anashramite: I think it is from *vidya-avidya* only, the suffering we are having.

Swamiji: That is because of the misuse of the word *avidya*. The word *avidya* is wrongly used. Ramanujacharya has found seven mistakes in Sankaracharya's idea of *avidya* in his Brahmasutra Bhashya. His main point is: "Why do you say that *avidya* creates this world? It cannot sit in Brahman, it cannot sit in the world, and it also cannot sit in the *jiva*. So where is it sitting? Therefore, your philosophy is pointless." Ramanujacharya condemns Sankaracharya, but he doesn't understand.

Avidya is not a substance; it does not require a place to exist. It is an affliction of the mind. If you ask where the affliction is sitting, do you want a place for that? Suppose a person is ill. Now, where is the illness sitting just now? What will you say? Illness is not a thing. It does not require a place to sit. It is a condition. *Avidya* is a condition, and a condition does not require a place. So Ramanuja's criticism has no meaning. Let it go. That is another subject.

I generally never use these words *avidya*, *maya*, and so on, in my writings. They are all unnecessary troublemakers. You should not use words which are not explainable.

Now I am coming to another point: *prakriti-purusha*. Mind and body, God and world, inside and outside, positive and negative, light and darkness—all these are the same as *purusha* and *prakriti*, subject and object. Wherever you touch, you will find these two things operating: I and you. The whole universe is made up of I and you, that's all—yourself, and what is not yourself. There are only two things in the whole universe. What is the relationship between yourself and that which is not yourself? No human being can answer this question. Here is someone sitting. He is not you, and you are not he. Is there any relationship between you two, or is there no relationship? If there is a relation, what kind of relation is it? Is he sitting inside you? Is he sitting outside you? If he is outside, there is no relation. Can you say there is no relation? Then what is it? The idea of 'not me' is the bondage. You cannot explain it as either included in you or excluded from you. This object before your mind is not inside the mind; it is outside the mind. If it is outside the mind, your mind cannot get it. If it is inside the mind, there is no need of wanting it. Then what is the meaning of wanting anything? It has no meaning. So all desire is a blunder, actually.

Sankaracharya gave an explanation of a great verse of the Bhagavadgita. *Prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva viddhy anādī ubhāv api* (B.G. 13.19): Consider *prakriti* and *purusha* as both beginningless. I read many commentaries on the Gita to find out how two things can be *anadi*, because if two things are *anadi*, they will clash with each other. Like Shumbha and Nishumbha, Madhu and Kaitabha, they will be sources of great trouble. Only God can be *anadi*, and nothing else can be *anadi*. Yet Bhagavan Sri Krishna says:

prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva vidhyanādī ubhāvapi. He has used the word 'two'. Why should he use the word 'two'? Already we have found out that when there are two things, no relationship is possible.

Sankaracharya's commentary is very strange. He may be right in what he says, but the way he puts it looks very funny. God does not create things by Himself. Creation requires a conditioning factor. Unless there is a conditioning factor before the sun, there will not be day and night. The sun does not create day and night. If the conditioning factor, which is the movement of the earth, is absent, there will be perpetual daytime. That is to say that there will be perpetual creation. Creation is spontaneous. God does not have to think. The whole universe appears automatically because it is an appearance of His existence. As long as He is, this also will continue, so there will be endless creation.

Gaudapada says in his Mandukya Karika that creation is the *svabhava* of Ishvara. He is not creating anything. He doesn't say or think, "Let me create." What desire has He got? But creation has a beginning and an end, just as day has a beginning and an end though the sun does not have either a beginning or an end. Therefore, you have to explain this creation having a beginning and an end due to the interference of some factor which is other than the existence of God Himself. That is *prakriti* and *puruṣa*. Now, what is *prakriti* and *puruṣa*? It looks like man and woman. The language used is so intriguing that we can misinterpret it. We think that *prakriti* is a woman, and *puruṣa* is a man. It is not like that. *Prakriti* simply means unintelligent material existence. *Puruṣa* is a name for intelligent non-material existence. Consciousness and matter, awareness and its object, this is *puruṣa* and *prakriti*.

Sankaracharya's interpretation is that there is a conditioning factor which limits the nature of creation to a particular characteristic only. With every cycle, the nature of creation changes. *Yathā pūrvam akalpayat* (R.V. 10.190.3). The Rigveda says the Creator created the universe in the same way as He created it earlier. Yesterday there was day, today there is day, and tomorrow there will also be day. There is no difference, but the varying movements of the earth changes the pattern of the day. One day it is hot, another day it is cold; one day is long, another day is short, etc. These are not done by the sun. He doesn't create these things. Likewise, though it is true that the same pattern is maintained in creation, the details differ. It is difficult to understand this.

Both Eastern and Western philosophers have accepted that every entity in creation is a pattern. This pattern should be distinguished from the shape of individuals. There is a pattern for a district collector, but the Mr. so-and-so who is the collector will be changed. The post of collector never changes; it is a permanent thing. Endlessly the collector will be there, but the person holding the post changes. Likewise, you are a pattern, and the pattern is like a mould into which anything can be cast. That mould determines the shape of the thing which is cast into it, like the moulds for making cement blocks for building construction. They can make the mould long or short or thick or small or heavy, and so on, according to the size of the block that they need. This pattern called 'you' will be there eternally, but the soul inhabiting it will be different. You are a pattern, a structural peculiarity. That structural peculiarity will be there permanently. There will always be commissioners, there will always be collectors, there always will be police, there will always be everything, but the soul changes. Today's policeman is not tomorrow's policeman, but police can never change.

So creation is involved in two aspects: the maintenance of the pattern, and the change of the soul that is cast into this pattern. In Western circles there is a philosopher called Alfred North Whitehead. You must read his writings. There is not much difference

between the height of Western thought and the height of Eastern thought. They are saying the same thing, only in different styles. Whitehead mentions the same thing, that there are patterns. The words used are difficult, so we do not understand the meaning.

Creation is a perpetual action, and only the nature of the patterns change. Eternally there will be this pattern, and only the soul will be different. Tomorrow another soul will enter into this pattern and it will think in a different way, but with the same face, etc.

An ashramite: Swamiji, the name and form are eternal?

Swamiji: Permanent. The mould is permanent; only what is cast into it changes. There is a mould, and the mould is permanent. You can cast gold into it, silver into it, mud into it, cement into it, etc. The thing that comes out is quite different, but the pattern is the same.

Ashramite: Till Self-realisation this will go on—moulding, casting and remoulding.

Swamiji: Self-realisation is a different thing altogether.

Ashramite: But ultimately the casting will end one day.

Swamiji: It can end just now if you want. In one minute it can end. All the things that I am telling you can end in one minute if only you wake up from this consciousness of there being something. You are always saying, “There is something other than myself.” That is the cause of bondage. Then creation starts, everything starts. But that ‘other than myself’ is seen in dream also. In dream there is ‘me and other than myself’, but when you wake up, where are they? How much time has it taken?

Ashramite: Swamiji, but here you feel concreteness of this waking. On this basis I say...

Swamiji: Is there no concreteness in dream? You are comparing it with another thing, but why do you compare? Take it as it is. Then you compare this waking with transcendence.

Ashramite: That hold I have not yet got; that is the trouble.

Swamiji: How can you hold the waking in dream?

Ashramite: It is a natural process.

Swamiji: No, it is not natural, it is a karma. The karma is keeping you pressed hard into the dream condition. When that particular karma which is operating as dream is lifted up, you come to the waking state. So here also it is karma only. There is a *prarabdha* karma which keeps you in the waking consciousness. When that is lifted, you go to the transcendent consciousness.

Meditation is nothing but the dreamer thinking of waking. The dreamer should deeply think of the waking condition; that is meditation. How will the dreamer think of waking, tell me? For the dreamer, the waking condition does not exist at all. For us also, God does not exist. But God is sitting on your head. Even then, you don’t exercise it. So there is a semi-consciousness. In dream the consciousness is completely blurred, but in waking consciousness it is semi-blurred, and so there is a possibility of meditating in waking consciousness. The completely blurred dream condition is not suitable. Nor is sleep—it is completely obliterated in sleep.

So *prakriti* and *purusha*... In Western circles there is a philosopher called Spinoza. He describes *prakriti* and *purusha* as space and time. Extension and relation, three-dimensional height, width, etc., and procedure or process of movement—there are three dimensions of everything. That is *prakriti*. *Prakriti* has got three dimensions: length, breadth, height.

Ashramite: There is no awareness at all?

Swamiji: No, absolutely nothing. And time is the fourth factor. So modern physics says there are four dimensions. For instance, there are three dimensions in a cinema hall. You see a flat surface, yet how does it look like a human being moving about, a three-dimensional man? On a flat screen you can see a depth of one mile, which doesn't exist at all. So if a flat, two-dimensional surface can look three-dimensional, what you call a three-dimensional thing is actually a four-dimensional thing. The fourth dimension is *turiya*; the three dimensions are waking, dream and sleep.

Hard effort is necessary to think this. Has anybody thought why the flat surface of a cinema screen looks like a big world moving about? Why it is looking like that? Something is wrong in the mode of perception. It is a perceptual defect. Otherwise, if you go near the screen, you will not see anything. You keep a distance so that the illusion might work very well. If you go very near the object, it will not look all right. Things look beautiful from a distance, but if you go on looking at them close up, the beauty goes. Even if you smear the whole body with food it won't help you. It must go in a proper way to the particular place.

So *prakriti* and *purusha* are only the three-dimensional and one-dimensional space-time complex. Without that, creation cannot take place. Therefore, Sankaracharya says there is a point in Bhagavan Sri Krishna saying that both are eternal. Space is eternal; time is also eternal. As long as they are there, creation must take place. If they are not there, no creation takes place. So this is Sankaracharya's interesting commentary about *prakriti* and *purusha*.

It does not exist, really speaking. It does not exist as an outside body. Your consciousness of there being something other than you is the bondage of your consciousness, and that thing which you call other than you is actually this person who is not other than you. Unnecessarily you are saying he is other than you, and he can say the same thing about you also. What do you say? Now, who is the other—you or he? Tell me. You are the object of this person, and he is the object of your person, so is he the object or are you the object? There cannot be two objects in perception. Then who is the object? Therefore, the whole thing is a blunder. The whole idea of there being somebody outside you is a blunder. So much education and knowledge you have got, but you are making a blunder every minute. You cannot say who this person is, and yet you are talking to him every day.

Likewise is this *prakriti-purusha*. They do not exist at all, really speaking, just as an object does not exist, and there is only a definition. You can say you are the subject; you can say you are the object. You may say you are *prakriti*, you may say you are *purusha*, or you may say you are Ishvara himself. When you give up the idea of your being a subject or object because they are inexplicable things, you immediately transcend them. You will attain to the third element between you both, which is called the *adhidaiva* principal—between the *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta*.

Ashramite: Is it Hegel's dialectics also?

Swamiji: I told you, the heights of Western thought and the heights of Indian thought are the same thing. Hegel says the same thing—that is thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The thesis is that you are a subject, the antithesis is that he is an object, but the synthesis is that neither of you are a subject or an object. And what is the synthesis? It is a transcendent consciousness where you accept that you are neither subject nor object. Then immediately illumination takes place so that there is moksha. What else can I tell

you? It won't enter the mind. You do not know who is sitting in front of you. The whole point is that, and yet you think everything is clear.

Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj has created this Ashram so that you may find time to think these things. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj has not created the Ashram so that you may eat well and sleep well and wander about anywhere. This is not the purpose for which Swamiji has created the Ashram. You could have stayed anywhere and joined any duty, become an official, earned money, had children, and been happy. Nobody objects to that. But Swami Sivanandaji felt there is a higher way of living. Unless this higher consciousness arises in a person, life is a waste, finally. Again and again you are being born and you are dying, etc., so that is why Swamiji created this wonderful atmosphere.

But you have no time. Where has the time gone? You should not complain. Bhagavan Lord Krishna says *tasya kartāram api mām viddhyakartāram avyayam* (B.G. 4.13): "Though I am doing all the work, I am not really doing all the work. I am doing everything, you cannot lift a finger without Me, yet I have done nothing." It is like the sun. Without the sun you cannot breathe, you cannot exist, you cannot digest your food. The whole thing will collapse. But the sun does not say, "Let me help this person tomorrow, let me see his health is okay, let me give him air to breathe, let me give him warmth." The existence itself is action. If existence itself is action, it is karma yoga. But if that action is done for an ulterior purpose, it is binding. So each one of you find out: are you working for a particular purpose, or is it a spontaneous emanation from your perfection? Then you will not make complaints. You can do any amount of work, yet nothing will happen to you because it is your own being coming out. You do not dislike yourself. You do not become exhausted of yourself. You are exhausted by something else.

That is what I was saying: something else does not exist. Unnecessarily you are thinking that it is somebody else's work you are doing. If it is somebody else's work, it will fatigue you. In half an hour you will get tired and say you have too much work, but if it is your work you will never tire. You do not tire of your own field, your own harvest, but will you go to another man's field and supervise the harvest? Why should you? You will say, "It is a drudgery. Why should I do that?" You can do hard work for your own satisfaction, but you won't work for another's satisfaction because again the idea of another has come. The whole point is this.

At the very beginning of the Brahmasutra Bhashya of Sankara is the clash between the I and the you. They are like light and darkness; they can never be reconciled. You can never reconcile yourself with another person, because you don't know who you are. You are the observer of him, but he is the observer of you. Now who is the observer, really? The very first sentence of Sankaracharya's Bhashya is this clash between the I and the you. Let it go. Now you are blessed.

What can I tell you? Those who have understood what I said may tell those people who have not understood, and explain it in your own language. It requires attention and appreciation of one's own predicament. You must know your condition: "What kind of man am I? I have come all the way from home. Am I vegetating here? Am I simply preparing for my death? Why should I come here? It is for improving myself so that there will be a field created by Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj that I may not be reborn again into this confused way of thinking."

Every day you must think this, and find time to be alone to yourself. Try to be alone to yourself. You don't want another man to talk to. Everybody should find one hour at least in which you don't think anything. For one hour you are absolutely alone. You

should not say that you have no time. Either you are doing something for another or you are sleeping. So in either of them *tamas* or *rajas* is working, and *sattva* is not working. You don't want to be alone to yourself. It is boring. When you are alone, you walk to Rishikesh. So again *rajas* is pushing you.

If this is not properly appreciated, you will suffer as old age comes. Nobody will care for you when you are old. Why should you be in that condition? When you go, go as a gentleman, as a person who has fulfilled your life. When you go, you say, "My Lord, I have done everything that is to be done for Your sake." You have come here to do something for His sake, and you have not come here to do something for your sake, because you don't exist independently. I mention to you again and again this idea of you and I must go away. Remove this idea of you and I, and then you are a friend of all people—*sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ* (B.G. 12.4). God bless you.

Session 21

THE SELF IS THE FRIEND AND THE ENEMY OF THE SELF

Swamiji: *Uddhared ātmanātmānam nātmānam avasādayet, ātmaiva hyātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ; bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ, anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat* (B.G. 6.5-6). Can all of you write an essay on the meaning of this sloka? The word *ātma* is used so many times, and every time it is used in a different sense, so it is not easy to write such an essay unless you know what is the meaning of this *ātma* used on different occasions.

The self should be pulled up by the self. Now, what is the meaning? Ordinarily it has no meaning because one cannot pull up one's own self. It is not possible. It is like lifting one's own self. Somebody has to lift you. How can you lift yourself? So there is some difficulty in knowing the meaning of that. You should not fall down and deprecate and throw despondency on the self. The self should not make the self despondent. Now, which self will lift which self? The self is the friend of the self. The self is the enemy of the self. The commentary is given here: *bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ*. Though it is a commentary, a very difficult commentary it is. The self is the friend of that self which has conquered the self by the self. *Anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat*: The self is the enemy of the self where the self has not been conquered by the self. So how many times is the word 'self' used there? You can count. The whole two verses are filled with 'self' only.

It is the essence of spiritual practice. The whole of sadhana is in these two slokas. The Sixth Chapter of the Bhagavadgita is the yoga of self-control, self-restraint, self-sufficiency, self-conquest, Self-realisation. You can call it by any name. Self-conquest, self-control, Self-realisation, self-sufficiency all mean the same thing.

An ashramite: All these things I think come in the lower self, and Self-realisation is in the higher self.

Swamiji: Now you are thinking of two selves, the lower and the higher. Actually, lower and higher selves are not mentioned in the sloka. It simply says 'the self by the self'. The self that is not conquered by the self is the lower self. How can the self conquer the self? Will you conquer your own self? The self is to be conquered by the self. The self should not deprecate the self. The self is the friend of the self. The self is the enemy of the self. What is the meaning of all this? How can one thing be a friend of oneself or an enemy of oneself?

We are afraid of ourselves. We have fear from nobody else. We have great fear from ourselves. Now, when I say 'we', who is this 'we'? That is the whole point. The self has a fear of the self. The self is happy with the self.

Ashramite: The Self is the same in everyone.

Swamiji: You write an essay on that, whether it is the same or not. If it is the same, then why is one a boss and another a servant? Why are you making such a distinction? Is there a Self in the servant or not? Or is he a different Self from the Self in the boss? Is it the same Self, only one is a servant and the other is a boss? So that means two different Selves are there. You said the same Self is everywhere, so then why are you saying that somebody is a servant? How do you answer this question? Here is the point. It is very difficult, sir. It is not an easy matter.

Ashramite: The servant Self has more limitations.

Swamiji: Who created the limitations? The Self does not create limitations for its own self. There is a time when we have to think of these matters. When we are entangled too much in externals, the self jumps out from itself, as it were, into the field of self-destruction, we may say. I must use words very carefully whenever I am speaking of the Self. The self can jump out of itself and become a greater self, or it can jump out of itself and destroy itself. Both it can do. It depends upon what kind of jump it is attempting, actually.

There is the larger self and the smaller self. If the smaller self jumps out to the higher self, it is a great achievement. But if the smaller self jumps out of itself into the pit of self-destruction, then it is a great pity indeed. The Self is everything, no more commentary is necessary; but in what sense is it everything? It is your father, it is your mother, it is your brother, it is your friend, it is your enemy, it is your protector, it is everything. It is you yourself, and it is also not yourself. Anything can be said about it. The Bhagavadgita uses the word 'self' in any number of connotations. Sometimes the word Atman is used for the body also. Sometimes it is used for the *prana*, sometimes for the sense organs, sometimes for the intellect. The word used in the Bhagavadgita is Atman, and in English you can call it Self. But what is the meaning of the Atman? Is it inside you or outside you, is it everywhere or only in one place, or is there anything outside it? These are the questions which arise. Is the Self inside you or is it also outside you? It is not outside because there are people sitting here.

Ashramite: It is in the heart of every living thing.

Swamiji: Then it is also outside you. Now you have modified your definition. If it is everywhere, there will be no place where it is not; and if it is everywhere, it is also everything. All the things are it only. So when you are opening your eyes and looking at things, what are you seeing, actually? Are you seeing the world of objects, or are you seeing the Atman? Here is the whole difference between spiritual perception and ordinary perception. If you cast your eyes around and see the Atman everywhere, it is spiritual perception. But if you cast your eyes everywhere and see only objects of attraction and repulsion, then that is the perception of bondage. So your vision determines your interpretation of things and the consequence that follows from it.

It is a very crucial matter. Books cannot help a person. It requires the Guru's instruction. Go and meet the Gurus, prostrate yourself before them, and learn the great truth. Knowledge has to be communicated to the student by a competent master. A printed book cannot do this. Printed books are only symbols, like algebra, and you have to read the meaning in them. A Guru is not like that. He is a vibrating awareness, so when he thinks, what is called *shaktipada* takes place. *Shaktipada* means the descent of power; the descent of divine power is called *shaktipada*. Even if the Guru merely looks at you, the energy of the Guru will enter into you. He can speak to you, and the energy will enter into you, but he need not speak or look at you; he can simply think you and there will be *shaktipada*. You may be in London and the Guru may be in India, but his thought about you will be enough because the mind does not take time to travel. The mind travels faster than the speed of light. It can reach Brahmaloaka just now in one second, but light will not reach. Though light is the fastest thing conceivable, the mind is faster. How much time will light take to reach Brahmaloaka? But as soon as you think, it has already reached. Nowadays there is a thing called a fax. Immediately it reaches there; the moment you send something it goes there because it travels by the speed of

electricity. The speed of electricity is the same as the speed of light. But here it is something different. It is still faster than that.

Another ashramite: Swamiji, the Isavasya Upanishad says that the Self is faster than the mind. What is it?

Swamiji: The Self exists even before the mind thinks. The mind has to think something. You are internalising it. You should not internalise and externalise the Self. You must universalise it. Here is the whole point. We always make the mistake of externalising and internalising. That is a mistake in perception. Old habits die hard. You are used to using the words 'my', 'my', 'my' and so on. How long will you go on using this word 'my'?

Ashramite: Swamiji, if the disciple who is far away is receptive, then he or she will get the message from the Guru. Otherwise, do you think the Guru will be able to send a message to a person who is not receptive?

Swamiji: Even then it will reach. It depends upon the bombarding strength of the Guru's thought. A stone cannot become smooth, but the Ganga makes the stone as smooth as butter by rubbing, rubbing, rubbing. See how smooth, butter-like, are the hard stones? See the power of water. Otherwise, no matter how much you rub the stone, it won't become smooth. That is the impact of bombardment.

The Self is like a live wire. Who will go near it? You cannot simply make a joke of it. You cannot even think it. If you think it properly, it will give a shock, but if you are simply joking with it, it will be like a rope. It won't give a shock. Without a shudder in your body you cannot write an essay on this subject because you are writing about yourself only, and nobody can be more fearful than your own self. It is very surprising that we are afraid of our own selves. As we cannot manifest our fear of ourselves in public life, we throw it on somebody else. It is a psychological mechanism.

When you have hatred for your own self you cannot manifest it properly, so you throw it on someone else and hate the other person. This is called displacement in psychoanalysis. It is a very serious subject. Self-love can become other-love. Self-hatred can become other-hatred. Self-fear can become other-fear. Psychology is a very important subject. You cannot know what is happening to you. You are thinking that everything is all right, but it is not like that.

You have got the highest cosmic potentiality inside. That is also an important point. You have got the worst in you, and also the best, and all the degrees of difference between the lowest and the highest. The whole universe is jumping inside. The whole universe is inside you in all the degrees of manifestation. From the ant and the crawling insect, from the stone up to the Absolute, everything is inside you. At different moments different things will manifest themselves, so sometimes you look like one thing, sometimes you look like another thing. That is why you have moods. You feel despondency and happiness and all kinds of things because these moods arise from various levels of your personality which manifest themselves under different exigencies. It is very difficult. Spiritual practice is not for ordinary human beings.

Ashramite: The substance of the entire creation, that particular substance is within every living being?

Swamiji: You are made up of that only. It is not within; you are made of that. The entire setup is inside you. All the rungs of the ladder of evolution are inside you. That is why it is a frightening thing to understand. You can deal with the sun and the moon and the stars and the satellites and the rockets; you can understand all of them, but you cannot know yourself. The nearer you come to yourself, the more frightening it becomes. You

can manage everything outside and face somebody else, but you cannot face your own self.

Ashramite: Swamiji, our senses can comprehend only what is finite. For example, we cannot visualise the infinite.

Swamiji: The senses cannot visualise. Only the higher reason can have some concept of it.

Ashramite: Then if we have realised the Self, what happens?

Swamiji: What is the meaning of 'realised the Self'?

Ashramite: 'Realising' means understanding it.

Swamiji: No, realising it does not mean understanding it. Realising it means becoming it. You become the Universal Being. You become God Himself. And if you become God, what will you do? How will you operate telephones at that time? [Laughter] It is unthinkable. There is no telephone necessary at that time. All needs will vanish in one minute. All your needs will be fulfilled simultaneously so that they will not be there at all afterwards. When every need is fulfilled, there is no need left. It is very difficult to conceive such things.

The smaller we are, the larger is the wealth and property that we require. The larger we are, the fewer are the things that we need from the outside world. It is the poverty of one's own self that makes one feel that we want more and more things from outside. But if we are inwardly rich, the outer wealth looks like a tinsel, like a straw. We don't want it afterwards. All the outer wealth is like a whitewash. A whitewash is not the substance; the substance is something else. We are satisfied with good clothes, but whatever the dress is, the person does not become more beautiful. Remove all the clothes and then see whether he is beautiful or not. He is not beautiful. He is an ugly man, so he wants to put on nice clothes and make it appear as if he is beautiful. All makeup of every kind is like whitewash. The real thing inside is brick and cement. You don't want to show it, so you put plaster and whitewash. Because there is a thin layer of skin on the body, everything looks wonderful. If there is no skin on the body, what will you see in that person? A person with no skin, how will he look? That is why they say all beauty is skin deep. All your evaluation is in the skin only. If the skin is not there, there is nothing in the person.

Ashramite: Swamiji, inwardly rich means a different thing.

Swamiji: If everything goes away from you, nobody wants you, nobody wants to even look at you, everybody condemns you, and still you feel inside you that you are a great person, that you have got some importance in you, that is the wealth. There are people who are intrinsically great. For example, an elephant is great not because people are praising it, not because it is putting on good clothes, not because people give votes to it. It doesn't care for your votes. It is what it is. Like that, you have a confidence in yourself. That confidence gives strength. "I have something in me which is in tune with the greatest power in the world, and I can summon it if I want." This is called intrinsic strength.

The son of the president has a power in himself. He says, "I can summon power immediately if I communicate to my father." Nobody can do anything to him. He is the son of the president. Like that, you should feel that you are in tune with the greatest power of the universe. Who can shake a hair of your body? But if you feel you are a poor

fellow, then you will be dependent upon what others are giving you for your importance. That is borrowed importance. That won't work.

There were some people who were intrinsically great, such as Mahatma Gandhi. He was praised and he was insulted, but it did not make any difference to him. He would not bother. He had some convictions. Great heroes lived in India, and in other parts of the world also. It is because of their inner conviction that they were great. "If everything goes, still I am. That is sufficient for me." But it should be the real 'I am': I AM.

You must place yourself in direct and vital connection with That which includes everything. Close your eyes and say: "I am in direct contact with That which includes everything, including myself also." At that time you will feel a shake-up, a tremor in the body. When you say 'including myself also', then there will be shaking. When concentration intensifies, the body will get a shock. Normally the body does not get a shock because the *prana* is moving in one direction. The shock is caused by the movement of the *prana* in some direction. The *prana* now in our present state of life is moving in harmony with this body, but this thought that I am suggesting is something which is disharmonious with bodily existence. This thought is harmonious with cosmic existence, and the *prana* cannot suddenly adjust itself to be in harmony with cosmic existence. It has been always doing service to the body in an individualised fashion, and now you are telling it to unite itself with the cosmic circumstance. It cannot accommodate itself. That is why in deep concentration there is a tremor and a shake-up of the body. If that takes place, it means you have really concentrated properly. Otherwise, you simply sit and get up in the same way as you were; then it means it has not worked properly. Your imagination has not been strong enough.

So you are your own friend. Nobody wants you. You must remember this very well. Nobody wants you. Don't have any misconception. If nobody wants you, who will want you? You catch hold of that person who will want you really. *Suhrdaṁ sarvabhūtānāṁ jñātvā mām śāntim ṛcchati* (B.G. 5.29): "Remember Me as your friend." The friends whom you befriended will desert you. The friend whom you never thought of in your mind will come to your help, just as a mother whom you didn't care for will come and caress you. *Mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ; gatiḥ bhartā prabhuḥ sākṣī nivāsaḥ śaraṇaṁ suhṛt, prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ sthānaṁ nidhānaṁ bījaṁ avyayaṁ* (B.G. 9.17-18): "Everything is Myself." He is your father, mother, brother, grandfather, everybody. Tune yourself in meditation with intense faith that it will work. Om Namo Narayanaya.

Session 22

MEDITATING ON THE EXPANSION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Swamiji: Gods in exile. We are all gods in exile. Our relationship to God is explained in two or three illustrations. One illustration is this exile. We belong to another kingdom, from where we have been thrown out. But we belong to that other kingdom. This point must be emphasised. We do not belong to that kingdom into which we have been thrown; we belong to that kingdom from which we have been thrown out. The second illustration is that we have disobeyed God, and so He has kicked us out. This is the story in the Bible. Lucifer, an angel, asserted independence and God threw him out into perdition, and kept a flaming sword at the gate of heaven so that he may not come back. He fell headlong. 'Headlong' means head below and legs up, like Trishanku in our stories. This headlong falling is also mentioned in the Aitareya Upanishad. The great Viratpurusha spread himself in a multitudinous variety, and in an inexplicable manner each part asserted its independence. We have only to say 'inexplicable' because why did it become necessary for the parts to assert independence? The more distant is the part from the centre from where it has come, the greater is the impulse to self-assertion and self-limitation.

The Aitareya Upanishad, which I like very much because it gives the entire story of creation in a very mysterious way, is an Upanishad which nobody reads. People read only the Isa, Kena and Katha Upanishads, and they think they have understood everything. The story of creation is in the Aitareya Upanishad. The great cosmic creative personality we call the Virat dispersed itself into an endless variety of existences.

There is nothing wrong with fire dispersing itself into millions of sparks, because the sparks are nevertheless fire only. So are we sparks of God? If that is the case, we will shine like God. But we do not seem to be shining like God. So it is not merely the dispersion of the whole into the parts that has taken place; there is a topsy-turvy falling of the parts. This is a very interesting thing that we have to remember. By being told that we are parts of God, we should not be under the impression that we are little gods, that our little brains are little gods thinking. No, it is not like that. We fell headlong, so it became topsy-turvy. The outside looked like the inside, and the inside started looking like the outside.

If you perform *sirsasana* on the bank of the Ganga and look at Swargashram, all the buildings will look upside down, though they are not like that. Look at yourself in a mirror. The right side looks like the left, and the left side looks like the right. This is the illustration of what is called the reflection theory, or the *pratibimba vada* of the Vedantic doctrine. God is reflected in us; therefore, we look quite different from God. That is, the right looks like the left, and the left looks like the right, which is another way of saying the universe, which is the first cause, looks like an effect of our perception, and we, who are the last, look like the first. We came last but it looks like we came first, and the world came first but it looks as if it came after. We look at the world as an effect of our perception, whereas the truth is the other way. It is looking at us.

When the Aitareya Upanishad mentions this process of creation, the multitudinous dispersion of the parts of the Virat, it also mentions that, simultaneously, these little gods fell headlong because these little dispersed sparks were gods only, just as sparks are fire only. As far as the sparks are concerned, they are gods, they are divinities, but they fell headlong. Then immediately they felt segregated from the whole. The

immediate experience was hunger. These fallen gods were like Trishankus, upside down, and they felt hunger by their dissociation from the whole to which they originally belonged. Call this the separation, consciousness asserting itself. If you are asked why you are very egoistic, what answer can you give? It is a joy to be asserting oneself. “Why should I be with you and share my joy with you? I don’t want to share my joy with you. I will take all my joy for myself only.” That is the assertive capacity of existence. Existence asserts itself as a total completeness, so each person feels, “I am a complete person. I won’t share anything with you. I don’t like you. I don’t even want you to exist in front of me.”

Anashramite: Before separation there was one only, Swamiji. There were no many things there.

Swamiji: Now it has become many. The story is that God wanted you to be punished. You can put it like that, if you want. The ‘why’ question comes because the effect is asking what the cause of the cause is. The effect cannot know the cause unless it enters the cause. You are asking why your back is not shining. You cannot see your back. You are an effect, and you are trying to find out why the cause has become the effect. Enter the cause, and then you will know the reason. That is called meditation. Hunger, appetite, heat and cold, fear of death—all these came upon the separated part, one upon the other. This is *jiva shrishti*.

There are two kinds of creation. One is called *ishvara shrishti*, and the other is called *jiva shrishti*. I am quoting a sloka from the Panchadasī: *īkṣaṇādipraveśāntā sṛṣṭirīśena kalpitā, jāgradādivimokṣāntaḥ saṃsāro jīvakalpitaḥ* (Pan. 7.4). The Universal Being willed. As I told you the other day, it saw with millions of eyes, but it did not see anything because there was nothing outside it to see. You must remember what I said the other day about parallel thinking. Everything sees. Yourself, myself, even the table and the walls, the trees and the mountains, the sun, the moon, the stars, all are seeing. They are not objects of your perception. They are seeing. So there is only seeing everywhere; there are no seen objects. That total situation of seeing is called cosmic seeing or Virat seeing, Ishvara seeing, Hiranyagarbha seeing, and so on. The moment you consider another centre of seeing as the seen, you are in trouble. So, as I told you the other day, I should not look at you as if you are sitting in front of me. I should see you as if you are parallel to me.

Now so many are sitting here. I am looking at them, and they are looking at me. Imagine another situation. All of us are lined up in one line, all looking in the same direction. That is, no one will see the other. Everyone is completely in a line. Then there will be a complete seeing, everybody seeing, a total seeing, but there will be nothing to be seen. Some such thing is the illustration of the Virat seeing. When the headlong falling of the parts took place, hunger and thirst manifested, and the gods cried, “Give us food.” So everybody in the world cries, “Give us food.” The ant wants food, the tree wants food, even an insect, even a scorpion, everything wants food. Even a bird does not keep quiet. In the early morning it gets up and then finds some way of getting grub. Hunger is the immediate consequence of the fall from the universal whole.

That which sustains is food. From where do we get the food? The food comes from the world. Food is a material object. It consists of earth, water, fire, air and ether. There is nothing but this in the food that we eat. The different tastes and the different relishes, etc., of the foodstuff that we eat are due to the different permutations and combinations of one or two of these elements.

Remember, the world of the five elements is our parent from where we have first come. The Taittiriya Upanishad is to be remembered here. *Tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśas sambhūtaḥ, ākāśād vāyuḥ, vāyor agniḥ, agner āpaḥ, adbhyaḥ pṛithivī, pṛthivyā oṣdhayaḥ oṣadhībhyo annam, annāt puruṣaḥ* (T.U. 2.1.1). There was a vacuous extension, as it were, at the time of creation. That vacuous extension is this vast sky that you are seeing. The consciousness of total inclusiveness should first be abolished in order that you may see externality. That is done by the manifestation of space. God-consciousness is total inclusiveness, and space is total exclusiveness. It is the opposite of God. You see everything scattered out in distant places. One thing is not connected with another thing. Everything is far away from another thing; that is space. But everything is one with everything; that is God-consciousness. If everything is connected to everything, that is God-consciousness. If nothing is connected to anything, that is space-consciousness. This is what has happened. This is the reason why many religions say God created the world out of nothing. In the Atharvaveda there is a mantra called the Skhamba Sukta—a long, long sukta. What is the scaffolding of this creation? What is the brick and mortar and the wood God used for manufacturing this world? What is the pillar of this universe? What is the material out of which the world has come? Since no material was there, religions started proclaiming that God created the world out of nothing. If nothing is the cause of this world, the world itself becomes nothing, with no substance in anything, like a balloon. This is a side issue.

Now, coming to the point, the hunger that we feel is due to the separation of ourselves from the foodstuff. The foodstuff is the earth, water, fire, air, ether, from where we have come. So we are craving for the very thing from which we are cut off. That is called hunger. You grab anything and throw it into your stomach, under the impression that it absorbs into itself the thing from which it has been cut off. But every day there will be hunger. It will not satisfy itself because however much you may throw these five elements into your mouth, they will not get identified with yourself. The food is always outside you. It is capable of nourishing the physical body, the *prana*, the *indriyas*, the *manas*, the *buddhi*, etc., but it cannot satisfy the Self. The Self cannot be satisfied with anything that is thrust into it from outside. The Self is itself, so another thing thrust into itself cannot satisfy it. Thus, with any amount of eating, you will still be unhappy.

This is what has happened during creation: hunger. “Give me that from where I have been thrown out,” is what the hunger is saying. All right, you will be given it, provided you really want it. Who wants it? Your self should want it. If the self asserts itself as an independent thing, it cannot come to you. *Sarvaṁ tam parādād yo’nyatrātmano sarvaṁ veda* (B.U. 2.4.6): Everything will run away from you if you consider it as outside yourself. That is why there is no friend in this world, because you are considering the friend as an outside object. However closely related he may be to you—even your own brother, which is the closest relation you can think of—he is an independent individual. Your brother will not enter into you. He is standing outside, due to space. I mentioned just now that space segregates everything. The closest relationship is cut off. Brother and brother, father and son, husband and wife are artificially connected as if they are relatives, but they are really segregated by space. Space is the Ravana, and time is the Kumbhakarna. They will not give you peace of mind.

When we are hungry and thirsty, we are asking for earth and water. Why are we asking for earth and water? Because we are made up of earth and water. We are asking

for the substance out of which we have been made but have been separated by space. That is the reason why even if you eat the earth and the water principles in this world, the separating principle of space will not permit you to be satisfied. So till death you have to go on eating, and even then there is not going to be satisfaction. You have to overcome space and time in order that you may get back to that original state from where you have been thrown out. Then the gates of heaven will be opened.

Rama had to defeat both Kumbhakarna and Ravana. I gave an example: Ravana and Kumbhakarna are this space and time. They are formidable enemies, and they will never allow you to think correctly. Everything is outside for us. Don't you think it is like that? Everything is outside; there is nothing inside us. This is what space is telling us. And time is telling us, "Fellow, I will destroy you one day." The fear of death comes. The sense of limitation and helplessness is due to space operating in a distracting manner, and the fear of destruction and death is due to the time process. Time is the all-devouring destroyer.

The Yoga Shastra is the art of defying this segregating act of space, and the death instinct of time. As I mentioned to you the other day, the art of yoga should be fully learned. Yoga is union. You cannot unite yourself with anything as long as space is there. One sand particle cannot get identified with another sand particle. They are all isolated. One leaf on a tree is not like another leaf. Everything is separate. How will you overcome the segregating function of space? When spatial distance is overcome, time will also go. They go together. When one goes, the other goes.

How will you defy space? Open your eyes, and then you will get all things. This is one method I am mentioning, among many others. Feel that you are seated here, and feel that you are also seated next to yourself. Feel that you are midway between yourself and another person. I am not making a joke; it is actually a fact. You cannot know that you are separate from another person unless your consciousness is operating between the two persons. Who told you that you are different from me? Your consciousness itself is saying that. How did your consciousness go so far away, to me, to know that I am far away? It is also moving between the two. So the seer and the seen are connected by a process of seeing, which is consciousness. I am here, and I am there which looks like a seen object, and I am also there between the two of us where I am supposed to not be. The process of seeing is also myself. *Pramat*, *pramana* and *prameya*: subject, object and relation. Bring them together. Club two things into one thing.

In Western thought, some philosophers consider this process as position, opposition and synthesis. "I like you." When I say that, I accept that you are different from me; otherwise, I cannot like you. Suppose you are yourself me. Then there is no meaning, there is no need to say that I like you. So there is a hypocrisy involved in this statement "I like you" because you cannot really like a person unless he is yourself only, and knowing that he is totally outside, you are saying: "I like you." You are telling this to every object in the world. Therefore, total hypocrisy is prevailing in your asking for any object of desire, and they also know that because, as I already mentioned, everything sees. So your hypocrisy will be reflected there. *Sarvam tam paraded...* It will say, "No, I will run away from you. You consider me as an object, so I go away from here." Everything will run away. Friends will run away—father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife—everybody will run away from you. Nobody will come near you because you are thinking that they are outside you. Anything that is outside you is not yours. Nothing is yours. It is complete foolishness, the asking for anything other than yourself.

But your consciousness is pervading between the two, and it is pervading between three, between four, five, a hundred, and millions—the whole universe—so where are you sitting? You are sitting in the entire cosmos as the total integrating consciousness of creation. This is, again, coming to the point of the Virat. Meditate like this. In the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgita, Krishna tells Arjuna *paśya me pārtha rūpāṇi śataśo'tha sahastraśaḥ, nānāvidhāni divyāni nānāvarṇākṛtīni ca* (B.G. 11.5): “Look at Me. Everything is here. The person to whom I am speaking is also here with Me.”

Learn the art of beholding without feeling a necessity for an object that is to be beheld. Try to wrench your personality from this location of being seated on the earth to another location. This is one of the sutras in Patanjali: *bahih akalpitaṁ vṛttiḥ mahāvidehā tataḥ prakāśa āvaraṇakṣayaḥ* (Y.S. 3.44). Wrench yourself away from yourself and place yourself in another place. Can you sit here and feel that you are sitting in Swargashram just now? Great willpower is necessary. Feel that you are running away from this body. You are sitting in Swargashram and looking at yourself here. Your body is here, but you are not here. You are on the other side of Ganga. Feel deeply: “I am now on the other side of Ganga. I am on the other side of Ganga.” You can feel the ground. You can feel the cement bench of Swargashram. “I am seated there. What am I seeing? I am seeing my body here, which is in the Sivananda Ashram.” Go on thinking like that. “Not Swargashram. I am further away than that, far away. I am in Kanyakumari just now.” Think like that. Go on feeling you are flying, flying away from this body. From Kanyakumari you are looking back into the Sivananda Ashram. This practice will gradually make the consciousness detach itself from this body. The one who is sitting in Kanyakumari is your consciousness, and what that consciousness sees in the Sivananda Ashram is the body.

How will you do this? You may ask me, “What is the meaning of consciousness? How to separate consciousness from the body?” Here is an example. There is the slough of a snake. The snake throws off its outer garb, called its slough. What it does is, at the time of casting off its slough it will move between two trees which are close to each other, and it will wriggle back and forth, and the whole snake will come out of its old skin. Even the mouth, the eyes and everything will be there in the slough. You will think it is the snake only. Now, something has come out of that slough. What has come out? Is it the snake that has come out, or the soul? Can you say it is the soul of the snake that has come out, or only the snake? So when a person dies, what goes out? Is it the soul that goes out, or is it you yourself going? It is not the soul that is going; you have gone. In order to know that it is you that are going, remember this example of the snake. The snake soul is not coming out; the snake itself is coming out.

This body is like a slough, really. Because of the tremendous identity of the snake with the slough, the slough looks like the snake. You cannot distinguish between them. Because of the tremendous identity of ourselves with this slough body, the body looks like me. Because of the inveterate attachment to the slough of the body, we conceive death as something passing away from ourselves. It is not like that. Something is not passing away from ourselves; we are going. I am going. Can you imagine this? Don't say, “My soul is going.” Say, “I am going.” This is impossible to think because of our identification with the body. The snake is saying it is the slough. It is a terrible thing to remember this. “I am going. Where will I go? I will go to that place which I am thinking just now. I have already created my abode elsewhere by thinking it just now.”

So many are sitting here. What are you thinking just now? Are you thinking of that place where you want to go? What are you thinking? Can anybody answer this

question? Is anybody thinking now of that place which you want to reach? You are thinking of something. That is the place where you will go. Be careful. Don't think it is a joke.

Ashramite: I am thinking just now, Swamiji, this body will not be there. When the pot is broken, there is no going and coming.

Swamiji: No, the body is not broken. The pot itself goes, the whole thing. The entire pot goes. The pot cannot break. Then you are saying the snake is broken. The snake cannot break. The whole thing comes out.

Ashramite: The idea of *sukshma sharira*, Swamiji, subtle body...

Swamiji: You yourself are the *sukshma sharira*. You are unnecessarily reading books and confusing yourself. There is no need of *sukshma sharira* and all that. "I am coming just now." Who is saying that? Is the *sukshma sharira* speaking, or are you speaking, or is the *buddhi* speaking? Who is speaking? Are the sense organs speaking? There is no such thing. You say, "I am coming." You do not say, "The subtle body is coming."

Ashramite: Everything is included, Swamiji.

Swamiji: So you must say, "Everything included is coming." [Laughter] Such attachment it is. You don't say, "The mind is coming, a conglomeration of the sense organs and the *buddhi* and the Atman is coming." You say, "I am coming." This is the thing that will take you to that place that you are thinking of. If you say "I am coming", you have accepted that you are there, and you will go to that place which you are thinking now. Nobody is binding you; nobody is liberating you. Your thought is binding you, and your thought is liberating you. It is a matter about which everybody should think. Just now we can breathe our last. It is possible. If you do, the whole thing goes. Where will you go? You will go to the same place which you are thinking just now.

What is anybody thinking just now, at this moment? Are you thinking of the lunch bell? What are you thinking? There is some basic thinking. You may be thinking of lunch and some work, but these are minor thoughts. You have got a basic thought. The basic thought is: "I am Swami Krishnananda." That is the basic thought. That I want to eat food and I want to sleep, these are secondary thoughts. Now, what is meant by saying "I am Swami Krishnananda"? This is the whole point. What do you mean by that sentence? Where is that person? What are you talking about? "I am this, I am that," you are saying. Where is that person? Is it the slough the person, or is something else inside?

Ashramite: Consciousness.

Swamiji: Now I am coming to the point. I am dragging your mind here and there to make your mind concentrated. Now you are in Kanyakumari. The snake has gone to Kanyakumari, and the slough is in Sivananda Ashram. Let the snake think like that: "I have removed the slough." The snake has moved to Kanyakumari. If you don't like the word 'snake', think of some angel, whatever it is. Why Kanyakumari? "I am there in the sun. I am sitting in that blazing orb and looking at myself as a slough here in Sivananda Ashram." Go up, go up, go up to the centre of the cosmos. "I am in Vaikuntha. I am in Kailasha. I am in Brahmaloaka." You may consider anything.

Scientists say there was a thing called the Big Bang. The universe was an atom, a *bindu*. The Tantra Shastra, Agama Shastra, says the whole universe was like a spot, a small thing. It was not as big as this. It expanded with a bang, the Big Bang. "I am in that place where I was before the Big Bang took place. How many kilometres away, how many light years away? I am sitting just now in that place where I was before the Big

Bang took place. So far! From there, I am seeing myself here.” Patanjali’s Yoga System mentions in one sutra: throw yourself out of yourself into distant space. Practice this meditation for a long time. You will gradually feel detached from this body, and you will feel you are somewhere else.

If this practice can be continued in respect of everything else, you will feel not only that you are somewhere else, but that you are everywhere. When you are everywhere, you are also everything. Look at the happiness you will feel at that time. You will feel as if you are the Creator Himself. “I am the Supreme Absolute, before creation. I have wrenched my consciousness away from this slough and stationed myself at that Supreme Centre. From there I am beholding the whole universe. I am seeing the world in the same way as God is seeing it.” We are seeing the world, and God also must be seeing it. But is there any difference between us seeing and God seeing?

We will see it spread out outside in space, but God will not see anything spread out outside in space. He will see Himself only, expanded. His *ananda*, His bliss, is spilling out everywhere like ocean drops spilling themselves everywhere helter-skelter when the waves dash one over the other. Many people think that creation is nothing but the joy of God manifesting itself. *Ānandādd hy eva khalv imāni bhūtāni jāyante* (T.U. 6.1). The Taittiriya Upanishad says that all the beings are created out of the bliss of God. We are basically centres of bliss, not centres of sorrow. *Ānandādd anandena jatani jivanti*. We are living due to the bliss only. We enter into that. From the bliss of God we have come, by the bliss of God we are living, and into the bliss of God we will return. Life is bliss. Life is not sorrow; life is joy. God is joy, and God cannot create any kind of evil in front of us. This wrenching oneself away from the centre and imagining oneself scattered somewhere in distant space, that is the evil.

Yoga is a difficult art. Every Sunday we discuss these matters, but for another seven days nobody bothers about all this. You think about other things. *Jñātuṃ draṣṭuṃ ca tattvena praveṣṭuṃ ca parantapa* (B.G. 11.54): It is necessary to know it—*jñātuṃ*; it is necessary to see it—*draṣṭuṃ*; it is necessary to enter into it—*praveṣṭuṃ*. Arjuna saw, Arjuna knew what it was, but he never entered into it. That is the whole difference. So he came back in the same way as a person who took a bath in a reservoir of nectar came back as the same old person. Now we are thinking of entering into it. The mind refuses to think like this. When I say entering into it, the ‘it’ comes as something outside somewhere. We should not use the words ‘you’, ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’, and so on. There is no such thing as he, she, it, you, because everything is me only. Will anybody refer to oneself as he, she, it? These words are used because you have isolated yourself from them and completely cut them off, and you want to benefit from them. How would you benefit from anybody when you call them ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’? You don’t want to be called an ‘it’.

Nothing can be had in this world because you are alienating everyone as an ‘it’ and as something else, and disconnecting yourself from that. This space principle again comes and says, “I will not allow you to obtain anything in this world.” To defy space, this is a method of meditation: placing yourself far away, far away, far away, far away. You can even imagine that you have crossed the boundaries of space. Only seeing will be there. *Salila eko draṣṭādvaito bhavati* (B.U. 4.3.32): You become like an ocean at that time. *Eṣa brahma-lokaḥ, samrāḍ iti; hainam anuśāsā yājñavalkyaḥ*. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Yajnavalkya tells King Janaka, “This is Brahmaloaka, the centre of Brahman. *Eṣāsyā paramā gatiḥ*: This is the abode of everybody. *Eṣāsyā paramā sampat*: This is the greatest treasure. *Eṣo’syā paramo lokaḥ*: This is the greatest

achievement. All the worlds will come to you. *Eṣo'sya parama ānandaḥ*: This is the supreme bliss. You have attained this."

Janaka falls down at the feet of Yajnavalkya. "Here I am with my whole kingdom at your feet, and myself also as your servant." Janaka was so impressed by this teaching that he said, "My whole kingdom is at your feet now, and I myself am your servant. Speak to me more, great Master."

Yo vai bhūmā tat sukham (C.U. 7.23.1). Sanatkumara is speaking to Narada. That inclusiveness, *bhūmā*, is happiness. What is that? *Yatra nānyat paśyati* (C.U. 7.24.1): Where you don't have to see anything outside you; *yatra nānyac chr̥ṇoti*: there is nothing that you have to hear; *yatra nānyad vijānāti*: there is nothing for you to understand; *sa bhūmā. Atha yatrānyat paśyati*: Where you see something outside; *yatra anyac chr̥ṇoty*: where you are hearing something; *yatra anyad vijānāti*: understanding something else; *tad alpam*: that is mortal. *Yo vai bhūmā tat sukham*.

Sa evādhastāt sa upariṣṭāt sa paścāt, sa purastāt sa dakṣiṇataḥ sa uttarataḥ, sa evedaṃ sarvam iti (C.U. 7.25.1): It is to the right, to the left, to the top, to the bottom, to the front and to the rear. *Sa evedaṃ sarvam*: That alone is. When you say 'that', you are not separately sitting outside. The gates of heaven will open, and God will withdraw the flaming sword. The exiled man will go back, and he will be received with great joy. We need not be exiled always. Why should we be exiles? Because of our *ahamkara*, we have become exiles.

So let this meditation continue. Whatever work you are doing, whatever you are saying, whatever you are seeing, let this background of thought be maintained. Just as I mentioned to you, whatever you may be doing and seeing, you will not forget that you are this person. You should not say, "I have no time to think like this." Why do you want time to think like this? To think the basic truth, you say, "I have no time. I am very busy." Why are you able to think that you are so-and-so? Have you got time to think like that? There is no time needed for that; it is yourself only, so there is no need of time. People unnecessarily complain, "I have no time to think of God. I am doing hard work." What kind of hard work are you doing? You forget your own Self and then do hard work. Is it possible? This is all a misplaced complaint.

Ashramite: The other things are not united, Swamiji.

Swamiji: If you don't want them to unite, they won't unite. You are telling them, "Don't unite"; so they say, "Okay, I will go away." *Gr̥hīta iva keśeṣu mṛtyunā dharmam ācaret* (Hitopadesha 1.3): You must think of this as if death has come and caught hold of your *choti*. At that time, what will you think? And any time it will catch your *choti*, so you should not say, "Come afterwards, I am busy." Will you say that? Be prepared now. Yoga is a perpetual activity of your existence. Your existence itself is meditating.

Session 23

DESIRE IS A PHANTASM

Desire is a self-defeating process. The mind that desires is a coward, not a hero. Only a coward asks for more and more of things. It is implied in this process that whatever the mind wants is somewhere away from itself. If the thing that the mind wants is inside the mind itself, there is no point in the mind wanting anything.

Do you understand what I am saying? If the mind feels that what it wants is inside itself, then it cannot want anything. It imagines that what it wants is outside the mind. Now, here it is committing a blunder. If a person has decided that the thing he wants is outside him, how will he get that thing when he has already decided that it is outside? How can the outside become the inside? It can never take place. The outside is outside, and the inside is inside. They are contradictories. So how can the mind, which is supposed to be inside, want a thing which is outside? That is why I said desire is a self-defeating process. That is number one.

Number two is, how can we get out of this problem? Great thinkers, philosophers both in the East and the West, have argued this question. There are six schools of philosophy in India: Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta. In the West we have great philosophers such as Plato, Kant, Hegel, and so on. Plato said that desire arises in the mind because the desiring individual is a shadow of its own original, which is in heaven. You are not satisfied with anything because your original is in heaven. He calls it the archetype, the original. This person sitting here is a shadow of the real person who is in heaven. That real person is calling the shadow person: "Come, come to me." So there is always distress in the shadow person. You are never satisfied because your real nature is calling you from heaven, but you do not know why you are distressed. You think that somebody is doing some wrong thing, somebody is not giving you what you want, this person is bad, that person is bad. This is what you see; but the real difficulty is not that. You are not in yourself. You are now outside your own self. What can be worse than that? Do you understand me? You are outside yourself because you are in heaven and this person sitting here is something outside it. The shadow is outside the light, so the light is telling the shadow "Come!" and the shadow is unable to catch the point. This is briefly what Plato is saying.

Now I am coming to Immanuel Kant. He says desires cannot be fulfilled under any circumstance because a desire is an operation of the mind. The mind works within the framework of space and time; therefore, no desire can be fulfilled as long as space and time limit the operation of the mind. Is there anything beyond space and time, or is everything within space and time only? Here Kant could not give an answer. He was a very intelligent man, but he could not go very deep. Everything is limited by space and time. Who is making this statement? The limited one cannot say that it is limited. If you want to know that something is limited, you are already aware that there is something outside the limitation. Do you understand the point? You cannot say that you are limited unless you are aware, at the same time, that there is something outside the limitation. The unlimitedness is implied in your being limited.

Now, what is limited is called phenomena and what is unlimited is called noumena. Kant's point is that noumenon cannot be known because the knowing process is limited to phenomenon. How did he come to know that there is a thing called noumena when he has already said that every knowledge is within phenomena only? The idea that

there is a thing called a phenomena cannot arise in the mind which is limited to phenomena. So here Kant got caught, and he could not go beyond that.

There was another philosopher, called Hegel. He turned the tables around and said that Kant is wrong. There must be somebody within the person who is saying that the unlimited does exist. You yourself have a potential of the unlimited; otherwise, you cannot know that you are limited. I will not go into Western philosophy now. I will come back to Indian thought.

The great technical process of setting matters right was heralded by Patanjali Maharishi, who wrote his Yoga Sutras. There is no use of thinking an object and merely imagining that you want it. Here what Kant said is correct because what you want is outside the capacity of the thinking process. Patanjali goes ahead of him and says the mind which is wanting something is making a mistake of thinking that what it wants is away from itself.

Psychologists say that you should not go on saying and thinking: "I want that thing." Assert: "I have got it. The thing that I want is in me. It is not only in my possession, it has become me itself. I am the thing which I want." Go on saying this: "I am the thing which I want. I am the thing which I want. I am the thing which I want." Then how will you desire it? What do you say? The desire is finished because you are the thing which you are desiring. He set the matter right: "I am the thing which I want."

Now, merely saying it is not okay because when you think "I am", you think of yourself only. It is not the person that is wanted. Something other than yourself is what you want. Let the other thing which you want be you yourself. You yourself are that thing which you are wanting. Suppose you are wanting a mountain of gold. Feel: "I am a mountain of gold. I am not this individual. I am a huge mountain of gold sitting here. I am a mountain of gold, a mountain of gold." If you yourself are the mountain of gold, how can you say that you want the mountain of gold? The mind is infected with a disease that is a self-contradictory process of wanting a thing which it cannot get.

Patanjali's system is samadhi. In samadhi everything is settled. Samadhi is the art of developing a consciousness whereby the object thinks of you instead of you thinking the object. You want something. When you want something, you think the object. Can you imagine a situation where the thing is thinking you? Is it possible? Transfer your personality to that object. This is not you sitting or someone else sitting. The thing which is wanted is sitting. Be clear in your mind what you want. You may say, "I want God." All right. God Himself is sitting here, and God is seeing everything. God does not want anybody because that 'anybody' you can think of is inside God Himself.

There are three things taking place in the process of the perception of an object. I have mentioned this many times in my books, but people don't remember it. You have an idea about the object, you give a name to the object, and the object by itself without the name and the idea also exists. Nobody needs a name. You can exist without a name. Just imagine you are alone in the whole world. Nobody need call you. When you are alone in the world and nobody is there around you, why should you have a name? Then nobody will have an idea about you also. Can you imagine what kind of person you will be at that time? There is no idea about you that anybody is holding, and there is also no name. So you are something without the idea of yourself, and without any name. Just think: "There is nobody in the world. I am alone, existing somewhere. Only trees are there, and the wind is blowing, the mountain is there, rivers are flowing, but no human being is existing anywhere. Then how can there be a name? Nobody calls me by any name, and there is also no idea about me." Neither are you a good person nor a bad

person, nor are you doing anything or not doing anything. All characteristics of yours vanish. You become the thing as it is.

This is Patanjali's system I am speaking about. You become the thing as it is, minus the idea that anybody might have about you, and minus a name. You become what you are. You will feel: "I am something different from what people are thinking about me, and also different from the name associated with me." At that time you will feel you are neither a man nor a woman. Who is to call you a woman? You are existing alone in the world. Nobody will call you a woman or a man. You are existing only as a human being. Slowly you are rising from the lower concept to the higher concept. "Neither have I a name, nor has anybody an idea about me. I am a human being."

Now the idea goes further up. "I am a cosmic human being, a cosmic person, because when there is only one thing, how can there be anything outside it?" On that you meditate. "I am a cosmic individual, a cosmic person, a cosmic being, cosmic consciousness, cosmic power." This is samadhi. Go on contemplating like this; meditate on this continuously, and don't forget it. Every day go on meditating. Always think like this even when you are going for a walk, even when you are taking food, even when you are doing some work. Don't forget this idea: "I am a total individual. There is nobody outside me. Alone in the whole universe I am. I am a cosmic being. There is no question of desiring anything. Who will desire anything? I am alone there. How can I desire myself? So desire has no meaning."

All desires fly away with this kind of meditation. We are so much afraid of desire, but it does not exist at all. It is a hobgoblin, a kind of phantasm; it is a kind of malady that is called desire. If you think like this, in a moment the desires fly away as darkness flies away when the sun rises. So everything is wonderful, beautiful.

Session 24

BECOMING THE WHOLE UNIVERSE

Swamiji: You cannot go behind the seen unless you become that seen itself.

An ashramite: What is the process of becoming it? Is it meditation only, or any other thing?

Swamiji: Suppose you want to become me. What will you do?

Ashramite: I would think deeply about you and always contemplate you only.

Swamiji: Not only knowledge, but also the whole body, the shape, the circumstance, the nose, eyes, head, everything. You have to become me entirely. Like that you become with everything. Then your question is immediately answered. The question itself will finish in one second.

Ashramite: What is samadhi?

Swamiji: You become that which you are thinking in your mind. You will never be satisfied under any circumstance unless you become that which you want. This is the whole story of samadhi. You can become anything, anything at all. There is nothing which you cannot become, because originally you were everything. Once upon a time you were everything, and now again you have to be that. In the middle you got into some entanglement, unfortunately, for some reason which nobody understands. Once upon a time you were everything, and now you have to be everything once again. Until that is achieved, no amount of doing, accumulating and becoming wealthy and powerful, nothing will help you because all that you get in the form of possession of wealth, property, land, authority, they are not yourself. They are something which you want to possess. That which you want to possess cannot be yourself. Until you possess yourself, you will not get anything. This idea cannot enter into the mind of any person because the human mind is not made like that. It requires being told again and again, again and again, again and again, by a person who thinks like that and who will go on saying that, and nothing will help you in doing it except satsang with a great saint and sage, whoever he is, who thinks like this and who has no other thought in his mind except this.

Ashramite: There is a saying that you should make yourself so powerful or so indispensable that God will ask you, "Let me know what you want."

Swamiji: This is true spirituality. You have to become so powerful that God should come to you and ask you what you want. Can you draw God into yourself? That is called spirituality. You should not run after God. God should run after you. Now, here is a great point. Is it possible for you to make God run after you? Then you are really spiritual; otherwise, it is shaking. You must feel inside, "I can call Him." But you say, "No, it is all futile. It is not possible. He will not come. He will give nothing to me."

Activity is also meditation only. You should not say that activity is not meditation. If you think that activity is different from meditation, it would mean that you have understood nothing of the Bhagavadgita. How will you take activity as identical with meditation? *Paśya me pārtha rūpāṇi śataśo'tha sahastraśaḥ, nānāvidhāni divyāni nānāvarṇākṛtīni ca* (B.G. 11.5); *mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti* (B.G. 7.7): "See Me. Within Me all activity is taking place. My existence and My activity are identical. My being is spreading itself externally, as it were, as activity." It is difficult to conceive how

your being will go out of yourself in the form of the field of activity. That is the whole point of this higher self and lower self. When the lower self moves out, as it were, into the higher self, it becomes spiritual activity, and it is also meditation. Now, when saying 'moves out', one must be very careful. It is not actually going out; it is going to a larger area of one's own self.

The other day a visitor here said, "I cannot think God." Then I told him, "Okay, you sit. You are two feet wide, but go on thinking that you are three feet wide, you are five feet wide. Go on intensely feeling that you have become so wide. Your body has become ten feet wide. You are big in width. You have become one hundred feet wide. You have become so wide that you are touching the mountain there. You should not simply say this; you must also feel it: 'I have become still wider. I am touching all space. My body has become so big that I am touching the stars. The entire field of activity is included within me because I have become so big. In order to work, there must be a field, but the field has gone inside me because I have become so big. I have become so big, as big as space itself. See how big I am! The whole universe is me.'"

Now we come to the point. Think: "I have become so big that I am as big as the universe itself. So if I do anything, where am I doing it? I am doing it within myself only. Therefore, activity is being. Action and meditation are the same thing. Meditation is the consciousness that I am, and activity is the consciousness that I do, but here the two things merge together because I am doing it within myself only." This is what Bhagavan Sri Krishna is telling us: "See, I am doing everything Myself. I am everywhere, and doing everything Myself."

This little humorous instruction that I gave to this young man satisfied him so much. It shook him completely. Without going into any scripture or anything, in a humorous way I told him, "See, are you meditating now on God? This is God. The biggest thing is God, and you have become that. What is the difficulty?"

"Oh, oh, oh," he said. He was satisfied.

Ashramite: It means he has become infinite.

Swamiji: So what you are doing is not outside you; the whole point is that. If you say what you are doing is outside you, it is a bondage. If you are doing it inside you, how will that become a bondage? You yourself are going within yourself, like the ocean moving within itself as the waves. So why do you complain?

People are very busy every day working in some department or the other, though they have time in their own rooms after their work is over. They can do their prayer, meditation, etc. Still, the mind is not fully clear in matters which are beyond human perception, which is the field of spirituality, really speaking. And that requires a little bit of discussion and self-analysis, etc. However much you may pray and offer worship, the mind is cleverer still. It can fool you with its clever methods and make you feel that you are experiencing something which is quite different from what you are actually expecting.

When a person takes to spiritual practice, in the earlier stages there will be no sign of any progress, as if nothing is happening. It will be a daily routine, like a cart moving on a road, with no conscious feeling of the advance. If you do worship and prayer without concentration of mind, then you will feel nothing. But if you are in right earnest and persist in the concentration of the mind, and if your heart is present in that prayer and worship that is offered, especially meditation, you will feel some signs taking place inside.

People think that some joyous experience will follow. It is not necessarily like that. Joy does not follow in the beginning. In the beginning, the psychophysical organism which is what we call the body resents the practice, just as truant children do not want to go to school though it is intended for their welfare. I have seen some children like that. They go halfway to the school, sit on a parapet the whole day, and come back home saying that they have gone to school. They don't want to go to school because they think it is a nuisance, and they don't want that. Though education is a very great blessing and there is no point in being truant and sitting on a parapet, the usual habit of carefree living resents any kind of discipline such as education, study, etc.

So is the case with meditation. The mind of a human being never meditates. It could never do that. It is like a honeybee or a fly, rather, that moves from place to place finding its grub. When it is not satisfied with what it seeks in a particular place, it will fly to another place. If anyone is careful enough to notice the activity of the mind in one day, it will be seen that it has never paid full attention to anything. It was just flitting from one thing to another thing. Attention is something unknown to a careless and carefree mind.

Meditation is nothing but attention. This moving from one thing to another thing is not permitted in meditation. If you persist in paying attention to one thing only, which is the essence of meditation, for some time you will not feel anything. Some exercise is going on. This is a very subtle point. In meditation, we are not thinking of what we see in the world. The mind is very happy in seeing things in the world. We go to the marketplace and go on looking around, and go on seeing everything without paying good attention to anything.

The mind resents the thought of the presence of something which is beyond its comprehension, and spiritual meditation is just that. Spiritual meditation is the attempt of the consciousness to centralise itself in something which is beyond itself. Anything that is beyond you is a step in the direction of spirituality. Religion is the asking for what is beyond you. It is not Hinduism, Sikhism, and so on. These ideas of religion should be given up. It is a longing for something which is beyond you and above you. You look up—of course, there is no need of physically looking up, but the mental habit of being frightened by what is beyond one's comprehension is manifest in a physical gesture of looking up. When you pray to God you do like this [Swamiji looks upward]. It is not that God is sitting above us; it doesn't mean that. But the body and mind are so intimately connected with each other that what the mind does, the body also does. If the mind feels it is deeply concerned with something above itself, the body also cooperates with this thought and looks up, as if that which is above is in the skies. We say God is in heaven, high heaven. This is a physical gesture exhibited by the body in collaboration with the mental effort to conceive what is beyond itself, which is the God of religion.

Now, when we speak of the God of religion, we must be very careful what we actually mean. Any degree of reality which is beyond the level in which we are is our God. Humorously considering, we may say the boss is the God of the subordinate. But there is a difference between a boss and a subordinate in this comparison. The relationship between the boss and the subordinate is horizontal. Both are sitting on a chair; one is on this side, the other is on that side. But God is not by our side, He is just above us. It is not a horizontal aboveness, but a vertical aboveness. This is a very troublesome way of thinking, that there is something above us not in a physical,

geometrical or physical sense, but in a frighteningly blessed sense. A blessing can sometimes be frightening.

Suppose there is a poor man who has a windfall. He receives a message that he is going to get a hundred million dollars. It will be a frightening blessing to him. He will be shocked. He cannot imagine what it actually is. This is a jocular comparison. Likewise, here also the conception of what is above us is to be properly analysed. That which is above us is not merely vertically above us, but it is also horizontally beyond us. It is an expanded being, comparable to an imagined situation where we have become larger persons than we are at present.

Only analogies can explain this fact. They cannot be explained logically. This 'higher than oneself' can be explained analogically, as is taught in kindergarten, by the concept of your being getting wider and wider, larger and larger and higher and higher, so that you begin to encompass the atmosphere around you until you touch the skies, as it were. You have become as large as the sky. Go on thinking like this: "I have become so big as the sky." But you should not think that the sky is outside you, because then it becomes an object. This spiritual concept is an inwardness, and not merely an externality. You can think of the sky even now, but this is not meditation because this sky is outside you and you are inside the sky. You should not think like that. The sky should be your own embodiment, so that you yourself are the sky. This is humanly not possible. You cannot think that you are something other than what you are, but meditation is just this technique. It is an intense concentration on a situation which is totally different from what your present condition is.

In some of the yoga scriptures, such as Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, childlike instructions are given to make one feel happier and stronger, such as: meditate on an elephant. Meditating on an elephant does not mean looking at the elephant. You can see an elephant on the road and go on looking at it, and it also looks like some meditation, but it doesn't mean that. Meditation, spiritually speaking, psychologically speaking, is the assuming of the very personality of that object in oneself. You yourself are the elephant. Patanjali Maharishi, in his sutra, says *baleṣu hasti balādīni* (Y.S. 3.25). It will look very humorous to hear all this, to think of the elephant being identified with yourself. You are not actually thinking of the elephant's trunk, but of the strength of the elephant and the carefree movement of the elephant, the fearlessness of the elephant. So meditation on the elephant does not mean meditating on the huge legs and the large body and the trunk, etc. That is to stretch the analogy too far, to the breaking point. Meditating on the elephant means you have the strength of the elephant. It is not the elephant, but the strength of the elephant, the fearlessness of the elephant, the courage of the elephant, and the carefree movement of the elephant. "Nobody can come near me." Go on feeling like this.

Patanjali's sutra says that by this meditation of conceiving of a larger than yourself, energies from the five elements will flow into you. What is the strength of the elephant? The earth, water, fire, air and space principles which are present in everyone's body are present in the elephant in a greater proportion. Because of the greater proportion of the presence of these elements in the body of the elephant, it looks heavier, larger, stronger, etc. By the concentration on the features of the elephant, you will draw the potential forces of the very elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—into yourself, and you will feel the strength. When you walk on the road, you will feel that a huge elephant is walking. You will not feel that you are walking with an elephant's trunk in front of you.

When you compare one thing with another thing, you must know the spirit behind it, and not take the comparison literally. People say the world and God are related to each other as a snake seen in the rope is related to the rope, and so the Ultimate Reality is like a rope, and the world is like a snake. This analogy is a philosophical comparison; one is superimposed on the other, but it does not mean that the Ultimate Reality is long like a rope. I am just mentioning the spirit of analogy. You must think not of the literal meaning, but only of the spirit.

So feel the energy of the elephantine existence. Why an elephant? Meditate: "The whole earth is me." In the Upanishads we have instructions on meditations of this kind. You can imagine what the earth is like. Everybody who knows some astronomy and geography knows what the earth is like. You can see in a picture how the earth is. Here, you don't only see the earth; you yourself are the earth. Strongly imagine that you are revolving around the sun. You are not sitting in Delhi, not in Rishikesh; you are in mid-space, revolving around the sun. Oh, how big! All the population of the earth is strung on you. All meditations are strange techniques. It is a mystical exercise, and ordinary people cannot understand that. Then you go up beyond the earth and the planetary system and the sun and the moon and the stars. "The whole space-time complex is me." Even now you can see space outside you. But you should not think the space; you yourself are the space. This is the difference between perceiving something and being something. You can perceive anything, but you cannot be that. This is the difference between meditational techniques and ordinary sensory operations in perception.

Miracles will take place by this kind of concentration. You might have heard that what you think you are, that you really are. There are people who perform miracles. We generally imagine that a miracle is something which is not natural. But a miracle is not an unnatural performance; it is a natural occurrence. What nature does spontaneously through its evolutionary process is done by a saint by assuming the processes of evolution in himself or herself. You feel the whole universe is evolving. You are not seeing the evolution of the universe; you yourself are the universe evolving. Think at this moment: "I am the whole universe evolving. Like waves in the ocean, I am dashing against my own self. I am bathing myself with myself, as the ocean does. I have become very expansive. I have assumed cosmic proportions. I am the whole cosmos. All the energy potential and content of the cosmos is scintillating through every pore of my person."

When Lord Krishna showed the Vishvarupa, as is described in the Bhagavadgita, the whole cosmos started jetting forth from his personality. You will be wondering how it is possible. It is possible because there was no Lord Krishna at that time. The consciousness that was animating the personality of Lord Krishna entered the whole cosmos and projected itself in outer space before other people, and that became the Vishvarupa.

Do meditation like this. You can also give darshan to other people because you are as much a part of this wondrous existence as Lord Krishna himself is. The only thing is, he is nearer to the reality than you are, and so you find it simply impossible. Anything is possible to anyone as everyone is an heir apparent to the energy of the cosmos, so nobody is a poor nothing; nobody is a weakling. Everybody is a friend of the whole world, and the world is a friend of everybody. Meditate: "All the energy of the whole world is flowing through me. My cells are vibrating with the particles of nature, of all space and time, of the sun, moon and stars." It is said that when the Vishvarupa was shown by Sri Krishna, the sun and moon and stars were all shining through his body.

One eye was the sun and another eye was the moon, and so on, it is said. It doesn't mean the sun and the moon dropped down and entered into his body. They were there as they were, but when Krishna became the embodiment of the whole creation, the sun and moon looked like his eyes. Can anybody think like this? This is a shortcut to spiritual experience as a quick achievement, but it requires a very strong mind. People cannot meditate if they have a feeble mind, are very poor in thought and willpower, and always feel, "I am not good. This is not all right." Everyone who is born in this world has the capacity of the whole world.

An advanced spiritual seeker is capable of adjusting himself to any condition. He can sit with a beggar, he can sit with a king, he can sit with a prime minister, he can sit with a president, he can sit with schoolchildren, he can sit with anybody and he will be quite able to adjust himself to their condition. How wonderful to think all these things! It is very difficult to imagine.

Yoga is not an easy thing. A herculean effort is necessary. Some chanting, reading, temple-going and taking bath in a holy river are not the true religion that one must aspire for. Such religions are many in the world. They are like commodities from the market. You can get any religion from a shop. This is like playing with toys. "I went there and took a bath. I saw this temple and *murti*." You may go on saying like that and then die one day, that's all. Nothing will happen.

This is an uncanny, veiled way of thinking of yogis. Ordinary men will not think like that. It is the art of touching truth, the truth of the cosmos. We are living in untrue circumstances now. They are all appearing to take place outside us, but nothing takes place outside. Everything takes place everywhere. All action, all events, all circumstances are cosmic. Every event is a cosmic event. We think that something is happening somewhere, but it is not happening there; it is happening everywhere. A pain felt in one part of the body is a pain felt by the whole body.

Do you know what is moksha? What is moksha, according to your idea? What happens to you when you attain moksha? You will do better work at that time than what you do now. You can work miracles at that time.

There was a king in Madurai, and near the city of Madurai there is a river. Once there was a flood, such a ravaging flood that it threatened to destroy the palace of the king. In those days the kings were tyrants. If they uttered one word, everybody had to obey. They were the judges and they were the police. They were themselves everything. Because of the ravaging water, the king ordered that every house in his kingdom should depute one person to build a bund in order to prevent flooding. People had to come because of fear of the king. Hundreds and hundreds of people came to build the bund. The king passed an edict that not even one house should shirk from following this order or they would be punished.

In one house there was an old lady living alone, who had nothing. She was very poor. She could not follow this edict because she had no one to send.

A boy came running. "Is there any job for me?" he asked.

"Well, a job is there. You see, the king ordered that we have to do this work. But I have nothing to give you for payment," replied the lady.

"Give me whatever you have got," said the boy.

"I have only dosa," she said.

"Give. That is sufficient for me. I will work. What is the work?" asked the boy.

"You go and build the dam there, participate," she said.

"I will do it," he said. And he went and put some mud on the bund, and then ran back.

"Give me dosa," again he said.

"Why you have come? The king will be angry," said the old lady.

"No, no. I will do the work," the boy replied.

"You go!" she said.

Again he went and took a little piece of stone, not a big stone like the others, and threw it at the bund, and came back.

"Give another dosa," he said.

The king was so angry. "Who is this stupid boy? From whose house is he coming?" The king took a whip and struck the boy on the back. The king felt that pain on his back so intensely that he thought he was beating himself, and all the hundreds of people felt the pain as if somebody had thrown a stone on their backs. They shook. What was this lash? The king struck the boy, and the pain was felt by everyone simultaneously.

Then what the boy did was, he took a little mud and threw it, and the whole bund was built, a strong bund. Hundreds of people, thousands of people could not do anything, but this one boy did it because he was Lord Siva. He came to teach a lesson to the arrogant king. What thousands of engineers cannot do, God can do. In one instant He created the whole world.

There are wonderful things which everybody should know. Shakespeare says in his play *Hamlet* that there are more things in heaven and earth than philosophy dreams of. You may know philosophy, you may know religion, but there is something more than all that you know. There are wonders everywhere. Everywhere eyes, everywhere light, everywhere grace, everywhere happiness, everywhere bliss is pervading. That is the wonder of this world. God has not created mud and stone; He has created Himself. Where is mud for God? This world came from God only. All these mountains and rivers, the sun, moon and stars came from God. We say the earth is made of mud, stone, and so on, but do you believe that stones come from God's body? There are no stones, actually. There is no mud, also. It is a wrong perception of something that makes it look like mud. It is thought that a brick pillar cannot contain God inside it, but Narasimha came out from a brick pillar. God is present in mud also, in baked brick. He can burst forth from an atom. That is the significance of *sarvantaryami*, omnipresence.

All this can have some meaning and be appreciated only if you carry on meditation every day. You must think only this. You should not say you have no time. This excuse has no meaning because thought does not require time. Doing work requires time, but thinking is not an activity. It is a process of being itself. It is like saying you have no time to be yourself. You should not say that, because meditation is nothing but being yourself in a higher sense.

Session 25

OUR PARTICIPATION IN AN ORGANISATION OF DIVINITIES

There are bees which produce honey. They have no property, they have no furniture, they have no clerical staff, but they form a wonderful organisation whose product is the most beautiful honey. Without any kind of external apparatus, by sheer dint of a cooperative spirit among themselves, they bring about a result which is astounding—honey, in comparison with which there is nothing in this world.

What an organisation is, we have to learn from honey bees. They are very active and continuously work hard for the production of a commodity called honey, without any permanent place or location for themselves. They can be spread out in various places, but they can join together at the call or the behest of an order which is of a mysterious nature. We may even say it is a mystical organisation.

Ants are also wonderful at organisation, to which nobody pays any attention. They are very intelligent. They have an intelligence bureau among themselves. They have soldiers, workers and labourers who carry dead bodies. Everything is there as a result of the activity of that little brain and two tiny scintillating eyes of those beautiful creatures called ants. Ants are beautiful to look at. They are not a nuisance, as we may think. They are wonderful.

These two instances—honey bees and ants—illustrate what an organisation should be and how it should work. People who belong to an organisation can be spread throughout the world, if necessary. It is quite possible to set up an organisation of individuals merely by their thoughts, their thinking capacity, and an orderly behaviour of a mental perspective among themselves. This is what we can learn from honey bees and ants.

There is no necessity for the members of an organisation to sit in one particular place. Buildings are not necessary. There are very able organisations secretly working for the welfare of a higher ideal, and these organisations are not visible to the naked eye. There are members of Lion's Club, Quakers, Rosicrucian Order, Freemasons, and others. Their activities are not publicised. Their activities are in their brains only, in their capacity to think in a coordinated manner. An organisation is an organisation of minds. Physical apparatus is not an essential.

Humanity consists of an organisation. All humanity thought of as a coordinated setup is an organisation by itself, but humanity does not sit in one particular place. Humanity has no formation. It is an organisation of cooperative spirits. Well-organised thoughts, functioning proportionately, with the necessary emphasis on important aspects—these are the elements of an organisation.

A human being is basically a mind. The body of a person is not a member of an organisation; it is the thought of the person that is a member of the organisation. The mind of a person in India can communicate with the mind of a person in far-off lands and establish a coordination for bringing about a fulfilment of a purpose, which is the aim of the organisation.

The whole world is an organisation in itself. How unitedly the particles of matter arrange themselves for a purpose is the law of nature. There is no furniture necessary for the world to work its purpose. A centre of attraction, cohesion, intensification, purposiveness—these are some of the words we can use for describing how an organisation works. The members of such an organisation are not I's, you's, he's, she's,

it's, and so on. Such words are irrelevant in an organisation. An organisation is just a cohesion of constitutive elements which are centres of purposiveness. Spirits operate in order to build up an organisation.

Where does The Divine Life Society exist? Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to say it exists in the hearts of people. The Divine Life Society is not in any particular place. Wherever there are people devoted to a higher purpose of life, there is a branch of The Divine Life Society. The Divine Life Society is not merely something recorded on paper. It is a cementing force acting among minds which think alike and act for a particular purpose. The whole of life is a bringing together of its internal elements to achieve a higher purpose. The human being is one of the elements in the structural pattern of the universe, of the world, of anything.

Little organisations we call The Theosophical Society, The Ramakrishna Mission, The Divine Life Society, whatever it is, are only appellations of visible formations of restricted forms of operation dedicated to a purpose which is common to everybody. All the organisations in the world which are working for a higher purpose, which are working for the achievement of the higher values of life, are internally coordinated. They are brothers of the same order. Saints and sages also form an organisation among themselves. They do not have to sit in one place to hold a meeting. They can think, and the meeting takes place. The necessity to coordinate oneself with another is the beginning of an organisation.

We are told that when God created the world, the great Unitary Being scattered itself, as it were, in the form of little particulars, call them by any name. These particulars are what we call individualities. Total isolations, unconnected with one another, are called individualities. An individual is an element which is totally dissociated from every other individual. One cannot touch the other. There is, rather, a repulsive force operating among totally isolated individualities, because if this repulsive force in individuals does not work, they would not be individuals. The word 'individuality' indicates a self-centred interior force which struggles to maintain the self-identity of a particular location, whatever be its size. That is individuality. 'Self-identity' is the word for it. "I am just what I am. I cannot be you or anybody else. Because of this fact, I cannot cooperate with you. I shall mind my business, and you mind your business." This is the basic attitude of a totally isolated individuality. In spite of organisations and administrations throughout the world, this instinct persists even today, and it shall persist always.

When things are put to a hard test, we will realise we are utterly self-centred, self-identical individualities, and we cannot brook to melt down our individuality for the sake of the sustenance of another individual, because if one is to sacrifice the self-identical individuality of oneself for the sake of another individuality which is totally different from one's own self, then the individuality of such a person melts down and it ceases to be an individual. This is the last thing which anyone can expect. So there is a struggle till death to maintain one's identity, and one will not care for anybody else. If one's personal self-centred intentions are frustrated or are even showing a tendency to the annihilation of one's own mind, thought, intention or purpose, it is veritable death.

This happened when creation took place. The Upani-shads tell us that these cast-out, banished individualities were once upon a time like gods in heaven, scintillating like sparks, but the moment the isolation of the sparks gets affirmed, concentrated and confirmed, these sparks, the so-called divinities, these little elements shut off from the Supreme Absolute, get hardened into a crust of individuality and solidify themselves in

the form of physical matter, which is the body that we are embodying. This is the tragedy of human life—of any kind of life.

It is not humanly possible to maintain this cocoon-like existence of utter selfishness and self-centredness, and even foolish people are not so foolish as to not understand the meaninglessness of their foolishness. They manoeuvre the foolishness in such a cunning way that it works in its own way. The ego, which is utterly selfish and does not care for any other person, knows that it cannot continue, it cannot survive without the cooperation of other individuals.

Masters of political science tell us the way in which governments formed. Why did people feel the necessity for administration? Where was the necessity? Each one was independent for oneself. What connection have I got with you? People gradually realised later on that such a self-identical total isolation cannot succeed. We cannot survive by such affirmation of total individuality. We require the cooperation of earth, water, fire, air, ether, and even of other people.

The need felt by each one that impossibility is behind the self-centredness of each individual created a necessity for the coming together of individuals. If I have a fear of something, that fear gets diminished if there is another person with me. If I don't care for other people, I remain alone to myself, swallowing my fear. If many people join together, the source of fear loses its intensity because a confidence arises thereby that the cooperation of many people will have the capacity to meet this source of fear and demolish it completely. The fear in each individual created the need to form organisations of a political nature, a social nature, and so on.

Even a family is an organisation of that type. Nobody can exist individually by oneself. It is not possible that you yourself till the land, sow the seeds, collect the harvest, cook the food and eat it. It requires an organisation here also for the helping hand of many other people. Every administration—family administration, district administration, village administration, state, international, whatever it is—are all various degrees of the need felt for the coming together of otherwise utterly individual, self-centred persons.

Notwithstanding all this, granting that people are ready to cooperate among themselves to form a world system of administration, each individual is still selfish. That original demonical, self-centred, isolated individual sense persists in each person. So, it is not possible to conceive such a thing.

God is in our hearts, but the devil is also there, side by side. What we call Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are both inside. Man is supposed to be a crossing point of God and brute, so it is possible for us to behave like brutes if the time for it comes, but we can also behave like gods if the time for it comes. The necessity for organisation arose, therefore, due to a practical need felt by individuals who could not survive without an organisation.

Coming to the point, an organisation requires only people. It does not require buildings and so on. For example, the members of a parliament can sit anywhere, not necessarily in one building, and even then they are members of parliament. In a similar manner, wherever we are, we may be dedicated to a common purpose. You may ask, "Why should you be insisting on a common purpose again and again? It is my purpose. I believe in my purpose. What is the use of another's purpose?"

It was already mentioned that individuality cannot survive by excessive insistence on its own isolation. It will gradually perish. There are fears of every kind. Death itself is the greatest fear in the world. We have invented and discovered hundreds of means of

seeing to it that we do not die so easily, because death is the greatest tragedy. Yet, the individual has to die. Emperors who are protected by armies and the best of medical people died, because death is inside the person. It is not outside, threatening one from somewhere else. When a person is born, death is also born together with that person. The fortunes of a person, the joys of a person, the sorrows of a person and the death of a person are all born together from the womb itself. Your whole biography is written in the womb itself. Though, due to your interpretation of things through your egoistic individuality you seem to be working hard to modify things, such a modification against the order of the Most High is not possible.

Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj organised this Divine Life Society. An organisation should not mean clinging to particular things. It is a totally detached spirit of the members of the Society that constitutes the Society. Each person is totally detached, but not detached in the sense of callousness, carelessness, and a don't care attitude. It is an intense concern with no attachment to any particular mood or objective. The whole Society belongs to each member of the Society, just as a Trust Board belongs to each Trustee individually, severally and jointly, yet no one is attached to anything.

Responsibility—the sense of duty—is different from attachment. See how carefully the manager of a bank takes care of the money in his vault, which does not belong to him. Not even one penny belongs to the manager of the bank. “What is the matter? It is not my concern. Let it be there. Something goes and something comes; in what way am I concerned?” Can he say that? He is intensely concerned, but totally detached. Here is an example of a deep obligation with a sense of duty being performed with detachment. We cannot understand how obligation and detachment can go together, but here is the very meaning of a dedicated life.

Dedication implies a social coordination and also a vertical longing for a higher ascent of each one towards divinity. We cannot quarrel among ourselves for any reason. An organisation does not consist of people who quarrel among themselves. The very meaning of an organisation is a participation for a common purpose. We cannot quarrel with nature; we cannot quarrel with the wind, with the heat of the sun or with the rain. What is the use of quarrelling with them? We have to participate with them. We have to participate with the activities of nature, and with God Himself. We cannot quarrel with God: “Why have You not given to me what I want? Why do You bring thunderbolts and destroy people?” We cannot argue with God like that. In the cosmic purpose, participation is necessary.

“Do your work,” says the Bhagavadgita. But whose work are you doing? It is not your work. But you may say, “If it is not my work, why should I do it at all? Why should I bend my back for the sake of the work intended for somebody else's benefit?” It is an uncultured attitude of any human being to think like that. A person who thinks “If it is not my work, why should I do it at all?” is a fool of the first water. Such a person knows nothing of nature, nothing of the world, and nothing of himself. It is a most uncultured attitude because each one belongs to another, in a different sense. I belong to myself in one sense, but I also belong to another in a different sense. Because we have descended from a larger organisation of divine elements at the time of creation, the participation of each individual unit in the fulfilment of a larger organisation of divinities persists even now.

If there is no connection of any kind between one person and another, and each one is self-centred and self-identical, we cannot even know that another person is existing. How do I know that you are sitting here? My mind is inside my brain, and you are

physically far away from me. My mind does not enter into your body, and you do not enter into my eyes. How do you know that I am sitting here, and how do I know that you are here? There is an internal coordinating system operating, unknown to everybody, due to which we know of each other's existence. Even the very perception itself is a coordinated activity, an organisation.

Such a wonderful spiritual organisation Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj created. "May we be blessed, may we be blessed, may we be blessed!" is my humble contribution today.

Session 26

CONTROVERSIES IN THE BRAHMA SUTRA

The point now that I am touching upon is the fate of the soul in the state of liberation. It has been a very controversial subject—what happens to the soul when one attains liberation.

I had occasion to meet very learned people, professors of philosophy. The head of the Department of Philosophy in Cornell University, New York, came here long ago, during Gurudev's time, and stayed for about three weeks. He was a philosopher. Every day he and his wife, who was a doctor, came and sat with me, and all kinds of subjects were discussed. He also conducted daily lectures on Western thought in *satsanga*, in the presence of Sri Gurudev.

During our discussion his wife asked me, "What are you aiming at finally, Swamiji?"

"We are aiming at the liberation of the spirit in God."

"What does it mean?" the professor asked.

"Identity with God."

"What happens when you attain identity with God?"

"You lose your individuality," I replied.

"Oh," he said, "I lose my individuality. If I am not there, as you say, who will be experiencing God? The experiencer himself is not there, as you are saying, so who is going to experience the state of liberation?"

"God will experience the state of liberation," I said.

"So what about me?" he asked.

"You will be so attuned to God's existence that there will be no question of your asking what will happen to you. If the river Ganga enters the ocean and the Ganga asks 'What will happen to me in the ocean?', what answer will you give? Will Ganga persist to exist in the ocean as Ganga? And if you say Ganga will not persist in the ocean as Ganga, will it be any kind of loss to Ganga?"

He said, "Ganga will become the ocean, all right, but there will be no Ganga there."

I replied, "Can you say that Ganga is not there? Similar is the case with all people. You will not be there, but it is not that you will not be there. Ganga will be there in the ocean, but Ganga will not be there in the ocean. Can you catch this subtle point?"

He said, "Very terrible."

Westerners cannot understand this merging. That word 'merging' is terrifying. You can attain God ruling in the kingdom of heaven, but merging with God is an abominable idea, especially in Western culture.

The Brahma Sutra takes up the subject, about which there has been a lot of controversy. If you read the Brahma Sutra honestly, you will find controversy right from the beginning till the end. Nothing is really clear.

One of the things that comes out on a close analysis of the real meaning of the sutras themselves is that the author seems to be favouring Acharya Ramanuja's interpretation of God and the world. The Brahma Sutra does not seem to be favouring Acharya Sankara's thought, but Sankara is bent upon seeing that his thought is there.

According to Ramanuja, the soul does not merge with God. It enjoys the glory of God. He gives an example. Our body is made up of so many cells. Can you say the cells themselves are you, or are you different from the cells? If the cells are not there, your body will not be there. But are you yourself the cells? Now, when you say "I

have come from my room and am sitting here”, who is this ‘I’? Is it a bundle of cells that is speaking? So the body, consisting of cells, is to be distinguished from that which embodies the cells. Ramanuja concludes that all the world, all individuals, are like cells in the body of God. You cannot distinguish between yourself and the cells out of which your body is made, yet you are not the cells. So is the case with the individuals attaining God. They are inseparable from Narayana, Vishnu, God Almighty, but they are not themselves Narayana. The cells out of which your body is made are inseparable from the body, but the body is something unique by itself. It cannot be called simply a hodgepodge, a bundle of cells. So there is a distinction.

Ramanuja’s doctrine is that the relation between God and the world is a soul-body relation, but Acharya Sankara does not agree with this. His point is that you should not bring the word ‘relation’ at all, because relation means accepting the existence of two different things. If there are two different things, they cannot become one. If the two cannot become one, duality will persist. If duality persists, there will be no universal experience. Therefore, Sankara contends that Ramanuja is not right.

Does the Brahma Sutra say that the soul merges with God in an identity of universality? Sometimes it looks that it is so; at other times it seems to be different. The difficulty arises due to the definition of God given at the very beginning of the Brahma Sutra. Who is God? It does not say God is the Supreme Absolute, indistinguishable, indivisible, eternal. The definition given is very peculiar: God is He who creates, sustains and dissolves the world. This definition is called a tentative definition. There is a distinction between an essential definition and a tentative definition.

Where is the house of Mr. John? You may say it is that house on which a crow is sitting. Maybe at that time a crow was sitting there, but it does not mean that a crow will be sitting on the house always. The definition of the house is not correct when you say that it is the house on which the crow is sitting. Likewise, the definition of God as the Creator is not a correct definition because God is not bound to be creating always. God can cease from creating. When God ceases from creating, what is His nature? So God should not be defined as the Creator. The definition given in the Brahma Sutra seems to be what is called *tatastha lakshana*, an accidental attribute, and not the essential nature.

What is the purpose of defining God in that way, which is not His true nature? But in India, the respect for the Brahma Sutra is so much among the pundits and learned people that they cannot argue against the sutra’s meaning. Whatever the sutra says, it must be accepted; otherwise, you are a heretic contradicting the true meaning of the Brahma Sutra. So all the commentators merely repeat what the sutra says.

This is the beginning of the Brahma Sutra. What is the end? *Anāvṛttiḥ śabdādanāvṛttiḥ śabdāt* (B.S. 4.4.22). According to scriptural statement, you will not return from the state of liberation. Here is a contradiction. You will not return if you are identical with the Absolute Being. But Acharya Sankara is at pains to say that the God that is described in the Brahma Sutra is a God with so many attributes, Saguna Brahman as we say, because it is already mentioned that God is He who creates, preserves and destroys. But the Brahma Sutra does not say who God is by Himself, independent of the activity of creation, preservation and destruction, and so the essential God is completely missed. But nobody can dare to say that the Brahma Sutra is not giving the correct information, so there is a difficulty felt by orthodox commentators. They cannot agree with what the sutra is obviously saying, nor can they say they don’t agree. If they don’t agree, it is heresy. If they agree, it is self-contradictory. Acharya Sankara knows that, so he says that *anāvṛttiḥ śabda*, ‘you will

not return', means you will not return until the time of the dissolution of the universe. According to Sankara, the God described in the Brahma Sutra is the creator God, not the absolute God, and this position that he takes is opposed to every other acharya's position. Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallava, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Shakta, Saiva philosophers—everybody has one uniform view, against all of which, Sankara stands.

The whole difficulty is in their definition of Brahman. The Brahma Sutra could have said God is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, Sat-Chit-Ananda. What is the harm in giving the description as Pure Being, Pure Consciousness, Pure Freedom? Instead of that, why did the Brahma Sutra say God creates, preserves, destroys? This is the original creator God. The Creator is called Brahma, living in Brahmaloka. So according to this, liberation will simply mean going to Brahmaloka, having cosmic consciousness, but not becoming Brahma himself.

There is a specific sutra. *Jagadvyāpāravarjam prakaraṇāt asannihitattvācca* (B.S. 4.4.17): "The liberated soul in Brahmaloka will have all the freedom except the power of creating the world." It is similar to someone living in the White House. All the facilities, all the enjoyments which the president himself has, may be given to this invitee living in the White House, but he is not the president. Living in the White House does not make you the president, though you have all the comfort, security, and every blessed thing. So is the case if you go to Brahmaloka. You cannot become Brahma himself, though you will have all the freedom. Only *bhoga*, enjoyment, is possible. You will enjoy all the glory of God Himself, but you cannot become God.

But why does this sutra say you will not return? Sankara is caught in a difficulty. Like a shrewd lawyer, he says 'you will not return' means that as long as the Creator continues creating and Brahmaloka persists, you will be there, and you will not return. But what about the state of the liberated soul when the whole universe is dissolved? It follows that you will come back. But Sankara does not want to say that you will come back, because if he says that, he has contradicted the sutra.

This is just to mention the problem created by the sutras themselves. But we are spiritual seekers. We are not interested in controversy. Let Ramanuja and Sankara say anything, but we want absolute freedom. That is what the soul is seeking. We do not want contingent freedom, tentative freedom, subject to coming back when the universe is dissolved. You cannot have absolute freedom if there is something second to you. The presence of a second beside you limits your freedom. In a democracy every person is free, but not absolutely free. The citizen of a country is free to the extent that the same freedom is granted to other people also, and it is not absolute freedom to the extent of denying freedom to other people. So the existence of other people and the necessity to give equal freedom to other people make freedom limited. Everybody's freedom is limited freedom due to the existence of other people who also have the same freedom. That cannot be called absolute freedom. 'Absolute' means no condition attached to it. As long as you give freedom to other people, you are free. It is a condition that you are putting; but you want unconditional freedom, and that is possible only in a timeless existence.

Timelessness does not mean a long, long duration. Even if you live continuously for millions of years, you are in time only. But freedom is timelessness. It is called eternity. Inconceivable is this state. No human being can conceive what eternity is because our mind-body complex is involved in space and time. Anything that we think is in space and in time. Even if we stretch our imagination to the extent of affirming that there is no space and no time, that thought will be in space and time only, so it is a futile attempt to

negate the consciousness of space and time. Therefore, no one can imagine what eternity is. That is to say, no one can imagine what God is. Here it means that no one can know what liberation is because of the persistence of egoism. You should not be frightened that, in your attainment of God, you will be abolished. In the same way, the Ganga, Yamuna, Mississippi, Missouri and Volga rivers need not be afraid that they are going to lose themselves in the ocean. They are not going to lose themselves in the ocean, because they become the ocean. Why are you afraid of the word 'losing'? The Ganga has not lost herself when she entered the ocean. She has become a larger being than herself. So the abolition of individuality is not a loss of existence; it is an enhancement of existence in a freedom which is incomparable. This is moksha.

Human beings cannot conceive it because all conception is in space and time. The Mundaka Upanishad says *yathā nadyas syandamānās samudre astam gacchanti nāmārūpe vihāya* (M.U. 3.2.8): "As rivers lose their identity in the ocean, so does the soul lose its identity in God." Losing identity does not mean self-annihilation, just as the river is not annihilated in the ocean; it is expanded into its true nature. The arguments, questions, controversies in this regard arise because of the impossibility of the human mind to think it. It is a thought that is beyond time and space, and as thought cannot go beyond time and space, nobody can understand what moksha is.

In the Yoga Vasishtha, the great sage Vasishtha gives discourses to Rama on the nature of Reality. In the middle, Sri Rama was asking all kinds of questions: how, how, how, why, why, why? Vasishtha said, "Don't ask me how, why, and all that. The question cannot be answered because all questions arise in space and time, so the answer will also be involved in space and time, and therefore neither your question nor the answer will be valid. But try to see how you can get out of it by meditation on it."

I conclude by saying meditation is the way to liberation. All these controversies are unnecessary scholarly disputations, pedantry, and not necessary for a spiritual seeker. Meditate according to the Upanishadic dictum known as the Vaishvanara Vidya, a tremendous knowledge promising ultimate freedom. What happens when you attain ultimate freedom? You become that which God experiences. What does God feel before He creates the world? He knows only 'I am'. This supreme 'I am' is inconceivable to the human mind because we confuse it with the I am-ness of all the people seated here. 'I am coming from Rishikesh' or 'I am coming from America' is the only kind of 'I' known to us. But this is an I with a tremendous implication. It is a cosmic, universal, uncontaminated, non-externalised I. You will not be able to catch it. But pure souls, sincere souls who are devoid of earthly passions, desires and prejudices will be able to comprehend what this is and will accept that when God is known, everything is known, and when God is attained, everything is attained. When you have God with you, you have everything. God is Pure Consciousness; He is not an object. Therefore, in the state of that God-consciousness, every affirmation of consciousness will materialise as the satisfaction that you are seeking in this world. All creation will glow in that state of supernal perfection.

However much I speak, it will fall short of this great truth because any exposition, with all the might and main of explaining things, will be limited to space and time, and the finite is trying to go beyond space and time. It is like a person trying to sit on his own shoulders. Ultimately, the divine grace must come to you. The Absolute loves you. It is not that you love it; it loves you. Its love for you is like the ocean loving the drops, whereas your love is like a drop loving the ocean. That is the great difference. God is here and now. It is Pure Being, Pure Consciousness, Ultimate Freedom, Bliss Absolute.

I have not given you a theoretical disquisition but a practical interpretation, practical guidance to actually achieve this freedom in your practical life, and whatever I told you is quite sufficient for a mind that has grasped it fully and sincerely.

Session 27

NO CONTRADICTIONS IN THE BRAHMA SUTRA

Regarding the glorious theme of the soul's unity with God, all kinds of discussions arose, as detailed in the Brahma Sutra. Every aspect was taken into consideration. My personal opinion is, there are no contradictions as they may be appearing in the Brahma Sutra. They are all aspects of the pyramid of Truth. Those who cling to one brick and ignore another brick cannot know the whole of the structure.

There is nothing totally irrelevant in this universe. Even a hair of the body is not an irrelevant thing. Nothing either outside or inside the body can be regarded as totally useless. By comparing and contrasting with a personalistic outlook, we make the mistake of judging things from a specialised point of view, and see only difference everywhere.

The path to God is the path to nectar, but it passes through poison. In India we have a story called the Amrita Manthana, the churning the ocean for the sake of obtaining divine nectar. The gods and the demons joined together to churn the ocean to bring up the celestial nectar of the gods. The churning went on for endless time, practically. What first came up from the ocean was not nectar but a terrific poison which blinded their eyes, choked their throats and suffocated their existence, which no one could tolerate. I am not going into the story of the Amrita Manthana, but rather the implication of this story in our search for Truth.

We should not imagine that God will come merely because we want Him. The truth is, we do not wholly want Him. There is no mistake on the part of God. God is a whole being, but we are not whole beings. A fraction of a being, which is human nature, is asking the whole being, which is God, to come immediately. It is not anybody's mistake. It is an erroneous notion of one's own self by the seeker of God.

What is the poison that is coming up? It is the reaction of all the buried impulses that are in the deepest layers of our personality. If you want to have some indication of what these reactions are, you should leave your home and live in an uninhabited place without any kind of facility, as if you are living in a desert, with no one to speak to and no one to want you. Go on living there, doing austerity. At that time, the buried instincts will come up. You will see blackness everywhere, dirt everywhere.

Actually, there is no dirt anywhere; it is inside only. Accumulated impulses of actions performed for ages and ages of previous lives will come up. A satisfied enemy does not look like an enemy, so the impulses that are inside which are being satisfied by our sensory activities do not appear to be there at all. We say, "There is nothing wrong with me. I am a pure soul. I don't have any anger. I have no desire. I have fulfilled all my wishes. I am perfectly all right. I have renounced everything." These are immature statements.

The waking life, the dreaming life, and our life in the state of sleep have to be examined carefully. What are we seeing in our waking life? We are seeing the world outside. How do we see the world outside through the consciousness which passes through the aperture of the eyes? What kind of consciousness have we got? It is an externalised form of the hidden instincts which are lying buried in the state of deep sleep. To give an example, it is like sunlight which is passing through scattered clouds of various patterns, causing the light to have various patterns—sometimes big, sometimes

blurred, sometimes not visible at all. This is the kind of world we are seeing. We do not see the world; we interpret the world, or interpret something which we call the world.

Philosophers have spent their whole lives explaining what is it that we are seeing. We are seeing our own selves in the world. Nobody will understand that this is happening. We are putting on some glasses which are made up of the fine potentials of our desires, which are in the deepest recesses of our heart. When we see the world, we are seeing our own desires, and they colour our perception. There are conflicts in the deepest recesses of our own instincts, and they colour our perception and make us feel that God has created a chaotic world, though God does not do such things. When we see sunlight reflected in water that is muddy or violently shaking, we will not see the sun. We will see a distorted appearance which is totally different from the real sun in the sky. The muddy aspect is the *tamas*, and the shaking of the water is the *rajas*.

These spectacles of instincts which form the medium through which we see anything, and through which we also see ourselves, are the reflection of the sun of the soul, the Atman, in the muddy water of the *tamasic* and *rajasic* qualities in us. When we say we see the world, we must also include ourselves because we are a part of the world. Who is seeing the world? We should not say: "I am seeing." We are a part of the world. We cannot exist outside the world. Then who is seeing the world? The world of instincts is beholding itself in a dance of confusion similar to a bacchanalian dance, a drunken man dancing in a totally irrelevant, irregular manner. That is the reason why we are not having one minute of peace in this world. We are the creators of our sorrow. This is the poison that is coming up when we start meditating on God.

People think that they can bypass all these things and jump into God. There are many gates to the heaven of God, and we have to pass through every gate. Society is one gate, the physical body is one gate, the sense organs are one gate, the mind is one gate, the intellect is one gate, and then all that is there in the state of deep sleep is one gate. We have to pass through all this, and cannot bypass anything. The gatekeeper will stop us at every step. We have to pay our dues.

Desires cannot be crushed. Nothing can be destroyed. Anything that we have been hugging as a reality will always remain as a reality as long as we are alive, whether it is actually real or not. The real is that which our consciousness accepts to be really there. It may be a hallucination, but it is a reality for the type of consciousness which accepts that it is there. The world may be there or it may not be there; that is not the problem. The problem is that the consciousness is accepting that there is something outside. Why it is accepting it is a very deep subject. We enter into deep waters, as they say.

Hence, the moksha that we have been discussing all these days, the liberation of the soul, is not to be considered as a joke. A complaint comes: "I have no time. I am a busy person. I go here, there, do all kinds of work the whole day. I am a family man. I have got responsibilities. Where is the time for me to sit and meditate like this?" Meditation is not one of the activities that you are performing. It is the background of all the activities. Meditation is a state of being, and not a state of doing something. You cannot say that you have no time to be. How can you say you have no time to be? You may have no time to do, but have you no time to be? Meditation is a state of being what you are, only in different stages of expansion of the dimension of being.

Expansion does not mean becoming wider and wider, which is measurable geometrically or mathematically. Being cannot be measured. Who can measure the width or the depth of your existence? It is not measurable; it is immeasurable. Your being is not the appearance of what you are now. We have discussed this several times,

so I don't want to repeat that now. You are not the one you appear to be either in the waking state or in the dreaming state. You are that which seems to be hiddenly present, unperceived, in the state of deep sleep. Consciousness has no dimension. The word 'dimension' is used only figuratively. Consciousness has no dimension because it is not in space; it has no length and breadth. So the expansion of the dimension of being should be understood properly. You should not make another mistake, even if it be the right thing. We can do many right things in a wrong way. That does not work.

We cannot conceive the expansion of our being. Can you conceive who you are minus the body-mind complex? That thing which you really are even now, that has to expand in a non-measurable way. It is being rolled in itself in a non-externalised way. We have to put it in strange language because no language can suffice in explaining this situation. The path of meditation is inscrutable.

I have said something about the poison that comes up at the very beginning of our attempt to reach God. The poison does not come from outside. It is our unfulfilled longings which we have pushed inside due to the non-availability of the circumstances to fulfil them.

If, after years and years of meditation done sincerely, honestly, from the bottom of your heart, you succeed in obviating the tantrums that are created by these poisonous instincts in you, you should not think that the journey is over. The first stage is the opposition by all the unfulfilled longings inside. We have gradually evolved from the lowest mineral stage to the plant, to the animal, to the human stage. When we evolved, we brought a remnant of the earlier stages with us. We have the qualities of a stone, of a vegetable, of an animal, and of a selfish individual. Human nature is a selfish entity. There is nothing good in it, though it can be utilised for a higher purpose. We can sleep like a stone, be hungry like a plant, and be cruel like an animal. Nobody is free from these instincts. When the time comes, we manifest all these qualities. You should not say, "No, I am not like that." The circumstances have not come wherein you can manifest this. Nobody is safe. You have to be guarded always.

When these obstacles gradually disappear, temptations arise. Instead of poison, smoke and irritation, you will see beauties everywhere. The beauties attract. The story of the churning of the ocean for nectar also tells us the stages of the ascent. In the beginning, it was smoke and poison. Then one by one the jewels, the beauties, start rising up from the ocean. In the earlier stages they are small beauties, small attractions; gradually they are more and more gorgeous beauties, and then they are magnificent attractions unimaginable by the human mind. The beauty of heaven itself can attract a person in such a way that the mind can be completely distracted from the path that is being trodden. Patanjali Maharishi, in one of his sutras, says that when the denizens of the higher stages of life invite you, be careful. In a very picturesque and humorous way, it is said that you will have the vision of the heaven of the gods. What happens? They will all invite you: "Your asceticism has fructified. Come! Here is a river of nectar. Here is a pond of milk that you can bathe in. Here is a cosy sofa; be seated here. These are all the beauties who are going to serve you. Be happy. You have come here by the power of your meditations." Patanjali says, "Don't be tempted." *Sthānyupaniṣad* *saṅgasmayākaraṇaṁ punaraniṣṭa prasaṅgāt* (Y.S. 3.52). This is the sutra of Patanjali. When the denizens in the higher levels of life invite you, do not accept the invitation. Do not accept an invitation from anybody. Do not receive gifts. You do not want gifts from others; otherwise, you will fall from that place.

Christ also had to pass through these stages. A voice was heard by Christ when he was doing austerity on the top of a mountain. "Why are you sitting here and torturing your body? See the beauty," said the voice. He saw a field of gold, all richness and beauty. "Here it is. This is the result of your austerity. Come on. Why are you wasting your time?" said the voice. But Christ was made of a different stuff. He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

Buddha had the same experience. He went on meditating for days and days. He saw things before him. What did he see? He saw his own wife with a little child. "You have left me and gone," that lady said. There was no lady there, and no child. It was his own mind. Some guilt due to the desertion of his wife and child rose up inside him and came in the form of a presentation. The wife was sitting in front saying, "My dear Lord, you have left me and gone. Here is your child." Buddha opened his eyes and thought, "How has this lady come here?" He closed his eyes. "No, it is not my wife, it is not my son. Mara is talking. No. Go, go, go!"

We also see all the grand beauties. You must read the sixth chapter of Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, which is the life of Buddha. He described what Buddha saw. The whole chapter is that only. You will be wonder-struck at what kind of life we are living. When those entities could not tempt him any more, they threatened him. "Hey, I will break your head. Get up from this place. Who are you?" There was thunder and lightning and rainfall, and he was fear-struck. He thought he would die just now, but he bore it.

We are not in a beautiful world. We are not in a world of nectar; we are in a world of opposition. Every inch of the world will oppose us. All the gatekeepers will say, "Get away from here because you have not paid the taxes that you owe." Bypassing the body is not possible, bypassing the instincts is not possible, bypassing the law is not possible. Nothing can be bypassed. You owe a debt to everything. You have to clear the debts at every stage and not say, "What is there in the world? What is there in the family? I don't want anything. I am going to God." This kind of talk has no meaning. You have to pay the tax. What is the tax? Those who have physically come far away from their family and their property, their mind will say, "No! What have you done?" In the Bhagavadgita we are told the objects of sense may be far away, but the taste for them will remain inside. You have rejected all the value of the world, but if they are brought before you in a concentrated form, will you receive them again or not? Ah, be careful! Nobody can renounce like that.

In the story of the Amrita Manthana, they continued churning the ocean until the grandest beauty arose. There was Lakshmi, the consort of Narayana, Vishnu. No human being could believe what kind of thing it was. Finally, nectar came.

The Brahma Sutra, therefore, does not create confusion. It only tells us the various stages and the different bricks in the structure of the ascent of the soul to God. There are no contradictions. Every school of thought is correct from one point of view. We have Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, Vedanta, even Charvaka, Materialism, and each one of them has a meaning. Meaningless things do not exist. We have to fortify ourselves by being friendly with the structural pattern of the whole universe. We have to become the universe itself. How is it possible? By deep meditation.

I have written some essays on the cosmical type of meditation called the Vaishvanara Vidya. It is a part of the Chhandogya Upanishad. Read it again and again, again and again; go on reading it three times, four times, ten times. In the beginning, the meaning may not be clear, but then you will be able to think only in that way, and there

is no other way of thinking. You will feel wonder. "O wonderful! O wonderful! O wonderful!" exclaimed the Upanishadic sage.

Session 28

THE ART OF HANDLING IRRELEVANT THINKING

Students of yoga say that their mind is not cooperating, that there is distraction. But who causes the distraction? This is a very interesting psychological operation. Every kind of concentration or meditation is an instruction given to the mind to change its habit. You are telling the mind to change its behaviour and think in a different way than the way in which it is thinking, and it resents this advice. If you tell anybody to change their way of thinking, to change their behaviour, they will fly into a rage and say, "Who are you to talk to me like that? You are giving me advice?"

The mind also says that: "Who are you? I am thinking as I want to think. It is my normal way of thinking, and now you are telling me that you are doing something called meditation. Who cares? You are telling me to change my behaviour. It is the worst thing that you can tell anybody. No, nothing of the kind." This is called distraction. It is not the marketplace or the railway train that is distracting you; it is something happening inside. The mind resents any kind of instruction because an instruction is to make it accept a change, and nobody likes change. To bring about some change anywhere, immediately there is an uproar. It will say, "Who is this man to introduce changes? We are perfectly all right." It is the same trouble arising in society that is in one's own self. It is a kind of insult. It feels, "You are insulting me by saying that I must change my behaviour. I will teach you a lesson. Get up!"

In this connection, there is a very interesting story in the Mahabharata which illustrates this difficulty of handling the mind. The war of the Mahabharata is something known to you all. There was a feud between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. When reconciliation did not work out well, they thought the best thing is war. The Pandavas were camping on one side, and the Kauravas under Duryodhana were camping on the other side. All the kings of the country were invited, some on behalf of Yudhisthira and some on behalf of Duryodhana.

The uncle of Yudhisthira, who was the brother of the second wife of his father Pandu, was called Shalya. He was a very powerful person. He pitied the Pandavas and thought, "These poor boys are suffering, and I must help them." He gathered an army that was huge like a sea, and moved towards the camp of the Pandavas to tell Yudhisthira that he was with him.

Duryodhana, the other side, understood this move. He thought, "This is a dangerous thing. If this large army goes to the Pandavas, it will be a great disadvantage for me. I must satisfy Shalya so that he may help me, but if I go to him openly he will not do that because he is favouring the Pandavas."

What Duryodhana did was, he set up a beautiful reception camp on the way where Shalya was moving with his army. He hid himself behind it because if he stood there, it wouldn't work. He told the receptionist to be so kind to Shalya, and many hundreds of beautiful tents were set up with music and beautiful beds, and dinner was arranged for them.

The tired Shalya came. He thought that this must have been arranged by Yudhisthira because he was moving towards them. "Oh, what great pains he has taken for me. I am certainly going to help him."

At that time Duryodhana came and said that he had prepared it all.

Shalya said, "You have done this arrangement? I thought it was the Pandavas."

Duryodhana replied, "No, I have done it."

Shalya felt, "What is this? It is a very difficult situation. I promised within myself that I am going to help the man who has received me with such kindness and with such beauty." He was in a bottleneck.

Shalya told Duryodhana, "I am very sorry you have tricked me, Duryodhana. But anyhow, when I utter a word, I will not withdraw it. I have told myself whoever has arranged this beautiful reception for me, I must help that man. I will keep my word. I will help you, but I am very sorry for all that has happened."

Then Duryodhana left with great joy that now Shalya would be on his side.

Shalya left his army somewhere and went alone to the camp of Yudhisthira and told him, "This is what has happened. I am very sorry. I gave a promise to Duryodhana that I would help him instead of you because he tricked me on the way."

Yudhisthira said, "You have done the right thing, Uncle. After all, he is my brother; why not help him? I am very happy. Please help him. After all, you see, we are brothers. When there is a quarrel between us, we are five and they are a hundred, but when there is a quarrel with somebody else, we are jointly a hundred and five." That is the goodness of Yudhisthira. "Very good, very good, Uncle. You have done the right thing in helping my brother. He deserves help. But help me also. I am a humble servant of yours."

Now Shalya thought, "How will I help? My army has gone. Duryodhana tricked me, and now I am going to trick him also." He said, "Listen Yudhisthira, my dear boy. Karna is a braggart. He thinks he is the greatest warrior, but he has no charioteer. He will certainly come to me and beg me to become his charioteer. I will insult him forthwith. I will insult him from beginning to end, and bring his spirits down so that half of his energy will go away. That is the help I can give."

Yudhisthira said, "What can I say? Please help me."

So when Karna had the chance, he drove his chariot to Shalya and then requested, "Shalya, great master, I am helpless. I request you to drive my chariot."

Shalya replied, "Idiot! You have the courage to ask me to be your charioteer? You fellow, you are a carpenter's son and I am a king. You ask a king to be your charioteer? Shameless man!" In the beginning itself Shalya talked to Karna like that. Then he said, "Hey, do you know whom you are going to face? You are going to face Arjuna, who will end you in one day."

Karna replied, "You talk to me like that? You are a charioteer. Get down from here. I would split your tongue just now, but I cannot do that because I have no other charioteer. You talk to me like that? I'll kick you down just now. I'll beat you and make you eat dust!"

"Hey," Shalya said. "What are you saying? You are a frog and Arjuna is an elephant. You talk like that to me? Who are you?"

"I am sorry." Karna wept. "Is there no other person for me than this man who is insulting me? What kind of charioteer have I got? A charioteer is supposed to enthrall the man, and you are putting me down. I am helpless!"

Shalya said, "Hey, beware who Arjuna is. You are a crow and he is a swan. He is a fierce fire and you are a straw."

Again Karna said. "Hey! You are talking to me in this way from beginning to end."

So Karna felt highly dispirited. He went to the war with half of his energy gone. In this way, Shalya helped the Pandavas. The Mahabharata is a wonderful illustration of every kind of behaviour of a person.

This is what the mind is doing. You try to change its behaviour, and then you say, "My mind is distracted. I cannot meditate. This Guru is no good. He exploits his students. I will go to some other Guru. All the Gurus are useless people. I am going for a long *yatra*, a pilgrimage somewhere. I will have a garden of my own. I will tend my beautiful flowers. These flowers are sufficient. I don't want wretched Gurus." This goes on and on and on, only because you have insulted the mind by telling it to change its attitude. There is no greater insult to a person than to tell him to change his behaviour, and you are doing that by going for meditation. This is not the way. You should not suddenly tell the mind, "Change your behaviour." Even if you want a person to change his pattern of living, there is a way of being friendly and cajoling, having a conciliatory and teasing way of handling a thing. Even a naughty child will not like to be told, "Don't do this!" The more you say that, the more it will stick to its guns. "I will do this only," the child will say.

"Don't go to the other side. There is a precipice," says the mother.

"No, I will go," says the child. And the mother has to pull the child away. This is exactly what the mind does.

Nobody is troubling you. You are trying to do something which is resented by the mind. You may ask, "Why is the mind resenting it? Is meditation a bad thing?" Meditation is not a bad thing, but the way you are understanding meditation is not correct. If even an expert doctor does not handle a patient sympathetically, and scolds him, that patient will not recover. So is the case with a teacher in a school or a college. You cannot penalise students and say they are all corrupt, rebellious elements. This attitude will not work anywhere. You cannot curse even a tree because it will resent it. J.C. Bose discovered that if you talk ill of a tree, it will know. If a gardener says that tomorrow he will cut down this tree, the tree will know, and it will tremble. By an electromagnetic metre it can be shown what the tree is doing, and the next day when the gardener walks past it, it will tremble. But if a gardener is kind—"My dear tree, I like you very much. I will water you, manure you. How beautiful you are!"—the tree will smile. You do not believe that flowers can smile. The harvest in the field can smile. Beautiful music enhances the crop. You should not say, "Oh wretched thing. Crows are coming." You should not talk like that.

The art of meditation is nothing but the art of handling irrelevant thinking. Naughty children, and people who refuse to take any advice, how will you handle them? Mostly you want to wage war. It won't work. You cannot wage war against your own self.

Sometimes you make a mistake in choosing the object of meditation. Either you choose some particular form or some deity—Rama, Krishna, Devi, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, whatever it is—or you go to the other extreme of abstract meditation on pure consciousness. The mind will not agree to either of these. Abstract consciousness is beyond its conception, so however much you may struggle, you will reap no benefit.

But in the method of choosing a particular deity, there is another trouble. Here also, the mind doesn't understand what is meant by 'a particular deity'. It thinks that a particular deity is something differentiated from other deities. This is, again, a mistake. The divinity that you have chosen for meditation is not one of the many possible divinities. If that is the case, then the mind will say, "Why not go to that god? I like Siva more than Rama, and Krishna more than Jesus." But the chosen deity is not one of the possible forms of divinity. It is the only form that can be in your mind. The object of meditation, even if it is a particular form, is a comprehensive appearance before you, something like a piece of glass which is concave or convex, attracting sunlight. It draws

the energy of all the rays of the sun into itself, and concentrated rays falling on it can create greater heat than dispersed rays can create.

The chosen deity is not one of the deities, it is the only deity. But what is the meaning of saying all this? When there are many possible things, why am I saying this is the only thing? It is because among all the possible forms, you have chosen this as the best; otherwise, you would have chosen a better one. Having chosen one and deliberately accepting that it is the best one, there is no use of complaining that perhaps others are also possible of experimentation. "I have been living with this Guru for twenty years. I will go to another." That means you have not chosen properly.

The object of meditation, even if it looks like a single form, is the meeting point of a cosmic ramification of energy. By the thought of the completeness of the form of the object of meditation, the complete process of the universe will impinge upon it. You can touch a pencil and draw the energy of the cosmos into it. Every particle of matter in this world is connected to every other particle. Every part of the body is connected to every other part of the body. If you touch one part of the body, you have touched the whole body. The entire body will know it. It is necessary for you to accept the superior understanding that any form is the same as any other form. "Which god is better for me, this one or that one?" This doubt has no meaning. Any form is as good as any other form, just as you can touch the body through any limb of the body.

The power of the thought of the meditator is what is behind the process of energising that particular form. When you erect a temple and newly install a statue, what is called *prana prathista* is done first. The energy of God is invoked into that particular statue that you consider as your deity. The stone, the image or the symbol gets charged with the flowing of currents of force from all parts of the universe. The *prana* is introduced into it by the deep concentration of the mind of the performer and the recitations of mantras which are equally powerful. You don't simply keep a statue and worship it. *Prana prathista* is the invocation of life into the statue, the idol, the diagram.

Some people worship only diagrams. Those people who worship according to the Tantra Shastra worship a diagram called Sri Chakra, which is an architect's plan of the nature of the whole universe. As the shape of a future building can be seen from the architect's drawing, this particular diagram, which is highly complicated, represents the structure of the whole cosmos in various levels of intensity. You can invoke the whole universe through that little diagram. You can keep a painted picture and draw the whole energy into it, because you are not seeing a picture, you are seeing that which represents the picture. The visible object is only a representation, a symbol of another thing which is in your mind.

People hang photographs of dead people in their rooms. Your father died, and you keep a photo of him. What is there in that photo? It is a little paper and ink. Are you worshipping paper and ink? No. It is a symbol that you have drawn of the father whom you loved very much, and that love for the father once again enters your mind by seeing the symbol before you. Even a rupee coin, a dollar note, is a symbol of currency value. The dollar note is only paper and ink. Do you say you are carrying a piece of paper with ink on it? That value which you see in it is more important than the physical aspect of it. A coin is not a metal piece. The metal piece is only the outer form into which has been invoked a force which is called economic value.

Everything that we see in this world is of that nature. The things as they are themselves are only representations, symbols, diagrams, photographs, pictures,

shadows of the real thing. As we cannot go on thinking of a shadow or a picture, our mind infuses an energy which is the ideal that is maintained in the mind on everything.

You see a person and say, "I love you very much." What are you loving? You cannot love the skin and the bones and the flesh of that person. You have infused into that physical form an idea that is in your mind. The idea that is in your mind is beautiful, and you infuse that into a physical form which is as good as any other physical form. This body is mud and stone; there is nothing more than that, but the mud and stone look beautiful when it is an architectural or a sculptural piece. Everything that you see in this world is of this nature. Nothing by itself has any sense, but we infuse sense into everything; because of this, we behave towards it in one way or another.

So is the case with our attitude in meditation. You should never say, "This is to be rejected." This idea must go. Many people think, "In meditation, I reject thoughts." The mind will not allow this method. You want to reject something. What is wrong with it? This idea of rejection is really abominable. In this world there is basically nothing rejectable. It is by comparison and contrast you are making this arrangement of liking and not liking. When you say "I have abandoned this", you think over what is happening. You are again thinking of that thing which you seem to have abandoned. You cannot know that you have abandoned something unless your mind is already there in that object which you seem to have abandoned, so you have not abandoned anything. The mind is still thinking of that which it has abandoned. You say, "I have renounced all my land and property, my house, my wife, everything." Why do you say that? If you have really abandoned them, you will not say that you have abandoned them. A person who has been healed of illness will not go on saying, "I have abandoned the sickness. I have rejected it." Will anybody talk like that? Anything that you have really abandoned cannot enter your mind a second time. So to go on saying, "I have rejected everything; I have abandoned everybody; I have no responsibility" is a foolish way of thinking. The mind is a greater teacher to us than any Guru in this world.

What you should do is, be honest to your own mental way of thinking. Renunciation is necessary for a Sannyasin. All Sannyasins feel they have renounced the whole world. They are sitting on the surface of the earth and then they say, "I have renounced the whole world." You are eating the food which is given by the earth, and you say, "I have renounced the whole world." You put on a cloth which comes by spinning cotton, and then you say, "I have renounced the whole world." What have you renounced, actually? Here also is a mistake in the concept of renunciation.

Renunciation does not mean absenting yourself from the location of something which you think you have abandoned. Renunciation is the abandonment of the wrong idea that things are outside you. The moment you are able to convince yourself that nothing in the world is really outside you, you have automatically renounced everything, because you can renounce a thing only if there is something outside you. You don't renounce your own self. This one trick works very well. There will be no problem afterwards. If the mind that is hankering for things finds that a thing that it wants is impinging upon it every moment and nothing is external to its want, this craving for another thing—the word 'another' should be underlined—ceases immediately because that which you want is not another thing. It is a thing as near to you as your own self.

There are no distances between objects. There is not even a really conceivable distance between the earth and the sun. There is no great distance between the stars and the place where you are sitting, but we say the stars are so many light years away.

These stars are sitting in your own body in a microcosmic form. The sun, the moon and the stars, the mountains and the rivers are inside us. The Chhandogya Upanishad tells us whatever is happening outside in the world happens inside us also. If it rains outside, it is raining inside also, and if you don't consider this, you will fall sick. You will catch a cold. You will have a sore throat. You don't accept that the rain is also inside. So you should not eat things which are not suitable when it is raining inside. There is also thunder inside. There cannot be a purely external action. It is a cosmic operation taking place. If anything happens anywhere, it is also happening in you.

Meditation is not a concentration of yourself on something else. The mind rejects the idea of 'something else'. You don't want something else; you want yourself only. You have to become another person. But another person is yourself only. All the things of the world that appear to be spread out in long distances are touching your very skin, actually. You can invoke them just now by deep affirmation of their presence here and now.

If God is said to be here and now, everything in His creation is also here and now. Why should God be here and now, and mountains be many miles away from us? Nothing that God has created is not here and now. Whatever the creation of God is, it is the same as God Himself. You have to behave with the things of the world in the same way as you behave with God. You are thinking, "Things are all outside, far away. Who bothers? Something is taking place somewhere. I am comfortable here." Nothing is taking place somewhere else.

Modern science has demonstrated that events do not take place in space. If events do not take place in space, where are they taking place? They are taking place in a spaceless existence. The spacelessness of the event makes it a cosmic event. Every event which appears to be taking place in one place is taking place everywhere. A philosopher said, "At the birth of every event, the whole world is in travail." 'Travail' means birth pangs. The pangs of the birth of a child in the form of an event anywhere in the world are felt by the whole cosmos, which is the mother. The universe is the mother of every event that takes place anywhere, as if a child is born. There is no event, no birth of a child, no action taking place without the knowledge of everything in the world. Are we not reminded again and again of the beautiful statement of a poet who said that you cannot touch the petals of a flower in your garden without disturbing the stars in heaven? There is no secrecy. A hymn in the Atharvaveda says that if you utter one word secretly, in a corner, in the ear of a person, it goes like a thunderbolt and is felt in the highest heavens. Even a whispered secret is felt like a thunderbolt in the high heavens. Does not the body feel the pain if there is a prick of a thorn in even the tip of the toe? Is it only the toe that is feeling the pain? The whole body is agitated, and forces are released to repel that enemy. So does the world act.

Meditation is centring one's consciousness on the ultimate meaning of all things. Meaningless attitudes towards anything will not bring you anything. But if you are habituated to only one way of thinking, it is like the conversation between Karna and Shalya. Both were very adamant. "You are like that." "You are like that." "Don't talk." "Don't talk." This was told to Buddha himself when he was in deep meditation. "Hey, foolish man, what are you doing here? Do your duty. Your wife and children are crying there. Get up and serve the world. You are pursuing a will-o'-the-wisp, a phantom, a passing wind. Get up from this place." This is not only for Buddha, it is for us also.

People say, "What are you doing? Unnecessarily you have come to the Sivananda Ashram. Have you no other work? Go back and do some good work. Serve the people. People are suffering everywhere. You are trying to catch God like this, but nothing of the kind will work. Don't pursue a will-o'-the-wisp. Nothing will come. Everywhere people are suffering without food and clothing, and you are meditating. Who cares? Go." Buddha was told this, and you are also told this. You will think, "I think there is some truth in it. Oh, I see. It is better to serve people. People are the same as God. God is in the people only." But they don't understand what kind of people they are serving. This is another aspect of the matter.

Great obstacles of every conceivable kind place themselves before you. Nachiketas could not get a clear answer to his question from a mighty Guru like Yamaraj, and you want the answer for it in the state of an immature mind. What are the obstacles that came before him? Not thorns, not thunderstorms, not hunger and thirst. These were not the obstacles that came before Nachiketas. All the glory of the world is before you. Do you consider it as an obstacle? Who on earth will think like that? All the wealth and glory and authority of the whole empire of the world is yours. Do you think 'obstacle' means something pricking and causing pain? An obstacle need not be only a pain-giving thing. It can produce great pleasure, which is a greater obstacle than pain. When it is a painful experience, at least you know that it is not a proper thing, but when it is a great joy that is flooding you from all sides, you can never think it is an obstacle. It is easier to bind a person by affection than by hatred. The intention is to bind that person, though it looks like affection and love.

Hegel, the great philosopher, wrote a book called *The Phenomenology of Mind*, a thoroughgoing analysis of the mental process. We have a dislike for everything. The personality asserts itself as the only possible reality. "I am the only possible reality. I cannot concede this right to anybody else. I reject everybody else." We cannot really love anybody. Rather, we reject everything, but we reject it in a different way. It is very important to note this. In actual rejection, you simply kick the person out, but that does not work because even after your having renounced, thrown away something, your mind is thinking of that thing, as I told you earlier, and it has not gone away from your mind. Even that which you have rejected is mentally accepted. But in love, you destroy a person. In love, you try to absorb the individuality of that person into your individuality so that the individuality of that loved person ceases. You have destroyed the individuality of that person by saying "I love you" because you absorb that person. There are two ways of destroying a person. By absorbing that person into yourself and making them cease to exist, you have won victory over that person. Or, the other way is by physically disliking them. But that physical disliking does not work because the mind is thinking of the very act of having rejected them, so it is a misnomer. And in love you have rejected them. Everything is an art played by the mind of rejecting everything except one's own self: "I am supreme. I am everything." But before the large society of people around you, you feel a great discomfort in saying "I am everything" because other people are there. So you destroy them either by physically throwing them out or by loving them and absorbing them, and making them cease to exist. It is a very great analysis. The ego works in various ways.

This is what happened to Buddha, the great saint, but he finally realised this is a kind of trick that the mind plays. This kind of trouble arises only in advanced forms of meditation. In the beginning, you will feel no obstacle. If a little puppy starts barking before an elephant, what does the elephant care? It won't even recognise the existence

of that yelping puppy. The mighty powers of nature do not recognise your meditation, so everything seems to be fine. But if it is an elephant facing another elephant, then they will be confronting each other.

So your meditation should be like an elephant, as strong as the universe itself. When it kicks up a row, then all these obstacles arise—beautiful things, ugly things, threatening things. Death itself will come and threaten you: “I will finish you just now.” But this will not take place in the early days of meditation when you are only like a puppy yelping before an elephant. You have not risen above natural forces, so everything looks fine. If you think, “I am doing *japa* and meditation. I will stand against the universe, and I am going to absorb it into myself” then you will see what happens.

This is the message for today.

Session 29

LIBERATION IN THE ETERNAL BEING

Swamiji: Liberation is Absolute. Do you go alone to the Absolute or do you carry the whole world with you? Be careful in answering. Does the whole world come with you, or are you going alone, as Mr. so-and-so?

An ashramite: There is no world.

Swamiji: Why are you saying that? You can see the world. If there is no world, why do you want freedom from it? Everybody says, "I am going alone." They do not say, "I am taking my family."

Ashramite: There is no isolation in this world also.

Swamiji: Why is there not? I am seeing isolation. You should not carry your present logic to that upper state. Everybody says, "I am going." Nobody says, "The whole world is going." Why does this 'I' come? "I don't want anything. I have left everything. I am going to God." Do people not talk like that? Or, "No. I will take the whole world with me." Does anybody say that?

Ashramite: The individual feels isolated from the world.

Swamiji: He is isolated. Otherwise, why does he say he wants liberation? Answer this question. People don't want liberation. There are some doctrines which say, "We will not attain nirvana, or liberation, until the whole world gets it." That means to say, the world will continue even after you reach nirvana. Is it so? This is one of the doctrines of Buddhism. There are Buddhists called Avalokiteshvaras. They say they will wait for the redemption of the whole world, and then only will they go. Is it okay or not?

Ashramite: It is not possible.

Swamiji: It is a prevalent doctrine. You cannot get liberated until the whole cosmos is liberated, because you are a part of the cosmos. How will you separate yourself and go like that? This doubt will persist even in the greatest of men. Everybody says, "I want to attain God." Nobody says, "I will carry the whole world with me." Why don't people say, "I will take the whole world with me to liberation"? What is the idea?

Ashramite: That single person is feeling sorrow for other people, so he wants them to go first.

Swamiji: Now, who is attaining liberation?

Ashramite: That person is attaining it.

Swamiji: There is no person there. Who goes to liberation?

Ashramite: Nobody goes, because there is nobody to go.

Swamiji: How do you answer this great point that Avalokiteshvaras, etc., have refused to enter nirvana and are waiting for the redemption of the whole world? Are they all foolish people?

Ashramite: They are not foolish people.

Swamiji: Their understanding is poor, you are saying.

Ashramite: Yes, Swamiji, it is below nirvana only.

Swamiji: Now Buddhists will get angry with you. "You are a selfish man," they will say. If this confusion is not there, people will not say at the time of dying, "I am leaving everything and going." What are they leaving? This is a very serious matter. You should

not cut jokes with it. Your meditations will depend upon your clarity on this matter. Lastly, like a bombshell, the doubt will come. The whole chaos will be in front of you because now itself you are arguing whether it is this way or that way, and no answer is coming. If the answer doesn't come now, how will the answer come afterwards?

If you attain liberation, where are you sitting? Are you sitting inside the Absolute? Tell me. Are you going inside the chamber of the Absolute? Where are you?

Ashramite: Omnipresent.

Swamiji: You become omnipresent. Omnipresent means you are inside the world also?

Ashramite: Yes, everywhere.

Swamiji: Then what is the problem of the world? Then you will not see the world there, so what are you liberating? What is the Avalokiteshvara liberating? If you say you are becoming omnipresent when you attain the Absolute, then you have also entered the world because the world is inside the Absolute.

Ashramite: There is no world there then.

Swamiji: Then why are you saying that you will wait until the liberation of the world? You cannot answer this question until you are clear in your mind.

Why I am saying all this is, this will persist in advanced stages of meditation. Now these questions will not arise. Everything looks simple. "I have detached from everything, and I am simply liberating myself with the all-pervading God." It is very simple, easy to say, but it is not like that. It is something else.

The whole thing hinges upon the relationship between you and the world. In what way are you connected with the world? Are you a citizen of the world, enjoying the facilities of nature? Are you inside the world, or are you not inside the world? Let anybody answer this question. Everybody says, "Yes, I am in the world." But are you in the world? If you are in the world, then the world has no connection with you. It is like water in a bucket. The bucket is different from the water.

Ashramite: I am the world as long as I see the world.

Swamiji: Who will say like that? Which person will talk like that?

Ashramite: The world doesn't exist.

Swamiji: This is a very serious thing, very serious. Great sages have toppled down. You are not in the world; you are also not outside the world. When all the constituents of the world are the building bricks of your own personality, how could you say that you are inside or outside?

There is a big building here. What is it made of? It is made up of steel, cement, bricks. Are the steel, cement and bricks inside the house or are they outside the house? Suppose the steel starts thinking, "I am inside this house." The house does not exist minus these things. These components of the house are themselves the house. So do you understand me now?

Ashramite: Yes.

Swamiji: So you cannot say the material which formed the building is inside the house, nor can you say is it outside the house. It is the house. All the five elements form this body, and even the mind itself. Then in that case, what is the relationship between you and the five elements of the cosmos? It is the same as the iron bar and the house. What do you say? Are you inside the world or outside the world?

Ashramite: The mind itself is the world.

Swamiji: There is no mind there. I am saying 'you'. Why are you bringing another word?

If the iron bar is the same as the building, you yourself are the world. Is there anybody in this world who will talk like that? Is there anybody who will assert this kind of thing? Is a person who asserts like that a madman or a sane man? If you go on saying on the street “I am the whole world”, they will put you behind bars. Our troublemaker is inside us only.

Every day you must meditate like this. When you are in the state of dream, you see a huge world. You may be a king who is ruling over the whole kingdom. You have ministers and army and police and whatnot—vast riches. Is this experience of dream real or unreal? It is real when you experience it. When you wake up, where are the army, police, land, property and all the paraphernalia that the king had? Are they still inside the dream or have they gone, completely vanished? They cannot vanish because they are real when they are experienced. Otherwise, it will mean you are getting up independently. “I have got up from that vast world of experience outside, and all the people are suffering there while I alone am waking up. No, I will not wake up. I will wake up only when everybody wakes up.” Will you say like that? Then only a selfish man will wake up from dream because when you wake up from dream all the people are still there, and you alone are waking up. This is exactly the answer to your question. Does anybody do this analysis in the Ashram?

Ashramite: We never thought of that.

Swamiji: Even the idea will not arise in the mind. Am I talking sense, or is it meaningless?

Ashramite: Very deep, Swamiji.

Swamiji: Why are people in the Ashram not thinking like this? Why should I alone think like this? Others must also think this way.

Ashramite: There is no provocation to think like that.

Swamiji: Provocation? Who gave you the provocation to talk like that? Whatever prompted me to speak in this manner will have to prompt you to also think like this, because there is no special person in the world. I am not a special person. If I am able to contemplate things like this, everybody can also do it. This is the highest sadhana you can think of. All the knots will break, and you will attain liberation.

“It will be very difficult. I have to take many births.” There are some statements like that even in the scriptures. Thousands and thousands of births you have to take and then purify yourself by expiation, etc., and only then is it perhaps possible to attain liberation. So this frightens us.

There were two people, a farmer and a gardener. They saw Narada, the sage, passing that way.

They asked him, “Maharaj, where are you going?”

“I am going to Vaikuntha to see Vishnu, Narayana.”

“I see. Then you please ask him when we are going to be liberated.”

“I will ask him,” Narada said.

When Narada returned, they both asked him, “What is the answer?”

Narada replied to the farmer, “You will take ten more births.”

The farmer cursed himself. “So much *japa* I am doing, so much Narayana *japa*. After all, this is the result of it?”

The gardener asked, “What is the answer for me?”

“You will take as many births as leaves on this tree in order to attain liberation,” replied Narada.

“Oh, so I am fit!” exclaimed the gardener. He immediately attained liberation because his conviction that he is fit broke all bondage, whereas that other man was crying, “Oh, so much *japa*, and it has no effect!”

You should not consider meditation as some activity in the Ashram: “So many works we are doing. We also sit for meditation in the Samadhi Shrine.” Meditation is not a department of The Divine Life Society, or of anywhere. It is yourself. Do you consider yourself as a department of somebody? It is a serious matter. Day and night you must absorb yourself in it. If this determination sinks into your feelings, and day and night you are not going to leave this subject, you may not take even one more birth. How many years do you take to wake up from a dream? How many years?

Ashramite: Instantaneous.

Swamiji: This is exactly like that. Liberation is not tomorrow. To the extent of the intensity that shook up the dream, causing waking, to the same extent is the time it takes for liberation. There must be a shaking up in your relationship with the whole creation in the same way as when you woke up from dream there was a sudden shake-up of mental activity that kicked you up. A tiger might have pounced on you in dream, and you woke up. How could waking, which is real, be effected by a tiger, which is unreal? Can the real be created by the unreal? Therefore, they say the Guru is like a tiger. The tiger is not there, but he will pounce on you in such a way that this dream will vanish completely.

You must be very serious, very serious. Whether you are eating or sleeping, meeting people or working, going to the bazaar or travelling, this terrible thing should be in your mind always. You think that you shall go and do some work somewhere and then come back and sit for meditation, but there may be no coming back afterwards. You may not come back, so what is the good of saying that you will do it afterwards?

This kind of contemplation is a timeless activity, so it is not possible in the process of time. It is a centralisation of consciousness; it is an ideal that is beyond time itself, and beyond space, also. That force which can centralise itself beyond the concept of space and time is operating within you. That is called eternity. The eternal in you gives you hope. That hope has driven you to an ashram like this, or to a pilgrimage centre or to a temple. It tells you that you have hope. Nobody ever thinks that there is no hope at all. Even a prisoner hopes that he will be liberated one day, freed, whatever the length of the imprisonment may be.

The bondage is created by the feeling of the impossibility of attaining liberation. That is the bondage. Feeling that it is not possible for you is the bondage. The land and property, husband, wife and children are not the bondage. You have a feeling that this kind of thinking is not possible, and that this kind of meditation is also not possible. “I am not for it. I am a helpless person. I have a great many problems.” These thoughts are the bondage. Don’t say that somebody is creating bondage for you. You have decided that you are unfit for it. If you have already decided that you are unfit, who will make you fit afterwards? If you have accepted that you are a poverty-stricken person, then you will be like that only. But you should determine: “I am not in space or in time. If I had actually been in space and in time, I would not have had the aspiration to attain freedom.” Space and time will not allow you to think that which is above space and time.

Now, how does this idea of liberation in the Eternal Being arise in the mind of a person who is otherwise bound by space and time? There is some element in us which is non-spatial and non-temporal, and that is speaking. People say it is God speaking.

Okay, whatever it is. We are spatially mortal beings, but when we know we are non-spatially immortal, then we are assured that it is possible, like that gardener crying, "After all, it is possible. I am fit!" You go on doing this *japa*: "I am fit. I shall get it!" That is what seems to be the meaning behind the great statement of Jesus Christ: "Ask and it shall be given."

But who will ask? Only that which expects liberation should ask. The tongue does not attain liberation; the mind does not attain liberation. It is the eternity in us that attains liberation. So when it is said "Ask and it shall be given", the eternity within us should ask, and eternity will respond from outside. The internal location of eternity, which is the aspirant, will receive a response from the all-pervading eternity outside: *tat tvam asi*. *Tat tvam asi* means this eternity is the same as that eternity. It is not that they are two things. "You are that person"—it is not like that. The eternity within is the same as the eternity without. As Vedantic philosophers say, the space outside a tumbler is the same as the space inside it. If the space inside a tumbler wants liberation, what should it think? It should give up the idea that it is inside the tumbler, because space cannot be contained within a tumbler. It is not possible. It is an apparent limitation imposed upon it, which is something well known to us.

Tat chintanam tat kathanam anyonyam tat prabodhanam, eta deka paratvam ca brahmābhyāsam vidur budhāḥ (Pan. 7.106): The practice of the presence of the Absolute consists in thinking only that, only that, only that. "My dear child, you have gone!" cries the mother. "I had only one little child, which I got by the grace of God. My dear child, where have you gone?" The mother has no other thought except that. She will not eat, she will not talk, she will not do anything. What is she thinking? "My dear child, where have you gone?" Will any other thought enter the mind of that mother? So very dear it is. So is the case with anything which you consider as very dear and near. If you lose it, immediately your heart breaks.

Tat chintanam: thinking only that. There are expert dancers, danseuse. In India especially they are prevalent. They carry a pot filled with water on their heads, and with that pot of water which can fall down at any time by any shaking of the head, the danseuse stretches her hands and circles around and goes here and there. Every kind of gesture is made, but what does she think in the mind? She thinks that there is a pot on the head. If she thinks only of the gestures, the whole thing falls. This is one example. Whatever be your activity, this memory of that central thing cannot go because it is like a Damocles sword; you cannot forget it. Or, there is a person who has lost millions of dollars in the stock market. He has become a poor, wretched person. What will he be thinking the whole day? He will not eat; he will not talk. He doesn't want anything like that. He is thinking one thought, the same thing, same thing, same thing.

Tat kathanam: If a person has lost all his millions, he will go on telling everybody, "I have lost everything. I have lost everything. I have lost everything." He will go on telling in the marketplace, "I have lost everything." Like that you tell all people, everybody. You are sitting in *satsanga*, you have got a study circle, you are colleagues sitting together and discussing. The same thing you go on discussing: "What is your experience? I was meditating yesterday. There was an obstacle." Students in a classroom discussing subjects of mathematics, etc., say, "What are the problems that will come in the exam tomorrow? We will compare, contrast." Like that, you sit together and discuss. "How are you meditating? What is the experience? What obstacle are you having? Tell me." And he will tell you his obstacles, and you will tell him yours. You all join together like

students in a classroom and collate all the ideas you have got. This is called *satsanga*. This is *tat kathanam*: talking only of that, discussing only that.

Anyonyam tat prabodhanam: awakening each person among yourselves. “What do you say? How far? What is your progress?” You can ask such questions only to your colleagues. You cannot ask everybody on the road. You must have a friendly atmosphere where kindred spirits sit together and discuss and exchange ideas.

Eta deka paratvam ca brahmābhyāsam vidur budhāḥ. This is called the practice of the presence of the Absolute, Brahman. *Eta deka*: only that, only that, only that. Now, ‘only that’ means it is not somewhere outside you. Again the idea of external things will arise. ‘That’ is ‘thou’.

In modern science there is a problem of bringing together the relativity theory and the quantum theory. There are some contradictions because relativity concerns itself with the cosmic operations of space, time and cause, and quantum concerns itself with subatomic particles. What is the connection? Einstein, who was wedded to this concept of the cosmic operation of space, time and cause, would not easily accept the findings of quantum because it contradicts his theory of relativity. He became very annoyed when quantum physicists said minute particles are pervading the whole cosmos so that the whole universe is one only. Einstein rejected that completely. The propagator of the quantum theory is said to be David Bohm, and Einstein was opposed to it because, according to the quantum theory, there is no distance. Space does not exist at all. Everything is energy only. But if that is so, then what is the use of relativity—space, time, cause?

There was a long argument between David Bohm and Einstein, and Einstein asked knotty questions which David Bohm could not easily answer. Then Bohm felt, “My theory stands good, so how am I feeling defeated by Einstein?” He went on thinking, brooding the whole night, and he found the answer. The next morning he told Einstein, “I have found the answer. Here is the answer which defeats your theory.”

Einstein could not say anything against it. He said, “It seems to be very reasonable. I accept what you say, but I don’t like it.” [Laughter]

It is very interesting to read this. It is called the Einstein-Bohm controversy. If you talk like this, others cannot understand what you speak. That is the controversy between Einstein and Bohm. Nobody will understand what you are saying. If a quantum physicist speaks to you, you don’t know what he is saying, what the meaning of it is. You are accustomed to only large space-time-causation activity, the theory of karma, and so on. In quantum there is no karma theory or anything, and you are not existing there. The whole thing goes in one second. This is *tat tvam asi*: thou art That. Space-time-causal relativity is the same as quantum mechanics, and the attempt to unify them is called the unified field theory. Some physicists are trying to bring about a unification of both, how the cosmos can identify itself with even its subtlest parts, but they have not yet succeeded. *Tat* has to become *tvam*. *Tvam* and *tat* always remain outside, and whatever you say, God is above you and you are outside. This idea cannot leave you. So *tat tvam asi* is very difficult. Quantum and relativity don’t join, but if they join, there is a blaze of light. The whole cosmos will light up. If you sincerely want it, it will come. No qualification is necessary for attaining moksha. You go on repeating so many rules and regulations, and so on, but only one rule is necessary: I want it.

Ashramite: And eternity too, Swamiji.

Swamiji: Eternity is speaking: “I want it, that’s all.” There is no other qualification necessary. If the heart says “I want it”, it is called *mumukshutva*. People talk of *viveka*,

vairagya and *shad sampat*, but *mumukshutva* is the last stroke to cut the Gordian knot. "I want it, that's all. I don't want anything else. I have decided I will get it."

Buddha sat under a bodhi tree, and all disturbances came to him. The winds started blowing. It was Mara, or Satan, as he is called. All sorts of visions Buddha had. Some were very highly attractive, some were terrible—thunderstorms, death-like blows, and so on. But he understood that these kinds of problems are all caused by the old memories of involvement in space-time. They are the Mara and the Satan, and they won't leave you like that. So he somehow collected himself and recovered. "I will sit here," Buddha said. "Let the flesh melt and the bones break, but I will not get up until I get illumination."

Christ was also tempted. "Why are you sitting on the mountaintop? You will get the glory of the earth. Go!" said Satan. The same thing was told to every saint and sage on earth. There were great saints in the Middle Ages called the Desert Fathers. They were living alone, with no facilities, in the deserts of North Africa. What is the use of living in a desert? The mind was craving, and they were suffering in agony inside. They had thirst and hunger, and old memories of the enjoyments in life.

These temptations of Mara or Satan are nothing but remnants of any subtle desire in you for something in the world. They are only a subtle potential of the remembrance of your desire to have as much joy in the world as possible. You have not fully enjoyed them. You have suddenly broken off the connection, and they come: "Where have you gone, foolish man? Come back!" There is no Mara, no Satan; it is you yourself. You are the binding factor, and you are the liberating factor. However, just to cut this short, this is how we have to conduct ourselves.

Many people have got many other ways. They say you are alone with God, that's all. You don't have anybody else. This is the *bhakta*. Devotees feel, "I have nothing around me. I am seeing only God everywhere." Some people say all these people in the world are only manifestations of God, that He is a social worker. Some are very strong in their determination to defy space and time itself. There are as many ways of meditation as there are human beings in this world. Though we have broadly classified them into karma, bhakti, jnana and yoga, and so on, there are minute differences in the manner of the conducting of the aspirations of people, and every path, every road, leads to Rome, as they say. Whatever be the method that you are adopting, if it is connected like an internet connection to the centre, it will take you to that place. Wherever it is, it will come to you, but determined will is necessary. The whole day you must think it. But there are people who say, "I have got so much work, so much duty. I am an officer, I am a judge, I am a secretary, so how will I?" Again the same Mara is saying this. Where are these secretaries and all these people? They are inside the Absolute only. It is the Absolute doing the work. The table and desk and fountain pen, and all the law, judges and so on, everything is that Absolute.

Aurobindo was imprisoned by the British for conspiring against the government. He was put in prison, and hauled up before the magistrate. Directly his mind opened when he was in the court standing before the judge, with police all around. He explained this in a speech called the Uttarpara Speech, named after the place where he gave this lecture. "What did I see in the court? I saw Narayana sitting on the judicial bench. I saw Narayana as the prosecutor. I saw Narayana in the police and in all the people. I saw Narayana in the iron bars of the prison." The whole thing dazzled. This is what you will feel. Would you like to feel like that? He had a determined will. Aurobindo's will was

like steel, so adamant, and his way of expression, his writing, etc., proves what kind of thinker he was. Generally, nobody writes like this. It is a very high power of expression.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva was a devotee of Kali, the Mother. He was so devoted that there was nothing else for him. Mother, Mother, Mother, Mother. This god ordained in such a way that a Guru came, uninvited. The Guru was called Totapuri, and he initiated Ramakrishna into a higher meditation.

“What have I to contemplate?” Ramakrishna asked.

“You can concentrate on the point between the eye- brows. Concentrate. Concentrate. What are you thinking?”

“I am seeing Mother Kali.”

“Cut off her head,” Totapuri said.

“Hey, you want me to cut off the head of my mother? No!” replied Ramakrishna.

“I am telling you, cut it off,” he said. “Cut it off, cut it off, cut it off!”

With great will Ramakrishna decided that Mother Kali is not there, and he cut it off. In a blaze of light she was gone.

If you are meditating, the same thing will happen. All your dear concepts will melt. It is difficult to melt a dear thing. It is simply part of your heart, and you are told to melt it down. If you are told to melt down the dearest thing in your heart, the most beloved, most lovable, which is impossible to get rid of, you would rather say, “Goodbye, I don’t want anything. My child is my child.”

A devotee went to Ramakrishna Paramahansa and asked, “Please teach me meditation.”

“What do you like best?” Ramakrishna asked.

“I like my granddaughter best,” he replied.

“Meditate on that,” Ramakrishna said. “Meditate on your granddaughter, but don’t think anything else, only your granddaughter. There should not be anything outside. Even space should not be there. Can you think of your granddaughter like that, without any space outside? Then she ceases to be your granddaughter because there is no space there. You are also not outside. Then you cannot love her afterwards.” This concentration broke the attachment completely.

The whole thing is concentration. It is the wonder that the mind can work. The power of the mind is unthinkable.

Never condemn yourself, never criticise yourself, and be adamant: “I have everything with me.”

Sri Krishna told Duryodhana, “Do you think I am alone standing here before you? Come on. The whole world is just here. All the seven heavens are here.”

Sri Krishna said “Tut”, and the whole Vishvarupa opened. Within his body the seven heavens opened. If it is within the body of Krishna, it is in the body of yourself also, so whatever you want can be here just now, here and now.

Session 30

TOTAL THINKING

The thing that we constantly remember in our minds is our own way of thinking, which conditions every blessed thing from earth to heaven. Our experiences, whatever they are, are just reactions set up, or rather, interactions taking place between the way of our thinking and that which we are unable to include in our way of thinking. This is something very important to remember. There are certain things which we do not include in our way of thinking, for whatever reason. What the reason is, we have to carefully think later.

The child that is neglected by its mother, due to an anxiety to take care of some other child, is the child that gives trouble. It is a simple, homely example. If you concentrate your mind especially on your son, for instance, who is an older child, and go on praising him every day, and do not pay any attention to your other son whom you do not consider as important as the older child, that neglected son will be a source of trouble in the family as long as he is a part of the family. If you consider him as someone not connected with the family, that is a different matter, but that person is your own son, and because of your partiality to certain aspects of your family life, you have neglected him. Even a tooth can give trouble to you when it is neglected. It can cause terrible harassment. You should not think that you need not bother about things. One day they will harass you. There is nothing that cannot give us sorrow.

Now I am discussing the process of thinking. What is thinking? It is an operation which has a content within itself. A thought has meaning only when it has content. What is the content of that thought which we are thinking every day? The content, as I mentioned in the illustration just now, is that which we consider as of immediate utility, without taking into consideration the future consequence of the concentration of the mind on immediate details. This is like the difference between a politician and a statesman. The politician mostly thinks of the immediate utility which is before him, and he has to somehow or other deal with it. He will not think of the future. Let the future go. But the statesman will think of the far-off future consequences of several steps that he takes.

The thoughts of our mind are not like those of the statesman's mind. We have a sudden titillation in one corner of the mind, and we want to see that the titillation subsides by a corresponding thought. But a thought is not merely what we think at a particular moment. It is not that the mind is just what we are thinking today. It is also not what we may be able to think about our present life. We have carried our mind even at the time of coming into this world. From where have we brought this mind into the world when we came here? It came from that place where we were existing before we came into this world. Where were we existing? We must have been existing in some place, and we must also have been committing the same mistake of thinking there just as we are accustomed to do now, at the present moment.

The immediate utility tactic of the mind continues through our various incarnations, and we never think a total thought. Why is it that we cannot think a total thought? It is because total thinking may be a hard exercise, and we do not want anything that looks hard before us. We want an easy, palatable mixture, an admixture, a tonic which will appease our agony.

There is no beginning of our lives. Our beginning is the beginning of the universe. We have not come from any particular place; we have come from the universe. So when we are born into this world, we are born into this world from the universe itself. This is, briefly, the point made out in that great doctrine of the Vaishvanara Vidya in the Chhandogya Upanishad. We bring the whole world with us when we are born. All the five elements contribute to the production of this body. Where are the five elements? Everywhere. So that which is everywhere congeals itself, as it were, in a point which produced this isolated individual body. Why does it congeal itself in one particular point and create an individual? Why are the elements not individuals? This is because what we usually call a pressure of consciousness, or more properly, a desire, is involved in the very meaning of individuality.

The consciousness of individuality is nothing but the consciousness of a desire. It is not necessarily a desire for something outside. It is the desire to be an isolated individual. Nobody would agree to any advice that this consciousness of one's own individuality is not a proper thing. It is a very atrocious suggestion that we should not think of our own self-identity. The greatest love that anyone has is the love for self-identity. That is why we cannot bear one word against us, because that is an insult to the self-identical pressure. We maintain a self-respect, as they call it. Self-respect is only the assertion of the propensity to be totally isolated by individuality. This is the samsara, as it is called.

Why is this individuality insisted on so much? Why is this body a combination of the five elements, which are everywhere? This is the problem of creation. 'Somehow' is the answer. The affirmation is actually the affirmation of existence. Nothing can assert itself more vehemently than existence itself. Everything exists, and nothing should not exist. The idea of not existing is abominable. We should never use the words 'not existing'. It must exist; otherwise, it has no sense. This existence which asserts itself as the only reality everywhere becomes the same thing asserting itself in an individual, localised form. Cosmic existence, we may say, has pinpointed itself, as it were, in a locality in space and time that we call this personal individuality.

The answer to this question comes from the scriptures, which say we had a longing to be isolated from the whole. The scriptures of all religions are only about this much: the initial tendency to isolate oneself from God. Whether it is the Upanishads or the Bible, it makes no difference; they say the same thing. One angel rebelled against the universality of God, and we know the consequences. It is the biblical Genesis. In the Upanishads, it is the same thing. In the Aitareya Upanishad particularly, this point is emphasised. *Ātmā vā idam eka evāgra āsīt, nānyat kiñ cana miṣhat* (A.U. 1.1.1). The One alone was. There was nothing but the pure Universal Being as such. Why should one angel rebel against the Universal Being? In these matters, the 'why' has no answer because you are asking for the source of the cause which produces some effect, while you yourself are the effect of this inexplicable cause. The effect cannot know the cause. It is like trying to see your own back. You cannot do it. The effect, whatever its nature be, including your individuality, cannot know its source because the source is prior. So is the rising of this individuality; therefore, you cannot know the cause of anything unless you enter into the cause and become the cause itself, in which case, your nature as an individual effect ceases. Thus, no problem in the world can be solved unless your self-assertive individuality goes back to the original source, which is the cause where all the problems are solved. This is the philosophical background of what I am going to tell you about the process of thinking.

When you think, you think something, but you cannot think everything. Psychologists sometimes give a technique of making the mind think many things at the same time. Suppose you are travelling in a bus. The bus is rectangular in its shape; it has a bottom, it has two sides, it has a top, and it is moving. Can you think simultaneously, not one after the other, that there are two sides, and there is a bottom and a top, and there is also movement? This is an exercise, a psychological discipline introduced by certain teachers for how the mind can be enabled to think many things at the same time, not avoiding any item which is involved in the process of thought.

There is great sense in this. You cannot ignore that there is a top, you cannot ignore that there are sides, you cannot ignore that there is a bottom on which you are sitting, and you cannot ignore that it is moving. In a similar manner, when you think something, you isolate the content of this thought from other possible contents which may enter into the mind at a future date, due to which it is that you think different things at different times, and what you think today may not be what you are going to think after twenty-five or thirty years, because the excluded content avoided under the exigency of the present circumstance will intrude itself one day or the other. It is like a neglected part of your body. You cannot take special care of one limb only. The neglected limbs will speak with their own voice one day.

There is a psychological art called total thinking, like the example of the moving bus. It is very clear for everyone that when you think something, you do not think something else. You are quite aware that something is not the content of your thought. In yoga psychology sometimes the prescription is made: do not think negative thoughts; think positive thoughts. It is well said. Now, when you try to think a positive thought and do not want to think another thought which is considered as negative, it does not mean that you are not thinking the negative thought. It is not possible to exclude a thought unless the thought is already there in that thing which is excluded. The dislike for a thing does not mean the mind withdraws itself from the thing. It is in another mode of negative prehension, as it is called, sitting in the same place. The universe is not a partial parent of anybody. It is a scientific object. You cannot just meddle with it and do whatever you like. The world will not say, "It doesn't matter. Let it go." Every little irregularity in your relationship with the cosmic existence will be meted out with an equal reaction of equal intensity. There is no other law in this universe except the law of cause and effect. Anything that is caused will produce a corresponding effect, and whatever be the relationship of the effect to the cause will be the extent of the experience one passes through in this world.

To cut short the whole thing, our experiences are the product of not only what we are accustomed to think at any particular moment, but are also the product of what we are not wanting to think. Philosophers use the word 'prehension' for this kind of psychological operation, different from the word 'apprehension'. Apprehension is a conscious act of knowing something in a particular way. Prehension is a subtle undercurrent of activity going on in the subliminal layer of our mind, which knows more than what the apprehensive mind knows.

There are operations inside us which know us much better than we know our own selves. People call them the subconscious, unconscious, etc. Prehension is a kind of subtle activity going on in the subliminal layer of our personality which, unfortunately for the individual mind, is connected to the whole world. So this prehensive activity is an agent employed, as it were, by the world-consciousness. It will tell the central law what we are doing. What we are doing individually is known to ourselves, but what we

are not doing individually will be known to a subtle agent who is sitting within us and who immediately records all our deep secret instincts and longings in the documents of the cosmos. That sometimes causes us agony and sometimes causes us joy, without our knowing why we are sometimes happy and sometimes unhappy.

Who is the cause of our happiness? Who is the cause of our unhappiness? We cannot say that any particular thing is the cause. The whole universe is the cause of our happiness; the whole universe is the cause of our unhappiness. Every action is a universal action. This is the import, perhaps, of what the great Lord said in the Bhagavadgita: "I do everything." *Mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyat kiñcid asti* (B.G. 7.7): "There is nobody doing anything except Me." It is God speaking.

All actions and events are historical processes which look like isolated processes in time, and are not so isolated as they appear. It is said that events do not actually take place in space at all, in the same way as the birth of a child does not take place from the womb of the mother. The birth is motivated in the high heavens itself. It is well said by a poet that wars and marriages take place first in the heavens, and then they descend to the earth. Our union with a partner and our problem with an opponent originate in the heavens, and they descend and collide and combine in a hodgepodge manner, creating a mess of everything in our daily lives.

Is it possible for us to think that every action is a cosmic action? Every action is taking place everywhere simultaneously. Every action takes place in all places. The birth of a child, to repeat it once again, is a birth taking place in every nook and corner of the universe. The child coming out of the womb of the mother is not coming only from the little womb. The entire substance, her whole body, produces the child. The mother sacrifices her existence itself, and she becomes a little less than what she was when the child comes out. Part of her being is sucked out when the child is born. That is why after birth the mother becomes weak and feels unhappy. In the same manner, the whole universe is at the back of every event. It is the womb, we can say. *Mama yonir mahad brahma tasmin garbhaṁ dadhāmyaham* (B.G. 14.3). Bhagavan Sri Krishna says, "The whole universe is the womb into which I throw the power of creation." Creation does not take place here and there; it is taking place everywhere.

People are not born here and there; they are born everywhere. In that sense, every event is known to every other part of the universe. It is said, in a humorous manner, that at the birth of any event, the whole world is in travail. Travail is the birth pang. The whole world feels the pain of the occurrence of one single event. The event is the child. The child is nothing but anything that is taking place anywhere. Any operation, any activity, any event, any process, whatever it is, is a child of the universe. The child is produced by the pangs of the mother, the pangs of the whole universe, and then it will take care of this event.

When you think something, you think one thing at a time, and you think another thing in a negative manner by excluding it from your thought, not knowing that the thought which is excluded is a part of the thought itself. The bringing back of that second, excluded thought into the process of thinking is total thinking, so that at one stroke you think everything at a time.

Is anybody able to understand what I am saying? Can you think like this every day? You want liberation, finally, and how will you get liberated unless this tangle, the network, the knot in which you are involved by your own wrong thinking is broken down? It is the Gordian knot, as they call it. Cut the Gordian knot. In the psychology of yoga these are called *granthis*: *brahma-granthy*, *vishnu-granthy*, *rudra-granthy*.

All this amounts to saying that every day you have to conduct meditation. Meditation is not one of the jobs that you are performing. Meditation is not one of the activities of your day. It is the thing which you are. Meditation is yourself; it is not what you are doing. Your doing becomes one with your being in meditation. You feel enhanced in your dimension at that time, and all the parts of the world will collaborate and greet you with a salutation, as it were. All the quarters of heaven offer tribute to this person, says the Chhandogya Upanishad. The Yoga Vasishtha says that you are well protected from all sides by the angels of heaven. That you are existing here is known to everybody. The guardian angels in heaven know that you are here, and if you are en rapport with them, they shall guard you forever.

You should consider yourselves blessed that God has given you some time to think along these lines, that your brain has not gone out of order, that it is able to think this integrated thought. It means that much of your *prarabdha* has gone; otherwise, these thoughts cannot arise in the mind. There is some good *prarabdha* also. *Prarabdha* is not always a dark thing. There are *tamasic*, there are *rajasic*, and there are *sattvic prarabdhas*. The *sattvic prarabdha* causes the transparency of the mind in which the truth gets reflected. These ideas can arise only in the transparent *prarabdha*, *sattvic prarabdha*, which, I believe, you are passing through. Everyone here who listens to this and has appreciated it, understands it, and knows the significance and meaning of it, the value of it for one's own salvation, has already overcome the negative *prarabdha* and is now sitting in the *sattvic prarabdha* in this holy Ashram. So consider yourself as blessed.

Session 31

MEDITATION ACCORDING TO PATANJALI

About meditation... Who is meditating? And on what are we meditating? The reason for meditating on anything is to make that thing one's own. That thing on which we are meditating should be under our possession. There is no use of meditating on anything over which we have no control. We have no control over anything in the world because all things are outside us. Everyone is outside everyone else. Everything is external; nothing is inside us.

Yoga meditation is supposed to be a method to rectify this uncontrollable existence of thinking in the world. It is a union with what we are meditating upon. How can union be possible if that thing is totally outside us? There is someone sitting here. How can I be in union with him? Is it possible? If I am able to unite myself with him, I myself will become him; I will not be Swami Krishnananda anymore. The reason why such a union is necessary is that everyone is incomplete. The belief is that when there is union with the thing on which we are meditating, the incompleteness vanishes, and the gap caused by that incompleteness is filled in by that thing on which we are meditating. It completes our being. The being of our own self, which is incomplete, is filled in and made complete by the being of that on which we are meditating.

This question is deeply studied in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, which is a master technique of yoga practice. Does it mean that meditation is thinking some object? Everybody is meditating. The mind is thinking something, but that something is outside the mind. Already it has been pointed out that anything that is outside will be of no use at all. The mind thinks that which is not within itself; it thinks that which is outside. It is trying to possess what is not in itself; it is trying to possess what is outside itself. The thing that makes it outside will prevent it from getting united with oneself. There is what is called space, which distinguishes one person from others. There is a big gap of space. As long as space exists, one thing cannot be another thing. The very meaning of space is 'creates distance'. Everywhere space creates distance. It separates one thing from another thing.

In the Upanishads, we are told that when creation took place the first thing that manifested was space. There was a distorting, scattering, externalising activity that took place through everything—pell-mell, here, there, in all places; that is creation. It is like breaking up a family. Family members are united. Whatever is the number of family members, they very lovingly live together in unison. Then some catastrophe takes place, and each member is thrown to distant places so that one member cannot even see any other member. This is what has happened in creation. We are not competent to ask why this has happened, because we are the product of this happening. A product, or an effect, cannot question the cause of which it is a product. It is like trying to climb on one's own shoulders, or like trying to see through the back of one's head.

Therefore Patanjali, the great yogi, says one cannot achieve anything by meditating in the sense of thinking some object outside. In one majestic sutra he explains the whole situation. Patanjali does not write volumes of books; he writes a few words. In these few words, the whole thing is said: *bahih̐ akalpitā vṛttiḥ mahāvīdehā tataḥ prakāśa āvaraṇakṣayaḥ* (Y.S. 3.44). This is a sutra which nobody studies. People think of *yama*, *niyama*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, and so on, but they do not know what this meditation is.

What are you doing when you are meditating? You may do *pranayama*, *asana*, hatha yoga, whatever it is, but the final purpose is meditation. What do you do? Don't say that you are thinking God. If God is an outside object, you cannot possess Him. The whole trouble about life is outsideness. You can never become a real friend of someone if he is an outside object. To consider anything as outside oneself is a kind of insult. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says *sarvaṁ tam parādād yo'nyatrātmano sarvaṁ veda* (B.U. 2.4.6): Everything will desert you and run away from you if you consider it as outside you. If you consider someone as outside you, he will run away from you; he will never look at you afterwards. Everything will run away from you. "He is considering me as an object. I will never go to this person in future. I will run away." There is nothing so bad in the world as to be regarded as an object of somebody. 'Object' means you are considering it as a servant, a menial whom you use for your personal purpose. Who will tolerate that kind of attitude?

The things in the world are not inanimate, dead things. They have intelligence. Even a stone will vibrate and react according to your wish. The outsideness of a thing is a kind of insult to that thing. Everything will run away; everything will desert you. Even this body will desert you one day, let alone your family, wealth, and so on. Even this body is a kind of object, because you can see it with the sense organs. Anything that can be seen with the sense organs is an object. The body is also an object. It cannot stand; it will be rejected by the Atman.

So what does Patanjali say? There are two kinds of mental function. They are called *kalpita vritti* and *akalpita vritti*. *Kalpita vritti* means imagining something as existing. Imagination is also a function of the mind. There is a *vritti*, a mode of thought, which acts like a mould into which it tries to cast the form of the object. This is why there is a desire for objects. When an object is desired, it is not possessed. The mind foolishly converts itself into a mould, into which the shape of the object is cast. So the mind thinks the shape of the object, and when it thinks the shape of the object, it foolishly thinks that the object is possessed. The object cannot be possessed, because it is outside. Every desire will be defeated; there will be frustration. Nobody has gained anything in the world by desiring a thing. Even if it is sitting on your head, it is not your property. That which is on your head is not your property because it is outside; you can shake it off, and it will fall down. Even if you hold some valuable thing tightly in your hand, it is not your possession because it is outside. You can open your hand and it falls. But if the object is inseparable from your very being, it will not go.

Is there anything in the world which is inseparable from us? Everything is separable, everything is chaos, and there is a foolish hunting for those things which cannot become our property. We can get nothing in this world. Every item leaves us, and then we have to go weeping one day because the whole thing is gone. This is because space cuts off one thing from another thing. Great thinkers and philosophers in the West have, in a desperate mood, concluded that reality cannot be contacted by the mind, because the mind thinks of that which is outside it, and reality is all-pervading; therefore, the mind cannot contact it.

The mould into which the form of the object is cast does not assure possession of that object. Some people think, "So much money is there; large heaps of currency notes are there. So many millions of dollars and rupees, mountain-like they are heaped up in front of me." Go on thinking; the mind will take the shape of that heap of currency notes and you yourself will become the currency notes, as it were. But you will never get it. That is called *kalpita vritti*, imaginary thinking. Though there is a satisfaction even in

this, it is a foolish satisfaction. If you bathe yourself every day with liquid cash, still it will not become yours. The water which you pour on your body while bathing does not become your property; it goes out afterwards. You may pour the most costly things in the world on your body, but they will not become yours. People put on gold chains, gold rings, and they think they are becoming very beautiful. They are not becoming beautiful; they are the same old people even with the ornaments. The gold chains can go, the earrings can go, the anklets can go—everything goes, and afterwards what has happened? These ornaments have not become part of your body. It is imagination which gives a false satisfaction of having possessed them. A gold chain is on the neck, and a person is very happy. “See, I have a gold chain.” You don’t have the chain; it is outside you. The chain does not become your property merely because it is hanging on your neck. All these things are called imaginations. All your joys and satisfactions in life are only imaginations, and imagination seems to be working and bringing some joy because the mould takes the shape of that object. It is the shape cast into the mould of this mind that makes you feel that you have got the object. But the object is far away; only the shape of it has been cast into the mould. Here is the mistake in thinking any object.

But there is another *vritti* of the mind, called *akalpita vritti*, which is not imagining that something is there; it is you yourself. Can anybody think with a stretch of imagination that what is thought by the mind is yourself only? This is a new kind of thinking. Who on earth can do this kind of thought, this kind of meditation? It is already mentioned: *sarvaṁ tam parādād yo’nyatrātmano sarvaṁ veda*. Everything that is outside you will run away from you. But that which is yourself will not run away. That which is yourself is the Self—call it the Atman or anything else. If something can become yourself, it will not run away from you. But if it is there as an object of seeing, perceiving, contacting through the senses, it will run away because it is outside. Nobody likes to hear that they are outside. Nobody likes to be discarded. It is a very hopeless thing, and nobody, not even a dog, would like to be discarded. Even a tree will not tolerate it. It will vibrate. They can find out your feelings. So, *bahiḥ akalpita vṛttiḥ mahāvidehā tataḥ prakāśa āvaraṇakṣayaḥ*.

We are spiritual seekers. We are not here to play jokes with yoga meditation. We are not here to live in a fool’s paradise, as they call it, that everything is getting on: “I am doing so much *japa*, and taking bath many times. I ring the bell, and read scriptures.” All these are part of *kalpita vritti*. The *japa* has not entered you, the scriptures are outside you, the bell is outside, the *arati* is outside, the god whom you are worshipping is also outside, but it looks as if something is happening to you. You are very happy because the image of that object—whether the bell, the *arati*, the book, the scripture, whatever it is—is cast into the mould of the mind that foolishly thinks it has possessed it. Neither have you possessed the book, nor the bell, nor the *arati*, nor even the deity. Everything is outside you. But you have an idea, an imagination that it has come into you. The reflection, as it were, of the object is cast into the mould of the mind and is made to think that it is real. In a cinema only light is seen on the screen, but it looks like a solid object, three-dimensional. People are moving about and talking. There is nobody talking; it is only a flat screen and flat shadows falling on it.

In the same way, a flat reflection of things outside—even if it is a religious thought, it makes no difference—is again only a reflection; it will not bring satisfaction. That is why people who have done so much *japa*, so much *tapasya* and so on, are unsatisfied, miserable. They go from place to place. When everything fails—*japa* has failed,

meditation has failed, nobody wants to talk to you, you have lived fifty or sixty years of life with this kind of routine and nothing happens—then the neglect which has been shown to the true self inside reacts and revolts, and creates a situation of imaginary importance by moving about, doing propaganda of one's own self, making friends and groups and communities of one's own self, and having a thousand disciples. When you walk on the road, a thousand disciples follow you. One thousand disciples are following you; how great you are! But the thousand disciples are outside you. You are a simple, petty nothing even if one thousand disciples are behind you. When everything goes—*japa* doesn't work, nothing works—you create disciples and then go all over the world, travelling in airplanes, etc., and think that you are a great man. You are only a petty man; nothing is there except people who can desert you at any moment.

Gurus have been deserted and condemned by disciples for a little thing which the disciples could not accommodate. The disciples criticise and denigrate the Guru, because they want the Guru to behave in a manner which is according to their instinct. Otherwise, how long will this Guru cater to the instincts of the disciples? A little thing and they say, "The Guru is harassing me." One man came and told me this. Every day he comes and sits here. He went to a Guru. What is the good of going there?

I asked him, "What is the trouble?"

He replied, "I don't want to be harassed."

"Who is harassing you?"

"The Guru is harassing me."

I asked, "What kind of thought do you have about the Guru? Why does he harass you?"

Some kink in the head of this man, some way of thinking that he has got would not tally with that Guru. Disciples are supposed to think like the Guru, but now they want the Guru to think like them. Otherwise, the Guru is condemned. You reject the man completely and won't talk to that Guru afterwards.

This is the tragedy of spiritual seekers. Meditation has gone, *japa* has gone, *purushcharana* has gone—you throw dirt on the whole thing—then you become a very important pontiff. Your name will come in the papers that you are doing such a miracle, you have opened hospitals. When everything fails they open hospitals and schools, and so on, everywhere. So many schools and colleges he has opened, and so many hospitals, so much food he gives to poor people. This is also a tragedy of life: we started with something and ended with something else. Somewhere going, everybody laughing. Shakespeare writes in one place that the gods are laughing at human beings. The gods play with human beings as children play with flies. Such is our status—a total misconception. We don't like anything. Why can't we like anything? Because everything is outside, it wants to run away from us. The Guru will run away, and the disciple will run away. Money will run away. Everything will go away, and nothing will be there except an empty shell. Only space will be there, which God created first. What remains finally is only empty space; the whole substance has gone.

So, to come to the point of meditation according to Patanjali, this tragedy will not take place if you honestly feel the being of that thing as your being. You can take any object for your meditation, and it will speak. Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, whose name you must have heard—a Russian leader and a founder of the Theosophical Society—had this identifying power. If you go on thinking the table, it will lift up. If there is a flower, it will move because you have become the flower. You cannot lift anything unless it is you. You cannot lift even one leg of an elephant, but the elephant lifts itself

completely. Can anybody lift an elephant? How is it lifting itself and walking? It can do so because it is itself. But the elephant is outside you, so it cannot come under your control. It is said that Lord Krishna lifted a mountain. He did not lift any mountain; he lifted his own hand, that is all. He was one with all things. The mountain was himself only, so when he lifted the mountain he was lifting his own hand. What is the difficulty in lifting his hand? But if the mountain is outside him, then nothing can be done.

The whole world will come to you, provided you are the whole world. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says *yasyānuvittaḥ pratibuddha ātmāsmiṁ samdehaye gahane praviṣṭaḥ, sa viśva-kṛt, sa hi sarvasya kartā, tasya lokaḥ sa u loka eva* (B.U. 4.4.13): This world becomes not only yours, you become the universe. Birth and death, the tragedy of transmigration, coming and going, is caused by the spatial isolation of ourselves from the universal existence. Creation has damaged us completely, and cast us out as a spatial object. We are suffering; we are really suffering. Everybody is suffering. From Indra, the *devatas*, down to insects—everybody is suffering. Misery is the name of life because everybody is cast off by the spatial, externalising process. Creation has to recreate integration; evolution has to become involution. From being an effect of a cause, you withdraw yourself back to the original source. You become the very thing from where you have come. You have come from the physical elements. You become the very earth itself; you become the very water itself; you become fire itself; you become air itself; you become space itself. You become space, time and causation itself. You become death itself. *Mṛtyur yasyopasecanam* (K.U. 1.2.25). In the Katha Upanishad it is mentioned in a humorous way that the Great Being uses *mrityu*, death, as a condiment for its diet. Who can eat *mrityu*? But you yourself are *mrityu*, so why are you afraid of it? If *mrityu* is outside, you are afraid of it. A transformation taking place inside your own self is *mrityu*. “Nothing is outside me; all things are myself only.” This is called *akalpita vritti*, where the thought identifies itself with the object. The object becomes the thought, and the thought becomes the object. You and I are one.

Then your face will shine. Everybody will know that here is a special person. They will do *namaskar* to you. Even without knowing who you are, they will do *namaskar* because there is something resplendent in your face. It is told in the Chhandogya Upanishad that there was a disciple called Upakosala. His teacher did not pay much attention to him; he went away on a journey. But Upakosala was such a great *tapasvin* that the gods took pity on him. The divinities came and taught him the secret of the universe. His face started shining. When he came back home, the Guru had returned from his journey.

“How is it, Upakosala, that your face is shining today? Who taught you?” asked the Guru.

“Someone who is not a human being,” replied Upakosala.

Gods took the shape of a bird, a bull, etc., and taught him the whole truth of the universe. The gods will help you even now. The Yoga Vasishtha says that all the quarters of heaven are ready to serve you. All the quarters of space will bend before you. All the gods superintending over the quarters of the whole creation will bend before you. Meditate that you are the All.

Again, this is not the mistake of imagining the shadow of the All. That is *kalpita vritti*. I told you this sutra of Patanjali is very difficult. You can imagine you are the All, and the All is outside only. You can think you are Akbar Badshah, but you won’t become Akbar Badshah by that thinking. The mind should not think the object; it has to become the object. When you feel that the five elements are yourself, you are in *savitarka samadhi*,

as Patanjali calls it. The feeling is that there is a shape of the five elements, and also the name of the five elements, and you have become the mighty five elements yourself. You are the entire earth, and all water, space, time. Everything is yourself only. This is *savitarka samadhi*. It is not thinking the five elements; you have become the elements themselves. You are the heavy earth itself. When you walk, you will feel that the whole earth is moving. You will feel heavy, heavy like the earth. Hanuman became very heavy, they say. He could break everything. How did he become heavy? He was a great yogi. The whole earth entered into him and he became heavy like the earth. Hanuman broke everything. From where did he get the strength and the weight? He got it because he was one with the five elements. The whole earth was sitting inside, and it crushed everything. Such was the strength of Hanuman.

That is yoga. Yoga is not simply imagining: "I am doing something. I am a very busy man; I have no time. I am going here and there, going on pilgrimage." Nothing will work. If you play with life and go on chatting, saying all kinds of stupid things, and go here and there, miserable will be your fate finally, and the purpose of your coming here will be a waste. *Maya* is terrible; it won't allow you to go forward. It pulls you back: "Don't go." The earth pulls you. The gravitational field will pull you down to the earth, and it will not allow you to go up beyond the gravitational line. For that, *uddhared ātmanātmānam*. The gravitation of the higher self should pull this lower self into itself, and you must cross this gravitational field of the earth and fly in the skies, as it were. That is yoga and meditation. But you are caught up in this body, this person which is *raga-dvesha*, so the meditation doesn't come.

I mentioned to you, briefly, the great hidden meaning of a few words of Patanjali's sutra, *bahir-akalpitaṁ vṛttiḥ*: Transfer yourself to that on which you are meditating. He is telling only one sentence. Transfer yourself to anything. Even to heaven, even to Brahmaloaka you can immediately transfer yourself. You yourself become Brahmaloaka, and then see what happens. But don't hesitate. Don't have any suspicion: "It is not possible. I am not meant for it." Then you will not be meant for it. "It is possible for me. If Hanuman could achieve that, I also can. If Lord Krishna lifted the mountain, I will also do it. If not today, tomorrow. One day I must do it." Like Buddha said, "Let the bones break; I will not get up. I will achieve it."

Though the mind is so tricky, so very treacherous and unreliable, it has the great force and potentiality to pull you up, because the higher Atman is working inside you also. The purified mind is the higher Atman; the impure mind is the lower Atman. So, *uddhared ātmanātmānam* (B.G. 6.5): You are your friend. *Bandhur ātmātmanas tasya* (B.G. 6.6): Your friend is yourself; nobody else is your friend. What is the meaning of saying "You are your own friend"? The higher being, which is pulling you up, is your friend. The lower being, which will pull you down, is your enemy. So each one has to find out where one is pulled, this way or that way.

It is a little sutra: *bahih akalpitaṁ vṛttiḥ mahāvidehā tataḥ*. Become disembodied in your meditation and the worlds, the gods, will protect you always. You are not merely the possessor of the world, you *are* the world. When it is said you are the world, you have become the Vishvarupa yourself, and the Vishvarupa doesn't want any property. He doesn't want anything. He himself is all things. This is samadhi, actually. There are so many stages of samadhi: *savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara*, *nirvichara*, *sananda samapatti*, etc. It is impossible to think that such states are above you. There are seven stages of rising until you become the supreme Absolute itself.

Every day you must do this work. Don't waste your time. When you have some *seva* to do, do the *seva*. Afterwards, be alone to yourself. Don't talk to any person. Why do you want friends? Who are these friends? What kind of friends are they? Who is going to help you? Today they say one thing, and tomorrow they will condemn you. Today's friend is tomorrow's enemy. This is all no good. You should not depend on anybody. You are your own friend; you are your own enemy. You have come alone; you will go alone. Be careful. Nobody here is yours. So trust in that Great Being who is always with you. *Suhṛdaṁ sarvabhūtānāṁ jñātvā mām śāntim ṛcchati* (B.G. 5.29): "Remember, I am your friend," Lord Krishna says. "I will come to you." Trust in it, and be at peace.

Session 32

RENUNCIATION AND THE FULFILMENT OF DESIRES

If you are one of the inhabitants of the world, living by its bounties and depending on its produce, how will you renounce the world? If the mind of the renouncer expands to such an extent that it encompasses all the values of the world—if your thoughts are so rich that they include all the wealth of the whole world—then your renunciation of the whole world becomes a real renunciation. The world is nothing but a sense of values. It is not that you renounce the stones or the mountains or the trees, etc. The value that you attach to any particular thing is the world for you. If you have no value at all for anything, you have renounced it.

If a gold chain is lying on the road and a cow is eating grass nearby, will it eat the gold chain? It will not even care that it is there. But for a human being, the gold chain will be more important than the grass. So the meaning of a thing is in the value of it. Valueless things need not be renounced, and things which have great value cannot be renounced. You do not want to renounce a valuable thing. Suppose a person sees a wristwatch lying on the road. It is a petty thing, but still there is a desire to pick it up: “Let me have it. Why not?” That is, the mind of the person has not overcome the limitations of seeing value in a watch. You can exist without a watch. It is not necessary at all. There is no need of knowing what time it is. Why are you wanting to know what the time is? Throw away all the watches, and still you will be happy, with no problems. Only sunlight is the timekeeper. But you get into little petty things—transistor radios, and so on.

Renunciation is done by the mind. If you move from one place to another place, it does not become renunciation. The dharma that Bhagavan Sri Krishna speaks of is the accommodation of oneself with a sense of value that you see in the world. Are you a highly valuable person? It is a very serious matter. Close your eyes and ask yourself: “Am I a valuable person?” This question cannot be answered. You will be terrified because you are not sure that you have got any value. Why should you not be sure that you have some value? The value that is seen in you should be greater than the value you see in anything outside: “I have such a value in me that I don’t want anything else. I can just exist.” Such a person is called a great man. He is greater than other people. That is, he has a value higher than the value of all other people. What that value is, it is up to each person to decide.

When you sit in your own room, really feel: “I am a very powerful person.” Power means not the elephant’s strength. “I have got a mental strength which can summon anything that I want because I keep my mind in contact with all the things in the world, with all the quarters of heaven. I am honestly meditating on everything, which is everywhere.” The Chhandogya Upanishads says to meditate that you are everything: “I am the sun and the moon, and the quarters of heaven, etc. The gold and silver, and all the fourteen worlds, Indra, Brihaspati, Narayana and Nara, everybody, they are all coming, sitting in front of me and wanting me. Narayana wants me, Nara wants me, Indra wants me, Prajapati wants me.” Do not only chant it; your heart should say that: “Yes, really I am a valuable person. They all want me. Brihaspati is calling me. Virat, Hiranyagarbha, Ishvara, Brahma, they are all calling me. I am a powerful person. I want nothing else. If I call them, they will come.” Your heart should melt and say this: “I have got everything, the best of things. Anything that I want will come to me. Everything will

come to me. My heart is throbbing with feeling for these things. They are touching me. There is no distance of even one inch between me and the great values that I see in all these substances. Space is touching me, time is touching me, the sun is touching me, all the fourteen worlds are touching me. Brahma, Vishnu, Siva are touching me. What more do I want?"

It is not a joke. It is not uttering a mantra. You are feeling it. It is a fact; they are touching you. Brahma is not sitting in a far-off place. The creative activity taking place in the whole universe is Brahma, the sustaining activity taking place everywhere is Vishnu, and the transforming activity taking place everywhere, inside your body also, is Rudra. So Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are working inside you. The three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping—waking is Virat, dreaming is Hiranyagarbha, sleeping is Prajna—that is Ishvara, and Kutastha Atman is Brahman.

Suresvaracharya in his Pranava Vartika says that since the waking condition of your personality is part of the Virat, what prevents you from feeling unity with that Virat? The whole universe is called Virat, and you are inside that. So why don't you feel unity with it? You must cut off the difference between you and Virat. Similarly, consider the dreaming experience as Hiranyagarbha, Prajna, the sleeping condition as Ishvara, and the shining consciousness as Brahmanishta. All Virat, Hiranyagarbha, Ishvara, Brahman are inside only, and you should deeply think it. The law is, as you think, so you are. Whatever you think you are, that you really are. Great strength comes. Then you will not go for petty things. You will not talk to anybody. You will keep quiet and be happy inside. Everybody will do *namaskar* to you.

Think like this always, and touch your heart: "I am very blessed. Some transformation is taking place. Every day I am meditating. What a great thing! I am sinking into the spirit of deep meditation of union with the Absolute Being. The Viratsvarupa, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Rudra—with all of them I am in unity. All the gods—Ganesha, Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Surya, Skanda—all are dancing in front of me. I am one with them. I cannot stand outside them, and they cannot stand outside me. The universe is one whole, one whole. I am very happy! I am feeling wonderful, throbbing with joy. Strength is coming. I don't want anything. If I want it, I will get it. Everything will come." Sometimes saints go on saying something as if they are crazy people, but they are not crazy. They are really wonderful people.

So the waking consciousness is Virat, the dreaming consciousness is Hiranyagarbha, the sleeping conscious-ness is Prajna, and that which is hidden inside is one with the Eternal Being. You are carrying eternity with you wherever you go, like a treasure chest. Everything will come. Swami Sivanandaji, who brought nothing with him, stayed in Swargashram eating only dry chapatti. How did he become so powerful? Was it due to money? He had no money. He had no friends. He had no disciples. What made him great? It is this kind of *tapasya*.

Swami Sivanandaji used to tell us sometimes, in a jocular mood, "Do you know what I am thinking? In the early morning, what am I thinking? When the sweeper comes, what do I think? *Sahasraśīrṣā puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt* (P.S.1). One of the heads of the Purusha is coming. When the sweeper comes, I take a flower and put it on his head. He is not a sweeper, he is one of the heads of the Virat. *Sarvataḥpāṇipādam tat sarvato'kṣīsiromukham* (B.G. 13.13). Everyone's head is His head. I am thinking like that. This is my sadhana. Then I take bath."

In those days Swamiji was taking bath in the Ganga. A very charitable person he was, even in his heart. "I take the first dip in the Ganga for the salvation of all those people

who have departed from this world. The second dip is for the salvation of all the people who are going to be born into this world. The third dip is for the salvation of this particular soul. So I take three dips,” he would say.

Only such a person who doesn’t want to keep anything for himself can be charitable. “Give! Give, and it shall be given back to you pressed, filled and overflowing.” Very interesting! It is wonderful to hear all these things. If you give one kilogram of charity, a million kilograms will come to you. Swamiji was one person of that type. Give, give, give, give, give, give, give, give, give!

Swamiji’s secretary went to Swamiji and said, “Swamiji, we have no money. The *prasada* that you give in the *satsanga* may be reduced a little bit. We cannot afford to give *prasada* like that.” Swamiji told the kitchen, “Tomorrow, double you bring.” And his calculation was not wrong. If somebody eats here freely for one month without doing anything in recompense for it, another person comes who stays here for only five minutes and eats nothing, and gives a large donation. That is also wonderful. We are unable to see things properly. Our eyes are blinded and very narrow. How much God gives!

It is not easy to understand Swami Sivananda. It is also not easy to understand the Bhagavadgita. Both are very difficult. Swami Sivananda was just like Bhagavan Sri Krishna. He would disapprove of whatever we did. If Yudhisthira said something, Krishna did not like it, and if he did not do anything, that also Krishna did not like. If we went with hardly any clothing, Swamiji would get angry: “Your *vairagya* is foolish. Just because you don’t wear clothes you are thinking that you are having *vairagya*. Put on clothes!” So then we would put on a blanket, and Swamiji would say, “This man is attached to his blanket. He is always clinging to that blanket.” [Laughter] If we didn’t wear clothes, it is foolish *vairagya*; if we put on something, we are attached. Now what to do? He would say, “There is *tamas* in your body, and so you must do hard work, hard work, hard work.” And if a person was only working, working, working, he would say, “This man is attached to work so much. No *japa*, meditation, nothing. Hey, do some prayer also! Do *japa*. Only working, working, working, working.”

There were two swamis here who did very hard work. Practically they are the founders. They did so much work that they founded the Ashram itself. Some swami was putting postage stamps, a very sincere man. When he died, Swamiji asked me, “Where is this man now? He is putting stamps somewhere.” Swamiji didn’t appreciate the work that he was doing. “After death also he is putting stamps,” he said. If someone supervised house building, he would say, “In the next birth he will become a brick.” Everything he would criticise. That is, he wanted a blend, not extreme things. If you put stamps, you will become a stamp. If you supervise the building of a house, you will become a brick. Then what is to be done? Everything must be blended together.

This is what Bhagavan Sri Krishna is saying in the Bhagavadgita. Sometimes he says, “You do work.” Sometimes he says, “I am doing everything.” What is this contradiction? “I have already done the work,” Sri Krishna says. “Whatever you want to do, I have already done it.” Everything is a contradiction. But it is not a contradiction; it is the Cosmic Being. The Cosmic Being is speaking from the cosmic point of view, with cosmic inclusiveness. Therefore, anyone who reads the Bhagavadgita from a literal point of view cannot understand it. You must raise your spirit to that status.

This is a kind of *satsanga* so that we may cleanse our hearts a little bit. If there are some troubles inside the heart, they must be removed. You should not keep them. You must say, “I have got some problem inside.” You won’t say that because people will think

you are a fool, but there is no need to think that way. That thing inside must be removed. You might have brought some family problem from your house and are worrying about it just now. That must be removed. There are prejudices, passions, grievances. "I wanted something, and I am not getting it. If I had gotten it, it would have been good, but I am not getting it." If you think like that, you must get it. If you want something which is worrying you, and you cannot sit without it, you must be given it in a homeopathic dose, not in an allopathic dose. An allopathic dose means you are actually giving it, but a homeopathic dose means it looks as if you are giving it, but you are not actually giving it. Like that you must fulfil desires. Desires should be fulfilled in a homeopathic manner, not in an allopathic way. Allopathic means you are actually giving it, and that should not be done because then danger will come. It requires great guidance by a good Guru, a person who understands your problems.

There are people who don't talk. Morose they sit because they have got some problem. You must find out what their problem is. "I wanted something I could not get. I have lost everything and have come here." Then you must find out some way for him to see that his harassment goes from the heart.

There are strong attachments and desires which could not be fulfilled. They pursue you wherever you go. It requires guidance. Who is the guide? We have lost the physical guide. The only guide was Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, so we feel as if we have physically lost our father. We cannot consider ourselves fit even to lift his shoes, so far away from him we are. We have lost him, but his grace will illumine us from within if we really want him.

Many people have been saved from tragedies just by remembering his name. Some people wanted to go to Badrinath. "Don't go today. Go tomorrow," Swamiji said, but he wouldn't tell the reason. What happened was that on that particular day the bus they would have taken was crushed by a falling tree.

An ashramite: Swamiji, these great ones, they speak very briefly.

Swamiji: They will not give a long commentary. Swami Sivanandaji did not like commentaries. Only a little bit he would tell, and we had to understand from that. It is like Panini's sutras. The whole world is there, but he tells it in one sutra.

Session 33

THE METHOD OF BECOMING

You will get only yourself. You cannot get another person. And wherever you are, that also is you only, so it will come to you. If you are another person, that person will come to you, but if the other person is the other person only, then you have no connection with that person. Even food cannot be digested if the food is not part of you. The food will be thrown out; the stomach will throw it out because it is not yours. You have not taken it with love and affection. The food that you take is a worship that you are doing.

Life is very short. Even if you are a young boy, you should not think you will live a hundred years. People don't die because they are old. Any time God will take you. There is no doubt about it; but do you really believe that He will take you? What is wrong with your mind? Can you not think, at least? God wants only your mind. He doesn't want anything else that you offer Him, because it does not belong to you. He wants you.

Sit quietly, and mentally do *puja*. There are varieties of gestures that the *pujari* makes. Do all the gestures mentally, and invite God. If you say "Come on", He will come. Then really He will come. It is easier to call God than to call even a dog. A dog will also come if you call it, but God is quicker than that because He is inseparable from you. Think: "All my limbs are His limbs." Then your whole body becomes sacred. A person whose body has become sacred is a saint. A saint is not made of gold and silver. He is like anybody else, but his very personality has become sacred because he has invoked the most sacred of all beings into himself. It is the mind that makes a person a saint, not any kind of action that he does. You need not do anything but simply sit. You will become a saint. Try to do this *avahana* every day. To invoke God, you don't require anything. You neither want flowers, nor incense, nor camphor. Nothing is necessary. You can have the camphor in the mind only.

Now I have told you the method of becoming. Your whole body should tremble with the feeling that God has entered you. If the sun enters you, what will you feel at that time? Just think God. It is a terrible thing. That fierce radiance is highly purifying. When Suryanarayana Bhagavan has entered you, what will happen to you, tell me? What will happen? You cannot exist afterwards. You cannot exist. Your whole body simply shakes. When a power greater than you enters, your body cannot tolerate it. That is why saints dance. You hear of people dancing, such as Sitaram dancing, Mirabhai dancing. Why are they dancing? They are not mad people. A power greater than them has entered them. It is like a high-voltage power shining through a bulb of low voltage, and it will simply fuse. One cannot contain that *shakti* higher than one's own self, so trembling takes place. That trembling is not a disease, it is a purifying process. Some energy has entered the body.

Every day, sit in your room and do this *puja*. Close your eyes. *Sahasraśīrṣā puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt* (P.S. 1). *Sarvataḥ-pāṇipādaṁ tat sarvato'kṣīromukham, sarvataḥśrutimal loke sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati* (B.G.13.13). Invoke it into yourself. Do this every day for half an hour, one hour. This is meditation, this is *puja*, this is worship, this is *avahana*, this is *kriya*, whatever you call it. It includes *bhakti*, *karma*, *jnana*, everything. In one thing, everything is there. Everybody should do this every day. When you get up in the morning or in the evening, or whenever it is possible, do this *avahana* into yourself, and be sure you will reach that Supreme Being. *Yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ tyajatyante kalevaram, taṁ tam evaiti kaunteya sadā tadbhāvabhāvitaḥ* (B.G. 8.6): Whatever you have been thinking in your mind, to that you will go.

Everybody should keep a note: "What was I thinking the whole day yesterday?" Write it down. "I made a mistake. I was thinking stupid things. Today I will not think like that. Since morning, what was I thinking?" Every day make a note in a spiritual diary. If you are sure that the whole day you have been thinking only that which you would like to become, then you will become it. But if you have been thinking that which you would not like to become, then rebirth will take place and you will be taken to that place, to that thing, which you have wrongly been contemplating by distracting your mind. This is a simple secret. What do you want to become? It is all a simple matter. You know what you want to become, and you will become that, but you should think only that. If you want to become an elephant, then feel: "I am an elephant. An elephant is sitting here. A very powerful elephant is sitting here. An elephant is sitting, an elephant is sitting, an elephant is sitting!" and you will become the elephant. *Baleṣu hasti balādīni* (Y.S. 3.25). Patanjali mentions in one of his sutras that you will get the elephant's strength if you think: elephant's strength, elephant's strength, elephant's strength, elephant's strength. Go on thinking that. You can think anything. You can think Rama, Krishna, Devi, Bhagavati, anything, and that energy will enter into you. Whatever you want to become, you will become. You can say "I want *nirguna* only", and then you will become *nirguna*. First of all, find out the meaning of *nirguna*. Don't make mistakes in thinking. Unnecessary thoughts should not enter the mind. These are all pundit's jargons, as they are called. There is no *nirguna*; there is no *saguna*. They don't exist.

[To an ashramite] Are you a *nirguna* man or a *saguna* man? What are you? You want something other than what you are. No, that is not possible. Don't believe these pundits who unnecessarily argue that God is neither *nirguna* nor *saguna*. Or, you may say God is either. Inside a block of stone there is a statue. Is there a statue inside a block of stone? No. But there is a statue because you can simply carve anything out of it. This is *nirguna*. That block of stone is *nirguna*. Nothing is there inside it, but you can carve it in any way you want. You can carve a tiger, you can carve an elephant, you can carve a god, you can carve a devil; anything can come out of it. This is an example of *nirguna* and *saguna*. There is nothing in *nirguna*, but everything is there, so you should not think that *nirguna* is without qualities. It is all the qualities. *Nirguna* does not mean without quality, but having every quality. Therefore, it looks like no quality. Do you understand me? Every quality is there in one thing; therefore, it looks like no quality. A block of stone has no statue in it, but every statue is there in it. An ink pot has no picture in it, but you can draw any picture with the ink. You need only a brush and paper. Now, is there any picture there? But you can create anything. A *nirguna* ink pot becomes a *saguna* picture. Everything is divine if you understand it properly. Everything is divine.

Session 34

SEEING YOURSELF AS PARALLEL WITH THE WORLD

An ashramite: Whatever austerity we do and these rules and regulations we follow and *japa* that we do, still there is no guarantee of Self-realisation because the Katha Upanishad says that the Self has to choose us.

Swamiji: You should not read any scripture, because they create troubles unnecessarily. Then the Bible says another thing. Now, you don't believe in the Bible. "Knock and it shall be opened," is what Christ said. Why does the Katha Upanishad contradict that?

Nobody can understand the meaning of these sentences. "He chooses me." Who is that He? You are thinking He is sitting somewhere far off. You are again making the same mistake of considering God as an object. I mentioned the other day that you always have a thought of somebody other than you, and now you say you are being controlled by the other. Give up this idea of the other. Then nobody will choose you. You are choosing yourself only. Be careful.

Ashramite: Swamiji, if everything is Self, everything is Reality, then how this embodiment of beings...

Swamiji: You see, then it means that everything is not Reality because you have contradicted it by saying this. You have got two ideas in your mind, so naturally you are not believing that everything is Reality. Then even this body is a part of that, and even the embodiment. The foam, the wave, the ripple, the drop, everything is the ocean only.

Ashramite: Then what is the process of this embodiment? How does it take place?

Swamiji: In one second it can take place, in one second. The bubble should melt into the ocean. The body, mind, subtle body, sense organs—the eyes go to the sun, the ears go to the quarters, the hands go to Indra, the legs go to Vishnu, the body goes to the five elements. Then what remains in you? In one second the whole thing goes. Read the Mundaka Upanishad. *Gatāḥ kalāḥ pañcadaśa pratiṣṭhā devāś ca sarve prati-devatāsu* (M.U. 3.2.7): All the elements in you will go to the elements outside, and all the gods operating through your sense organs will go back to their original gods, so that you will not be there at all. It is like a person who lives on borrowed money. When you repay the debt, you have nothing with you. You cease to exist. These are all elements borrowed from the world outside. The skin, the blood, the marrow, the heart, the lungs, everything is borrowed from outside. They will go back. They are dismantled. It is like dismantling a house. So much effort you have taken to build a house with steel, cement, and so on. When you dismantle it, the house goes.

Ashramite: How do they come, Swamiji?

Swamiji: They come by believing that they exist. It is like a hobgoblin, imagining something. The imagining is itself the bondage. Who imagines? Neither God imagines, nor you, because you are not existing; you are not created at all. So the imagining is imagining itself. [Laughter]

Ashramite: Very mysterious.

Swamiji: A Guru is necessary. *Ananya-prokte gatiḥ atra nāsty* (K.U. 1.2.8): There is no way unless you are taught by another who is *ananya*, which means 'non-different from that'. A person who is non-different from that should be your Guru. Now, have you found any person who is non-different from that, a *brahmanishta* and a *brahman-*

shrotriya? Samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahmaṇiṣṭham (M.U. 1.2.12): You must go there and prostrate yourself. Great sages, Narada and others, were going and prostrating themselves. Narada's power and knowledge, nobody could calculate; he went and prostrated himself to Sanatkumara, who looked like a little boy. *Tad viddhi praṇipātena pariprasnena sevayā* (B.G. 4.34): Go and prostrate yourself, and question and serve. Three things are mentioned: *praṇipātena*, *pariprasnena* and *seva*. Then they will teach you. But you don't want to serve anybody. You don't want to serve anybody?

Ashramite: No, Swamiji. Other things can be done, but not service. [Laughter]

Swamiji: The ancient disciples did nothing but service. They carried firewood, they carried water, and did everything. On the one hand, it effaces the ego; on the other hand, it brings the grace of the person who is served. If you serve a person, you mentally pray to that person. Suppose you want to serve God. You are not going and touching the feet of God. Your mind itself is serving Him. So even by thought you can draw the grace of God and, likewise, from the Guru also. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is not physically alive, but you can think him and you will contact him. Vasishtha is not visible, Shuka is not visible, Lord Krishna is not visible, Rama is not visible, but you can think them. They are still existing somewhere, and if you are en rapport with them, immediately they will come. Everything is existing. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana are taking place even now; Ravana, Kumbhakarna, everybody is there, only they are in different realms in a transmuted form. Nothing is destroyed; everything is indestructible. The law of the conservation of energy, according to modern physics, says that nothing can be destroyed. There is only a transmutation of form. Non-existence is not possible. There is no such thing as non-existence. Thus, you can draw from the universe whatever you want just now, if your mind is united with it.

Generally, people say yoga means union. This is a very difficult thing to understand. You cannot unite yourself with anything. You cannot unite yourself with even a fountain pen. It is always outside you. So I have used another word for that. Instead of saying yoga is union, I thought it better to put it like this: yoga is parallelism with a thing. You become parallel with a thing, and do not look at the object.

Now, by 'parallel' I give an example. There are two rails on a railway track. One rail will not consider the other rail as an object. Even if you suppose that there is consciousness in the rails, they will not look at the other rail as an object. Two bulls pull a cart. One bull is not the object of the other bull; they are parallelly moving independently. So if a thing in the world is parallel to you...

Now I am looking at you. You look like an object in front of me. But if we sit in the same line, then we both see the same thing. I don't see you, and you don't see me. We both sit like this [beside each other and facing the same direction]. Then the object-subject relationship is cancelled immediately. You become parallel.

If you are parallel with everything in the world, that is the Viratsvarupa. There is no seen object there; it is seeing only, because when you are parallel with everybody, everybody is seeing, and there is no seen object. You should not bring somebody in front of you as an object. Even when you think of space, you think it is in front of you. You never believe that space is behind you. Have you ever thought that space is behind you? You look ahead of you. Whatever it is, it is in front. A thing may also be behind, but still you will say it is in front. It is a habit of the mind. So parallelism is a better method. There will be only the seer, and no seen object. Like that, you convert everything into your friend. It becomes your friend. Friends walk together side by side.

They don't see each other directly when they walk. Likewise, unity will immediately take place.

The unity does not take place because you are looking at something as an object, as an opponent. Anything that you look at is an opponent to you, but you should make it a friend. Think, "Here it is." [Swamiji lifts a pen.] I am seeing, and it also sees. And another is there; it sees, it sees, it sees. The walls also see, the trees are seeing, the mountain is seeing, the river is seeing, space is seeing, time is seeing, the sun, moon and stars are all seeing. There is only seeing. Only the seer is there, and the seen is not there. Then everything is seeing only. That all-pervading seeing is the Viratsvarupa. You have seen pictures of the Viratsvarupa. It sees, but it sees nothing. There is nothing in front of it for it to see. It doesn't see anything; it is seeing only, pure seeing. Adopt that method. How many minutes can you spare to think like this? There is only seeing. The whole universe is seeing. It doesn't see any object. How much time will you take to meditate like this?

Ashramite: Five, ten minutes.

Swamiji: You will get moksha in five minutes? You want to pay three paisa, and then you will get the whole universe?

Ashramite: Ten minutes in one sitting, Swamiji. Three, four sittings in a day.

Swamiji: You are right in one way. Even five minutes are sufficient, provided your heart has immediately melted down.

Another ashramite: It means there will be no person to get moksha, Swamiji.

Swamiji: It is *sadyo mukti*, immediate. God does not take time to come. He is timeless.

Ashramite: The very person himself has completely merged in that Universal Being.

Swamiji: You will be so happy. You should not think only for five or ten minutes here and there, and then do something else. So many times I have told you, you have no other duty but this. Not only will you be happy, you will see things as parallel to you. You will be happy with them, and they will be happy with you. Everything will change. Circumstances will change. Slowly everything becomes a seer only, cosmic seeing. The building is seeing, the roads are seeing, the sky is seeing, the trees are seeing, everything is seeing. *Sahasrākṣaḥ* means millions of eyes are seeing. All these eyes are seeing. They are not seeing, they are being. This is yoga.

There are stages of the ascent to this kind of experience. It won't come suddenly because there are lesser degrees, higher degrees, and still higher degrees, higher degrees, higher degrees, until you reach the highest degree. In the beginning it is only a small area which you can convert into pure seeing. You may convert the whole of your room, for instance. You are seeing something in your room. All of them are seeing only. Then afterwards you expand, and the whole Muni-ki-reti is seeing like this. Afterwards you say the whole Uttar Pradesh is seeing, the whole country is seeing, the whole earth is seeing, all space is seeing, all time is seeing, the whole universe is seeing, Virat is seeing, Hiranyagarbha is seeing, Ishvara is seeing, Brahman is seeing—seeing, seeing, seeing.

You cannot go to the higher state immediately because the mind will revolt. It won't agree. It will say, "What about my desires? Give!" It will say that. What is desire? You are getting everything. Even that thing which you desire is seeing. It is a part of seeing, so you cannot ask for anything. Even the asking for something has no meaning, really speaking. You should never say you want something. That thing which you want is you only; it is parallel to you. It will get annoyed with you: "You are considering me as

separate? You want to possess me like that?" Would anybody like to be possessed like that? He will say, "Look at this man. He wants to possess me." But if he is parallel to you, he is a friend. The parallel person is a friend; the possessed person is an object. Who would like to be an object? You must be a friend only. A very important matter this is. You must go by degrees—slowly, slowly, slowly, slowly, slowly.

These degrees of parallelism of perception are called the samadhis. The *savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara*, *nirvichara*, etc., that Patanjali mentions are the same thing. You cannot go there at once. You can go at once if your mind is strong enough, but if it is troubled...

The whole problem is some lurking desires inside. It is very difficult to handle them because there is still something that is the object. You have got something and think that it is yours. You don't say, "It is me." You say, "It is mine." There is a difference between something being me and something being mine. This 'mine' must go away. It is me only. You cannot possess me, but you possess mine, though the mine does not really exist. That thing which you call 'mine' is a 'me' from its point of view, so there is only me. That's why it is said the whole universe is the Self. How difficult, you see? It will change you completely.

Ashramite: Whatever Swamiji spoke, we can understand it theoretically. But how to practice it, Swamiji?

Swamiji: Your mind has not fully accepted it. That is the whole thing. Your mind is saying, "Yet, I have something to tell." But—always there is a 'but' behind everything. If you have really understood what I said, you will absorb it into your mind. Understanding means appreciating. Appreciating means making it one's own and not keeping it somewhere outside, because then you are not appreciating it. If you don't appreciate a person, you keep that person outside somewhere. If you appreciate the person, you make that person yourself.

You have to feel what you have understood. Close your eyes and think: "This is like this, this is like this, this is like this. Oh, wonderful!" Touch your heart. "I am happy, I am happy. It is like this, it is like this. I wrongly thought something. I was thinking wrongly up to this time. Now it is like this. Nothing is mine, it is me only. Nothing is mine, it is me. Nothing is mine, it is me." Go on saying this. It is also a mantra. A mantra does not have to be only in Sanskrit; it can be in any language. In any language you can say: "It is me, it is me." Go on telling it to yourself again and again: "Nobody is an object outside. It is a seer only." The whole universe is seeing like this, but it is like the Vishvarupa. Keep a picture of the Vishvarupa in front of you. So many eyes are seeing, but they are seeing nothing in front. It is seeing itself only. Go on saying this every day. Then what you have asked will come to you.

I have mentioned the method of practice to you. Go on dinning it into your mind again and again, again and again, again and again. Even a naughty child will stop crying if you gently pat it and use the same technique every day with the child. But if you take it lightly, you will be the loser. You are not doing this for somebody else's benefit. You are not merely making a gesture of meditating. This will not benefit you. You must feel in your heart: "It is for me."

You are a totally independent person; you must remember that. You have no friend in this world. You do not belong to anybody. You do not belong to even your father and mother. It is a kind of mistaken notion that you possess your child, and so on. The child does not belong to its father. This child was with somebody in the previous birth. Due to some karma it was thrust into the womb of this mother and this father. So is the case

with one's parents; they were also thrust into somebody's womb by their karma. Thus, interrelationship is impossible. Each one is totally independent, but the biological instincts are so strong they compel you to feel: "This is mine, and this is not mine."

Just imagine a situation when nobody wants you. I am giving a practical suggestion to you. A time may come when nobody will want you. What will you feel at that time? I am now giving you a technique of developing inner strength. Do you become very happy and strong because others call you important? Are you borrowing your importance from other people's words, or do you have a real importance? Are you a really important person, or have you borrowed importance because others are saying that? Borrowed money cannot sustain you, borrowed knowledge cannot be called your knowledge, and borrowed recognition is not recognition. What do you say, my dear boy? Remember, really nobody likes you. You are adjusting yourself in society in such a way that it looks as if people are liking you. If your adjustment is not there, they will throw you out. Even your parents will throw you out if you are not in harmony with their whims and fancies. So who is your friend? Be careful. It is no good fooling oneself.

But there is somebody who will be always with you—That which sees everywhere, That which sees everything, and That which alone sees: *suhṛdaṁ sarvabhūtānāṁ jñātvā mām śāntim ṛcchati* (B.G. 5.29). He whom you have completely ignored will come to you as your friend when nobody wants you. What do you say? It is not necessary to wait for the day when the world does not want you. Psychologically you may even now imagine that nobody wants you, and then you will have no suffering when it actually takes place because already you have accepted it: "Nobody wants me, really speaking. I am only making some adjustment; therefore, everybody looks friendly." The adjustment goes, and nobody wants you. They will throw you out. Nobody wants you, really speaking, nor do you want anybody. That is also a misnomer. It is a social adjustment and some kind of cooperation and manoeuvring. So many things are done to make society look like a complete whole, but actually there is no such thing as society. Each one is independent. If society is a whole, everybody would be born at the same moment. The entire nation will be born today itself. It cannot take place. So this is also a makeshift. Each individual is totally different; their karma is different from yours, and your *prarabdha* is different from theirs.

But there is One Person who is behind you always. You cannot forget that. He is the person with all eyes, and your eyes belong to Him only. You are not seeing; He is seeing through your eyes. This is yoga, my dear boy. Listen to me.

Appendix

TWENTY-ONE PRACTICAL HINTS ON SADHANA

1. First of all, there should be a clear conception of the Aim of one's life.
2. The Aim should be such that it should not be subject to subsequent change of opinion or transcendence by some other thought, feeling or experience. It means, the Aim should be ultimate, and there should be nothing beyond that.
3. It will be clear that, since the ultimate Aim is single, and set clearly before one's mind, everything else in the world becomes an instrument, an auxiliary or an accessory to the fulfilment of this Aim.
4. It is possible to make the mistake of thinking that only certain things in the world are aids in the realisation of one's Aim of life, and that others are obstacles. But this is not true because everything in the world is interconnected and it is not possible to divide the necessary from the unnecessary, the good from the bad, and so on, except in a purely relative sense. The so-called unnecessary or useless items are those whose subtle connection with our central purpose in life is not clear to our minds. This happens when our minds are carried away by sudden emotions or spurts of enthusiasm.
5. All this would mean that it is not advisable or practicable to ignore any aspect of life totally, as if it is completely irrelevant to the purpose of one's life. But here begins the difficulty in the practice of sadhana, because it is not humanly possible to consider every aspect of a situation when one tries to understand it.
6. The solution is the training which one has to receive under a competent Teacher, who alone can suggest methods of entertaining such a comprehensive vision of things, which is the precondition of a true spiritual life, or a life of higher meditation.
7. There are economic and material needs as well as vital longings of the human nature which have to be paid their due at the proper time and in proper proportions, not with the intention of acquiring comfort and satisfaction for one's self, but with a view to the sublimation of all personal desires or urges, whether physical, vital or psychological. An utter ignorance of this fact may prove to be a sort of hindrance to one's further practice on the path of sadhana.
8. It is, of course, necessary that one should live a life of reasonable seclusion under the guidance of a Master until such time when one can stand on one's own legs and think independently, without help from anyone.
9. But, one should, now and then, test one's ability to counteract one's reactions to the atmosphere even when one is in the midst of intractable and irreconcilable surroundings. Seclusion should not mean a kind of self-hypnotism or hibernation and an incapacity to face the atmosphere around.
10. It should also not mean that one should be incapable of living in seclusion, alone to oneself, when the occasion for it comes. In short, the ideal should be the achievement of an equanimous attitude to circumstances, whether one is alone to oneself or one is in the midst of an irreconcilable social atmosphere.
11. While in seclusion, the mind should not be allowed to go back to the circumstances of one's family life, official career or to problems which are likely to disturb the concentration of the mind on God, because the pressure of these earlier experiences may sometimes prove itself to be greater in intensity than one's love of God.

12. It is impossible to concentrate on God unless one has a firm conviction and faith that whatever one expects in this world can also be had from God; nay, much more than all these things which the world has as its treasures and values.
13. It is difficult to have the vision of one's Aim of life when the mind goes out of meditation to whatever it longs for in the world. Hence, a deep study of the Upanishads, the Bhagavadgita, the Srimad Bhagavata, and such other scriptures is necessary to drive into the mind the conviction about the Supremacy of God.
14. Study or svadhyaya, japa of mantras, and meditation are the three main aspects of spiritual practice.
15. Svadhyaya does not mean study of any book that one may find anywhere at any time. It means a continued and regular study, daily, of selected holy texts, or even a single text, from among those that have been suggested above. A study in this manner, done at a fixed time, every day, for a fixed duration, will bring the expected result.
16. The japa of the mantra should, in the beginning, be done out loud so that the mind may not go here and there towards different things. The loud chant of the mantra will bring the mind back to the point of concentration. Later on, the japa can be done by moving the lips but without making any sound. In the end, the japa can be only mental, provided that the mind does not wander during the mental japa.
17. A convenient duration, say, half an hour or one hour, should be set up at different times, so that the daily sadhana should be for at least three hours a day. As days pass, it can be increased according to one's capacity.
18. During japa, the mind should think of the meaning of the mantra, surrendering oneself to the Deity of the mantra, and finally, communing oneself with that great Deity. Effort should be put forth to entertain this deep feeling during japa, every day.
19. Meditation can be either combined with japa, or it can be independent of japa. Meditation with japa means the mental repetition of the mantra and also, at the same time, meditating deeply on the meaning of the mantra, as mentioned above.
20. Meditation without japa is a higher stage, where the mind gets so absorbed in the thought of God, surrender to God, and union with God that in this meditation, japa automatically stops. This is the highest state of meditation.
21. Throughout one's sadhana, it is necessary to feel one's oneness with the universe and with God.