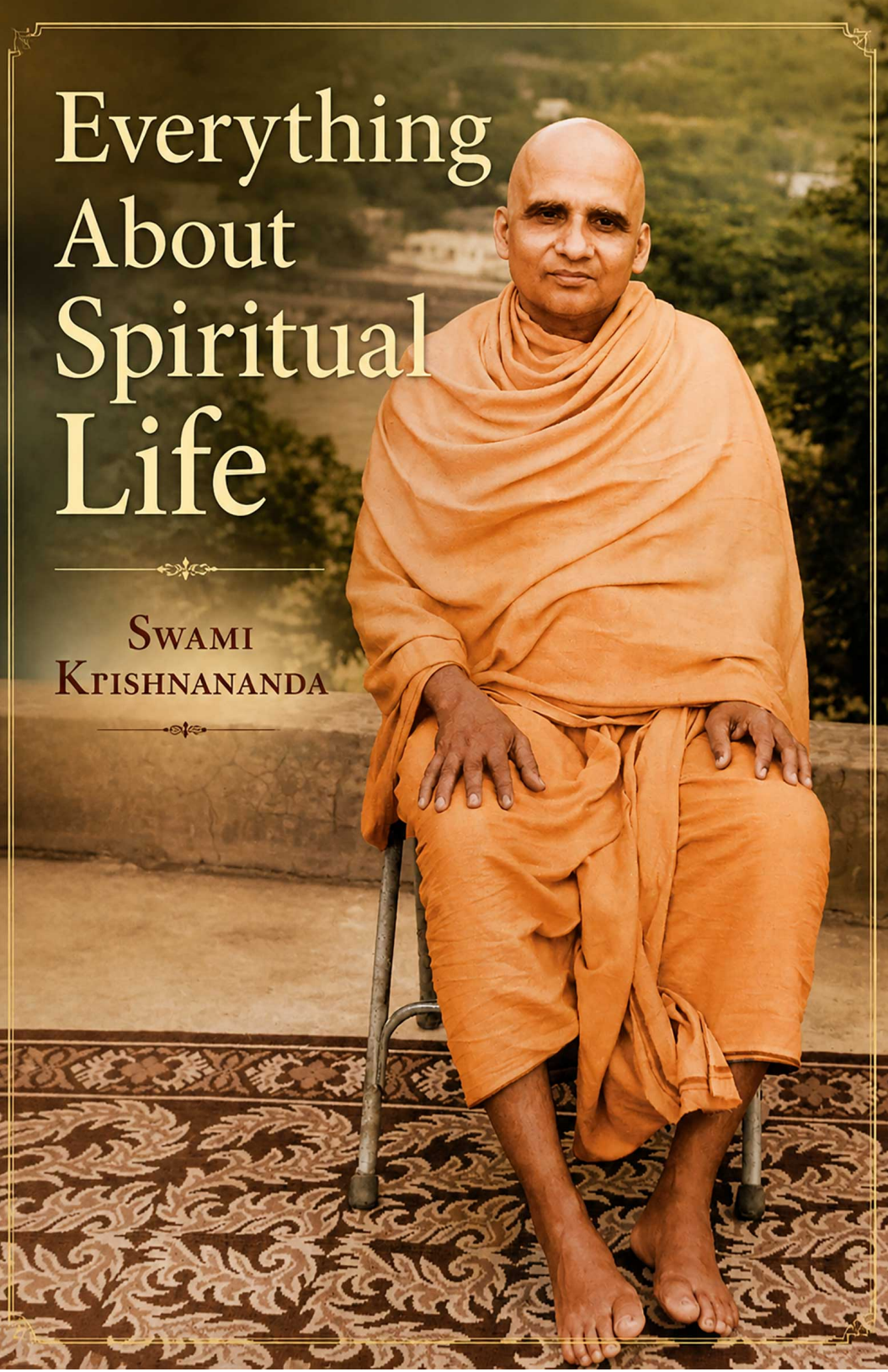
Everything About Spiritual Life



Swami Krishnananda

EVERYTHING ABOUT SPIRITUAL LIFE

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This is a series of lectures that Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj gave in the Ashram's Academy during September and October in 1994. When asked what would be the subject of this series Swamiji replied, "Everything about spiritual life." And so this is the title.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHICAL THINKING

In ancient times, both in the East and the West, the impulse towards philosophic inquiry arose out of the perception of the wonder of creation. We look at the sky above, the sun, the moon and the stars, all which defy our understanding. We are under the impression that we are seated on this Earth. Actually we are all now moving in a spaceship, which we have not thought of during our day-to-day life. We know the planet Earth is rattling around in empty space; that is why I said we are in a veritable spaceship just now. We are in the middle of space.

Is it not a wonderful thing to think? We are not on this Earth sitting cozily on a solid surface, as if we are stationary, and everything is moving for our wonderment and perception of mystery. The structure of this creative, or creational, phenomenon really passes understanding. What precision in the working of nature! What system! What beauty, and what breathtaking profundity it is, if only we are able find time to think over these matters. What are these stars? How are they hanging in space? Why does not the sun fall on our head, when it has no support? And nothing seems to have a support anywhere in this world; everything is moving. But the movement is not helter-skelter; it is methodical, harmonious, systematic beautiful. Utter mathematical precision is the way we can describe this wonder of what we call this creation.

It is necessary for us to find a little time to think like this. Look at the sky. Where is the sky? We are in the sky. Why should we look up to the sky, as if the sky is above us? We are in the sky, in the middle of empty space. What do we feel when we hear all these things, knowing that we are moving perpetually, rapidly through space, as if we are on a pilgrimage around empty space? For a moment our breath will stop.

There is nothing stationary in this world, which we will observe by carefully noticing what is happening in nature. Nothing is stationary, right from the atom to the galaxies. There is movement and movement and movement, but movement towards what? There cannot be movement without a direction. Towards what are we moving? We may think, like children, that the movement is linear, as if there is a beaten track, a road leading to Delhi. It is not like that; it is not movement in a straight line. If it is not that kind of movement, what other kind of movement can we conceive in our mind?

By a careful investigation into the nature of things, two great wonders are observed: the impossibility of understanding what all this around us is, and the impossibility to know how we are alive at all. We go to bed and fall asleep; everything is silenced. But the heart does not sleep, and the breath does not sleep. Why do they not sleep, if we are sleeping? Have we any say in this matter? We are free birds. We are all independent persons. We ask for freedom. We are not bound to anything; we are totally free. But what kind of freedom are we exercising in the operation of our lungs, our heart, or our brain? Are we

contributing anything as an individual to the function of this magic structure of the psychophysical organism? Have we thought about this matter? These considerations lead to a deep questioning spirit into the realm of what we generally call philosophy.

As I mentioned, in ancient times wonderment was the beginning of this inquiring spirit. It was so in Greece, and in India. There must be something which is controlling this mathematically precise activity of the universe. We cannot say anything is unintelligent or dead. Everything is perfect, utterly clear. The movement of the planets and the stellar system is so wonderfully precise that we can predict today if an eclipse is going to take place one hundred years afterwards. What kind of arrangement is this? From a theorem, we come to a corollary. From a basic proposition, we come to a conclusion. We may call it mathematics; we may call it logic. How can we know that one hundred or two hundred years ahead there will be an eclipse of the moon or the sun? It is the wonder of mathematics, which is the brother or alter ego of physics, including astrophysics.

Who is responsible for all this wonderment, inside as well as outside? Have we, as persons, individually contributed anything to this wonder? We seem to be helpless cogs in the wonderful movement of the wheel of this clock of creation. Our self-assertion that we are very important persons in this creational panorama gets subdued a little bit. Our ego is slowly tending towards extinguishing itself before the might and the magnificence of creation.

There are two kinds of wonder: one is the wonder of beauty, the other is the wonder of sublimity. If we look at the full moon on a clear sky, and go on looking at this beautiful moon, we will not like to take our eyes away from it—round, soft, beaming with nectarine rays. How beautiful! And how beautiful is a blossoming rose! This is a small example of our feeling towards beauty. Our aesthetic sense is roused by the perception of what we regard as beautiful. Why a thing looks beautiful is a different subject that we shall look into a little later.

Apart from the perception of beauty, there is also the perception of sublimity. If we see a huge elephant standing on the road, we would like to go on looking at it again and again. Why are we looking at it? It is not going to give us anything. But we would not like to take our eyes away from that elephant. When we go to the shore of the ocean where mighty waves are dashing, we are fear-struck, wonderstruck, awestruck at the magnificence of the ocean, which terrifies us and puts our ego down. We look so small before the mighty waves of the tremendous incomparable mass of ocean. We also look small before the elephant; we cannot go near it. Why do we admire the elephant? Because the mightier and larger is the compass of what we see, the smaller is our ego at that time. The lesser is the feeling of our self-assertive nature, the greater is our appreciation of the sublimity of anything. The greater is our self-assertion and egoism, the less we know anything of the world.

In the perception of beauty, we lose ourselves for the time being in a kind of attunement, as if we are embracing it, making it our own, and our other-than-beautiful

personality is imbued with that which we call beautiful. If we ourselves are as equally beautiful as that which we are looking at as beautiful, we will not enjoy that beauty. There is something lacking in us, which is compensated by that object which we regard as beautiful. What is lacking in us?

Beauty is an aesthetic completion of our personality in a type of perception which is unique by itself. It is sublimity, as I mentioned earlier. We wonder at the perception of a beautiful thing, and our wonder is such that we cannot say anything about it. Whether it is a wondrous architectural presentation, a beautiful sculpture, a marvellous painting of Michelangelo or Ravi Varma, wondrous music, great literature such as that of Shakespeare or Milton, or the Mahabharata or Ramayana, we are taken out of ourselves; we become something more than, other than, ourselves. Architecture, sculpture, painting, drawing, music, literature are forms of aesthetic beauty. We go on looking at it again and again, and we are not tired of seeing it. The lover likes the beloved; the beloved likes the lover. There is no meaning behind it, because it transcends meaning. Here logic and equation will not work, because finally the world does not seem to be made out of mathematics and logic. It is a super-mathematical and super-logical presentation before us, and the only word we can use to explain this situation is wonder, wonder, wonder!

Then from where has all this come? Here philosophic inquiry commences. This is how ancient philosophy started. But in modern times, scepticism and doubt seem to be the beginning of philosophical inquiry. A scientist does not take anything for granted. Things may not be as they

appear. It may not be like this; it may be otherwise. It is doubtful our perceptions are really genuine or valid. Science advances because the earlier discoveries are set aside by newer discoveries, and so what was considered as a final statement earlier is now considered as redundant. Then where do we end with this kind of advance in scientific understanding?

We doubt everything. "What I am thinking now also may not be free from a doubtful involvement. The world may not be in front of me, really speaking. I may be under an illusion. I may not be thinking correctly. Some genie might have entered my brain and may be compelling me, propelling me to think in an entirely wrong way. I might be having a topsy-turvy perception. Nothing is certain, everything is doubtful." One philosopher went along this line of investigation: "The world may not be there. What is the proof that the world is there? I myself may not be there. How can I prove that I am here? Let me doubt the world. Let me doubt people around me. Let me doubt myself also." We cut the ground under our own feet, and we cannot stand anywhere. Scepticism begins its argument in this manner. But it many a time loses its manoeuvring, direction and steering, and does not know what it is saying. If our statement is doubtful, the fact that it appears to be doubtful also may be doubtful. What are we saying?

This question arose in the mind of a great thinker in the West called Rene Descartes. He thought, "I am somehow thinking. Who is thinking?" His great dictum was '*cogito ergo sum*': I think; therefore, I am. He made a mistake in this statement. We 'are' not because we think; we think

because we exist. It is the other way round. If we are not there, the thinking will not be there. Why do we say, "I think; therefore, I am?" We should say, "I am; therefore, I think." This is a point which is scored by the Eastern thought over this kind of Western thinking.

Doubt cannot doubt itself. The doubter has to be there in order that doubts may be valid and, therefore, the doubter's existence cannot be doubted. Let us accept that the doubter is there, else doubt cannot be there. We are not going mad that we wish to cut the branch on which we are sitting, cut off our thought itself, and endeavour to cut off ourselves also. Such a thing is not possible. Wisdom was there behind this sceptical approach. I have to be there in order to doubt.

But what kind of 'I' is there? I think; that means to say, I am conscious. There is no such thing as unconscious feeling of one's own existence. The feeling of one's existence is a conscious affirmation of being. So, 'I am', because if 'I am not', my investigations and my doubts also vanish simultaneously. So, I have to be. But what kind of 'I am'? Where am I? If I separate all accretions involved in this consciousness of 'I am', and keep only the bare principle of 'I am', there will be nothing left except a pure feeling and awareness of my being: I am conscious that I am. We cannot say anything else about anything else, because we have already set aside the validity of there being anything outside the consciousness of our being.

Let me go deeper into this question. I am conscious that I am. Generally, in studies of psychology and epistemology, consciousness is defined as that which is conscious of

something other than itself. There must be something of which consciousness should be conscious. Otherwise, where is the meaning of consciousness? What are we conscious of? There is an object of consciousness. This is how we generally think in ordinary parlance. But here, the object has gone; it is questionable whether it is there or it is not there. The only doubtless thing is that 'I am', and this 'I am' cannot be anything else but a feeling which is identical with awareness, consciousness. A startling conclusion!

Who am I? Very hesitatingly, we say we seem to be only consciousness of being. Where is this consciousness sitting? Has it any location? Abruptly, glibly like a little child, we will answer due to the affirmation of this physical body: "That consciousness is within me." How can it be within anything? That which is only within is certainly not without. When we say consciousness is within us, we are indirectly assuming that it is not without. Who is saying that consciousness is not without? Only consciousness can say that. Consciousness says, "I am inside, I am not outside."

This is an important point. The outsideness has to become a content of consciousness—be attentive to what I am saying—in order that consciousness may feel that it is not outside. It has to transcend its within-ness, gallop outside the boundary of this body, and feel itself in some other place, where it is denying itself at the same time. Think over this matter deeply. The consciousness that it is only inside and not outside is not possible unless it is at the same time outside, so that it may be conscious that it is not outside. You must meditate on this matter very carefully.

What does this mean, finally? It is not inside, because if we say it is inside, we are creating great trouble for ourselves. By denying its absence outside, we are virtually asserting its presence there, because the denial of a thing is not possible unless the denial has already become a content of the denying consciousness. Thus, it means consciousness is not only inside, it is also outside. Outside has no limit; it is endless expanse. So, what does it mean? This 'I' consciousness seems to be an endless expanse of being-as-such.

What do we call this consciousness? In Indian philosophical circles, this consciousness is called the Atman in Sanskrit. Again, do not make the mistake of saying the Atman is inside the body, because the idea of insideness has been ruled out because of the impossibility of that assumption, if the Atman is not at the same time outside also. It is the pure Selfhood or the assertion of pure subjectivity that is designated by the Sanskrit word Atman. In English, we call it Self. Inasmuch as it is everywhere, as has now been discovered by our analysis, it is Brahman at the same time.

The Self is the Absolute. Because it is also inside us—it is our pure subjectivity—it is called the Self or the Atman. Because it is not merely inside us but everywhere, it is a universal plenum of completion. In Sanskrit, we call it Brahman. In English it is called the Absolute Being.

This is where we are led by our critical examination. It started with a doubt. Whether we go with the wonderment of creation or the conclusions of a sceptical outlook in philosophy, we seem to be landing on the lap of a common,

uniform conclusion. Eastern thinking has been mostly intuitional and universal. Western thinking has always been empirical, individual, and limited to the reports of the sense organs. The perception of primary and secondary qualities which we see in the things of the world are the starting points of Western thinking—secondary qualities such as colour, sound, etc., which directly impinge upon our senses, and primary qualities such as geometrical shapes and the very structure of the object. Empiricism is the foundation of most of Western thinking. I do not say it is so everywhere, but mostly it is.

The inductive method is more predominant in the West, and the deductive system is predominant in the East. Deduction starts with something final being taken for granted as unavoidable, and from this unavoidable acceptance of there being some truth, we deduce certain conclusions. From the general, we come to the particular. But the Western way is to go from the particular to the general. When we observe certain events in the world which are, to ordinary perception, distinct particulars, and we see these particulars and behold a generality around them, we are actually following an inductive method. It is not that the inductive method is absent in Eastern thought. Philosophy and religion have always been inseparable in the East. But in the West, religion stood apart, and philosophy took a purely scientific turn, especially in the modern period.

Wherever we move, whether through the inductive process or the deductive process, we seem to be landing at a particular point. Go farthest into the remotest point of

empty space—as far as possible to the circumference that limits entire space, if at all there is such a circumference—and we will find that we are back like a boomerang on the very point we started with. The innermost depth becomes identical with the most exterior depth of scientific observation, the farthest becomes the nearest, the most objective becomes the greatest of subjectivities where we begin to feel a commingling of the observer and the observed, whereby we will, at the same time, notice that all observation involves the activity of the observer. We cannot stand apart as an observer, keep observation outside in a laboratory, and have the object of observation still further away. The observing spirit, the observational process, and the object of observation seem to have a common ground, and unless we stand on that ground, we will not know either ourselves, or the process of observation, or the object that is observed. By pure scientific experimental or observational methods nothing can be known finally at its core because we, as scientists, try to stand outside the object, forgetting that our very attempt to know the object conditions the nature of the observation and the very structure of the object.

Thus, we will not know anything unless we know everything; it comes to that, finally. Therefore, philosophical conclusions of both the East and the West meet at a common point. It is not always true that, "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." Though it is said so, it is not always like that. The world is round, and not flat. So is perception; it is a rotund process. It is a circular arrangement, where we cannot know which

is the beginning and which is the end. In a circle, there is no beginning and there is no end. The beginning is the end; the end is the beginning. The commencement is the goal; the goal is the commencement. Here, we bring together Western adventure and Eastern intuition. So, we should be a true philosopher and not just a fundamentalist or a parochial linguistic theoretician. If we are broad enough to think in this manner, we will see we are citizens of the world—not of India or Europe or America, or of this country or that country.

The winds of the cosmos blow through our hearts. We are not citizens of merely this human Earth. We seem to be lifted to the galaxies, to the cosmic space, and we are citizens of the universe. What are the prerogatives and the liberties of a citizen? He is fully protected. A citizen is fully protected by the laws wherein and whereby he is a citizen. We are citizens of the universe, and the universe will protect us. We are guarded from all sides. We are never without a friend and we have no enemies, because the world has come round into a point of singular observation of a totality of Awareness. We may call this the most wonderful humanistic way of perception—a Universal United Nations that we have created—or perhaps, God Himself has entered our hearts and taken possession of us.

All these wonderful conclusions are before us by a total dispassionate inquiry into the nature of things, which is what we call philosophy. God bless you.

Chapter 2

UNIVERSAL ALONENESS

I concluded the previous session by saying that there is a consciousness inside us called the Atman in Sanskrit; and we discovered that this consciousness, or what is called the Atman, cannot be only inside. It has to be outside also because if consciousness is only inside your body and not outside, who will know that it is not outside? There is nothing except consciousness that knows. It is the knower, the understander, the perceiver, the seer, the principle of knowledge. If this principle of knowledge or knowing is only inside you, and you conclude that it cannot be outside, who will know that it is not outside—except itself? So the Atman, this consciousness, cannot be bound by the body.

It appears to be limited to this body because of intense attachment. I can give you one example. There is *akasha*—space—everywhere. Wherever you go, there is space. Suppose you bring a little glass tumbler, and see space inside it. Imagine that this space inside the tumbler has consciousness and knows that it is inside the tumbler; but does it know that it is also outside the tumbler because space is everywhere? Taking for granted that such a situation is possible—that this space inside the tumbler can become conscious that it is only inside the glass, and knows nothing outside the tumbler—that would be our present position. Consciousness is like space pervading all places. Outside it nothing is; it is everywhere. This body is like a tumbler, like a bowl, inside which also is this all-pervading consciousness. But somehow, in a mysterious manner, this

consciousness identifies itself with this one location, a little limited part, and so you say, "I am here," "You are there." One tumbler-space is talking to another tumbler-space: "How are you, sir?" "Come on, let us go." What is this statement? Actually, it has no meaning. One tumbler-space cannot talk to another tumbler-space, yet this is what is happening, which is a complete miscalculation of the true fact.

This consciousness, which is your Atman in the Sanskrit language, is your essence, your True Being. It is not only inside your body, it is everywhere. The conclusion from this is that you yourself seem to be everywhere. This is a shocking conclusion. If I am the consciousness, and I am nothing more than that, and if that is everywhere, it is another way of saying I am everywhere. How is it possible?

I will give another example without going too far into this mystery. Now you are in the waking state. You are aware of the whole world, but you are thinking the world is outside and you are sitting here. And when you say, "I am sitting here," you mean this consciousness is inside this body. But you are not always in the waking condition; sometimes you dream, and sometimes you go to sleep. Now you feel that you are existing because your consciousness is speaking through the body: I am. In sleep, it does not speak like that. In the state of deep sleep, there is no consciousness. Do you exist in sleep? Were you alive in sleep? Or do you have a doubt? "I slept very well yesterday," you say. Who is saying this? Not this waking consciousness, because it was not there in sleep. Actually, there was no consciousness in sleep; it was total darkness,

unconsciousness, and abolition of every possible form of perception. When you knew nothing in sleep, how do you know that you slept yesterday? Do you understand? You have a memory that you slept. How could you have a memory when there was no knowledge of sleeping at all? You never knew that you were sleeping.

Memory is a representation of a previous experience. If today you have a memory of having slept yesterday, there must have been an experience preceding this memory; and what was that experience of sleep? It was an experience of nothing—knowing nothing. There was no personality; you never existed there. In deep sleep, you seem to have abolished, nullified your existence—you were not there. If you were not there in sleep, who is saying now that you slept yesterday? Here is a great clue to understand what your real nature is. You knew nothing, but you have a memory that you knew nothing.

This is a subtle, in-depth psychology which you must carefully listen to. You are aware that you were not aware of anything. It is a strange situation. You are conscious that you were not conscious. It is a peculiar psychological contradiction to make a statement like that. "I am now aware that I was not aware in sleep." Has it any sense? But it has a sense; that is, there was something in deep sleep. It was not a negation of all of your personality. You are not dead in deep sleep—you are alive.

Now, what do you mean by being 'alive'? When you breathe, when you see, when you think, you feel that you are alive. But in the state of sleep you are not thinking, you are not seeing, and you did not even know that you were

breathing. So, for all practical purposes there was no indication that you were alive. Yet, you were alive. So being alive does not necessarily mean this, because you can exist without thinking, without tasting, seeing, or any of the sense organs, and without even being conscious that you are breathing.

Therefore, you are really not the mind, or the breathing process; you are also not this body, because you were not conscious of it, and you are not the eye, the ear, the nose or the tongue. You were existing independent of all these limiting adjuncts connected with this physical frame. What is your real nature? Who are you? If any question is put to you, what will you say? Will you say, "I am a five-and-half-foot-tall physical frame, I am the son of such a father, I am the brother of so and so"? You will say only that, nothing more.

But ask yourself, go on thinking: "What kind of person am I? I was knowing nothing in sleep, yet I was alive." How is it possible to be alive without knowing anything at all? Thus, existence does not necessarily mean being conscious of the body and the world. You can exist independently of the body and world consciousness. In the state of deep sleep, therefore, you were not the body, not the mind, not the intellect, not the sense organs, not a man, not a woman. You don't know what you were in sleep, whether you are young or old; all these ideas have gone. In deep sleep you are neither man nor woman, neither old nor young, neither rich nor poor, neither tall nor short, neither this nor that. You were only general awareness. Pure Existence only was

there. “Pure Existence only I am, I was, I have to be.” This is all you can say about yourself.

But do not say, “I am a brother, brother-in-law, husband, wife, tall, short, rich, poor.” These are all statements that you make by associating your real nature with passing phenomena. If a person has no son, you cannot call him a father; if a person has no wife, you cannot call him a husband, and so on. These relations that you are associating with yourself are purely relative to circumstance. You are totally independent by yourself—you are neither a father nor a mother, neither a man nor a woman, neither rich nor poor, nor anything of the kind. What is the meaning of rich and poor? Nobody can possess money. It can be held, and can also be lost. Anything that can leave you cannot be regarded as your property. Even this body may go away one day. So, what is your property? You are yourself your property. The greatest thing in the world is yourself—not the building, not the land, not the wealth, not the friends, not the relations. You are the most important thing in the world. But, what kind of ‘you’? It is that real ‘you’ which was there in the state of deep sleep—not the waking ‘you’—because in the waking condition you think: “I am tall, short, young, and so forth.” But in sleep all these have gone, and yet you did exist.

Your real nature is pure impersonal existence unconnected with any kind of appurtenance outside. But due to the force of attachment, this impersonal conscious existence gets attached to the several shirts that it puts on. This body is a shirt because you can throw it away; the mind and the intellect are also shirts. They are all coverings

of different intensity over this Pure Being that you are. Existence alone was in deep sleep. What kind of existence? There is no qualification for that existence. Where is existence? Existence cannot be in one place only, in the same way as consciousness cannot be in one place only. So, existence and consciousness go together. When you say, "I am here," you are saying, "I am conscious that I am here. I exist." Do you exist? Yes. When you say, "I am existing," you mean, "I am conscious that I am existing. I am not unconscious that I am existing." Thus, your existence and your being conscious that you are existing go together. You come to a wonderful conclusion: you are existence-consciousness. In Sanskrit it is called *sat-chit*.

And were you happy when you were fast asleep? You feel wonderful and would like to have a long sleep. If the sleep is not there, even a kingdom of wealth has no meaning. Even a king cannot be happy if he does not sleep for fifteen days. So, that condition is also a state of great joy, satisfaction. Existence-consciousness-joy is called *sat-chit-ananda* in Sanskrit. *Sat-chit-ananda* are not three things, because you feel *happy* when you are *conscious* that you are *existing*. It is one mass of inexplicable experience. It is not existence somewhere, consciousness somewhere, happiness somewhere. We use the words *sat-chit-ananda*—existence-consciousness-bliss—because we have no proper words to explain what it actually is. It is existence which is conscious of itself as happy. That is what you are.

This is a wonderful truth, which is now clear to you by a little bit of analysis. I opened up the fabric of your thinking, gradually pulled out the threads and showed you what is

inside. By a process of a deep analysis of this kind, you came to know that you are neither the body nor anything connected with this body or relations. No friends, no relatives, no wealth, no property, no land, no money—these are all gone in the state of deep sleep, but most happy you are. When you have nothing, how are you happy? Generally people become happy with a lot of money—so much land, so much relations, so much building. You have nothing in sleep, and yet how happy you are. Who made you happy?

Happiness is not a product of possession of things in the world. Actually, if you analyse further, you will realise that all possession is a source of misery. You are absolutely alone to yourself in the state of deep sleep. In that utter metaphysical aloneness you are the Eternal Being experiencing itself in a joy that surpasses all understanding. Eternity, Endlessness, Pure Being, Deathless Consciousness was there in your state of deep sleep. Therefore, you are happy.

Do you believe that God is a happy person? How much property has He got? Where is His house? Has He got money? Has He got friends? Has He got relations? Has He got a palace? If He has nothing of this, He must be a very unhappy person. We are happy because we have got so many things. God has no land, no place to sit, no friends, no father, no mother, no relation, nothing—so He must be miserable. But do you think so? He is the highest happiness. The more you are able to live a life of total aloneness independent of relations with anything, the greater is your happiness; and God is Universal Aloneness.

You are now thinking of yourself as an aloneness in the state of deep sleep. It is an individualised aloneness; therefore, it comes and goes. You cannot be sleeping always throughout your life. Your *karma phala* makes you wake up, and the all the potentialities of desire germinate into action. Once again you are miserable in the waking state, and you continue that misery in dream also. As you get tired of this activity, the real nature in you pulls you towards it like a parent pulls a child. Birds go on chirping, searching for their grub from morning till evening and never rest even for one moment, but in the evening, when they are tired, they go back to their nest. Likewise is this bird of this *jiva*, which is running here, there, doing all kinds of work everywhere, trying to find some solace in something. Finding nothing, you get disgusted, and go back to your house. Your house is inside you only; therefore, the Truth in you forcefully pulls you into yourself and tells you, "You are alone in this world."

You are alone in this world. When you brought nothing when you were born, when you will not take anything when you go, how did you become rich in the middle? Now also you have nothing really. You are unnecessarily imagining you have got a lot of property, which will vanish like the wind any moment by an earthquake or a social catastrophe. Then you will find yourself alone once again as you were born, or as you will perish. So, now also why not be alone? Do not be attached to things. This attachment to things is a malady—it is a kind of disease that has arisen in the consciousness, which foolishly roams about like a dog

barking at its own shadow, while there is no other dog except its own self.

Hence, you are an alone pure Being-Consciousness, and that is why you are so happy in the state of deep sleep. When some great trouble comes, when there is a quarrel in the family, when you have lost your job and friends do not want to look at you, what do you think at that time? "I have nothing, I am alone. Nobody wants me. I have lost everything; the very ground under me is shaking." If you are drowning, what will you think at that time? "I have got so much money in the bank, I have got so many friends and relatives"—will you think like that? You think of yourself only, and no other thing. So, the real thing is 'you' only.

God is Supremely Alone in a universal sense, and you are alone in an individual sense; this is the difference. But, even then, this aloneness only brings happiness. Friends, relations, comrades, and alter egos—anything other than oneself—is an artificial situation that is created because the moment there is another, there is suspicion and fear from the other. In the Upanishad, it is said dvitīyād vai bhayaṁ bhavati (Brihad. Up. 1.4.2): You always suspect a person near you. What kind of person is he? You cannot fully trust any person, because it is contrary to the real nature of your being. Your being cannot tolerate another being, and so you distrust everything and quarrel; war takes place. But the truth is something else altogether. You have got caught up in a muddle of chaotic, confused thinking.

These are the ways of philosophical analysis by which you gradually come to your Self. Philosophy is the art of coming to one's own Self, finally. But you must know what

this one's own Self is. Do not make the mistake of saying, "I am Mr. so and so." That is not the Self I am speaking of. I am speaking of that Self which was in the state of deep sleep, which was being as such, conscious of itself. If it were not conscious of Itself, you would not remember that you slept. Because of your desires, which you have brought through many births, and which are clouding your consciousness in sleep, you are not aware that you are existing. If that cloud is lifted by an artificial aperture created through the sense organs, you begin to feel that you are existing as a wrong person. You are feeling that you are existing, but actually this feeling is contrary to the truth of your real existence. The wrong person is saying, "I am existing." The Real Person is somewhere else, hidden. This wrong person is not going to give you anything. All of us are wrong persons in that sense. The whole thing is a chaos, a confusion created by the drama played by the sense organs and the potentialities of desires which are not fulfilled and brought forward from previous births.

So, remember once again that your real nature is Aloneness. Sometimes, they call it *alak niranjan*, which means 'there is nothing, Only One'. You might be afraid, "If I am alone, then I will die." The death is not from that Aloneness; it is the wrong association of this aloneness with perishable things that is death. There are two things we have to understand in this connection: the aloneness of yourself as a person, and the Aloneness of the Supreme Being—God Almighty—in the universal sense. In Sanskrit that universal 'I' is called Brahman, and the individual 'I' is the Atman; and inasmuch as the cosmic space and the

individual space in the tumbler cannot be separated, this Atman that you are cannot be separated from Brahman. The drop is the same as the ocean. This is a continuation of the process of analysis which we tried to conduct last time.

The oldest and greatest scripture of the world is the Rigveda. We have the earliest document of philosophical investigation in the Rigveda Samhita, where the vision of the Ultimate Reality was proclaimed by the great master as *ekam sat*: Being is one. You cannot divide Being into parts and have little bits of Being, because if you do, there will be a gap between this part of Being and the other part of Being; but that gap also must be existing, and that is also Being. Hence, there cannot be a gap. Non-existent separation is not separation. The gap cannot be non-existent; therefore, it is existing. Thus, there is no such thing as non-existence. The idea itself is meaningless, as Being cannot be divided. *Ekam sat* is the Rigvedic proclamation, ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti (R.V. 1.164.46): Great sages behold it in a variety of forms. Entire nature, the whole world that you see, is a manifestation of *ekam sat*.

We call that one Being by different names due to our language, the geographical conditions, the anthropomorphic notions we develop, and being born in particular cultural patterns. Geographical conditions, historical circumstances, cultural background, and family upbringing all condition your way of thinking this One Being. Inasmuch as you think through the mind, you cannot think through your pure Being, because the mind is always wedded to the perception of the sense organs;

therefore, there is a multiplicity of the vision of this Supreme Being. It is like a single beam of light passing through a prism and getting deflected in many ways. Or it is like the many tongues of fire in a huge conflagration. No matter how many tongues of fire there may be, it is just one fire. Millions of waves in the ocean are only the ocean. All these names, all these forms, all these varieties of objects that you perceive are interpretations wrongly given to you by the five sense organs. The mind is dependent upon the report of these sense organs; therefore, there is no true perception through the senses and the mind. Everything is different from everything else: one religion is different from another religion, one god is different from another god, and you find that in the history of humanity everything is chaotically distributed with differences everywhere.

The eyes can see, but they cannot hear. The ears can hear, but they cannot see. The nose can smell, but it cannot eat. The tongue can swallow, but it cannot hear. Each limb has its own limitations, and yet we take for granted that these reports of the sense organs are complete. They are all isolated discrete particulars which have to be brought into a focus of synthesis, which the mind is trying to do. But the mind, unfortunately, is playing second fiddle to the sense organs which are making it dance to the music of wrong reports. You cannot know the Ultimate Reality through sense perception and mental operation alone. Thus, if all philosophical analysis is to be conducted only through sense-oriented mental thinking, it will not lead you to the Ultimate Reality.

There are philosophers who have gone into deep study of this phenomenon that we are conditioned by varieties of things, and the true nature of things cannot be known by any kind of rational analysis. Even reason cannot fully plumb into the depths of itself. How can reason go into itself when it is seeing outside? Reason is rarefied thinking, and thinking is only a conditioned sensory operation. Therefore, reason, logic, rational analysis and mental thinking through the sense organs do not bring any kind of conclusion. That is why there are so many philosophies—Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Sankhya, Yoga, etc. Even in Western philosophy, each person says whatever he likes because these thoughts, these conclusions, are totally conditioned by the phenomenon of this world as presented to the sense organs, ratified by the mind, and finally okayed by the reason.

So, where are we? We are drifting in a world of phenomena, passing shadows, where everything is moving, everything is passing. But what is there which is not passing? We cannot see it through the senses, through the mind, through the reason. Everything is a flux, everything is motion, everything is a tremendous vibration of forces; this is what we hear from great learned people or saints and sages such as Buddha, for instance. Even in the Bhagavadgita it is said anityam asukhaṁ lokam (Gita 9.33), duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam. (Gita 8.15). *Asukham*: impermanent is your experience in this world; *duhkhalayam*: joyless is your experience in this world. Just as a *vastralaya* is a shop where there is only cloth, or an *aushadhalaya* is where there is only medicine, here there is

only *duhkhalaya.* Bhagavan Sri Krishna has said that just as a *vastralaya* gives *vastra*, and an *aushadhalaya* gives *aushadha*, this world gives *duhkham*, and that is why it is called *duhkhalayam*. That also is not permanent, it is *asasvatam*. The whole thing is mystery indeed, and it is high time for us to awaken ourselves to the secrets of our very existence.

As I mentioned in the previous session, there are two ways of coming to conclusions derivatively: by deduction from a vision of the Ultimate Reality, as it is in the case of the Vedas and the Upanishads, etc., or by induction, as it is mostly in the case of Western thinkers. Every day the sun rises in the east, but how do you know that the sun will rise in the east always? You do not doubt it. By a collection of particulars over a long period of time, and seeing a uniformity in the operation of these particulars, you come to a conclusion that the sun will always rise in the east, though there is no guarantee. Due to some change in the astronomical set up, the sun can rise in the west, but we think that will not happen because we have not seen it.

Indian thought, being mostly universal in its outlook and deductive in its nature, is based on the vision of Truth, and not mere analysis as it is in the case of the West. Therefore, in India we call this perception *darshana. Darshana* means vision. The great seers have seen, and then only proclaimed. They have seen not through these eyes, not through the mind, not through even the reason, but through the soul itself. By deep self-control, the Atman beheld itself as what it was, what it is, and what it shall be.

If there is no restraint of the sense organs from their wrong manoeuvring through the objects of perception outside, the mind becomes a treacherous medium which will not tell you the truth. Reason is also only a kind of rarefied form of thinking. If you want to achieve anything substantially and truly, you must have self control. You must withdraw the energies that are being depleted and thrown out unnecessarily by seeing, hearing, touching, etc. Consciousness, which is your real nature, is reflected through the reason and the mind, and percolates through the avenues of the five sense organs as sunlight may pass through five holes at the bottom of a mud pot or a pitcher. The force of the senses is such that they drag your pure Consciousness-Being outside, and make you feel that you are outside, as if you are a foreigner in your own land. This kind of catastrophic information is supplied to you by the sense organs. The sense organs are not your friends. This is why any kind of scientific analysis which is based purely on sensory observation and experimentation in a laboratory may give you a tentative truth, but not an ultimate truth.

You are spiritual seekers. You want to build up your true personality, and become a true human being. A true human being is a strong personality. He wants nothing. He is a great genius, and feels, "Everything is in me only; I can stand before anything." This kind of conviction comes to a true gentleman. A gentleman does not think, "I am helpless, everything is gone, nobody is with me." He thinks, "If everything goes, still I am here."

The elephant says, "Let all go, I am here. Come, you come before me." Bhagavan Sri Krishna spoke like that in

the court of the Kurus when Duryodhana said, "I will bind Sri Krishna and put him in prison, and see that the Pandavas are thrown out." Krishna said, "Okay, come on! You bind me! You are so many, and I am alone, but this one man is sufficient before all these millions." You know the story. That is a real gentleman. It is something more than a gentleman; it is a superman. Lord Krishna was a superman. He said, "The whole world can stand before me." But you want so many people; you want brothers, sisters, family, and so on. You cry for these things every day, and you are never satisfied with anything that is given to you; everything is insufficient. You should say, "I have got everything within myself. I can summon the forces of nature." If Sri Krishna said that, why not you? He is only an example of supernature.

You should feel, "I am sufficient for myself. If I am here, it is sufficient for me. I do not need anything else." Are you here? That is sufficient. I gave the example of Bhagavan Sri Krishna—"I am here, and it is sufficient. I don't want anybody else nearby. No friends, no armaments, no police, no army. I am here—one—and let the whole world come and stand before me." This is not merely a story in the Mahabharata, this is the potential that is in everyone. You are a man, and you have to become a superman, and finally a Godman. God bless you.

Chapter 3

THE DIFFICULTY OF KNOWING THE ATMAN

During the first session we discovered that our essential nature is something totally different from either the body or the mind, and that we seem to be existing in the state of deep sleep minus the relationship with body and mind. On a further probing into the implications of the memory that follows after sleep, we discovered that we ought to have existed in the state of deep sleep as consciousness only, but for some important reason we were not aware that we were such a thing. Consciousness, which in Sanskrit is known as the Atman, is not only inside the body. "I slept." "I was conscious." Such statements may suggest that this 'I' is inside this body. Bereft of proper investigation into the subtlety of the situation, this is the primitive untutored feeling that may arise in everybody's mind. Consciousness cannot be locked up inside the body. I mentioned the second point involved herein: If the consciousness is only inside the body, it cannot know that there is a world outside because who is to know that there is a world, unless the consciousness itself is to be aware of it? It cannot know it because it is inside, like a prisoner within the walls of this body. But the fact that you can know even about the stars in the heavens, that you can see the vast space and endless structure of things, that you can have a consciousness of such an immensity should imply that this thought, the mind or consciousness cannot really be only inside this

body. You can touch the stars with your thought, and actually you are doing that because otherwise, you would not know that there are stars. This was the second implication of our studies. Firstly, our essential nature is consciousness. Secondly, this consciousness is not inside the body; it is as immense and large as the whole creation.

You will be surprised to know where you are actually sitting in this great circumstance of the unlimitedness of That which seems to be inside you. We have it in the Upanishad that Prajapati, Brahma the Creator, once declared: ya ātmā apahata-pāpmā vijaro vimṛtyur viśoko vijighatso'pipāsaḥ satya-kāmaḥ satya-saṃkalpaḥ, so 'nveṣṭavyaḥ, sa vijijñāsitavyaḥ sa sarvāṃś ca lokān āpnoti sarvāṃś ca kāmān. yas tam ātmānam anuvidya vijānāti: īti ha prajāpatir uvāca (Chhand. Up. 8.7.1). In his constituent assembly, Brahma proclaimed loudly that there is a thing called Atman which is deathless, all-pervading, immortal, pervading all the worlds in all realms of being; and whoever knows this is the master of all the worlds and has the instantaneous capacity to fulfil all his desires, and there is nothing else that he wants afterwards. This proclamation that he made in the assembly was broadcast everywhere. Everybody came to know about this new proclamation, this wonderful thing that he declared, that here is such a thing called Atman and if you know it, there is nothing else that you need to know. The whole world is under your control, and all your desires are fulfilled instantaneously. The devas and the asuras—the gods and the demons—both heard this.

"Oh! This is what Prajapati Brahma declared. We must know it; we shall have it; let us know it! Let us be masters.

We shall go to Prajapati Brahma and prostrate ourselves, and request him to teach us what this Atman is," they said.

All the gods assembled and declared, "Indra will be our representative. He will go and learn this art, and then come and communicate the same to every one of us."

The demons also sent one representative, called Virochana. "You also go and know this Atman, so that we become masters of everything." Indra and Virochana, representing two opposite camps, went to the great Creator Brahma and prostrated themselves.

"Indra, Virochana, what do you want?" asked Prajapati.

"Great Master, you declared that there is the Atman which is everywhere, and if we know this we have everything. Please teach us this Atman," they said.

"Observe self-control for thirty-two years, and then come to me," replied Prajapati.

"Well, all right," they agreed.

You are prepared to undergo any suffering if you know that you are going to get a great reward for it. Any suffering is all right, provided that wonderful thing is coming. So, Indra and Virochana observed intense austerity, *tapasya*, for thirty-two years, hoping that something would come as a result. Then they went back to Prajapati.

"We have observed thirty-two years of self-control, O Master. Please tell us about the Atman," they said.

"Go see yourself in a pot of water. Look at the water, and that which you see is the Atman," Prajapati replied.

"Oh, I see. So simple," they thought. They looked into a pot of water, and saw themselves. This body, head to foot, was seen reflected in the water. "So, this is the Atman! This

head-to-foot six-foot frame, this is the Atman. It is a very simple matter; the Atman is now known." Indra and Virochana both thought that they had gained what they wanted.

Virochana went to the demons and declared, "Wonderful! This body is the Atman; feed it. The Atman wants nothing else except physical consciousness, material enjoyment, and comfort of the body." The philosophy is eat, drink and be merry, and so these followers of Virochana became what we call materialists, believers in the body and material substances and the satisfaction of all things connected with the instincts of the sense-ridden physical body.

Indra also felt, "Oh! Okay. This is what we have learnt after thirty-two years of self-control." He went away. But on the way home, he had a doubt which had never occurred to Virochana. "Prajapati Brahma said what I see in the water is the Atman, and he said it is deathless, immortal, all-pervading, but this does not look like that. It is just this body; it is not all-pervading, and it cannot be deathless. It is going to perish. This mortal frame cannot continue for a long time. No, something is wrong. I don't think it is correct." Halfway, he went back to Prajapati, and did prostrations. Virochana did not come back, because he was fully satisfied.

Brahma said, "Indra, why have you come back? What is the matter?"

"Great Master, there is some difficulty. I don't feel quite all right in accepting that this thing which I saw reflected in water is the Atman. You said the Atman is all-pervading,

immortal, deathless, but this body that I saw in the reflection of the water is not all-pervading and is not deathless. So, there is something wrong in what I heard from you. I don't feel happy, and I require rectification. Please tell me where the true Atman is," said Indra.

"I see. Go! Observe self-control for another thirty-two years," replied Brahma.

"All right, I will observe self-control for another thirty-two years," said Indra. After the second round of thirty-two years of self-control, Indra returned to Brahma. "Please tell me about the Atman," said Indra.

"Do you know that you are seeing something in dream? That is the Atman. Go! Now, I have improved upon the concept of the Self," replied Brahma.

Because the great master said that, and it was his order, Indra obeyed and went. But halfway, he had doubt again. "No, no. This is not all right. What is there in dream? It is just like waking. In dream there is hunger and thirst, and physical death also can be experienced. One can fall from a tree and break one's legs, and can die also. This is no good. This Atman is perishable. Something is wrong in this doctrine." Again he went back, and prostrated himself before Brahma.

"Indra, again you have come?" said Brahma.

"O Master! Something is wrong with this doctrine. What is the use of this thing that I see in dream? It is as perishable, nonsensical, meaningless, absurd, and not worth anything as is the case with what I see in the waking condition," said Indra.

"All right. Observe self-control for another thirty-two years," replied Brahma.

So, thirty-two times three means ninety-six years of self-control that Indra underwent. Afterwards Indra went back. "Please teach me the Atman that is all-pervading, by knowing which I can have everything."

"Do you know that in deep sleep you are observing, seeing something, and experiencing something?" asked Brahma.

"Yes," Indra said, "I am experiencing something in deep sleep."

"That is the Atman. Go," said Brahma.

Indra went, and halfway again he had doubt. "No, this is no good. This sleep Atman is no good because it is as if it is dead. This immortal Atman is dead in deep sleep. He is annihilated. His existence is abolished. He knows nothing. He is in a state of idiocy, negativity. No, no. Immortal, deathless, all-bliss, said Prajapati Brahma, but what is the condition of this that I experience in deep sleep? No, there is something wrong here." Again, Indra went back to Prajapati.

"Oh, Indra! You have come again?" said Brahma.

"There is something wrong, Master. I don't see any worth in that which I experience in the state of deep sleep because it is a complete negation of all values, so how can that be called the Atman? Where is the point in it?" asked Indra.

Brahma said, "Okay, go again, and observe five years of self-control."

He was a little considerate this time. Instead of thirty-two years, he said five. Thus, 101 years of self-control—it was a very difficult situation indeed. We cannot understand what this self-control and austerity was, or what they underwent. With all that *tapasya*, they got nothing finally, except some kind of tentative definition which meant nothing in the end.

After 101 years of self-control, Indra went to Prajapati: "Please tell me about the Atman."

Maghavan martyaṃ vā idaṃ śarīram (Chhand. Up. 8.12.1), said Prajapati to Indra. "O Ruler of the gods, Maghavan Indra, all this formation is perishable."

That which you observe through the sense organs as a positive object of perception, whether in waking or dream, cannot be the Atman because it has a beginning and an end. It is destructible, whereas the Atman is deathless. Even if we consider the state of deep sleep as the Atman because it does not look like something that is observed as a perishable object, deep sleep is an annihilation of consciousness.

There are two conditions which are very important for you to know here. Firstly, that which you see with your eyes is not the Atman. That which you experience through the sense organs, or even by the mind conditioned by the sense organs as is the case in waking and in dream, cannot be regarded as the Atman. So, the first point is that anything that is outside, externalised, projected in terms of the sense organs, whether in waking or dream, cannot be the Atman, because that which is external cannot be the universal. Hence, the waking and dream conditions are not the

Atman. Why not sleep? What is wrong with it? The other condition of the Atman is that it is pure Self Consciousness. It knows that it is: "I am what I am." This consciousness is absent in the state of sleep. Therefore, the condition of the experience of the Atman is that on the one hand, it should not be externalised as an object of the sense organs or even the thought process; and, on the other hand, it should not be an annihilation of awareness. Existence minus awareness is equal to no existence, just as wealth minus the consciousness of it is no wealth at all. A rich person who does not know that he is rich cannot be regarded as rich.

Consciousness is the conditioning ruling factor in all our experience but, as mentioned, it cannot be externalised. Both in waking and dream, the Atman seems to be externalised, dissected into the seer and the seen. There is a partitioned existence of the Atman, as it were, which is a total negation of its true nature. Neither in the waking condition, nor in dream, nor in sleep, can you know the Atman. What other experience do you have in this world? You are either awake, or dreaming, or sleeping; there is no fourth condition. And if all these three states are worthless instruments for the purpose of knowing the Atman, what other means can you employ in knowing it?

"I have no means of knowing the Atman. All my apparatus has been exhausted. I have no further ammunition with me to tackle this situation. What is it? This particular 'I am' is nothing but a bundle of experiences in waking, dream, and sleep, and you say all these three states are useless for the purpose of knowing the Atman because of these defects that are very clearly observed. I

have no other experience in this world. If the three states, which are my property, my nature, are incapable of knowing the Atman as it is, I have no means of knowing the Atman. Don't talk about it."

The difficulty of knowing the Atman is here presented before us. Here is a wonder before you. You have to know it, and yet you have no way of knowing it. You are in a serious predicament. In this connection, I shall narrate an anecdote which appears in the Kathopanishad. Nachiketas, a great seeker like all of you, went to Yama, the great master of wisdom, and according to the story, he was offered three boons.

"Ask for the first boon," the great Yamaraj, master of knowledge, told the boy seeker Nachiketas.

"I have come to you, great Master, from the mortal world of an experience which is not happy in any way. In the world there are no friends, really speaking. Anyone who is a friend today can be an enemy tomorrow. That which is my possession today may not be my possession tomorrow. Today this is the object of my possession, my property; tomorrow the same thing is the property of somebody else. Nobody in this world can be trusted. Anybody is a friend, anybody is an enemy. Not only that, everything is perishable. Now I have come to you; I am at the gates of the doors of Yama. When I go back, please bless me with this first boon that I ask, that all shall be well with me in the world. I shall not be victim of anyone's love and hatred, and I shall be received as one with the whole world," said Nachiketas.

"This is a great thing that you have asked, 'Let the whole world treat me as itself, so that I have perfect security. No difficulty of any kind, no suspicion, no worry, a life which is not distraught with agony and suffering of any kind, may that be granted to me as the first boon.' Take it. When you go back, you will be received by the whole world as its own friend," replied Yama. In one second this unthinkable gift was bestowed.

"My dear boy, ask for the second boon," said Yama.

"I hear that the gods in heaven have no sorrow of any kind. They are bereft of the turmoil of physical existence as is experienced by people. They are possessors of the knowledge of the wealth of the whole creation. Let me be also blessed with this boon of the universal perception of things," asked Nachiketas. In Sanskrit, this experience is sometimes called Vaishvanara.

"Take it," replied Yama. In one instant, the wonderful boon was bestowed. What kind of thing it is that he was given? Kāmasyāptiṁ jagataḥ pratiṣṭhāṁ krator ānantyaṁ abhayasya pāram (Katha Up. 1.2.11): "It is the soul of the world, the joy which is inexpressible by any thought of mortals, the universal experience of the possession of everything in space and time—such Vaishvanara knowledge I have given in one instance. Take it."

"Master, you are very kind," said Nachiketas.

"Now, ask for the third boon," said Yama.

Nachiketas threw a bombshell on the head of this great Guru by saying, "Tell me what happens to the soul after the death of this body."

"No, no," Yama said. "Don't talk like that. My dear boy, you are a good child. Never utter such foolish things, and do not raise questions that even the gods cannot answer. What happens to the soul when you are rid of mortal encasement, what happens to your consciousness when it is free from the shackles of body—you are asking such a question! Go back. I am sorry that I asked you to request a third boon. Don't worry me. Go!" replied Yama.

"No, I cannot go like that. You told me that you will give me three boons, and I am now asking for the third. You must give it to me," said Nachiketas.

"No," Yama said. "I am very sorry that our discussion has gone this far. Even the gods cannot answer this question as to what happens to consciousness when it is rid of the mortal encasement."

Nachiketas said, "Great Master, you are saying that nobody knows the answer to this question. I know, therefore, that you know the answer. So, after having seen a person like you, which fool can go back without getting this knowledge?"

"You should not persist in this question. I give you everything: the longest life, as long as the universe itself; all the joys conceivable; all the wealth of the whole Earth. You are the emperor of all things. I give you this boon, but you should not ask this question," replied Yama.

Now, you may wonder, what is wrong with this question. Why did Yama hesitate to answer this question? Actually, the question was simple. Nachiketas wanted to know what this Atman is, as was the case with Indra and the others, who wanted to know the Atman. They had some

tentative answers which were not satisfying. The same was the case with Nachiketas, but Yama would not give the answer. Why? What would he have lost by giving the answer? It is because questions and answers are processes which cannot apply to the realm of the Atman. The Atman is the knower bereft of any knowable object external to it. You can logically, methodologically, philosophically discuss anything which is an object of reasoning, understanding, but how can you convert the Atman into an object of reasoning when it is at the back of the very process of reasoning? Reason cannot operate until and unless the Atman is already there behind the reasoning process. So, you are trying to climb on your own shoulders by asking what the Atman is. Who is to put the question—because the questioner has the Atman behind him. This is the reason why no answer can be given to this question regarding the Atman.

Then, what is all this effort, if you have no means to know the Atman? Because it is the knower itself—it is the seer behind all the processes of seeing—it is not an object that can be investigated by any available means of knowledge. Perception, inference and so on are useless as instruments of knowing this Atman, because it is prior to the very operation of the faculties of perception, inference, etc. Yet, you have to know the Atman. Here is the contradiction before you. Āścaryo vaktā kuśalo'sya labdhā, āścaryo jñātā kuśalānuśiṣṭaḥ (Katha Up. 1.2.7). Both the Bhagavadgita and Kathopanishad say that to think this is a wonder, to hear this being spoken is a wonder, blessed is the person who can speak of it, and blessed is the person

who can listen to questions and discussions of this kind. You cannot know it, and yet you have to know it. Here is a peculiar contradiction.

This contradiction can be solved only if you know what Indra did for 101 years by way of what is known as self-control. Self-control is the means of knowing the Atman, which cannot be known in other ways. It is a returning of yourself to yourself. At present, you are not in yourself.

You may put a question, "What is the meaning of saying 'returning of myself to myself'? I am already in myself. I am Mr. so-and-so sitting here. What is returning?"

You are actually not in yourself at the present moment. You are outside. When you are looking at the tree, you have become the tree. The consciousness takes the form of a modified psychic operation, called *vritti* in Sanskrit, which is the shape of the object which you look at, which you hear, which you taste, which you smell, which you touch. What are you doing the whole day? Either you are seeing something, or smelling something, or hearing something, or touching something, or tasting something. Other than these five activities, what other things are you doing in this world? So, in all these activities which are the operations with the five sense organs, you have gone out of yourself. You, the so-called Atman or the Self, have become other than what you are.

Do you know what it means to be other than one's own self? If you have studied this subject, you can imagine psychoanalytically what it is to be aberrant in regard to one's own self. When they are not feeling normal, sometimes people say, "Now I am not myself." When you

are angry beyond comprehension, or filled with desire beyond expression, or in an inebriated condition, you are not in your own self. There is not a moment of time when you are in yourself because you are always seeing something, hearing something, and contacting something in some way, so that there is a perpetual movement of yourself out of yourself into an objective condition which is called perception. In all perception, you are losing yourself. That is why Patanjali's Yoga Sutras say that every modification of the mind is an obstacle to the knowledge of the Self. Yogaś citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ; tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe avasthānam (Yoga Sutras 1.2-3): You can find yourself in yourself only when the *vritti* or the modification of the mind in terms of the perception, or the cognition of things, ceases. This is the self-control which Indra practised for 101 years.

Now, in this self-alienation that is perpetually taking place, you are becoming weaker and weaker every day. You are weak bodily, mentally, and also in your reasoning capacity. In every respect you are a helpless person in this world, because the more you are conscious of outside things, and the more you are concerned with those things, the worse for you. Nothing can be worse than that.

There are two ways of perception or modification of the mind known as *aklishta* and *klishta vrittis*. These are non-painful operations of the mind, and painful operations of the mind. A general consciousness that there is a tree does not cause you any pain because there are so many trees in the forest, so they do not matter to you. Nevertheless, a modification of the mind has taken place in the process of

knowing the existence of the tree. But suppose it is a plant in your own garden which you have tended—a mango tree or a rosebush. You are attached to it, and it is a source of pain. If somebody plucks your rose, you are very annoyed. If somebody cuts a tree far off in a forest, you do not care, but if it is your tree in your garden, you do not want it cut.

Therefore, painful *vrittis* and non-painful *vrittis* are two types of operations taking place in your mind, and you are subject to both of them. You are not merely allowing yourself to be transported away from yourself to the objects of perception, you are making matters worse by either clinging to them or hating them. The process of general perception is studied in schools and colleges in what is called general psychology, and the process undergone in the perception embedded with emotional like and dislike is studied in abnormal psychology, especially in psychoanalysis.

Now, can you know what kind of persons you are? Are you subject to all these limitations and troubles? Certainly, your whole life is a bundle of this great grief from being compelled at every moment to be other than what you are. This kind of life you are living in this world. Therefore, Prajapati said, "You must practise 101 years of self-control before you can know the Atman." Yama said, "Go away from here. You can take the whole world, but don't talk about this matter." What is the use of talking about a thing which is implied in the very question that you are asking, and nothing can be done about it as long as you are a person? To be a true seeker of the Atman, you have to be other than an ordinary person. A person is one who thinks

in terms of the sense organs—either with love and hatred, or otherwise—and we are nothing but a jumble of these operations. We are a psychic chaos, rather than a stable individuality. Therefore, none in the world can be always happy. One cannot be secure even for twenty-four hours continuously. You have anxieties of all kinds, and do not know what will happen to you the next moment. Even within your family, you are not safe. When you suspect the members of the family, what about other relations far away? The whole life is spent in this manner. You have two types of agony: consciously felt agony, and unconsciously felt agony. Something is worrying you inside, of which you are not consciously aware; and that is the case with everybody. But in certain cases, you are aware what the agony is.

A yoga seeker, a seeker on the spiritual path, should be a very good psychologist. You must be a master of the knowledge of your own mind. There is no use studying psychology in order to teach it in a college. You must know how your mind is operating first. At a particular moment of your mood or whim and fancy, what happens to your mind? Why are you thinking in this manner at this moment? What has happened to you? You may say that somebody is doing something to you, but are they really, or are you doing something to yourself without realising it? Self-control is the restraint of the movement of consciousness in terms of the sense organs. Self-control does not mean closing your eyes and chanting something, because you may close the physical eye, but the conscious eye will operate. It is not the physical organ of sense that is

troubling you; it is the consciousness that is moving through the aperture of the sense organs that is the source. Self-control is the restraint of the operation of consciousness along the lines of what is other-than-being-selfhood. All the things of the world are non-self in the sense they cannot be considered as yourself. Other people are not yourself, the trees and mountains are not yourself, nothing is yourself. You are simply thinking that you are identical with your little physical frame, as if all other things are null and void in respect of yourself.

If you want to study the nature of self-control, you have to be at the feet of a master for years. Knowing the Atman is a different subject altogether. That is why Yamaraj told Nachiketas, "Go away from here, and don't worry me unnecessarily about this matter. It cannot be known." Anyway, the answer was given to Nachiketas later on after the severe testing which Yama imposed upon him; and that was the case with Indra also, who finally understood the transcendent and immanent nature of the Atman. In the state of deep sleep, the Atman is immanent, hiddenly present in ourselves, but really it is above the condition of sleep.

The philosophy of India is a transcendental immanence. It is not any kind of 'ism' that can be found in Western thought. It is not pantheism, deism, atheism, or any kind of 'ism'. It is impossible to conceive it, because while accepting that the Atman is everywhere, one also accepts that it is not anywhere in this world. A transcendentality together with an immanence is inconceivable to the ordinary mind. God is in the world,

and yet He is not in the world. Both these aspects of the Ultimate Reality have to be borne in your mind even before you try to practise self-control.

Thus, yoga practice, spiritual life, understanding yourself—the purpose for which you have come to this ashram—is an arduous task. You have to live for it, and die for it. It is a dedication until the end of your life, and not something to be learnt in two months and then forgotten. This is not to be learnt for a period of time like a semester in a college or university. It is a discipline of life, a restraint of yourself from self-aberration or alienation, which you cannot understand by reading a book. You have to be purified at the feet of a Master whose blessings are your solace, and perhaps the Almighty Himself will bless you if your heart is sincere. Great is this subject. That is why Prajapati had to inflict so much suffering upon Indra, and Yama had to turn Nachiketas away without an answer. This is the case with all great Masters. They will not tell you anything for years together, though they will bless you one day.

Chapter 4

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-RESTRAINT

The entire gamut of Indian culture can be expressed in one word, 'self-restraint', which also expresses the ways and means of ensuring peace of humanity. When you have uttered this word, you have said everything. It is going to pave the way to health, wealth and welfare of all people everywhere, both here and hereafter. That is the way to prosperity in this world and blessedness in the other world—*abhyudaya* and *nihsreyasa*. It does not necessarily mean that you have to suffer in this world for the sake of blessedness in the other world.

The other world and this world are not two opposing tanks. They are like the soul and the body of a person. The other world that you think of, the heaven or the realm of higher attainment, may be compared to the soul of a person, and the life that you live in this physical world is the body of that soul. If the body and soul are not enemies, if they are complimentary facets of a single approach to life in general, then life here and hereafter are not two different things. There are people who reject this world for the sake of the future world, thinking that the world is binding, it is maya, it is an illusion, it is bondage, and the earlier you are rid of it, the better for the sake of the salvation of the soul. This is like saying that the earlier you are rid of this body, the better it is for your soul.

You know very well how wrong this approach is. You cannot get rid of this body, because it is a condition that is necessary for the fulfilment of a purpose for which it is manufactured by the soul itself. The body has not been thrust on you by somebody from outside. It is a house built by the soul itself for a specific purpose. Until the purpose for which it is built is fulfilled, it cannot be thrown away.

The world is related to the higher realms of being in a similar manner. The manifested and the unmanifested are not two opposing tanks; they are two facets of one wholesome reality. Neither can you reject the world for the sake of God, nor can you reject God for the sake of the world. Neither of these approaches are permissible. Materialists reject God and cling to the world. Ascetics reject the world and cling to God. Neither of them is seeing things in a wholesome manner.

I gave you the example of clinging to the soul and throwing away this body or clinging to the body and throwing away the soul. How would you succeed? And what would be the catastrophic conclusion of this kind of unwise attempt on your part? This is one phase of what I am going to tell you today. The other phase is a continuation of what I told you yesterday, the role of self-restraint or self-control in the life of people. Is self-control meant only for spiritual aspirants and, therefore, not a concern of those who cannot be regarded as spiritual aspirants?

Actually, you cannot distinguish between spiritual aspirants and non-spiritual aspirants, just as you cannot cut the life of a person into a soul somewhere and a body

elsewhere, the world somewhere and God another place. You cannot divide life into spiritual and unspiritual. These are very important things to be known by any earnest seeker of truth. Truth is not in an otherworldly God; it is also not in a world minus God. They are not two things. The idea of duality, the idea of the distinction that is usually drawn between the visible and the invisible, is to be taken care of properly.

Life is an integral whole. It is a completeness in itself; therefore, you cannot reject anything as unnecessary. A thing looks unnecessary because it has already served its purpose. If you have eaten a beautiful meal, you may not like to eat a second time a few minutes afterwards. The very thing that sustained you and was enchanting you, the delicious meal for which you were in rapture, becomes redundant because it has served its purpose. A thing which has not served its purpose cannot be abandoned. It is up to you to realise whether everything in the world has served its purpose and you have no connection with it. Everything is related to you, but relatively, tentatively, for a particular purpose and for a particular period of time. There is no compartmentalisation of life into sections or classifications of purpose. Life is a growth in a holistic manner from the lower completion to the higher completion. Life is not a horizontal movement; it is a vertical ascent. The verticality of the ascent consists in the wholeness that constitutes a particular level of your life. Whatever be the status that you occupy in life, you are a whole person. A poor man is as whole in his personality as a rich man. The wholeness of a rich person is not capable of distinction from the wholeness

of a poor person. Poverty and wealth are accretions that have grown on the personality which by itself can stand on its own legs. There is a growth in a holistic manner in everything, from the seed up to the banyan tree, from the little babe up to the genius. There is no separate, section-wise interpretation possible between the baby that a genius was and the genius that he is now. A great scientific genius who is mature in his mind now was a little baby once upon a time, but he has not jumped from the baby condition to the genius condition; he has holistically outgrown the lower category of wholeness and entered into a larger maturity of wholeness.

The relationship between body and soul also is one of integration. If the body acts totally different from the soul, you could have kept the body somewhere in a cupboard and the soul would be somewhere else. They not only work together, but they work as a unified purpose. The force that is behind the operation of the body is the soul, and the mechanism that is used by this force inside is the body.

Now, as we have observed earlier, our essential nature is consciousness, and it is not locked up inside the body but is everywhere. Infinitude is the nature of this consciousness, which means to say, outside consciousness nothing can be. As we have noted, if there is something outside consciousness, there would be nobody to know that there is something outside consciousness. Consciousness is being; being is consciousness. Existence is consciousness; consciousness is existence. Existence cannot be divided into parts. You exist, I exist, a mountain exists, the sun exists, a river exists, an ant exists, an elephant exists. Existence is a

common denomination and a foundational reality of everything, and cannot be partitioned or sectioned. Therefore, indivisibility is the nature of existence, and indivisibility is also the nature of consciousness. Inasmuch as there cannot be two indivisibilities or two infinities, existence becomes consciousness, and consciousness becomes existence. Everything is Being-Consciousness—Satchidananda. If this is the case, what is the role of the sense organs in the life of a person?

As I briefly mentioned yesterday, the senses contradict the wholeness of the spirit. They create a segmentation between the perceiving consciousness and the perceived object so-called. There is a violation of your conclusion that being-consciousness is indivisible. If you are going to stick to this conclusion that being-consciousness is all-inclusive and is all-in-all, then the sense organs have no role to play. They cannot act or operate at all. The eyes cannot see anything because there is nothing for them to see. If you believe that the eyes are seeing something outside, that outsideness violates the indivisibility of existence, it violates the nature of pure consciousness, and it violates the nature of Ultimate Reality. So all sense perception is a violation of the nature of Ultimate Reality. If that is so, all of our life which is sense ridden, conditioned through perceptions through the sense organs, is not compatible with the nature of reality. The humdrum life that we are passing through in this world of dissection, division, partiality, good and bad, right and wrong, and so on, does not seem to be in harmony with the conclusion that reality is indivisible. The sense organs rebel against the conclusion that existence is

indivisible. The sense organs are the opposite party contrary to the ultimate truth that existence is pure consciousness.

You may have heard the biblical story that Lucifer rebelled against God; he asserted his independence, and the reaction from God was a catastrophic rejection of the self-affirmation of Lucifer, causing his headlong fall into the precipice of an inverted perception of things. This is not a scriptural story, it is a scientific operation taking place every day. The Aitareya Upanishad tells us exactly what the Bible says in connection with the fall of Lucifer and his becoming Satan by a topsy-turvy headlong falling down and visualising things contrary to reality. The Aitareya Upanishad is very brief, but it tells us everything about the process of creation and also the return process. Ātmā vā idam eka evāgra āsīt, nānyat kiñ cana miṣat (1.1): In the original condition of things there was nothing anywhere except this all-inclusive Atman. The creational doctrine tells us there is a gradual condensation of the will aspect of this universal consciousness, and there is a tendency to objectification of what is essentially universal. If the universal is to get objectified, it is an example of universal self-alienation. I become a non-I in my perception of things. I behold myself as something other than myself when I look at creation. The process of this self-alienation is described beautifully in this Upanishad.

No self-alienation and perception of that type can be possible unless there are faculties or means of perception. These faculties are the sense organs. There was a central will which congealed, as it were, into a direction of

consciousness towards what you consider as light and shape. The work of the particular sense organ called the eye is the cognition of light, colour and shape. The other organs perform similar functions of a different type. There is the cognition of sound, taste, etc. The process of cognition by a sense organ in respect of a self-alienated object outside is impossible to conceive unless there is something to connect the perceiving organ with the object that is perceived. You cannot have a gap between the perceived object and the sense organ.

To give an illustration, there is a tree in front of you, and your eyes are seeing the tree. There is absolutely no connection between your eyes and the tree. There is a vacuous space between the eye that is eager to see and the object that is seen. This energy which operates inside as the means of perception is called *adhyatma,* the subjective faculty that cognises things. The objective phenomenon which is cognised by the sense organs is called *adhibhuta*. All things that you cognise through the sense organs as if they are outside come under the category of what is known as *adhibhuta prapancha*, the world of materiality and objectivity. There is a subjective impulse towards cognition of an object which appears to be separated from the subjective consciousness; the subject and object are dichotomised. I am not the tree and the tree is not me, and yet I see the tree. The phenomenon of the perception of a tree, or of anything for the matter of that, as an object outside by an otherwise-pure subjective faculty of the sense organs cannot be explained unless there is an intermediary principle between the subject and the object. In the

language of Indian thought, this intermediary principle is called *adhideva*, the superintending principle.

Since the senses are concerned only with the object, they have a tremendous push towards what is totally different from themselves in the perception of an object. The sense organs cannot locate the presence of this intermediary principle, just as in a cinemagraphic projection you can see the movement on the screen and the wheeling of the film in the camera, but you cannot know what is happening in between. The light rays which work in a very interesting manner between the rotating wheel of the film and the screen in front cannot be seen. Sit in the middle of the audience in a cinema hall and try to see the light. You will not see anything. You will see the screen, the moving picture, and if you go behind you can see an arc light being projected from the camera on which the reel is moving. The middle thing cannot be seen because the mediating, intermediary thing is not an object, because if that also becomes an object, there will be no intermediary connection at all. If it is taken for granted that the so-called *adhideva*, or the intermediating principle, is also something to be cognised by the sense organs, then there would be a *regressus ad infinitum*, as they call it. To cognise that intermediary principle through the sense organs, there must be some relationship between the sense organs and that peculiar intermediary principle, so that the second intermediary principle would go on like this endlessly. Infinite regress will follow. Because of this difficulty, you cannot know what is happening in between yourself and

the object that you are perceiving. The *adhideva*, the superintending divinity, cannot be seen.

The scriptures, the Upanishads, tell us that the sun in the sky is the conditioning factor of the operation of the eye; and similarly there are divinities which are super-physical, beyond the faculties of sense organs and objects, operating to give life to the sense organs. The eye cannot see unless there is life in the eye. This life comes from a particular divinity.

There are three processes, therefore, in the act of the perception of an object: the subjective side which is the sense organ, the objective side which is the object, and the intermediary principle which is the divinity. If that divinity is not to operate, you will not know anything that is happening. The whole world will look blank and empty, and no perception will take place. If you withdraw the mind, the eyes cannot see the object. If you are deeply thinking of something, solving a mathematical problem or some issue which has taken possession of you, you cannot see an object in front of you. Even a rushing railway train will not be visible to your eyes because your mind is elsewhere. The elsewhereness of the mind is nothing but the elsewhereness of the divinity operating through the mind.

There is a threefold process in all perception, which is a travesty of affairs ultimately, since you cannot divide reality into a threefold categorised existence of subject, object, and the intermediary principle. The Ultimate Being is not a subject because it has no object in front of it. It is not an object because there is no one to cognise it. There is no

question of an intermediary principle because neither the subject nor the object is there. This is the nature of Ultimate Being. But inasmuch as we are living in a world of perception through the sense organs where this threefold category is incumbent upon our life, we are living in a world of unreality. The sense organs are deceiving us. They are not our friends because they give us a report which is contrary to the nature of things. Indivisibility is dichotomised into the seeing subject and the object that is seen, while such a thing is not the true nature of things.

To give another example, see what is happening to you in the state of dream. There is a something which sees the dream. You are seeing the dream, and you are seeing a world of dream, the same world as you are seeing in the waking condition. All sorts of things—space, time, sun, moon, stars, mountains, rivers, people—an entire phenomena of what you see in the waking condition is seen in the dream condition also. You see a mountain, for instance, so far away from you in dream, and you are there also. You see and visualise that mountain. The same process of an intermediary principle comes into operation between the dream subject and the dream object, without which the dream subject cannot know that there is a dream mountain. But you know very well there are no mountains in dream. The waking mind, which is your real mind, so to say, has cut itself into three parts: the visualiser in the dream, the visualised object, and the process. In dream there is also space, time and causation. You can see a vast space, and there is a time process, and something proceeds

from something. And so in dream, as is the case with waking life, you will find the entire world operating.

But is there a world in dream? The one indivisible mass of your waking consciousness has converted itself into a threefold operation of a seeing subject, a seen object, and an intermediary superintending principle. The same thing also happens in the waking condition. If you believe that there are no mountains in dream, then there is also no person who sees the mountain, and there is no question of an intermediary principle. Why is it so? Because the total mind, which is what you call the waking consciousness, has artificially divided itself into three parts, but not really. The mind has never become the mountain, you have never become any subject, and there was no superintending principle between them.

The same is the case with the waking world. In place of this individual mind that has differentiated itself into three parts in dream, there is a cosmic mind which operates totally but appears as the visualising subject which is you, me, etc., and the object seen outside, and it requires an intermediary principle also. This is to say the operation of the sense organs is a complete havoc that has taken place, and perception through the sense organs is not actually a perception of reality. This is why Patanjali Maharshi in one of his sutras says even the consciousness of an object is a *vritti* which has to be subdued. Pramāṇa viparyaya vikalpa nidrā smṛtayaḥ (Yoga Sutras 1.6). Five categories of perceptional psyche have been mentioned in this sutra. *Pramana* is right perception. To be aware that there is a tree in front is a right perception, but it is a wrong perception

from the point of view of yoga practice because the tree is not outside you, as you have already concluded existence is indivisible and existence is consciousness. If the Ultimate Being which you are aspiring for—God-realisation or the realisation of the Absolute—is indivisible existence-consciousness, then the operations of the sense organs, even if it be called right perception in ordinary parlance, is not right perception. It is a *vritti* of the mind. But because you are attracted to it and you regard it as something very comfortable and utilitarian, these *vrittis* or functions of the mind in the process of what is called right knowledge are not considered as suffering. Therefore, they are called painless *vrittis*.

In the perception of an object, to which I made a brief reference last time, there is a twofold categorisation: pure perception in a general fashion, and emotionally conditioned perception. If I see something in front of me, that is general perception of the object. But if I see something in front of me which I like very much or hate very much, that is an emotionally conditioned perception of an object. You may be aware of an object in a general fashion, as you are aware of a mountain in front, or the Ganga that is flowing, or the sun that is shining. You are not emotionally disturbed because you see the sun, moon, stars, etc. But there are things in the world which upset your mind. You cling to them or repel them. These are the painful *vrittis*, *klista vrittis*, born of the ignorance of the fact that your real nature is indivisible existence.

First of all, you must know what you are wanting. What do you want, finally? You are running here and there

throughout your life, from morning till evening, but what for? To attain perfection, deathlessness. You do not want to die. You want perfection for all time to come, which is called immortality, which is the nature of this individual existence. This is what you are unknowingly pursuing even in your wrong activities of the world. Such being the case, how would you consider sensory perception as anything but the world? Therefore, self-restraint is necessary. Self-restraint is the withdrawal of the operative process of consciousness towards a particular organ in terms of an object which is imagined to be there. If dream is not a reality, waking life is also not a reality for a similar reason because the structural pattern and the operational process in dream is similar to the structural pattern and the operational process of waking. You are bound either by a golden chain or an iron chain; anyhow, you are bound. You are in the prison. With what you are bound is not important; that you are bound is the point.

So a yogi, an aspirant in spiritual life, has to practice self-control. We have touched upon this point previously. A person who is wedded to the operation of the senses cannot know reality because reality cannot be seen, heard, touched, tasted. It is being as such—God-being, as it is called. You can imagine what it would be to be in the state of pure being as such, indivisible, without any externality, no segmentation; outside you there is nothing, and you are there as pure being, indivisible, undivided, pervading everything. The one alone is, *ekam sat*.

If this is your aspiration, the operation of the sense organs has to be restrained. In the beginning, the painful

vrittis have to be subdued. Later on, the painless *vrittis* have to be subdued. Most of us have love and hatred. There is nobody who does not love something or hate something. You have created a division between what is necessary and what is not necessary, what is worthwhile and what is not. This particularisation is false because in the interconnectedness of the things of the world, you cannot know which is the cause which is the effect, and which is beautiful, which is ugly. The things do not exist at that time. But the sense organs tell you they are there. They are totally there; therefore, you have to love and hate them. It is all right; you can live in the world with this impulsion, but then there is no use searching for perfection and deathless existence. One has to be sincere in what one is seeking. You should not play a joke with your life. That is why Prajapati told Indra to observe self-control for so many years.

When Sri Krishna went to the court of the Kauravas to make peace, Dhritarashtra asked his minister Sanjaya, "Who is this Krishna who is coming? Can I see him?" because he had only heard of Krishna, and did not know what kind of person he was. Sanjaya replied, "Sri Krishna is a *kritatma*. A *kritatma* is one who has subdued his sense organs completely and all objectivity has melted down into the pure universal subjectivity. Such a one is Lord Krishna, and if you are of that type, you can see him; otherwise, do not try to see him at all." The Purna-avatara of Shakti, the universal force in the Purna-avatara of Sri Krishna, was due to the melting down of all objectivity into the subjectivity of universality. That is what is called Visvarupa. When all the world which is pure objectivity melts down into the pure

subjectivity of universal being, you are Visvarupa at that time; you are God Himself. If that is your aspiration, the senses have to be restrained. Otherwise, you will be running after a will-o'-the-wisp, a phantasmagoria. It is like the blind Dhritarashtra wanting to see what he could not see.

But what is self-control? What is meant by self-restraint? Is it closing the eyes, blocking the ears, not eating, not sleeping, not talking? Is this called self-restraint? That is again a misconception. It is very difficult to live a true spiritual life. The moment you touch something, the problem arises. You are prevented from knowing what is actually taking place. A great competent master is necessary to live a spiritual life, or even a good life, a humanitarian life, a gentlemanly life, a social welfare life, a worthwhile life—whatever you may call it. This restraint of self is necessary because the more you restrain your sensory operations, the more you expand the dimension of your being nearer and nearer to the borders of universal being, and you become a superman, or perhaps a Godman.

Chapter 5

THE NATURE AND CONTROL OF THE SENSES

During the last two sessions we were discussing the nature of self-restraint or self-control. Inasmuch as self-restraint is the essence of spiritual living, it is necessary to know something more about what it actually means. What is meant by self-restraint? All the ancient masters, sages, saints, and scriptures have told us that there is nothing that you cannot achieve by self-restraint. You become a master of yourself. When you become a master of yourself, it seems that you become a master of everything else also. Self-knowledge is all knowledge. We have been told that control of oneself is control of the whole world.

Now, what does this mean, finally? Why should there be self-restraint, and what is the difference between self-indulgence and self-control? Ethics and the practical methodology of living are both based on what philosophers generally call metaphysics. The nature of Ultimate Reality will decide what is proper conduct, what is morality, and what is the way in which you are expected to live in this world. The mode of living, and the conduct and character of a person, depend upon the nature of Ultimate Being. Everything follows from the concept of the Supreme Reality, and its nature will decide the nature of everything else. All things in the world, whatever be their nature, are evolutes—corollaries, as it were, following from the fundamental theorem of the nature of Ultimate Being.

What is Ultimate Being? Religions have called this Ultimate Existence as God, Absolute, Substance, and by such other nomenclatures. This is something which is final, and beyond which nothing can be—because if there is anything beyond it, it cannot be final. The finality of a thing consists in its being all-in-all, and once you utter it, you have said everything about it.

We were discussing the nature of consciousness. Our essential nature seems to be consciousness. It is the Being of consciousness that is the Being of any one of us. This is what we learned in the earlier stages of our discussions. We also learned that this Being is universal—that consciousness cannot be divided into parts. The consciousness that you are is an undivided consciousness, because the division of consciousness cannot be conceived. The conception of the division of consciousness involves accepting the all-pervading nature of consciousness at the same time because to divide consciousness into parts would be to accept a gap between two parts of consciousness; and in order for us to know that there is a gap, consciousness has to be there. So, there cannot be a gap in the structure of consciousness. That is why it has to be everywhere.

It is not only everywhere, it is the only thing that exists. Why is it so? Why is consciousness the only thing that is there, and nothing else can be there? If you posit the presence of something outside consciousness, consciousness has to know that there is something outside it. So, by whatever logic you try to understand the nature of consciousness, you will find that only it is existing, and nothing else can exist because the idea of something else

will defeat the all-pervading nature of consciousness; it will divide itself, which is not a possibility. So, Ultimate Being is consciousness only.

Because of its infinitude, endlessness, perfection, deathlessness, absoluteness, we call it Almighty. Generally, when we pray to the Almighty God, we look up to the skies: "O Almighty God! Bless me." The idea of looking up in our prayer is a symbolic manifestation of our inward feeling that it is above us. The above-ness does not necessarily mean location in space, far-off in the skies. It is a logical superiority, a qualitative ascent of consciousness, which is not measurable in mathematical or geometrical terms. 'Higher' consciousness is not high in the sense that it is several kilometres away.

In the Bhagavadgita there are very simple verses which explain all this mystery of consciousness, and the whole of spiritual discipline. Uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ nātmānam avasādayet, ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ; bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ, anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat (Gita 6.5-6). I feel that there is no need of reading any book, as these two verses are quite sufficient if their implication is understood. What do they mean? 'Lift the self by the Self' is the meaning of uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ: Raise the self by the Self. I am giving you a literal translation of these verses, without going into any commentary. Uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ: Raise the self by the Self. Do not deprecate the self. Nātmānam avasādayet: Do not cast a mood of despondency on the self. Your Self is your friend, and your Self is your enemy. This second part is an explanation of the

first part, which says to raise the self by the Self. The higher Self has to raise the lower self. The lower self is to be in a state of harmony with the higher Self. When the lower self is raised to the status of the higher Self, the higher Self becomes the friend of the lower self. If the lower self remains completely satisfied in its own finitude, and the higher Self is completely out of its purview, the higher Self may look like an enemy.

Ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ: The Self is the friend of the self; the Self is the enemy of the self. Which self is the friend? Which self is the enemy? The higher Self is the friend and also the enemy, according to your attitude towards it. Here, 'your' signifies the lower self. Your contaminated physical consciousness, your finitude of feeling, is the lower self. "I am Mr. so-and-so; I am so-and-so, son of so-and-so, daughter of so-and-so, relative of so-and-so; this person is here; I have come from such and such a place." The consciousness which asserts itself in this manner is the lower self.

The idea of finitude, limitation, location, implies the existence of that which is not located. There cannot be a consciousness of finitude unless there is also an awareness of the infinite beyond itself. So, the infinite has to be there. The infinite is above the finite self. In what sense is it high? Not in a measurable manner. I have been giving the analogy of higher education and lower education. Higher education is above lower education, but when you use the word 'above', you are likely to think that one is sitting on the head of the other. It is not measurable by distance. What is the distance between lower education and higher

education? There is no measurable distance. Though one is far away from the other, it is a conceptual, ideological, logical distance—distance in consciousness itself. Consciousness cannot have a geometrical distance; it is a distance measurable by consciousness itself. Therefore, intriguing indeed is the nature of this Self. It is a wonder. You cannot understand what is this Self. Yet, it has to be accepted because you are limited. The limited consciousness implies the presence of an unlimited consciousness. Thus, what the Bhagavadgita means by saying 'higher' and 'lower' is nothing but the 'unlimited' consciousness and the 'limited' consciousness.

The infinite consciousness is your friend, and it is also your enemy. If you oppose it, it becomes your enemy; if you are in a state of harmony with it, it is your friend. Self-control—coming to the point now—is nothing but the removal of all the impediments in the finitude of self which prevent the friendly attitude that you have to develop towards the infinite Self. How can you be a friend of the infinite? What do you mean by 'a friend'? A friend is one who can set himself or herself perfectly in tune with the other, who is the friend or the alter ego. They have to think alike. If two people think perfectly alike, they become friends; but if think differently, they cannot become friends. Therefore, if you are to become the friend of the infinite Self, you have to think like the infinite Self.

Do you know what the infinite Self is thinking? It cannot think anything other than its own Self, because to think as we do in our common perceptional or cognitional parlance would be to be aware of something outside

oneself. The infinite consciousness does not have anything outside itself; therefore, it cannot think in a perceptional manner, as we think. What does the infinite consciousness think? It thinks itself. I think it was Aristotle who said that thought thinking itself is God; thought thinking another thing is a human being, a mortal.

Here is the meaning of the higher Self and the lower self. Why should you restrain yourself? Why should there be self-control? You have to understand first of all what the meaning of the term 'self-control' or 'self-restraint' is. It is the dissolution of, or the resolution of, those factors in the finite self which block the connection between the finite and the infinite. There is a wall between the finite and the infinite. This wall is what is called objectivity, externality consciousness, or involvement in space, time, and causation. When you are aware of something outside you, you are thinking contrary to the Universal Self. At that time, you are not a friend of God. If you are not a friend of God, He also is not your friend. Ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham (Gita 4.11), says the Gita: As you approach Me, so I will approach you. What you think of God, that He will think of you.

Now, what do you think about God? You cannot think Him, because you are thinking about the world of objects; you are entangled in objects of sensory attraction. The whole day and night you are running after the pleasant things in the world for your enjoyment, and you move Earth and heaven to remove obstacles to this kind of sensory satisfaction. Running after the objects of sense which are supposed to be satisfying, and simultaneously

rejecting anything else which is going to be an obstacle to this pursuit of pleasure is what you are doing day in and day out. You go to the factory, or are a clerk, an officer, a minister, etc., but all these are various forms taken by the pursuit of finitude towards an enjoyment through the sense organs.

There is no such thing as enjoyment through the sense organs. The senses cannot give you satisfaction. You may wonder why you feel happy when you obtain the object of satisfaction. When a desirable object comes near you, you feel very happy; when it is very near, you are still happier; when you possess that desirable object, you have an immense happiness. But you must know that even if the desired object is really under your grip and you are holding it in your hand, you will have the anxiety inside that you may lose it one day. There can be bereavement. So, even the highest satisfaction through the sense organs is infected with the feeling of the agony that you may lose it some day. Anything that you possess in this world can be lost. The possibility of losing even the best of things gnaws into your vitals and poisons the joy that you are apparently having through sense contact.

Therefore, even sensory satisfaction is no satisfaction. It is like sweet porridge or kheer mixed with a pinch of bitter neem leaves; bitterness is mixed with sweetness. The bitterness of sense satisfaction is in its unreliability, in the sense that you cannot possess anything finally. No two people can join completely; they can split at any moment, whatever be their relationship. All friendship is conditional, and unconditional friendship is unthought of in this world.

Two things cannot become one. 'A' cannot be 'B'; it is a contradiction. 'A' is 'A' only. So, the sense organs try to convert 'B' into 'A'. The object should be myself, which is an impossibility because 'B' cannot be 'A', and this is the contradiction. 'A' is 'A', 'B' is 'B'; how can 'B' be 'A'? But this contradiction is involved in all kinds of sensory enjoyment.

Therefore, the finite being, which every one of us is, is in a world of great catastrophe, error—which is the running after things that are apparently outside. How could there be anything outside if the Ultimate Being is infinite? Thus, in your search for the objects of sense, you are denying the infinite—denying God Himself. Therefore, you are suffering because God Himself becomes your enemy. The infinite Self becomes the enemy of the finite self when it is behaving in a manner contrary to the nature of the infinite Self. If you think like God, God will think you, but if you think like a finite being wedded to the sense organs, you will end up in tragedy.

What is the tragedy? One thing is, the possessed object will leave you one day or the other. You can lose money, land, buildings, friends, husband or wife, children; everything can go at any time. You have a feeling inside that one day you will lose everything, and so the possibility of sorrow following a temporary enjoyment vitiates the enjoyment. So, even the temporary satisfaction of the sense organs is not a real satisfaction; it is a big blunder. Secondly, what happens is when your mind feels that the object of desire has been possessed, that mind which was moving outside itself—moving away from its centre

towards the object—withdraws itself because of the feeling that there is no necessity now to go outside. Temporarily, for a flash of a second, the mind ceases to think of the object; it rests in itself. Then immediately, consciousness inside flashes forth in that resting condition of the mind; this is called *sattva*. You feel a deluded happiness when you have obtained the object of desire.

The object has not given satisfaction. Do not be under the impression that you have got satisfaction from the object. What has happened? The mind that was hovering around the desired object has ceased to function in an objective manner because of the feeling that the object has been obtained. When it ceases thinking in terms of an object, the *rajoguna prakriti* in the mind ceases, and *sattva* manifests itself. *Sattva* is like a clean mirror, and through that the Atman flashes forth. Immediately, you feel happy. That is why there is happiness even in sense satisfaction. Happiness is not coming from the object, it is from yourself only.

Thus, all life in this world is a big tragedy. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which are the great epics of life, tell you how tragic things are—because you are pursuing a will-o'-the-wisp, a phantasmagoria, a mirage. You are pursuing things which are not there. It is like a dreamer running after the beautiful things of the dream world. The dream objects also are included in the world of dream, and so they cannot give you satisfaction.

Self-control, therefore, is the art of behaving in your consciousness in such a way that it is in tune with the infinite Being. For that purpose, you should withdraw the

channelising of consciousness through the sense organs outside. It appears that self-control is like sense control. Sense control is self-control, and vice-versa, self-control is sense-control. There is a peculiar difficulty here in understanding the nature of self-control, because you may think it is sense control, as it has been explained just now—withdrawing consciousness from the sense organs. So, what spiritual seekers sometimes do wrongly is that they suppress the activity of the sense organs. To see an object outside is an activity contrary to the nature of infinite Being. You close your eyes, and then you think that the eyes are controlled; you plug your ears, and so on. You cause the practical cessation of the operation of the sense organs. But the sensation is different from the sense organ. This is a question of psychology. You are happy or unhappy not because of the presence of the sense organs, but because of the sensation that is operating through the sense organs. Even a blind person who cannot see has desire. Even if you cannot hear, you still have desire. Desire cannot cease by being deaf and blind. You may not speak at all; you may observe *mauna* forever like a dumb man, but desire cannot become dumb. Therefore, closing the mouth in *mauna* in a literal sense, closing the eyes, closing the ears, is not self-control because the self is not actually the sense organ.

You have to understand what the meaning of self-restraint actually is. It is the withdrawal of the tendency of consciousness to move through the sense organs. The organs are faultless; they are fleshy manifestations of the physical body, and are not your enemies. The organs are there even in a dead body. When the person dies, the eyes

are there, the ears are there, but there is no activity or sensation, whereas a person has sensation, and not merely organs such as eyes, ears etc. Hence, the art of self-restraint is the restraint of the tendency of consciousness to project itself through the apertures of the sense organs. Actually, self-control means control of consciousness. It is the restraint of consciousness by consciousness—restraint of the lower operation of consciousness by the higher operation of consciousness. The finite consciousness is restrained by the metaphysical consciousness or the universal consciousness. Again we come to the Platonic idea. The idea of Plato is the metaphysical reality, and the perceptional consciousness is the lower, sensory one.

Spiritual life is not a simple thing. It is an engineering feat, an artistic feat, a mathematical feat—whatever you may call it. Caution, vigilance is the watchword of the spiritual seeker because at any moment you can slip down. Indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabhaṁ manaḥ (Gita 2.60): Impetuous are the sense organs. They tousle us here and there like a powerful wind, a tornado, a cyclone which tosses a ship on the ocean. The ship of the mind can be thrown in any direction by the impetuous gale-like movement of the sense desires.

The mind thinks in terms of sensory reports. What does the mind think? It only thinks what the senses say. If the eyes say that there is a tree, the mind accepts it and believes that the tree is there. It is convinced by the thought "yes, there is", and the intellect just okays it. Therefore, the power of the sense organs is nothing but the power of desire.

Why do you desire? What has happened to you? Desire is an erroneous handling of your love for God Himself. That is why no desire can finally be fulfilled in this world. You are employing finite means of satisfying an infinite desire. How can an infinite longing be satisfied by means which are finite? The Upanishad says the 'unmade' cannot be known by the 'made', which is to say, the Eternal cannot be known through the temporal. There is no connection between them. The world is a spatiotemporal externality, whereas the Absolute is a non-temporal, non-spatial infinity. So, there is no connection between the two. A person who lives in this world of space-time-objectivity cannot contact the infinite. To contact the infinite, you have to be in the state of consciousness which is in harmony with the state of infinitude.

I have told you enough about what self-control is. It is not controlling any particular organ. It is not a repression of any particular function. It is an absence of the longing that consciousness apparently has in respect of a thing outside itself. Tell the consciousness, "Outside you, nothing is," because if consciousness has something outside it, it has to be there also. Therefore, consciousness is everywhere. So to think that consciousness can love an object is a contradiction, a great blunder. Then the senses will come down. Tell the consciousness, "What are you doing? When you are seeing something, hearing something, wanting something, you are trying to see, perceive, have, enjoy, possess something which is really not there." This is why some people say the world does not exist. It does not exist in the sense that externality does not exist. The so-called

externality is a phenomenon that is projected by the operation of what is called spatiality, temporality and causality. These are the troublemakers, and they cannot operate in infinite consciousness. Once again go back to the origin of our discussion that consciousness cannot but be infinite, and there cannot be anything outside it. Therefore, to desire an object is an absurd activity of consciousness. It is a futility, finally. Tell the mind again and again, "What are you looking at? What are you seeing? What are you thinking? What do you want?" You cannot want anything, really speaking, because consciousness cannot have anything outside it.

Therefore, desires themselves are meaningless; they are like diseases of consciousness. You have to go on doing japa of this great truth that consciousness cannot have anything external to it, and therefore, the projection of consciousness in terms of an object through the sense organs is an erroneous activity. The moment you withdraw the tendency of your lower consciousness in terms of an object, the higher Self manifests itself immediately; then the dreaming man wakes up into a wider awareness. This happens even in a very short time, if you could really, earnestly practice this technique of yoga. This is called yoga, actually speaking. What is called yoga is nothing but self-control—the withdrawal of the tendency of externalised consciousness, and centralising it in the infinitude of consciousness. Here is the whole of Patanjali, the whole of Vedanta, everything in a nutshell before you.

This is the reason why self-restraint is necessary. If you are successful, even in an adequate measure, in the art of

restraining your consciousness, heaven will descend on your head. Patanjali says, the cloud of joy and virtue will jump and inundate you—*dharma-megha samadhi* will come. Righteousness will manifest from yourself. You need not do right things; they will automatically emanate from you like a fragrance from a flower. Your body will emanate righteousness; like a rose flower you will be. In the Bhagavata Purana, it is said that Rishabhadeva, one of the great sages, used to emit the fragrance of jasmine from his body, which could be smelled for several miles' distance. He had achieved self-control to such an extent that God was implanted in his heart. So, it was the fragrance of God Himself. All the fragrance of the rose flowers, the beauty of the music, and the colour—all these things are coming from God only, from the infinite consciousness. It is the reflection of infinitude in finite projections which makes them look beautiful. There is a mistake in living as you are living in this world. If, perhaps, the grace of God is abundant, you may become good people, bright people, better people, emanating the fragrance of jasmine from your personality. God will bless you.

Chapter 6

SPACE AND TIME

Last time I cited two verses of the Bhagavadgita: uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ nātmānam avasādayet ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ; bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ, anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat (Gita 6.5-6). We discussed the hidden meaning of these two verses—the raising of oneself by oneself.

We belong to two realms of being, the phenomenal and the noumenal, as philosophers generally tell us. The phenomenality of our life consists in our limitation to the conditions of space, time, and causation. We think of everything in terms length, breadth, and height. This is the quantitative assessment of the things of the world. Everything is a quantity—it has some substance, and it is measurable in terms of length, breadth, and height. This is one of the conditions to which our mind is subject. You cannot think of anything without attributing to it a quantity, some shape, which is a characteristic of our involvement in spatial characteristics. The mental involvement in space, whatever it be, compels us to think in terms of quantity—length, breadth, and height. This is the specialty of space.

We also attribute a quality to an object. It is not that a particular thing is only constituted of length, breadth, and height. It has some quality, a characteristic that determines its essentiality, individuality, and distinguishes it from other things. If a particular object has no specific quality of

its own, it cannot be distinguished from other objects. So, the multiplicity of things we perceive in the world is due to the characterisation of things in terms of the qualitative measurement.

One thing is quantity, another thing is quality, and the third thing is relation. Everything is related to something else. We connect one thing with another, we compare one thing with another, contrast one thing with another. This process takes place automatically in our mind, without much of an effort. Every object has a mode or a condition of existence; it is in some situation, some context, some predicament. This is a philosophical finding, a way of analysis of experience, by which we note that quantity, quality, relation, and mode are inseparable from the object, whatever be that object. This conditioning of the mind is the phenomenality thereof.

You are forced to think only in certain ways, and you cannot think in any other manner. The compulsion of the mind to think in a particular manner divests it of its real freedom. Why should you imagine that a thing should be only of this nature, and it cannot be of any other nature? Apart from this fourfold characterisation of any object, there is also a fluxation, a change, and a mutability that we attribute to things. Nothing exists in the same condition for a long time. There is, if you would like to put it so, an evolution of things. There is a transition involved in the very existence of things, and because they are characterised by transitional process, they cannot even be said to be existing, truly speaking. A thing which changes its characteristics by the process of self-transformation, or the

evolutionary process, cannot be said to be existing; it is only moving.

Many thinkers have opined that the world is a process, rather than a thing. It is a movement, rather than a substance. Everything changes; nothing is static in this world. This is how we are forced to think in our minds—all is change, and nothing is static. But, the awareness that everything is changing cannot be associated with the process of change itself. Awareness cannot change. If the bed of the river moves with the same speed as the river, you can imagine what will happen to the river. The river has a speed of movement because the bed itself does not move. Just imagine that the riverbed also flows with the same speed as the waters of a river; the consciousness of movement will not be there.

Change implies the observation that change obtains in this world of phenomena, but the observation itself cannot be attributed to the process of changing. Change cannot know that it is changing. There should be a witness, an observer, in order that the change can become a content of the observation. You see a river that is flowing; if you also start flowing together with the water, you cannot know that there is a flow at all. You say that a railway train is moving; but suppose you also are moving with the same speed along parallel lines, you will not know that the train is moving. So, movement cannot know movement. A motionless staticity—something which is to be called permanent—has to be there in order that the evolutionary process of the world can be conceived. Change implies changelessness.

The observation that all things are phenomenal is not an act of the phenomenal setup itself. Phenomenality cannot recognise itself as a phenomenal existence. There is a non-phenomenal reality which has to be accepted as the observing medium, so that you can know that the world is phenomenal. Everything is passing away.

The consciousness of death is an interesting theme which is to be studied carefully. We do not like to hear the word 'death'. It is something abominable even to hear, because we associate this word with a negation of true being, a negation of your existence. Now, is it possible to negate existence? We have already noticed that existence cannot be nullified. It would be a contradiction to say that existence can be non-existent. Such a thing has no meaning. It is an absurd statement.

There is something in us which defies the process of dying. If dying is itself our real nature, we would not be frightened about dying because nobody can be afraid of what is normal and natural. There is an admixture of the noumenal and phenomenal character in our personality, due to which there is a fear of death. The phenomenal side tells us that nothing can be permanent. Everything has to pass away into something else. Everyone knows that no one can live eternally in this world. Knowing well that you cannot live long, why should there be a fear of death? Because it is an accepted fact that everything has to go. While the fact of everything going out of its present condition is accepted, still there is a fear and wish that it should not take place. Knowing well that everyone has to die, one does not want to die. Here is a contradiction in our

feeling. We are trying to negative a process which is inevitable and unavoidable.

This contradiction arises on account of two factors involved in our own personal existence. There is a deathless noumenality in us, and also a dying phenomenality in us. That which is deathless in us—Pure Being, eternal in its nature—when it gets combined with the phenomenality of passing away, creates a feeling of discomfort. It is explicable only because of an admixture of two factors which enter into our mind, pressing us from two different directions, causing a third peculiar situation of fear of death to arise.

Fear of death is actually a wish that death should not take place, while everyone knows that it will take place. The physical or psychophysical involvement of our personality is what is called the phenomenality of our life, which is involved in time, but the Timeless Being, which masquerades in this process of the world, tells us that such a thing is not possible and it should not take place. It says that a perpetuity is something that would be welcome. Timeless Eternity, as it is called, is hidden beneath the phenomenality of the temporal or time process. You may say that God is hiddenly immanent in this world in some such manner as this particular context or situation.

Eternity is making itself present in that which is not eternal, namely the time process. Our asking for endless things, and endless things for all time to come—which is a peculiar characteristic in our aspirations—is accounted for by our involvement in space on the one hand, and in time on the other hand. We wish to defy time by our asking for deathlessness, or the longest life which will never end; and

we wish to defy the limitations of space by our longing for endless possessions. There are two great desires in the human being—endless expanse and the possession that one can have. You would like to rule the whole Earth and the entire skies, if possible; and that power to rule the whole world and all space should also be a perpetual blessing. If you are the emperor of the whole world for only one second, that would not be a satisfaction to you. It is only fifty percent of the matter. The emperor of the world is in possession of the vastest comprehensiveness of objectivity, but temporality infests this possession and kills him. We do not wish to be finitely located to one little place with nothing to possess, but would like to have all the world for our own selves; at the same time, we would like to have the whole world for ourselves for endless time. Here, we are trying to overcome the limitations of space as well as time—an impossibility on the face of it, but our desires are really an asking for the impossible.

Here is a continuation of what I told you yesterday—the necessity for self-control or self-restraint. All desires are an asking for the impossible, because perpetuity in time is not possible as time is a process, and not an existence. Endless, unlimited possession also is unthinkable because there is an end for everything. Modern science tells us that even space is limited, and it is not unlimited as it appears to our visual perception. All desires involve a self-contradiction, asking for that which they should not ask for. "May I live long, for ever and ever, as long as the sun and the moon last, as long as the earth continues to exist." This will be our prayer, if it could have any meaning. Jivema sharadah shatam

shrinuyama sharadah shatam. We pray every day in our *sandhya vandana* process. Why is it *sharadah shatam*? It may be thousands of years also.

And you do not wish to live for an endless period of time like a non-entity in this world. Would you like to live like a nobody? That is a vacuous type of existence. Your endless existence should be filled with an endless inclusiveness, so that you have infinity and eternity, as it were, within yourself. Here, we have an indication of what we are really made of—potentially, at least. Infinity and eternity are dancing within our own hearts, but unfortunately are dancing to the tune of the clamours of the sense organs, which tell us something quite contrary to the inner aspiration potentially felt in that manner.

Self-restraint, self-control is necessary in order that we may not live in a fool's paradise where everything is apparently there, but nothing is really there. You cannot catch the wind and bind it; you cannot survive by catching hold of a piece of straw in a flooded river, nor can you have perpetual satisfaction in this world by catching hold of a moment of a fluxation which the universe is. Actually, we cannot even say that there is such a thing called 'moment'. The moment also is a kind of three-dimensional conception that we introduce into the process of time. A process cannot be partitioned into bits; that is why we call it a process. It is a continuity, and not a divisibility.

Therefore, neither your asking for endless possession in terms of having all the objects of the world—the entire Earth itself—nor your desire for endless living in the time process are justifiable; and all desire is only this much.

Hence, it would mean that desires are unjustifiable movements of the mind. They are illogical phenomena—unjustifiable, illogical, and infested with a kind of foolishness, we may say, from which we have to keep ourselves clean. In the Kathopanishad there is an anomalous statement, parāñci khāni vyatṛṇat svayambhūs tasmāt parāṅ paśyati nāntarātman (Katha Up 2.1.1), which has two meanings. When God created the world, it appears that He punished us at the same time with a tendency to look outward, and never to look in a universal fashion. Our consciousness is infected—punished, as it were—with an impetuous tendency to see outside itself, and never look into its own Self.

Being becomes 'becoming' when consciousness projects itself as a movement towards an object of sense. Being becoming 'becoming' is a contradiction. Parāṅ paśyati nāntarātman: Nobody will know one's own Self. Everybody knows everything about the stars in the sky. You can count how many stars are there, but you cannot count your thoughts, or the number of your feelings inside. You can know many things about this world—historically, geographically, and so on—but you can know nothing about your own Self. Professors of knowledge are filled with information about everything in the world, everything except themselves. You may profess knowledge, but you cannot possess that knowledge which you actually require.

This is the reason why it is said again and again that only a great spiritual hero will be able to understand what is actually happening to himself. Kaś cid dhīraḥ pratyag-ātmānam aikṣad (Katha Up. 2.1.1.): A great hero only can

understand what is actually happening within. Āvṛtta-cakṣur amṛtatvam icchan (Katha Up. 2.1.1): Desiring immortality, a hero on the spiritual path introverts his consciousness and sees what is happening inside. A big play or a game is being enacted in our own hearts, and we will find that whatever is outside in the world is also potentially present in our own selves. The Chhandogya Upanishad tells us that the entire space which is so big—all the stars, the clouds and the rain, the sun that shines, and the moon—all are inside the heart of a person; and this little heart is as wide as the space outside. How is it possible? How can a little heart that seems to be ours contain a vast space as big as all space?

Really speaking, there is no bigness about space. It is not vast, as it appears. It is a sensory illusion that is created by peculiar operation that defies our understanding, as infinite distance can be seen to the right side, as well as the left side. If you keep two mirrors on both sides and place yourself in the middle—you sit in one place, and keep one mirror to the right and one mirror to the left—you will find yourself infinitely projected on both sides. Distance, which is not there, can be seen as if it is there. There is no depth in the mirror; it is a flat surface, but it can project a phenomenon of endless distance, both ways. You can see it in museums. They have kept one image, and two mirrors are placed on both sides; like a Disneyland, they have kept mirrors on all sides so that you may not know where you are standing. You may hit your head against a mirror, thinking that it is a passage, and so on. Such a confusion

can arise on account of a misplacement of context in the perception of things.

Really speaking, there is no depth in space, and there is no linear movement of time; they are illusions created by a peculiar kink in the operation of consciousness, as is the case in the dream world, for instance. The distance in spatial expanse in the dream world, and the time process to which you are subject in the dream world, are contained within the little waking consciousness into which the whole world of dream will be absorbed when you wake up. You will be wondering how your little skull—the little movement of your mind inside the brain in the waking life—could project a huge world of distance, the time process, and all the panorama of your waking life. The drama of consciousness is the real drama of life.

Knowing all these things, we should not be entangled in attachments of any kind, because all attachments, all desires, are something like the desires that a dreaming individual may evince in terms of objects that are visualised in dream. They are inside the waking consciousness only, yet the mind runs outside as if they are outside. Similar is the case with this waking world. There is an integrated cosmical structure. An organic Being is finally there, which somehow or other kicked us out. We have separated ourselves from this organic structure of the universe, and we behold it as if we are an observer of this world, of which we are really a part. This is the fall of man, as it is called in the scriptures. The fall of man is the isolation of the part from the whole, and if the part which is integrally connected with the whole appears to stand outside the

whole and beholds the whole as an object of itself, what will it see except a topsy-turvy illusion, a delirious perception?

Therefore, all attractions and beauties of life, all things in the world which appear to be desirable, are concoctions. They are a peculiar erroneous evaluation of our consciousness, which has become topsy-turvy in its observations—the external looking like the internal, and the internal looking like the external. Knowing this situation, it is up to the seeker of truth to absolve oneself from these tricky operations of consciousness, which has wrongly visualised itself as isolated from the Whole to which it belongs.

The cosmos is one integrated completeness. We are not merely inside it; we are inseparable from it. The hands and the feet are not inside the body, and they are not outside the body. They are the body. In a similar manner, you can imagine that you are not outside the world, nor also are you inside the world, but you are the world. If that is the case, what are you looking at with your open eyes? You can imagine the error of sensory perception. A deep analysis is called for here in the interest any spiritual seeker.

You will find that this is a hard task, because the habit of consciousness to look outward and place itself in the limited context of an observer of the world is so strong. *Indriyani pramathini*. I mentioned to you yesterday that these sense organs have tortuous, impetuous, gale-like force, which are nothing but the avenues of the gushing of consciousness in an externalised fashion through an imagined space-time complex.

A spiritual seeker, therefore, is perpetually vigilant. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the great saint, had analogies, illustrations, and examples to make complicated things very clear. In one of his statements, he tells how you have to be cautious, and never be wool-gathering. Suppose it is heavily raining, and it is the middle of the night. You find a little shelter—a little thatched hut. You sit there just to have a little respite from the dark and this pouring rain outside. By the starlight, you see that a snake is crawling out of a hole, and another snake is by your side; and behind you is a scorpion. Everywhere you find little creatures coming, dreaded things showing their heads, and you are sitting there because you can't go out in the heavy rain. Will you sleep even though you are tired? The whole night you will be looking all around, from ten directions, to see what is happening. What happened to your fatigue, and your wish to sleep? It has gone because of the fear of what is there around you. You can give several examples of this kind where it is possible for you to get highly concentrated on a thing, and never forget it.

You may say that the mind is very mischievous, the senses are strong, desires are powerful, or that you are unable to concentrate your mind. These arguments arise on account of your lukewarm affection for the ideal that you are choosing. If you are walking on the road and thousands of people also are moving, vehicles are making noise, blowing horns, and there is all kinds of noise and different types of people pushing you, elbowing you from different sides, and you are carrying a large fortune in your pocket, you can never forget that the fortune is in your pocket. You

may be tired, you may be thirsty, you have not eaten for several days, and you would like to rest, but that fortune in your pocket, which is your very life, as it were, will not permit you to think anything else except that. The value that you see in a thing will enable you to concentrate on it.

Perhaps, we cannot see enough value in living a spiritual life. There are so many mistakes we commit in the very thought of what spiritual life is. Often, we think it is an other-worldly life. We think that it is a movement towards a reality that is not in this world, that it is far away from us, that God is not in this world, and that we have to die here in order that we may reach the Absolute which is above this world. The transcendent character of the world, of felicity, God above in heaven—these ideas arise in us because of the limitations to which the sense organs are subject by the operation of space, time, and cause. God is not transcendent. He is neither outside nor inside, nor we can say that He is everywhere. All these ideas arise on account of definitions that we attribute to Him in terms of space, time, and causation. Neither is He inside, nor is He outside, nor is He above.

Where is He? It is an Indeterminate Being as such, which is your potential Being also. It is only here that you have the possibility of being immortal, deathless; everything else will die and pass away. If you know the value of attaining God, you will think nothing else in your mind. But you do not believe that there is as much value as the scriptures, saints and sages say because you think that there is some value in this world also. Who can say that this world is valueless? This pull from the world, which is

apparently full of value, contaminates your love for God who is apparently transcendent to your sensory perception. Even the concept of God is vitiated by the involvement of the mind in space, time, and cause. That is why you find even a few minutes of meditation is very difficult. Neither can you do japa, nor chant the name of God, study, *svadhyaya,* or concentrate—nothing is possible because this world, which is working havoc in terms of our vicious activity of the sense organs, prevents you from knowing the true noumenal indivisibility of Being which is independent of and completely free from the phenomenal texture of your temporal personality.

Lots of time is to be devoted for this purpose. It is not a question of a few minutes of scratching your head. Spiritual life is a whole-time occupation. You will live for it, and die for it. Spiritual life is not one kind of activity among other activities in which you are getting involved: "I have to go to the factory, I have to go to the shop, I have to maintain a family, and I have to do meditation also." So, you consider meditation on God as one among the many other activities of life, not knowing that it is not an activity at all. It is an inwardness of your Being to which you enter, and it comprehends all other things in your enumeration. The factory-going, working, amassing wealth, and all other things are included within this.

The indivisible Being, which is the God whom you are aspiring for in your meditations, is inclusive of all things. The mind will not accept this truth. It will say, "It is not so. The world is there. It is beautiful, and it can give a lot of satisfaction." Who can say it is not? Do you think that this

world is hell? The mind says, "It is like heaven. I can get whatever I want from this world," and it gives a little corner in a limbo of your existence for the seat of God; and finally, you will find that God is completely excommunicated from this world. The world kicks God outside. As in Aesop's fable, the camel kicked the Arab out of the tent. This is what is happening to poor God. We have given Him a little niche of our life, grudgingly; we have no time for Him, but we do not understand that all time is included in Him.

Why do you want time for thinking God when it is Timeless Existence? Do you want time to think God? It is Pure Being as such; it is your existence. Do you want time to exist? How much time do you want to exist? It is a meaningless question. Existence does not require a time. If that is the case, the thought of God, meditation on God, or the absorption of your consciousness in God does not require time, because it is a timeless operation of your consciousness.

Knowing all this, withdraw your sense objects. Never be a slave to the temptations of the senses, and do not play second fiddle to the mind, which is just dancing to the tune of the sense organs. Be under the guidance of a good teacher, a master, a guide, because however much you may hear, your mind will not retain all these things. When you go out, 90% of this goes out. Nothing is there; the whole thing is washed off because the mind is powerful. Repeated study, continuous *svadhyaya, satsanga* with saints and sages, Gurupadesha, an honest search for God and a real wanting it is required. 'Real wanting' is to be underlined. If you really want it, it has to come. As it is well said by a great

master, “Ask, and it shall be given.” If you ask for it, it shall be given. If you don’t ask, it is a mistake. So, be happy. God bless you.

Chapter 7

REVERSING THE PROCESS OF CREATION

We have been, for the last three or four sessions, considering details of the withdrawal of sensations in the practice of self-restraint, which is the crux of spiritual life. Spiritual life is a life of self-restraint, and so we had to take sufficient time to go into its details.

In two instances the withdrawal of sensations takes place automatically, and on one occasion it takes place with effort and deliberate attempt. When a person is about to die, a withdrawal of sensation happens spontaneously, automatically, without any effort. At the time of passing, the first thing that happens is that speech stops. The person who is about to die cannot speak, but he will think; the mind will be operating. Other sensations such as hearing will slowly diminish in their intensity, and then will also cease. The sensations will get withdrawn into the thinking faculty, which is the mind. The dying person cannot speak, cannot hear, but can think for a while. People ask, "Do you recognise me? Do you know who I am? Speak!" but he cannot speak. His mind will be in a delirious condition because of the impending shock that is to be injected into the personality at the time of death.

Then the mind also stops thinking. There is no sensation of any kind, and no thought, but the prana will be there. There will be breathing; people will bring a little piece of cotton and keep it near the nostrils to see whether the person is alive or not. The last thing to leave is the prana that connects and maintains the subtle body, and

which is the vital energy in the system. Then the prana gives a shocking experience. Like a horse shaking itself so abruptly and vehemently that the person riding it might fall off, such a shocking, we may say catastrophic, withdrawal of the prana takes place from the physical body. At that time, the Upanishad is our guide here. It says that a little spark, a flame, jets itself forth from the heart, which is the concentrated capsule of the *jiva*. The individuality, the self-consciousness, the *jiva,* the person as such, gets concentrated in a little jot of a flame-like spark which wrenches itself from the body, and it gravitates to some condition of living which is called rebirth.

In swoon—a condition where one is not aware of anything—a similar process of withdrawal of sensation takes place. A shock is given to the whole person when one is in a state of swoon. He falls down, having no strength to stand. The withdrawal of sensation at the time of swoon is similar to that which takes place at the time of death, except for one thing—that flame, that little dot of spark of consciousness will not extricate itself from the bodily connection because if that happens, then death will take place. So, there is a difference between swoon and death. This distinction is described in some interesting detail in the Brahma Sutras.

Thus, in swoon and death, sensations get withdrawn, but this is not self-restraint. In deep sleep there is also a gradual withdrawal of sensations in a process similar to swoon and death. The condition of deep sleep has some characteristics of dying, and some characteristics of swoon, yet it is quite different from both of these in the sense that

the spark, the light, the flame retains its location in the physical personality. Therefore, one can wake up from swoon and sleep, but not from death.

We are not concerned with how we die, how we fall into swoon, or how we go to sleep; how we ascend to God-consciousness is our subject. Here, a deliberate effort is necessary, and a spontaneous withdrawal of sensations will not take place as in other conditions described. A famous passage in the Upanishad here is a guideline for us—how we can gradually ascend from the world of sensations to the world of mentation and reason, and then to the world of pure spirit.

Indriyebhyaḥ parā hy arthā, arthebhyaś ca param manaḥ, manasaś ca parā buddhir buddher ātmā mahān paraḥ; mahataḥ param avyaktam, avyaktāt puruṣaḥ paraḥ, puruṣān na paraṁ kiñcit: sā kāṣṭhā, sā parā gatiḥ (Katha Up. 1.3.10-11). The whole of yoga practice is here in a twin verse from the Kathopanishad. Great effort is necessary in the practice of sadhana. You cannot automatically, spontaneously, fall on the lap of God as you fall in sleep, swoon, and death. What is the kind of effort that is required? The sensations are so impetuous that they compel us to be conscious of an object outside them, about which we have studied enough already. In order that the sensations may operate in respect of the objects outside, the objects have to exist first. So, the object is considered as prior to the operation of the sensations. Unless the object is already there, the sensations will not operate in terms of objectivity or the perception, cognition of an external object.

Here, we are reminded of a doctrine of a famous British thinker John Locke, who distinguished between primary qualities and secondary qualities. The secondary qualities spoken of are nothing but sensations. The cognition of colour, sound, taste, touch, etc., is not supposed to be present in objects as such. The object itself is neither sweet nor bitter, beautiful nor ugly, with colour nor without colour—nothing of the kind. The reaction of sensory operation upon an existent object is what is called an experience of a secondary quality. Thus, those who hold on to this theory of a distinction between primary qualities and secondary qualities believe in the existence of objects as such, independent of their sensations. This doctrine is also sometimes called the doctrine of representationalism. The objects represent themselves in the sense organs and are not directly perceived.

That is to say, from your sensations, you cannot know the objects as they are because the sensations, with their own structural peculiarity, condition the mode of perception. As molten lead cast into a crucible will take the shape of that crucible, objects—whatever they are—appear to take the shape of the particular sensations; therefore, we say, "The object is like this," by looking at it with the eyes, by hearing it with the ears, and so on. The existence of an object independent of sensations is taken for granted. Primary qualities such as dimension are not created by the sensations. There must be a substance, an objectivity, before sensation takes place. Here we have a touch of the doctrine of realism, as it is called in Western parlance. The objects are prior to sensations.

I will digress a little bit from our main subject to give some background. Later on it was difficult to conceive the presence of a primary quality that is conceived or accepted to be existing independent of sensations. It was George Berkeley, who followed John Locke, who asserted that if we cannot say that sensations are things as such, and if we believe that primary qualities are there independent of sensations, then even primary qualities are also sensations only. They also cannot be proved to exist. How do we know that primary qualities, like dimension, exist? It is also a kind of cognition through the apparatus or faculty of our perception, which conditions not only our manner of knowing objects, but the nature of the object itself. So, objects do not exist. This is the conclusion George Berkeley came to, in opposition to John Locke who said that sensations do not give us the correct picture of objects, but objects do exist.

Here, we have got a peculiar situation created by the doctrines of realism and idealism of whether objects condition perceptions, or perceptions condition objects. We do not go into the further developments of this doctrine, which was taken up vigorously by people such as Immanuel Kant.

Thus, when the Upanishads say the objects are prior to the sensations, it accepts a sort of realism of the world of objects, and there is a gradual ascent of consciousness from the secondary qualities to the primary qualities. In another place, the Upanishad says that the objects are the roads along which the chariot of the human personality will move, driven by the charioteer of the intellect, with the

chariot passenger being the soul or the individual *jiva.* In meditation, which is actually the process of self-control for the purpose of liberation, what is done is that we do not judge objects in terms of our sensations.

Here again, we are in harmony with the description of Patanjali Maharishi where he says *artha*, the object as such, is to be disentangled from the conceptions and ideas of the object. All great men think alike; whether it is Immanuel Kant, George Berkeley, John Locke or the Upanishads, all of them tell the same thing in different languages. Finally, the great truth is identically portrayed by these masters, whether Plato or somebody else.

The Upanishad says here that it is necessary for us to be in tune with the objects—not as the senses represent, but as the objects are in themselves. The *artha*, the object as such, should be disentangled, separated from its encrustations of name and concept. You are sitting in front of me. You are independent persons. You are not necessarily as I think you are. I have an idea about you, but you may be totally independent of this idea. You have a name, a designation, but you are something independent of that designation. You are John or Robert, Rama or Krishna, but these names do not actually mean that you are that. You can have some other name also. You may be named something else. So, the names are appended to your personality so strongly that you will wake up from sleep only if you are called by that particular name. If John is in deep sleep and I call him, "Robert, get up," he will not wake up. If I say, "John, get up," he will get up. Even in the state of deep sleep, the identification of your personality with the name is so

intense that you will not wake up if you are called by another name.

But this is not the nature of the person, or of any object. The Yoga Sastra of Patanjali or the Upanishad tell us that the first step to take in the direction of yoga practice is to learn to think the object as the object thinks itself. It would be a great achievement on my part if I can judge you as you are judging yourself. I should not foist on your personality my ideas or even the name that is given to you by your parents. When names go, and ideas connected with the person also are separated, still you are impersonally existing, and every object is existing by itself. This is a great achievement in yoga. Though it is regarded as the first step, it is practically a tremendous step that you are taking. You have to turn the tables round, as they say. You think not the object, but you think with the object. You have to exercise your imagination as to how this can be done. Instead of looking at the tree, you stand with the tree, parallel to it, and feel as the tree would feel itself, think as it would think, be as it would be. Do this in the case of every other thing also in the world. You are not looking at a thing, you are parallel to the thing; you are friendly with the thing, one hundred percent in harmony with the thing. You think not the object, but you think as the object itself thinks. If this is successful, it is a great achievement.

What will happen at that time? The world will join together as a power that is spread out everywhere, and enter you. What will happen to you at that time, when the whole world joins together and enters you? You become a world individual, as it were, not one individual coming from

somewhere. You are not coming from anywhere, my dear friend; you are everywhere. This identity of yourself with the things themselves, as they are in themselves, is a great yoga. It is so because it is quite opposite to the way in which you are thinking the things in the world. Think not the things, but think with the things. Be parallel to the objects, and stand with them. You will find the tree and the leaves will smile at you. They will not be afraid of you that you will cut them down. "My friend is coming, my alter ego is coming—not merely my friend, but another aspect of myself."

When Vyasa Bhagavan, the father of Suka Maharishi, saw his uninitiated divine son walking away unconcerned with everything, he called, "Suka, my son, where are you?" And the Bhagavata Purana says when the father called the son, the reply came, "I am here." From where did the reply come? From every leaf in the entire forest—all the trees, all the leaves started vibrating, saying, "I am here, my dear father." What does it mean? This Suka, this young man, the little boy—looking at whom, children used to pelt stones, imagining that he is some crazy person—was one with the trees, one with the skies, one with the sun, moon, and stars, one with the very leaves which started vibrating. Taravo 'bhinedus taṁ sarva-bhūta-hṛdayaṁ munim ānato 'smi (Srimad Bhagavata 1.2.2): "I prostrate myself before that heart of all beings, Suka Maharishi," is a sloka from the Bhagavata Purana.

Yoga takes you higher and higher by stages, until you reach a complete communion with the ascending layers of the creative process. In the philosophies of Sankhya, Yoga,

and Vedanta, the cosmological process, or the way of the descent of things from the Supreme Being, also determines or explains the way of the ascent: as you came, so you go back. You have come from Delhi to Rishikesh, and now you want to go back from Rishikesh to Delhi. When you start moving from Delhi to Rishikesh, the first thing that you see is Meerut, then you reach Muzaffarnagar, then afterwards you reach Roorkee, then you reach Haridwar, then you reach Rishikesh. Now, you want to go back to Delhi. When you go back, what you will see? First, you will see Haridwar, then you will go to Roorkee, then you will go to Muzaffarnagar, then you will go to Meerut, then you will go to Delhi. The reverse process takes place in the ascending effort of the yoga student, in comparison with the descending process of cosmological creation.

I shall divert a little bit upon this process of the coming down of the categories of creation, both from the point of view of the Sankhya and the Vedanta. What does the Sankhya say? There is an infinite universal *purusha* consciousness all pervading. There is a *prakriti* or the potentiality for the manifestation of all the things of the world. In light of the Sankhya philosophy, this *prakriti* or the potentiality of creation is made up of three strands, as they call it, the properties *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The equilibrated condition of the *prakriti* is called *sattva*; the *rajasic* or distracting, dividing activity of *prakriti* is called *rajas*; and the inert, non-active, inactive condition is called *tamas*. When the *purusha* consciousness reflects itself in this equilibrated aspect of *prakriti*, it becomes a cosmic conscious potential creative force called Mahat. Sometimes

this Mahat is identified with Brahma, the creator, about which we hear much in the Puranas and the epics. This Mahat is a cosmic generality of awareness of everything. In the case of *purusha*, we cannot say that it is aware of everything, because there is no question of space, time, or anything. So, *purusha* is just what it is. So, we cannot say *purusha* is cosmically conscious, etc. That designation is applicable only to Mahat, where the potentialities of space-time emerge, and there is a cosmic consciousness, potential omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. This cosmicality of Mahat becomes conscious of itself: "I am the all-pervading being." This particular stage is called Ahamkara when the cosmic consciousness makes a cosmic affirmation of this otherwise-universal omnipresence and asserts itself as *aham asmi*—I am, I am what I am, I am that I am. Don't mistake this Ahamkara with egoism of a human being. Egoism, as we understand in common parlance, is pride, assertiveness of a bodily individuality. This has to be distinguished completely from the word Ahamkara. Actually, the Sankhya could have used another word, instead of confusing this Ahamkara with that *ahamkara*. Anyway, this has been called Ahamkara—cosmic awareness of one's being oneself only, and there is nothing external to oneself.

Here, we have a similarity with the Vedanta doctrine of the Absolute Parabrahman. There also the word *prakriti* is used. Sometimes, the word *maya* is used. I don't want to confuse you with all these words. They are practically the same thing, and the Vedanta also accepts the term *prakriti*, as we have it in the Mahabharata. The Manusmriti and the

Bhagavadgita also accept the presence of a *prakriti*, though from another standpoint altogether. This *prakriti* has three strands, as I mentioned, three properties—*sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. When this cosmic enlightened condition, pure reflective capacity, receives the cosmic consciousness of the Mahat in its assertive, self-conscious form, it becomes Ahamkara. Thus, we have *purusha*, *prakriti*, Mahat, Ahamkara, the categories of descent.

Here, a threefold splitting of operation takes place. The *adhyatma, adhibhuta,* and *adhidaiva* stages are supposed to be the threefold ramifications of this central universal Self-consciousness of 'I am'. What are these three categorisations or split forms? On the one hand, there is the individual observer of the world; on the other hand, there is the observed physical world; in the middle, there is the connecting link—the *purusha*, Supreme Brahman consciousness itself linking the subject with the object—to which subject I made a reference earlier, so I won't repeat it again. The objects cannot be known to exist unless the senses are connected to the object through a third medium, which is invisible to the sense organs. That medium is called *adhidaiva*, a superintending divinity. So, three ramifications take place after the Ahamkara manifests itself—the individual perceiver, the world of objectivity or perception, and the invisible connecting link which is the devata, *adhidaiva*.

Then what happens? The *rajasic* aspect of *prakriti* has created this threefold ramification, and the *sattva* aspect gives the tinge of consciousness in the individual that cognises. We are aware that we are cognising or perceiving

things; this awareness consciousness is a reflection of *purusha*, Brahma consciousness itself. The differentiation that we feel between ourselves and the object is due to the *rajas*. The *tamas* aspect has its own say; space, time, and causation is the first vibratory process in the *tamas* aspect of *prakriti*. That condenses itself into a grosser form of vibrations called potentials for the manifestations of the five elements earth, water, fire, air, ether. These potentials are called *tanmatras*; the pure potentialities of that which is to be manifested afterwards is called *tat matra*—the essence of the physical world. These are known as the potentiality for hearing, for seeing, for touching, for tasting, for smelling; in Sanskrit they are called *sabda, sparsa, rupa, rasa, gandha*. They are not processes of the senses such as hearing; they are the potentialities which make it possible for us to see, or hear, or touch, etc. These potentialities get condensed in a particular form, called *panchakarana*. They become actual physical elements of earth, water, fire, air, ether; this is the world before us.

I have described the whole process of creation. Now, you have to go back through the process: from Rishikesh to Haridwar, Haridwar to Roorkee, Roorkee to Muzaffarnagar, Muzaffarnagar to Meerut, Meerut to Delhi. Indriyebhyaḥ parā hy arth paraḥ. Of course, the senses are a reality for us, but the first step in yoga is knowing the objects which stand by themselves as pure primary qualities—with whom we have to think and with whom we have to be in harmony.

This is a very difficult subject. I am trying to purify your mind, and make you semi-divine at least, if not entirely

divine. You will feel surprised that you are living in a different world altogether than what you are seeing with your eyes. This kind of thing you will not hear anywhere; nobody will talk to you on these subjects. Even if you read a book, it will not enter the head. It requires a personal contact of a guide.

A guide who is a living person is much better than a printed book, for two reasons. Firstly, you can ask questions and clarify your doubts from the person. Secondly, there is a vibration emanating from the person who speaks. That vibration is not as much present in the printed book. So, it is very good that you are hearing all these things. Slowly, the world will take you into yourself, as a mother embraces the child. Your mother is this whole cosmos. Whatever I have told you just now is your mother, your father, your parent. You are the child, and it will embrace you and take you into itself; and then you will think like the mother, the father. You will not think like a naughty child running here and there; that is what you are doing now. Mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ (Gita 9.17). In the Bhagavadgita Sri Krishna Bhagavan says, "I am the father, I am the mother, I am the grandfather, I am the protector, I am the refuge, I am everything for you. Come on, I shall take care of you."

This happens when you stand with the things of the world. Never look at them as if they are to be exploited by your perception. These ideas of enjoying them, taking them, repelling them must go. So, I have told you only something—the first step in yoga—but it is such a tremendous step that it will revolutionise your whole life.

You will digest your food better, you will speak nicely, you will become a friend of all people, and the whole world will protect you. Be happy. God bless you.

Chapter 8

THINKING AS THE COSMIC MIND THINKS

Last time, we discussed two verses from the Upanishads which described the process of ascent through meditation for the purpose of the attainment of the Supreme Spirit in liberation. Indriyebhyaḥ parā hy arthā, arthebhyaś ca param manaḥ, manasaś ca parā buddhir buddher ātmā mahān paraḥ; mahataḥ param avyaktam, avyaktāt puruṣaḥ paraḥ, puruṣān na paraṁ kiñcit: sā kāṣṭhā, sā parā gatiḥ (Katha Up. 1.3.10-11). Above the sensations are the objects of sensations. This was the subject of our discussion.

Unless there are objects, sensation regarding the objects cannot arise. But the cognition of the presence of objects is not merely an activity of the sense organs. There has to be a mind to think this process of sensory cognition. The senses of knowledge are five in number; we see with our eyes, hear with our ears, taste with our tongue, smell with our nostrils, and touch with our fingers or the skin. Each sensation is different from the other—the eyes cannot hear, the ears cannot taste, and so on. There has to be a synthesising principle in order that one single person may be aware that perception is going on simultaneously through the various senses. We can see and hear and touch and taste all at the same time. This simultaneity of the comprehension of sensations is due to a principle of synthesis, beyond and superior to the sensations themselves. This principle of synthesis is called the mind.

Generally, the mind does the work of indeterminate perception. To give an example: When you walk along the

street at sunset or dusk, you see something in front of you. This awareness that there is something in front of you is the work of the mind. The mind says, "Something is there," but it does not say what it is that is there. Mere general, indeterminate awareness of the presence of something is due to the function of the mind, but the determinate perception with a decision as to what that object is, is the function of a higher thing, which is the *buddhi*, reason, or rationality. Arthebhyaś ca param manaḥ, manasaś ca parā buddhi: Above the cognitional process of the knowledge of objects through the sense organs is the mind, and above the mind is the rationality which decides the nature of the situation.

Here, we have to pause and consider what exactly the Upanishad means by saying that the mind is superior to the objects, and the reason is superior to the mind. Previously we had occasion to notice that the objects have to be there prior to the operation of the sense organs; that is, what is called the substantiality of something independent of the sensation thereof is to be accepted in order that there may be valid cognition of the object. The object should be there. If it is an illusory perception, we do not call it right knowledge. In the same way as we accepted the presence of a substance called the object independent of and prior to the activity of sensation, we have to also accept a prior mind independent of and beyond the ordinary cognitional mind.

The mind creates the knowledge of objects. Does it manufacture the objects? Or is it just okaying the reports of the sense organs? The thoughts of people, the minds of

individuals, differ one from the other—I have a mind, you have a mind, everyone has a mind—and these minds of individuals are not uniform in their nature. They have a self-assertive individuality of their own. My mind can know that you have a mind. How does it happen that my mind becomes conscious that you also have a mind? Is your mind an object of my mind, so that my mental process can regard your mind as existing outside my mind?

Again, to recollect what we discussed last time, we accepted the connecting link between the perceiving individuality and the object that is cognised or perceived. We designated this connecting link as *adhidevata,* the superintending principle—something which is required to relate the subject with the object. The mind or the sensations, in order that they may be aware of an object outside, should accept the operation of a medium between the subjective side and objective side; this we regarded as the *adhidaiva* or the superintending medium. In a similar manner, it looks that one mind cannot know another mind unless there is something which is beyond the individual mind. There has to be a mind which connects individual minds.

This superior mind which connects all minds is sometimes called the cosmic mind. The cosmic mind is a strange condition which the ordinary mind cannot understand. It is the total apprehension of all cognisable or perceivable things, and in this condition of cosmic mental operation, there is no necessity for a connecting link between itself and the objects, because objects get subsumed under the operation of the cosmic mind. That is

why the cosmic mind is also omniscient. The individual mind cannot know the truth of the object—the *artha*, or the substantiality, the object as such; the individual mind can gather only an information regarding the outer characteristics, or what we call the secondary qualities of the object. The object as such cannot be known by the sensations, but not so is the case with the cosmic mind. There, the objects are subsumed under the cosmic mental operation. The object does not stand outside the cosmic mind. This cosmic mind is referred to in this verse of the Upanishad when it says buddher ātmā mahān paraḥ: Above the individual mental operation and the reason is a cosmic mentation, *mahat-tattva*. We studied something about it last time.

Your meditational technique should take you gradually from mere sensation of objects to the substantiality of the objects themselves, whereby you do not think the objects, but think with the objects parallelly. You befriend the objects, and they set themselves in tune with yourself; and vice versa, you set yourself in tune with the objects, so that the world becomes your friend. In a similar manner, the Upanishad tells us in this verse that the individual mind and the reason have to be transcended in the state of a cosmic rationality, which is the Mahat or the universal *buddhi,* in which the Ahamkara is included. Individual faculties are included and transcended in the cosmic mind, which can also be called the cosmic reason.

This is a Logos, to put it in the biblical style of description. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and word was God" is from St. John. This

'word' is not the spoken word, but the potentiality of the sound process itself—the *sphota*, as it is called in Sanskrit language; therefore, we say that the Veda mantras are eternal in their nature. They are not merely words written in a book.

In this condition of the *mahat-tattva*, objects do not merely stand parallel to its operation, but are also not independent of its operation. When the cosmic mind thinks, it thinks the objects also at the same time, whereas in the individual mind, it is different. When I think, I do not think the objects also at the same time; the objects stand outside the mind. But in the case of the cosmic mind, it is quite different. When the assertion of the cosmic mind takes place, the world of creation is included in it.

This is a difficult meditation, at least for a novitiate, because unless you are trained to think in an impersonal manner, you will not be able to make out any meaning of what is being said when the *mahat-tattva* or the cosmic mind is described. Nobody has seen the cosmic mind, and an unseen thing cannot be known, cannot be described, cannot be understood. It makes no sense at all; but from the necessity of there being a connecting universal link between minds, from this hypothesis, by this inference, we have to conclude there is a Thought which is superior to individual thoughts. This Thought, which thinks nothing but Itself, is, you may say, God Thought or God's Thought.

We may compare the universal mind with what we call God's mind. We say 'my mind', as if I am different from the mind which is possessed by me. "My mind is elsewhere." People talk like that. It is a meaningless statement, really

speaking, because we are the mind, and therefore, we cannot say 'my mind' as if we are there, somewhere sitting, and the mind is elsewhere. In the case of the cosmic mind, the position is that it is totally impersonal. Human beings, as they are prone to think in general terms, cannot imagine this condition. No human being can be totally impersonal in outlook, though it is not an impossibility if proper effort is exercised. We are not accustomed to think in general terms. We glibly use the words 'I', 'my', 'mine' without actually comprehending their implication. The mind is our own self, so we are not possessing the mind, as if we are the owner of it. Therefore, statements like 'my mind' have no real meaning.

How do we ascend from this condition of individualistic meditation to the cosmic meditation? When we think of this process, we are actually in the heart of yogic meditation. What we are studying just now is not merely a cosmological process of thinking the evolutes in the cosmos, but we are also thinking the process of ascent in the reverse order of the cosmological descent. The objects debilitate you when they stand outside you. They condition your thinking, demand an excess of attention from your sense organs, and—as we have noticed earlier—any attention excessively bestowed on any object outside is, simultaneously, a depletion of the energy of the system. The Atman becomes the *anatman*, the Self becomes the not-self. Nothing can be worse for a person than for this to take place. You would like to be yourself. Would you like to be somebody else? "I am what I am, and I cannot be somebody

else." But you are somebody else in your process of cognition of an object outside.

You cannot know that there is a tree is in front of you unless your consciousness, which is operating through your individuality, manifests itself externally in terms of the object outside—namely the tree—and envelops it, and takes its shape so that the consciousness of the shape of the object concerned is communicated to the deciding faculty, the reason inside, and you begin to feel that the tree is here. You cognise the tree. The Atman, the consciousness, whatever you are, goes out of yourself in the cognition of objects, and that is why this *vritti*, this psychic operation, this mental modification in terms of an object, is a devastating process taking place in everyone every day; therefore, every person feels weakness in body and mind.

First, have sufficient strength. Where is the strength? Your strength has gone to something which is not you, which is the thing that you are seeing with your eyes, or hearing with your ears, etc. Is it necessary for you to be contemplating on anything that is external to you? You have forgotten that the very consciousness of the object outside is due to an operation of the superintending principle called *adhidevata*. Minus that, the objects totally get cut off from your existence. You will not even know they are there. So, through the operation of the medium, namely the *adhidevata*, your mind, your consciousness moves outwardly in space and time towards the object, which ought not really to be regarded as outside you. If you are persistent in going on thinking that the world and objects or persons outside are really outside, you are cut off

not only from the real substance of the object, but also from the cosmic mind; you are cut off from God Himself.

So, all our perceptions and cognitions and our awareness of things in the world are unspiritual, *anatman,* in their nature. They are totally cut off from the manner in which the cosmic mind will think, God will think. Actually, yoga is the operation of the consciousness in terms of God-consciousness. If you can think as God thinks, you are in a state of yoga. There is no need of reading too many books and all these paraphernalia of descriptions. Can you imagine what God thinks? You cannot know how to operate your mind in this fashion: "I have never seen God. So, how will I think as God thinks?" But you have got a peculiar faculty inside you which says that God must exist. The infinite is speaking through the finitude of your personality. The consciousness of your limitation, which is finitude, is an implication at the same time of the presence of an infinite that is beyond the finite; therefore, you can know what the infinite could be. It is non-externalised awareness of being. This is God-consciousness.

For a moment, place yourself in the position of the Creator of the universe Himself. This may look very humorous to you, but it is a very serious matter and not so humorous as it appears. You are seated in the very location of the supreme Creator, and He is beholding the whole universe. With some effort, you can think like this; it is not impossible. What would God think? Would He be thinking of little things of the world, as we are accustomed to? He would have a total comprehension of the entire body of creation, inseparable from the consciousness that knows it.

The 'I am' consciousness of God-Being would include the whole universe also within it. The universe does not stand outside God-consciousness, whereas in our case everything is standing outside us, demanding attention from us, making us subservient to the consciousness of them; and in a way, we may say, everyone who is bestowing excessive attention on an object outside is a slave of the object, and not an independent person. No one in the world can be said to be really free, if this process of subjection of oneself to the condition of the existence of an object continues.

There is no freedom as long as objects are outside you and compel you to be aware of them. This status of individual predicament has to be gradually overcome by the art of sublimation of the sensations which pull you towards the objects outside, melting them down into the mental and the rational faculties, then melting that also in the great mind, the cosmic mind. Can you think as the cosmic mind thinks? You can. You have got the power of inference. You have the deductive faculty. From the condition prevailing now, you can deduce certain consequences which are certainly cosmic in their nature. In another verse of the same Upanishad we are told yacched vāṅ manasī prājñah (Katha Up. 1.3.13): An intelligent person should collect the senses with the mind; let the mind think independently, and let not the senses be given a long rope and be allowed to report erroneous information to the mind. Let all the senses be centralised in the mind. Yacched vāṅ manasī prājñas tad yacchej jñāna-ātmani: Let the mind be centred in the intellect with this power of ratiocination. Jñānam ātmani mahati niyacchet: The pure reason that you are may

be centralised in yoga in the Mahat, the cosmic mind. Tad yacchec chānta-ātmani: Beyond the cosmic mind is the pure, uncontaminated, undifferentiated Being as such.

What happens to you when you are engaged in this kind of meditation? If you are sincerely engaged in this kind of contemplation and not merely experimenting with it, and if you are sure that you have everything within you and you don't require any help from outside—inasmuch as you are a citizen of the cosmos, and therefore, the law of the cosmos will take care of you—if this conviction has gone deep into your heart, you will find the world moving towards you, rather than you moving towards the objects. The reverse process will take place; it is as if the ocean moves towards the rivers, and the rivers are not going to the ocean. We move towards the objects of sense, but in this yoga meditation, the objects will start moving towards yourself. Wonderful is this experience indeed! Instead of your running after them, they will run after you. Instead of your falling at the feet of the world, the world will fall at your feet.

How does this happen? It is because you have abolished the distinction that was obtaining wrongly earlier between yourself and the objects outside. Sarvaṁ tam parādād yo' nyatrātmano sarvaṁ veda (Brihad. Up. 2.4.6) is a sentence from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: Objects will not come to you if you want them. You should not be under the impression that just because you want them, they will come to you. The more you think an object as standing there outside you, the more it will like to flee away from you. The object flees away from you. There is bereavement always,

loss of property. You will gain nothing in the end. All possession will end in bereavement because the objects also have a selfhood of their own. This is a kingdom of ends, as they generally say. All things are ends in themselves, and nothing can be regarded as a means to somebody else. You want to wrongly convert the objects as a means to your satisfaction, but the objects reject this proposition from your side. They resent it; therefore, they flee from you. Anyone who is after the objects of sense under the impression that he can possess them is under a wrong notion. The more you try to possess a thing, the more will it try to run away from you, so that you will be not only bereft of your energy in the process of sense cognition, you will also have the tragedy of the agony following the bereavement of yourself from the objects. Either way, you are a loser.

Yet, the mind of man is so foolish that it thinks that the whole world is his property. The king says, "I rule the whole world." How does he rule? He is a puny individual, like anybody else. His egoism is so vast, and it thinks that it is as wide as the universe itself. Nothing of the kind is possible. Ignorance reigns supreme in this world, and that breeds the compulsion, the impulsion to be cognisant of objects—love them and hate them, try to possess them—all which is a futile attempt in the end. So, try to withdraw your mental processes from the awareness of things outside. Let them be there. We are not objecting to the presence of things outside, but they are not outside, they are just unrelatedly commensurate with your existence.

The world is a universal organism; it is a living thing. There is no dead matter in this world; therefore, consciousness cannot possess anything unless it converts the possessed thing into dead matter. Otherwise, if the object is not a material thing, it is to be regarded as a consciousness. The whole thing becomes a tautology. Consciousness cannot possess consciousness. If you convert what you try to possess into a material object, you are doing a great disservice to that object, insulting it, converting it into a medium while it is an end in itself. Regard everything as an end in itself, and you are present in everything.

Is it possible for your mind to bring about a transfiguration of the process of thinking, and feel as the cosmic mind thinks? Within three days, you will see the transformation taking place in your life. It is not a question of several months or years. Your heart has to be there. Where your heart is, there you also are. You are not sitting physically in some place. You are in that place where your heart is, your feelings are, and your consciousness is. Three days of intense concentration will bring about such an inward and outward transformation in your life that you would like not to have anything else. You will find all things come to you, and you do not have to go to them, because objectivity—which is a wrongly attributed characteristic of things in themselves—gets abolished in this meditation, and externality melts down into universality. The whole of yoga is only this much—the melting down of the externality concept into the concept of universality of Being. Bondage is the consciousness of externality; freedom is the

consciousness of universality. Here it is before you, the whole treasure on a golden plate. Take it for what it is.

The Upanishad, in this pithy statement, has given you the entire gamut of the ascent of the soul to its perfection. After mentioning that the highest condition is Mahat—buddher ātmā mahān paraḥbuddheratma mahan parah—it also adds a caution—mahataḥ param avyaktam: Do not be under the impression that things are so easy. What happens? When you are trying your best to plant yourself in this awareness of the total awareness of Mahat, an obliteration of consciousness may take place for a short time. You will be in darkness. Mystics call this condition 'cloud of the unknowing'. A cloud, as it were, hangs in front of your awareness in meditation, and you begin to see nothing, as if you are in a state of deep sleep. Why does this happen? When you are intently, consciously, engaged in meditation on the cosmic mind, why is this cloud coming and making you feel negativity and darkness? It happens because of the last kick that the sense organs give to your attempt at meditation. The senses were your friends, and they were your real friends—you were hugging them, caressing them, always pleased with them, and loving them as if they were everything. A thing that is loved so much is now discarded as an element which is not compatible with your nature; it is redundant. You have made friendship with something, and it has now become redundant.

This redundant thing has a double characteristic of being under your possession, and also being not under your possession. The sensory aspect of the object that is possessed is one aspect of it; and the independence of the

object is another aspect. So the admixture of these factors of independence and subservience clash, and you have a peculiar sensation of being in a no-man's land. This no-man's land, this cloud as it were, this condition of darkness that may for the time being prevail, is the *avyakta prakriti* or difficulty mentioned in this verse, mahataḥ param avyaktam.

The individuality of ours, our loves and hatreds, are projections of the ignorance which is the offspring of this unconscious condition. *Avidya* is the mother of *raga* and *dvesha*—which means to say, the progenitor of the individuality itself. Our very existence, therefore, is a manufactured product of this ignorance, which bifurcates the Truth from the manifested individuality of all things in the world. The entire creation, therefore, as it is observed through the sense organs, may be said to be a topsy-turvy perception.

So, the reverse process that you are engaged in during meditation becomes a serious encounter to the old habit of seeing things outwardly. The old habit of knowing everything outwardly, and wanting everything externally, is now getting an order to quit by the circumstance of cosmic mind. The order to quit is a serious order indeed; no one likes it. So, it gives a kick. That kick is somewhere midway between externalised consciousness of the object and the universalised consciousness of the *mahat-tattva*. It is a condition of darkness—neither it is universal awareness, nor external awareness; in between, there is a difficult situation, where, they say, you have no help except Guru's grace. Your individuality is wiped out there, but the

consciousness has not arisen. In the middle you are, in an unconscious condition, as it were. You have to be pulled up from this state by the grace of the Guru, or by the fructifying effects of your good deeds of previous life; or sometimes, they say it is God's grace.

You must know that God also loves you. It is not only that you love God. Do you know that God loves you? Perhaps he loves you more than you love him, and therefore, the force exerted by the grace of God upon every individual is much greater than the force exerted by the *sadhana* of an individual. So, that also is a mystery beyond philosophical disquisition. No argument can understand what this mystery is—how God's grace operates. They say That comes in, as an *amanava purusha*, in the language of the Upanishad; a superior, superhuman interference takes place, and you are pulled up from this condition of darkness and awakened to the state of the cosmic mind. So the word *avyakta* is explained.

When you are awakened from this darkness, you are lit up into the midday sun of the Absolute Being—*purusha* it is called. After That, there is nothing beyond. Puruṣān na paraṁ kiñcit: sā kāṣṭhā, sā parā gatiḥ. That is your goal; there is nothing beyond it. You are supremely blessed. God is with you.

Chapter 9

THE MEANING OF SPIRITUAL LIVING

I have been always taking the standpoint of pure spiritual living, as you might have noticed. I have not been talking to you like a professor of philosophy, taking up some theme and haranguing on it. My intention was to make you not only good people but also divinely inspired persons, spiritual people, and that is why I spoke to you from an angle which is a little different from a professorial or academic lecture. It was centralised in the subject of pure spiritual living.

Here, I would like you to remember the meaning of spiritual living. Usually, the concept of spirituality is vague. It is associated with a kind of abstention from work in the world: detachment from family circumstances, and being away from the crowd of people; having practically nothing to do with the work-a-day life of people in the world; being far away from human contact as much as possible; living physically alone in some place unknown and unseen as far as possible; sitting and pursuing a routine of daily prayer, a meditation on a godhead whom one has chosen as the *ishta devata*; having nothing to do with this world, nothing to do with people, even with the nearest and the dearest. This is our idea of spirituality.

But there is something more about it. The universe is an organism. This is something everyone has to keep in mind in order to understand what spiritual living is. If the universe is an organism and a living entity which is comprehensive, a totality in itself, then true spiritual

awareness would be a little different from the ordinary concept of spirituality as hibernation, detachment, being physically away from things, etc. In the earlier stages of spiritual living, it is absolutely necessary to be away from objects of temptation—from noise, from disturbance of any kind, from interference in your prayers and meditations, from people who are too worldly in their nature—and it would be good to be away from them as much as possible. It is to be accepted that this is a preliminary step that one has to take, and it is very essential. All the scriptures mention that you have to be detached from every event, circumstance, condition, person, or thing which will contaminate you with a desire to come in contact with them through the sense organs.

But this is not the whole of spiritual living. I have to repeat the word 'organism' once again. It is the life of the universe taken as a completeness in itself, which you have to befriend as an integral part thereof, so that in a moment's contemplation in this manner, you feel lifted up automatically to a realm of experience which is neither of this world nor of the other world, but of all things put together. It is an awakening, as it happens when we wake up from the world of dream.

Spiritual consciousness may be compared, in some way, to what happens when we wake up from dream and assume a different consciousness altogether, which is called waking consciousness. The dream world may be considered as something like this world that we are living in. Everything that you see in this world, with all its paraphernalia, you see in the world of dream also. You may be attached to certain

things in the world of dream. There are lovable things and detestable things in the world of dream also. You live in the world of dream in the same way as you are living here in this so-called waking world. When you wake up from dream, you assume an awareness, a state of consciousness, which integrally subsumes within itself all that you have seen and experienced in the world of dream. This is another illustration of what an organism is. The waking consciousness, in comparison with the world of dream, is an organism which includes the entire space-time world of dream experience.

If this does not take place, you can be sure that you have not woken up properly. Some memory of the objects of the world of dream, if they persist even in your so-called waking condition, would indicate that you are still half asleep, and not fully awakened. A fully awakened condition is a state of consciousness which withdraws into itself all the objects seen in the dream world also. That would be real awakening; and if spiritual life is to be regarded as a life of awakening, this has to take place even in the context of waking life.

A total rising-up into a comprehensiveness of experience, which includes all that you consider here as an external world of people and things, will all get subsumed under your awakened consciousness, so that you find yourself as a person who is usually called a super-person or a superman. These words are also not adequate to explain that condition. You will be a universal man as if you are the only man living in the universe, because all other men, all other things you consider as existing and populating the

world of your experience, get melted down, as it were, into a larger personality which you assumed, into which your earlier personality of individuality also gets included. The so-called Mr. and Mrs. consciousness, or whatever consciousness you have in this world, will not persist in spiritual life.

You may feel this is a very far-fetched experience, but there is nothing wrong in attempting to achieve this experience even in our little initial stage of participation in spiritual life. The ascent through the stages of spirituality is actually ascent through several degrees of completion, several degrees of ascent through wholes. The movement along the ascending process of spiritual experience is not a movement from the finite to the infinite, but is a complete finitude satisfied within itself and not a finitude contending with other finitudes. A finite, which faces in opposition another finitude, is not complete in itself because it is opposed by other finites. It exists by participation in the existence of other finites, as we are doing every day. Our life in this world, as persons, is conditioned by the existence and operation of other people in the world. All the other finitudes in this world determine the character of our living, so that no person can live absolutely independently. There is a necessity to have cooperation from nature, from things of varieties of types, and from people in general. That is why we cannot easily live a totally isolated, individual life. We have always to live a social life. This is our predicament, where our finitude as an individual is not a holistic experience but something contending with, participating with, other finitudes.

But a rise of a wholeness from the lower category to the higher category is a different thing altogether. In this little wholeness that you experience even in the initial stage, all other finites get blended together. In every stage of your spiritual experience, you are a complete man. You are not a part. An ant is a complete individual, and an elephant is a complete individual. They are not parts. Many ants do not make an elephant. Each one is complete in itself. So, everything is a completion in itself in the sense that it is not a means to somebody else. You are not a means to other finites, and other finites are not a means to you. Even if you have to live a very happy organised life in this world of human society, you have to introduce into your relationship with people a kind of integrated consciousness so that all that humanity looks like one person. Then you are well protected by people.

The entire humanity is not a multitude of people, but one common consciousness of humanness. All people make one Man only, one Person—that is the great Man, with a capital 'M'. In theological parlance, we say Christ is the son of Man. He is not the son of any particular man. He is the son of Man, the total Man, who includes and allows the submergence of every individual man. It is a consciousness rather than the perception of many people in the world. When you look at many people in the world, you are not seeing humanity as a whole. It is an experience inwardly, wherein you withdraw into yourself the consciousness of everybody in the world, so that you think like a universal Man, as if all people in the world are cells, little participants in the experience of this great Man, total Man, universal

Man, where your individuality also gets transcended together with the transcendence of individuality of all other people. In a way, we may say, this is what is called God. This universal Man is God, and this God is not in high heavens, somewhere sitting far away.

God is not sitting in the heavens, because heaven also is included within the consciousness of this organismic experience. That is why we have to accept that God is not only all things, everywhere, at all times; God is the only Being that can Be, and nothing else can be. This consciousness of the only thing that can be, and the state of there being nothing else other than this one Being, including all other beings, all space, all time, all causal objects, including all things—if you can adjust your mind, your consciousness, to this ascending form of an experience, you are in the centre of the sea of spiritual experience. Spirituality, therefore, is not an abandoning of anything; it is inclusion of all things.

That which is to be abandoned in the earlier stages is also to be included later on. The enemy becomes the friend at one stage. There is an old Chinese proverb, or perhaps it is a proverb from Zen: In the beginning, when you are starting to live a spiritual life and have not taken even the first step, trees are trees, mountains are mountains, and rivers are rivers. When you are in a state of practice of spirituality, trees are not trees, mountains are not mountains, and rivers are not rivers. When you have a total experience of this universal organism, trees are again trees, mountains are mountains, and rivers are rivers. That to which you were attached or from which you were repulsed

in ordinary sensory life is indicated by the statement, "In the beginning, trees are trees, mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers," as it is the case with every one of us. Trees cannot be something else; trees are trees only. But when you detach yourself, when you are practising *sadhana,* when you practise renunciation, trees are not trees, and nothing is what it is, because your connection with them through a perceptional faculty has been withdrawn. They do not any more exist as objects of perception for you because you have withdrawn the consciousness of perceptivity. But when you have assumed the highest state of organismic experience where trees, mountains, and rivers get included, they are trees, mountains, and rivers, but they do not appear as standing outside as objects of perception.

There are cells in our body—millions and millions of cells which constitute this whole personality of ours. Each cell is different from another cell. It is one point of view; it is perfectly so. But if each cell is really different from every other cell, you would feel that you are a forest or a jungle of little animals fighting with one another, and you would not know what that experience would be. It cannot be called an experience at all. There will be no experience, because that would be a state of warfare and struggle for existence of each cell in respect of every other cell. In spite of the fact that each cell of your body is different from the other, you do not feel that there are so many cells in the body. You can examine them scientifically and see that even now they are independent and are operating in their own way. They have got their own characteristics which make the personality of

an individual, the human being; nevertheless, you do not feel that they are operating separately or independently. In a similar manner, in this holistic organismic experience of the universe, these trees will be there, mountains will be there, rivers will be there, people will be there. There is nothing wrong with them; let them be there. You are not going to abolish the world in Self-realisation. In the same way, in your feeling of your total being as one total person, you are not destroying your cells or withdrawing yourself from the existence of cells, abolishing their existence; they get integrated into a larger consciousness.

Therefore, it is the opinion of great Masters that in Self-realisation, God-realisation, spiritual experience or whatever you may call it, nothing happens to the world. You are not going to destroy the world and melt it down into liquid. It is just what it is. If you consider it as a liquid, even now it is a liquid only. It is not a solid object. If you think it is something else, let it be that; it does not matter. But it is this consciousness that brings meaning to all these individualities of cells in the universal organism.

Gradually, you step from the lower degree to the higher degree of this total experience. Every experience is total. To give a humorous analogy, if you can conceive it, it is as if you are rising from the ant experience up to the frog experience, from the frog experience you enter into the experience of a larger animal such as a horse, from this you rise into an elephant's consciousness and then a mammoth consciousness, and so on. A larger and larger inclusiveness of experience is experienced, but it is not a partitioned finitude of experience.

There is a difference between the initial stages of spirituality and the slightly advanced stages. Ārurukṣor muner yogaṁ karma kāraṇam ucyate, yogārūḍhasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇam ucyate (Gita 6.3) is a description of this condition in the sixth chapter of the Bhagavadgita. Effort to detach oneself from the objects of sense is the beginning of yoga practice. Effort is necessary in the earlier stages; activity is involved. You are doing something in the initial stages of yoga: karma kāraṇam ucyate. But once you are established in the higher levels, śamaḥ kāraṇam ucyate: cessation of activity becomes the motivating force behind spiritual experience. This cessation of activity is not to be regarded as sitting quiet without doing anything.

When you say that the sun is not doing anything, is the sun completely inactive, doing nothing at all, and only we are active? All the activity of this world, every kind of life in this world, whether it is vegetable life, plant life, animal life or human life, anything that is vital anywhere in this world is due to the activity of the sun. Yet, the sun has no hands and feet. The sun's activity consists in its very existence. The sun's being itself is the activity.

Do you think God is running about here and there to take care of the world—checking what people are doing, what is happening somewhere? Would God be worrying about that? His total existence itself is a consciousness of everything that is taking place anywhere. In a similar manner, this so-called cessation in the higher stages of yoga is inclusive of all the activities which constituted the earlier stages. When an electric fan moves slowly, you can see that it is active. When it works at the highest speed, you will not

see that it is moving. It looks still, as it were. You cannot see the motion of a fan because of the rapidity of the action. If you want to know whether the fan is moving or not, stick your finger in and see what happens. A complete cessation of the activity of the fan is actually the highest form of its activity.

A sage or a saint, or a yoga student, is not a foolish person sitting somewhere without concern with the world. Many people think, "Oh, you are doing yoga. Selfish man! Go and sit somewhere, attain God for yourself, and what happens to the world of people?" This is a crude, pragmatic, foolish, materialist, sense-ridden opinion in regard to the practice of yoga. If one of the family members in a house takes to yoga, what do the other members feel? "Look at this foolish fellow! He has no concern with the other people. He is sitting independently there, doing some yoga for his own purpose, selfish man!" Yoga practice may be considered as a selfish adventure in the same way as a very active, highly accentuated movement of an electric fan may look like a do-nothing. That so-called idle, non-active, unconcerned, detached yogi is not a do-nothing. He is not unconcerned with the affairs of the world. All the affairs of the world get merged into his activity. The service that he does to humanity as a whole through this kind of contemplation is 101% greater in value than all the humdrum movements of social workers who run about here and there with their hands and feet to do some good to people. Their activity is perishable; it has a beginning and an end, and if you examine the motivation behind this social welfare activity, you will find selfishness behind it.

An unselfish social worker's movement may be motivated by some kind of subtle personality consciousness, which cannot be completely obviated.

But here is the so-called inactive individual, sitting alone, unconcerned with all activities, but his consciousness touches the corners of the whole world. The so-called individual, isolated, unconcerned with humanity, is concerned with everybody. His yoga is the highest activity that one can think of, where he vibrates through the cells of the very components of the universe. This is real spiritual life. Nobody can understand a spiritual person because he ceases to be a person at that time. He is a visible form, a concentrated presentation as it were, of the working of the whole cosmos.

This is also the definition of an Avatara or Incarnation. An Incarnation is the pinpointed, concentrated, visible form of the working of the whole cosmos. That is why the Incarnation is so powerful, like a lens kept in the sun, drawing the energy of the entire sun and burning things that are near it. A yogi is like a lens; he draws the energy of the whole cosmos into himself, and his strength is like the strength of a powerful lens drawing the energy of the entire sun into himself.

Therefore, the yogi is not an idle person. He is not individually sitting somewhere in Uttarkashi. He is not sitting anywhere. He is everywhere because of his consciousness pervading all things. Thus, spiritual life can be regarded as the greatest service that one can think of. But people who can see things only through their eyes and only understand things through their sense organs wrongly

think that a spiritual man is a runaway, that he has abandoned all duties. But he has not abandoned any duty; he has subsumed the lesser duties in the higher duties. Sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja (Gita18.66): All the duties have to be abandoned, says Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Abandoned for what purpose? For the sake of a higher Truth.

All the lesser obligations get melted down into the call of a higher duty, which includes the lower duties also. The love of God is greater than all kinds of love that you can evince in regard to the people in the world. You may love every person in the world, yet it is only a feeble apology for what you can consider as love of God, because love of people considered as isolated individuals is fragmentary, sense-ridden, perishable, and artificial, whereas love of God is genuine, permanent, inclusive, and absorbs into its theme the loves that you can think of in respect of anything anywhere.

All love is included in God-love. So, a person who loves God is not a foolish person loving something individually which is for his own personal satisfaction. Spiritual satisfaction is not personal satisfaction; it is universal satisfaction. Yatheha kṣudhitā bālā mātaraṃ paryupāsate, evaṃ sarvāṇi bhūtāny agnihotram upāsata (Chhand 5.24.5), says the Chhandogya Upanishad. As hungry children sit round their mother and wait of their meal, so the whole universe of beings wait for the satisfaction of this one person who is the Super Person.

You know the story of Bhagavan Sri Krishna eating one leaf from the vessel of Draupadi. That little leaf that went

into his stomach satisfied the whole world because he was not an individual person. So is the case of a yogi. Sri Krishna was the greatest of yogis you can think of, and every yogi is like that. You can also become like that.

It is difficult to understand the mind of a true spiritual seeker. A worldly minded, materialistic, sense-oriented individual cannot appreciate spirituality. They will think it is a running away from the affairs of life. Even if it is genuine, they will think it is a kind of pursuit of salvation for oneself, and so on. This is the story that will be told to you by the sense organs.

Spirituality is of a different calibre altogether. It is a working in a different realm of being, and not in this world of space and time. It is towards this end that we are trying to gradually take you, not only for your individual satisfaction, but for the satisfaction of everyone with whom you will come in contact. Your vibrations will benefit everyone who is near you. Maybe, if the vibration is strong enough, it can benefit the whole world. The greatest people of the world are not those people whose names you read in the scriptures, or who are advertised in the newspapers. These are not the greatest people. The greatest people of the world are unknown to mankind. They do not do anything, but only think One Thought. That is the greatest service that they are doing, like Nara-Narayana in Badri ashrama. We think that they are not doing any work, and they are unconcerned with the world. We are told, according to our tradition, that the meditations of Nara-Narayana in Badrinath are for the welfare of the whole of creation, the entire world of humanity.

The highest meditations are unknown to the public eye. Famous individuals, Nobel laureates, people who are advertised, and those about whom you read in books are number two. The greatest souls are Nara-Narayana. They are not seen in newspapers. Nobody advertises their existence, and you will not see their names mentioned anywhere, but they may be doing a work which none else can do. One thought, and that is enough. That one thought is equal to the activity of the whole of humanity for all ages to come. That is the real meditation. Towards this great purpose of the centrality of your consciousness in yoga meditation, which is the aim and objective of your life, which is all the service that you can render to all people, which is the highest activity that you can think of, which is the very purpose for which everyone exists in this world, that is the thing towards which your mind is to be slowly motivated and gradually allowed to centre itself, so that you cease to be a human being. You become the centre of attraction for all things—a magnet, as it were—towards which things will be pulled. You can pull God Himself towards you.

It is a great thing to hear. Can you pull God towards you? You can, provided you can think and operate in your consciousness as God does. You think that it is enough if you love God, but God has to love you. Don't you think God should love you? Is it enough that you love Him, and he simply ignores you completely? When God loves you, the very particles of nature will start dancing like the *rasa* dance which is described in the Srimad Bhagavata. The very leaves will vibrate, and the Earth will shake. If God starts

loving you, miracles will take place from every corner. So be prepared for that greatness. Together with your love of God, may God love you.

Chapter 10

LIVING IN HARMONY THROUGH SACRIFICE

The organismic concept of the universe is given to us in the eighth chapter of the Bhagavadgita in two verses: Akṣaraṁ brahma paramaṁ svabhāvodhyātmam ucyate, bhūtabhāvodbhavakaro visargaḥ karmasaṁjñitaḥ (8.3); adhibhūtaṁ kṣaro bhāvaḥ puruṣaś cādhidaivatam, adhiyajñoham evātra dehe dehabhṛtāṁ vara (8.4).

These two verses of the Bhagavadgita are very important cosmologically and from the point of view of an assistance to meditation. It is not easy for the mind to conceive of a total completeness. It has never been our habit to take anything completely. Everything is only partially taken notice of, never completely. We move from one titbit to another titbit, and a holistic complete view is quite alien for our mind. Something is grabbed and something is abandoned. Whenever we conceive of any particular object, at the same time we have excluded other things which do not come under the purview or gamut of this description. As we have noted to some extent previously, meditation is not a partial view of things. It is a complete picture of the whole structure of creation that we have to present before our mind.

There is the Supreme Absolute, *aksharam brahma*. It is all in all. Imperishable Absolute is *aksharam brahma*. Then, we are also here. Whatever be our acquiescence in the finality of the nature of the Absolute Being, we also seem to be persisting together with it: "I am there to conceive the Absolute; I want to reach it; I do meditation for attaining it;

I persist together with my aspiration for that all-in-all Absolute." This persisting individuality is the *svabhava* or the nature of individuality as such, mankind as such, or anything for the matter of that. The self-assertion of a particular individual is the *svabhava* of that individual. It is natural for an individual to assert itself as a self-complete reality—wrongly, of course, because no individual finite existence can be regarded as complete in itself. Yet, each one of us regards our own self as complete—so much so that this wrong notion of one's own completeness rises to such an extent that we become arrogant, very proud of our strength: "I am all in all. Who is there before me?" Such bragging is not uncommon among people who take the standpoint of this erroneous individuality, this finitude which assumes the infinite arrogance of an all-comprehensiveness.

However, we have to accept in the process of our analysis that there is an individual who is aspiring to unite itself with the Absolute, and that individual has its own constitutive nature. That unavoidable constitutive nature of the individual is called *svabhava*, natural disposition. Akṣaraṁ brahma paramaṁ svabhāvodhyātmam ucyate. Here, *adhyatma* is the individual selfhood of mine or yours or anybody else's, which has its own characteristic self-assertive finality assumed by itself.

Of course, there is a great contradiction on the very surface of it because, on the one hand, this finitude, this individual aspires for the Absolute and accepts that the Absolute is all in all; yet, at the same time, this 'me' persists as that which seeks to unite itself with the Absolute. Who is

going to unite itself with the Absolute when the Absolute is all in all? This question will not arise before this inveterate assertiveness of the individual, which somehow or other accepts the finality of the Absolute and also the finality of one's own self: "I have to be there in order that I may accept the nature of the Absolute." For the time being, tentatively, we may take for granted that there is this individual aspiring for the Absolute, whose nature is self-assertion in this manner: svabhāvodhyātmam ucyate.

Bhūtabhāvodbhavakaro visargaḥ: There is the cosmological emanation of the evolutes of the universe from this Absolute Brahman. The Supreme Absolute is what is called Ontological Being—Being as such. From this Being as such, which is what we call the Absolute Parabrahman, the universe is supposed to emanate. This process is cosmological, a gradual coming down from the universal transparency of completeness to a gradual particularisation and condensation into objectivity of experience. The Universal objectivises itself in creation, the 'I' becomes the 'thou', the subject becomes the object. In the earliest of stages, this subject becoming the object is not just identical with the psychological subject of an individual becoming empirically an object in cognition or sensory perception. The universal subject envisages itself as a universal object. Universal self-alienation may be the proper description of this condition, though unthinkable for us at this moment.

What is the first evolute? Space, time and vibration are regarded as the first evolutes of the Supreme Being, which is, in a different way, given to us in the second chapter of

the Taittiriya Upanishad. Tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśas sambhūtaḥ (2.1.1.): From that Universal Selfhood of the Absolute, *akasha*, the so-called vacuous emptiness before us, manifested itself. Ākāśad vāyuḥ: The vibration set up in the constituent components of space became wind, air. Friction caused by air becomes heat, vāyor agniḥ. The condensation of this heat becomes water, anger āpaḥ. The solidification of water becomes earth, adbhyaḥ pṛthivī. In this manner, gradual condensation takes place in the cosmological scheme of creation. So there is the Absolute, *akshara brahma*, then the individual *svabhava* or the nature of self-assertiveness on the part of the aspiring consciousness, then the emanation of all the gradational evolutes, to which we have already made reference in our study of the Sankhya categories, etc.

Karma is the word used here in the Bhagavadgita to designate this cosmic emanative process. Here, it is not referring to the work that is done by a person, which is also called karma. It is a cosmic emergence of a force that disperses itself in all directions, something like the Big Bang, as the modern scientists tell us—a sudden vibration, like the *bindu* or the *nada* of the *tantriks*—and the split of the original vacuous apparent universality into a dual conception of the right and the left, the subjective and the objective, that which causes and that which is caused. This is the *karma* philosophically conceived, as mentioned in this verse of the Bhagavadgita, visargaḥ karmasaṁjñitaḥ.

Adhibhūtaṁ kṣaro bhāvaḥ. The entire objective universe is called *adhibhuta*. It is material in its nature. In the language of the Bhagavadgita, the material universe is

called *adhibhuta* in this particular verse. Puruṣaś cādhidaivatam. There is a Universal Man gazing at all this process that is taking place, which we have in a most dramatic manner described in the Purusha Sukta of the Rigveda. The Great Being, I-am-what-I-am, the One Man, the Cosmic Man, the Only Man, superintends over all this process of creation, in all manner, whatever it be. The Supreme superintendence over this process of creation is done by the Absolute itself putting on the role of the Purusha, as he is called.

Adhiyajñoham evātra. Then there is a field of activity, which is called *yajna*. In Indian cultural parlance, all activity is a sacrifice. This is something peculiar that you have to note. Everything is sacrifice, whatever be the work that you do. It is a sacrifice because a part of you gets alienated in the performance of your work. What part of you gets alienated, in what direction, will be the subject of the fourth chapter of the Bhagavadgita, which is something very interesting and detailed. What is the alienation? What happens to you when you do work? Are you doing a sacrifice in doing work?

There are two concepts of sacrifice. "I have sacrificed a lot for this purpose." People sometimes speak like that, by which they mean that they have lost much of their legacy or heritage for some purpose. "Do you know how much sacrifice I have done for this?" They feel they have lost something. But *yajna,* the true spiritual sacrifice which is the connotation of work according to the Bhagavadgita, is not a sacrifice of something that you would like to possess but are now losing. In this sacrifice, you do not lose, but

you gain. Here is the difference between your ordinary concept of sacrifice and the Bhagavadgita concept of sacrifice. "I have sacrificed all my belongings to my children, and now my children have everything and I have nothing. I have come to the ashram here." Very poor condition of a person! "I have sacrificed my life, everything, for the independence of India. Nobody bothers about me." Everything is a complaint. You have done a lot of sacrifice and lost everything, and got no recompense. This kind of sacrifice is no sacrifice. It is a tragedy of the very concept of the true nature of work.

In actual spiritual sacrifice, you do not lose anything. What actually happens is that you create, through this process of spiritual sacrifice, an avenue for the entry of a larger universality into your own self, so that at every step of the sacrifice you perform, you become bigger and bigger, more and more important, stronger and larger in your dimension. What you lose in your spiritual sacrifice is your finitude, and you cannot say the loss of finitude is a loss, really speaking. It is like losing illness in the process of treatment of a disease. "Oh, I have lost so much of my illness." Will you complain like that? The gaining of health involves the loss of illness at the same time, but it is not really a loss. It is the loss of a defect in your personality, which is the disease, as you call it.

So, in actual spiritual sacrifice, more and more of the finitude of your personality gets erased out, scrubbed off, and larger dimensions of the Universal Being are allowed to enter into you, so that in every act of sacrifice you become more and more divine, more and more spiritual, more and

more godly. The superintending principle over this entire arena of spiritual sacrifice, the whole activity of the world, whatever it be—political, social, economic, including warfare—the whole thing is superintended over by some being. "I am the superintending principle of all that," says this Great Being.

A diversification of the Absolute in all these ways takes place in the process of creation. Your own existence as an individual, the whole universe which has emanated from the Absolute, your activity in this world, the divinity that superintends over all your activities, and even the processes of creation—these are the ramified forms of the performance of the single Absolute, you may say. In this manner, conceive the Total Reality. When you open your eyes and look at the world, you are seeing *adhibhuta*. When you close your eyes and contemplate within you, you are seeing *adhyatma*. When you see the evolutionary process of the universe, you are seeing *karma* as an emanation of the universe from the Absolute. When you see the great majestic, mathematical precision of work in nature—everything is tiptop and fine, neat and clean, and nothing is out of order in this universe—that perfection that you see in this world process is God operating through all activity, inwardly as well as outwardly. Because of the presence of this universal God, the world looks beautiful, and you have a hope that one day or the other you will be better. You will not curse yourself that you are going to be worse.

Whatever be your present condition, you do not think that tomorrow you will be worse. Even a poor person receiving a very meagre income and suffering in the family

does not think that this will be the permanent state of affairs. The presence of divinity in all things is the reason why we hope for better things. We do not even believe that we will be annihilated in death. Nobody thinks that he will be extinct. "No, I will do many good things, and I will be rewarded." If you are going to be extinct and completely annihilated in death, nobody will try to lift a finger. Why should you do any good thing in the world or anything at all when tomorrow you are going to be annihilated? But something in you—the God present in you, the infinite present in you, the Absolute present in you—tells you that you are going to continue to exist even after this body is discarded. Therefore, even when a person is about to die, he wants to do some good things, some charity. Where is the need for doing charity when you are about to pass away from this world? It is because you know that charity, that gift that you give, will be repaid to you in a future life. If the future life does not exist, the activities of this present life have no meaning. There is no ethics, no morality, and nothing is of any kind of worth here if the futurity is abolished completely. That hope that you will be continuing in the future is because of the planting of God-consciousness in yourself.

So, you see God pervading everywhere—in and out, top and bottom—externally in *adhibhuta*, internally in *adhidaiva*, in the process of creation called *visarga, karma,* and in the whole activity of *yajna,* which is the duty that you perform. This is how you can bring a holistic concept before your meditation. It is another way of the description

of the organismic structure of the whole universe before you.

Seven questions are raised by Arjuna in the beginning of the eighth chapter of the Bhagavadgita, and six questions are answered by these categories that I have mentioned. The other one is what happens when you depart from this world, to which a lengthy answer is given by Bhagavan Sri Krishna. The first six, which are very important ontological principles, are just skipped without any commentary, just making mention of them; but the phenomenon of dying takes a longer description.

What happens when you pass away? Nothing happens. To our solace and satisfaction, we may tell ourselves actually nothing happens even if we die. What happens when you go to sleep and wake up in the morning? When you wake up, you will only continue the entire life process of the previous day. As I mentioned, the continuance of life is guaranteed by your very hope of your activities being rewarded, and this continuance is not taking place in a haphazard manner. It is just like awakening from sleep. Whatever you have been thinking, whatever you have been doing in this world, will be carried forward as in a balance sheet of account in your next birth. What happens after death? Whatever you have done here, whatever you have thought and felt here, that will be carried forward. And where will you be reborn? You will be reborn only under those conditions where your unfulfilled work can find materialisation. Just be guarded here in this matter.

You must be guarded. You will be reborn in that place, under such conditions, where you will be able to materialise

your thoughts and feelings, and the fruits of your actions in this present life. Is it not important, therefore, for you to go on keeping a diary of what you have done today? Can you just go scot-free, as if you are a king or the lord of all things and everything is in your hand? Can you say, "I am the lord of the waves; stop the waves!" The waves would not stop like that. But most of us are callous about our own welfare. Carefree we are with our life. Do you know that what you have done today will be your experience of tomorrow? What have you done two days back? If you want a blessedness tomorrow, will you have thorns sown in the field of your life today? Today you sow the seeds of thorns, and tomorrow you expect apples. No, apples will not come. You will see a vast area filled only with thorns in your future life. It is, therefore, very important for every one of you to keep a diary of what you have been thinking: "I have woken up in the morning. Now it is past ten o' clock, and what ideas occurred to my mind right from the time I woke up?" Do not think this is a joke. This is a serious matter. You are the maker of your destiny. Nobody will reward you and nobody will punish you, except yourself. Your thoughts and feelings will reward you.

The whole universe works like a computer. It is not a friend or an enemy of any person. As you feed it, so it will reward. Every day, keep a note of what ideas, thoughts, feelings have arisen in your mind. They will fructify in your future. Sometimes, it is said—as in the Bhagavadgita, for instance—the last thought will determine your condition in the next birth. So, you will be foolishly thinking, "I can think a good thought when I am about to pass away. Now I

shall do whatever I like." Don't be under this impression. The last thought is the butter that will come out of the milk of the whole life that you have lived for so many years. When you churn milk, butter comes out. Likewise, the so-called last thought during the passing from this world is not just one thought, isolatedly standing there to take you to heaven or somewhere else. It is the energy sucked in a total fashion from all the thoughts and feelings that you entertained right from your birth onwards. Therefore, the last thought is not actually a last thought, it is a total thought of your whole life. The word 'last' is not a proper description of the condition. It is not the 'last'. The fourth state of consciousness above waking, dream and sleep is not the fourth numerically, it is a transcendent inclusiveness of the first three stages.

You must be very cautious. The words that you utter, the thoughts that you entertain, and the feelings that you have in your heart will punish you. *Yamadanda* is something told in the Puranas. The Lord of death will stand there as a 'black man'. This 'black man' is nothing but your black thoughts, and the *danda* or the club that he holds to punish you is the reaction set up by your own evil thoughts. What are the evil thoughts? Any thought that is contrary to the universality of Being is an evil thought. In this sense, we may say, there will not be enough space in hell if all the people in the world end up there, because no one today in this world actually thinks and feels in harmony with the nature of things. There is a chaotic feeling and a cluster of confused ideas in the mind of people. We somehow drag on. We say we get on in life somehow or other. We are not

living our life, we are dragging through it somehow, helplessly. This is not the way of living. We should not drag through our life, but live life. To live life will be to set our present condition of existence in harmony with the structure of the whole world, as described in the six answers Bhagavan Sri Krishna gave to Arjuna's questions: *aksharam brahma paramam,* etc.

Whatever you think at the time of death, that you become, which is another way of saying that whatever be the essence of all the things you thought in your mind and felt through your personality will be boiled at the time of death. The essence of all your feelings and thoughts throughout your life will come up to the surface. That is the last thought, and you will gravitate, like a rocket, to that atmosphere where your unfulfilled desires, your incomplete thoughts and feelings, will condense and congeal into a solid personality, which is called rebirth. It is being born once again in a physical formation of a specific type through which alone those actions and feelings of your earlier life can find a fulfilment. So, you can be born anywhere.

But, you may wonder, "Where am I going to be born, in which place? You can find it out just now by the chart of your way of life, today, in this world. It is not difficult to know what will happen to you after death. You can know it today itself. What you are thinking today, that you will be doing in the next birth also. Towards the end of the eighth chapter of the Bhagavadgita there is a very detailed description of the bright path of ascent and the smoky path of descent, about which you need not bother much now

because here we are concerned with practical meditation. I am mentioning these instances only to enable you to concentrate your mind in a proper manner, to muster the energies of your personality to conserve the vitality that usually gets depleted through the avenues of sense perception. Every moment, you are an *anatman*—an other-than-yourself, an other-than-what-you-are. A worse thing cannot be conceived. Whenever you cling to an object outside, brood over it and hug it, you have become other than what you are. Can you conceive of a greater tragedy than to become other than what you are? Abolition of oneself, and becoming another, is what is taking place in sensory perception and emotional attachment to things.

Here is the Bhagavadgita before you, a wonderful textbook. Everyone should read the Bhagavadgita under a competent teacher and guide. Even if you read it many times, you will not make much meaning out of it. It seems to be saying many different things. But if you have a competent guide, you will know that what is described in the Bhagavadgita is the quintessence of the cosmological descent and ascending process, the Supreme Being presented in all its variety for your meditations. This is the Bhagavadgita. Everybody should read it with very good commentaries.

I will suggest to you certain commentaries of the Bhagavadgita. One of them, which is easy to read, is Swami Jnaneswar Maharaj's commentary called Jnaneswari. A simple, easy-to-understand commentary is written by Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. And there are larger commentaries, such as the one published in Gita Press. The

founder of Gita Press was a saintly man, a venerated person called Jaydayal Goenka. He gave a large commentary on each verse of the Bhagavadgita, and it is available in Hindi as well as English. So, we have Gita commentaries by Jnaneswar, Sivanandaji Maharaj, and Jaydayal Goenka. Then there are the traditional commentaries of the *acharyas*—Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya.

All these commentaries may create confusion in your mind. So, take one only, according to your predilection, whether you are a devoted type, or a psychic type, or a rational type, or an active type, as the case may be. I think that the great message of life for you is the Bhagavadgita, which is supposed to be the quintessence of the Upanishads, which are the quintessence of the Vedas. The whole culture of India is in the Bhagavadgita, all which is, finally, intended to enable you to live a total, integrated life of non-sensuous completeness, never being a slave of your sense organs and desiring to see, to hear, to touch, to eat, and to smell. All sense organs crave for their satisfaction. You go to movie theatres, clubs, and so on, only for the sake of the satisfaction of this malady created by the sense organs. It is a waste of time.

Study the Bhagavadgita, and the Upanishads, and be under a good guide. Every one of you should have a good guide. You may consider that person as a Guru, if you like. If you do not use a big word like 'Guru', have at least some kind of referee. If you have any difficulty, refer to that person. Have a referee, a mentor, a teacher, whoever he is. Find somebody. Among so many people you have seen in

the world, somebody must have impressed you very much. Be friendly with that person until you find a better one, under the dispensation of God Himself. You will find everything is all right.

Therefore, every day of your life it is necessary to be in harmony with nature, in harmony with God who created nature, in harmony with people in society, and in harmony with all created beings. The last word of the Gita is that harmony is yoga—samatvaṁ yoga ucyate (Gita 2.48)—a setting up of equilibrium in your personality in respect of society outside, nature in front of you, and God above. That kind of harmony, simultaneously introduced into your personality, is the process of the cosmic awakening of your so-called individuality. May God bless you.

Chapter 11

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

This is to summarise the essential features of the knowledge that you have gained for success in your life. Success in every aspect of your life is your aim; you do not wish to be defeated anywhere. Everywhere you are first and foremost. In the last verse of the Bhagavadgita, the way to success is told to us in an epic fashion. Yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ, tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama (18.78): Under these conditions, there is sure to be happiness, prosperity, success in every undertaking, and firm policy. But what are the conditions referred to here? It is where Sri Krishna and Arjuna stand together in a state of union, placed in one chariot. The whole of the Gita is here in one *sloka*.

What do these words mean to us finally? What is the significance of Sri Krishna and Arjuna having to be together? Is Sri Krishna alone not sufficient? Why should there be Arjuna? Sri Krishna is the master of yoga; he is all in all, and there is no need of Arjuna. But yet, it is mentioned there that the twin forces should act in unison for the purpose of welfare and success in every field of life. The idea is that the Bhagavadgita is not a message for ancient times. It is not someone that spoke to someone else under a given condition. It is the All-Being that spoke to everyone for all time to come. The Bhagavadgita is an eternal message for eternal mankind, because it came from the eternal Source.

What is the secret of success? It is the union of Arjuna and Krishna. Everywhere in our life, we find there are twin forces operating. There is the twin force of the relation between you and the world outside, there is the operation of the twin force of your relation with God, there is the twin force of your relation with humanity outside, and there is the twin force of your relation with your own inner constitutional setup. You have got four kinds of relation, and everywhere you are present. Arjuna is everywhere, and Krishna also is everywhere in this description of the relations that constitute human life. If this twofold manifestation of force is set in tune in a most harmonious manner, without creating any jarring noise between the two, a third element fructifying in your life will arise from this achievement. That third element is success.

Achievement, attainment, success, prosperity—whatever you call this fulfilment of the aim of your life—is all a fourfold action taking place simultaneously, because in the present state of affairs, we seem to be living in a fourfold relation of this kind. There should be no clash of the inner constituents of the factors of life. The factors of life, as I mentioned briefly, are fourfold. Most of us have inner tension. The constituents that make up your personality are not in a state of alignment. There is disturbance in the mind. Though you attribute all disturbances to the wrong actions of other people in the world, this attitude is not entirely justifiable, because trouble arises from yourself first. That is the 'eye of the hurricane', as they call it. The centre of the problem is yourself only, and not somebody else.

You are not set in tune with your own self. There are various types of distress harassing us. Do you wake up in the morning with a pleasant mood, a sense of satisfaction, a feeling of completeness? Do you think everything is all right with you? Each one of you should close the eyes for a few minutes and think: "Is everything all right with me, or is something wrong?" Be a judge of your own self. It is easy to judge other people, but you cannot easily judge yourself because in other types of judgment, such as in the social field, the client is different from the judge; but here, you are the client and the judge. This is the difficulty. Or to bring the old analogy once again, the higher Self is the judge, and the lower self is the client. Hence, you yourself are the client and the judge, in two strata of your own being.

Your feeling for the world outside is not always set in harmony with your feeling for the salvation of your spirit. It is not easy for you to bring about a reconciliation between two ideas working in your mind. You want final spiritual attainment, God-realisation as it is called, but you do not wish to be disturbed by the world, which is also there solidly in front of you. That is to say, the transcendent aim of yours, which is the salvation of the soul, does not seem to be properly set in tune with your practical experience of a perception of the world, which is solidly gazing at you. You do not know what to do with this world when your aim is something which seems to be totally different from what you experience in this world. Are you going to reject this world, or are you going to take this world with you when you reach God? You have to do something with it. Are you going to throw it away as redundant, and then

independently, individually, reach God? Nor can you bundle up the whole world and take it with you when you reach God. This is something intriguing.

Go to Gurus and put these questions: How am I going to deal with this world of my daily experience, together with my aspirations for God? How am I going to deal with people around me, which are millions in number, populating this whole Earth? What is my duty towards these people around me, if at all there is a duty?

The people around you impinge on your very skin. You cannot say that you have no duty towards them. Your very consciousness of the presence of people outside is a call for your duty in respect of people outside. If you have no duty towards anybody, you need not even feel that they are existing at all. But the people around are so solidly present and concretely presenting themselves before your experience that you cannot reject them, and you have to put up with them in compromise and harmony. I mentioned to you that you have to be in harmony with your own self also.

The last verse of the Bhagavadgita is the solution for all these questions. You have to plant the presence of God at the foundation of your endeavours of any kind—either towards people outside, or towards the world of sensory perception, or in regard to your own individual personality also. How do you attain this? How do you manage to get on with this situation? Do you feel that you are in a position to accommodate the thought that there is such a thing called God, and It is all-in-all? You might have heard this said a hundred times, and you may accept it also—yes, God is all-in-all. But the consequence of this acceptance is not

properly noticed. Some results follow from your acceptance that God is all-in-all. That is, everything has to be interpreted in the light of the presence of the All-in-all—your own self, society outside, and also the world of perception. Then success follows. As a matter of fact, if you think about it properly, the thing that you call God is the power which sustains the organism of the whole cosmos; and in comparison, and by way of an analogy, if you are to bring before you the organism of your own individuality, you will realise that all the functions of your body are centralised in the harmonious operation of a principle of life which is within yourself, and also transcending your bodily encasement.

The principle of life is first, and every other activity of the personality comes afterwards. Any activity of yours, or work that you perform, should not contradict the maintenance of the organismic integrality of your being. There is no use doing a lot of work if it is going to affect the integrality of your personality. You cannot break yourself and then become whole with the world outside. You have to be whole first, and then only your relation with the world will be a whole. You should not be a torn personality, with a segment of emotion on one side and a segment of intellect and rationality on the other side.

Great professors, intellectual geniuses lecturing in universities, have family problems. They are wretched in their homes, but great masters and scientists and mathematicians in the universities. They would not like to go home and look at the face of their wife because she is a termagant, abusive, and says all kinds of negative things to

the great man who is a professor. He is torn between two sides. Now, which is the reality of this person? Is the home experience the reality, or the professorial side? You cannot say either of them is unreal. The problem is that the man has not been able to bring about a harmony between these two aspects. His emotions have not been trained to the same height as his intellect. He is a puny little nothing as far as his emotions are concerned, but a mighty giant in his professorial knowledge.

Sometimes we are torn personalities, as I mentioned, and here is an example of that splitting of personalities: one thing in your bedroom, kitchen and bathroom, and another thing in public life. This will not work. You have to be the same thing in your house that you are in the ministerial or presidential level you may occupy. You cannot have two things in yourself. Do you want to become two people? You are one person, and therefore, in all your experiences you must be one person. You are as mighty and great in your kitchen as you are in the field of work in this world. You are not a soldier only in the battlefield, and a poor nothing in your kitchen; that should not be. The world is made in such a way that there are no kitchens and bathrooms here. It is one integrated, spread-out arena of mighty operation of cosmic forces. There is no bathroom in this universe. It is as great as a temple and university, etc.

To give an example from the Mahabharata, Sri Krishna is great in all ways. The greatest yogi you can think of is Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Nobody—not a Sannyasin, not a sage, not a saint—can stand before him in the knowledge of yoga. And he is the greatest warrior. You cannot imagine

how a great saint can become a warrior. No general can stand before him in the battlefield. And he is a perfect householder, and a perfect Sannyasin. No Sannyasin can equal Bhagavan Sri Krishna. He had palaces, he had retinue, he had everything which is royal, but the renunciation which is associated with a person like Sri Krishna is far, far superior to a Sannyasin's renunciation. A Sannyasin renounces things which are really existent, as unreal things need not be renounced, but forgets that real things cannot be abandoned: nā 'sato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ (Gita 2.16). This is no good. Sometimes Sannyasins fail due to a wrong notion of renunciation.

How can you renounce a tree? It is a poor thing, standing there in its own capacity, and you say, "I will renounce a tree," "I will renounce a mountain." What are you renouncing? A thing that is not there need not be renounced. That which is really there cannot be destroyed and, therefore, cannot be renounced. Many concepts of sadhu-hood and Sannyasi-hood may have to be properly re-orientated in the light of the Bhagavadgita gospel if you have rightly understood its meaning.

Greatest Sannyasin, greatest householder, greatest warrior, and greatest yogi—how will you combine all these things in one person? Really, there are no warriors, no Sannyasins, no householders, nothing of the kind; there is only one Being existing. Can you call God a Sannyasin, or a householder, or a soldier? What kind of thing is God? That concept, let alone the attainment itself, will rejuvenate you to such an extent that you will be the same person in all

fields of life. In the railway station, in the bus stand, in the vegetable market, in your temple and your tutorial institute—wherever you are, you are the same person, and you think in the same way in all places. You will speak to the vegetable vendor with the same majesty and goodness that you speak in a parliament, and will not speak down to him. This bifurcation wrongly made between one thing and another thing, one experience and another, is the malady of your life.

You are the same person everywhere; you are the same greatness manifest in yourself—which is possible of attainment only if you are able to see one thing in all things. Arjuna has to see Sri Krishna everywhere. The might of Krishna enters Arjuna; that is, the cosmic force enters into you, and you work like a whirl operating through it. Sometimes, we say we are world citizens; but we are not merely world citizens, we are embodiments of the world itself.

I have already mentioned how this could be achieved by being perpetually in the state of meditation. Meditation does not mean something that you will do afterwards: "Now we are listening to somebody saying something, and afterwards we will go for lunch, and later on we will sit in a corner and meditate." This kind of foolish thinking must be avoided. Death is nobody's friend, and no notice will be given to you about the next moment. Even before you sit for meditation, the order may come to you in the dining hall itself.

Again, to repeat, you are the same person everywhere, and whatever you are in the state of meditation, you are in

the dining hall also. You will be wondering, "How I can meditate on God when I am eating food?" You are not eating food, really speaking; you are performing a cosmic action there also.

You cannot contain this thought in your mind, as the meaning behind the personality of an Incarnation such as Bhagavan Sri Krishna cannot be understood. He is All-in-all, both the greatest and the very humblest you can think of. In the Rajasuya sacrifice of Yudhishthira, Sri Krishna was the receptionist. Why should he take up this minor work of a receptionist in that mighty conference? Could he not be given some better function? He was receiving people, but not merely receiving with words. He was washing their feet, pouring holy water on the auspicious people, the blessed ones that came, and seating them in a proper place. He was serving food to all people. Was he a suitable person to serve food? Was there nobody else who could do that? And when the feeding was over, he removed all the leaves and cleaned the whole place. Such a mighty person, at whose name the world shudders, took upon himself this work of cleaning up after the feeding was over. He could have said, "You are giving me this kind of work? Do you know who I am? I am a yogi, an Atman, a renunciate, a Sannyasin, a God-man. You want me to sweep?" Would you like to be given this job? Ask any Sannyasin to do this work. He will say, "I am a Mahatma, Mandaleshwar. You want me to do this kind of work? This is why you invited me?"

It is poor, empty souls that require respect from other people. A great being does not expect respect, or even a

good word of thanks from anybody. The smaller you are, the more you expect respect from other people. The larger you are, the less you would like to be recognised. Who will recognise you? You are yourself complete in yourself. And if you trust really the presence of God—not merely treat it as a word in the scripture, and not something that you have heard from your Gurus—if you really trust it and plant that feeling in yourself, you will wonder at the miracles taking place in your own life.

Don't have any kind of despondency in your mind. There might be a doubt: "These are all very big things. I am not meant for it. I am a poor fellow." You are not a poor fellow. Do not have doubts. There are things called traitors, who deceive you and put you out of gear, and the greatest traitor is doubt. Doubts are our traitors. Do you have a doubt about the capacity of God to protect you, or that this is actually possible? Even if you are a sinner, and have done many wrong things, if your heart has changed and you have become a different person today, who knows? Even a great Sannyasin or yogi of today might have committed many blunders in the previous life, but those blunders do not pursue this person due to the transformation that has taken place in this birth.

Thus, you have to take rebirth. Unless you are reborn, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. This is what Jesus Christ said. To be reborn does not mean taking another birth in a mother's womb. That is not the meaning. To be reborn is to be reborn into the spirit of the universe. Confidence in yourself is necessary. You must be confident:

"I am perfectly all right, and I can understand what is good for me."

The order of Sri Krishna was the final gospel to Arjuna. Whatever Sri Krishna said was final. If Sri Krishna said, "Don't do anything," Arjuna will not do it, even if he felt it was necessary. "Do it," means Arjuna will do it, though he felt that it is not proper to do so. Place in your mind a picture of this Great Master Bhagavan Sri Krishna, or anyone like that, such as Vasishtha, Vyasa, Suka, or any great saint and sage. The thought of a thing influences you. If you think of garbage, dirt, and rubbish, even the utterance of these words influences your mind. If a holy mantra can bring about a positive effect in you, a dirty word can bring about a contrary effect in your mind. See for yourself. Go on uttering the word 'mango, mango, mango', and see what you feel; 'temple, temple, temple', what do you feel; 'police station, police station, police station', what do you feel; 'war, war, war', what do you feel? Do you see what happens to you when you utter these words? Go on shouting to your own self: "Almighty God, Absolute Being, Almighty Absolute!" Do not chant any mantra or anything. In your own language—Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, or English, whatever it is—repeatedly utter these words: "the Absolute, the Supreme Being, the Absolute All-in-all." Utter these words; do not do anything else. Only the words will do. Your heart will slowly start melting with even the words you utter. Words have such power.

The Word is God, it is said. It is the Logos or the ultimate intelligent principle; that is the Word—the sound principle, the *sphota sakti* as they call it. That is why every

word has such a meaning—the *mantra*, as it is called. Take the name of a great person, the greatest that you can think of in the history of mankind. Go on chanting that person's name. You will feel a shake-up of your personality. Whether you are able to properly concentrate the mind or not, shout loudly this great word 'Absolute Being', and your sin has been destroyed. Api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpakṛttamaḥ, sarvaṁ jñānaplavenaiva vṛjinaṁ santariṣyasi (Gita 4.36). You may be the worst of sinners. A sinner is a person who isolates himself from this notion of God, and lives contrary to it. You should not think these words are mere instructions. They are injections given to you with a potency of a high vitamin, which will strengthen you. Not only should you think like this, but you must feel like this; your heart should well up with this acceptance, and you will find the touch of Sri Krishna on Arjuna everywhere. Wherever you are, in any difficulty, somebody is there behind you to push you in the right direction. "At every critical juncture, I manifest Myself," says the Lord in the Gita: saṁbhavāmi yuge yuge (Gita 4.8). *Yuga* means the age, such as Krita, Treya, Dvapara, Kali. It may be that. But also *yuga* means a coming together of two things; we may call it a crisis. At every critical moment, a divine spark manifests itself. The very proximity of your thought to the Being of that Perfection will splash forth an illumination and an enlightenment which will strengthen you at the same time. What you are going to acquire is not knowledge of something, but acquaintance with the Being that you yourself are, in tune with the Being of all things.

Therefore, you should make it possible in your daily life to keep God first, world next, and yourself last, as Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to say. In every enterprise of yours, the first thing is not yourself. The first thing is the Supreme Being, and it will charge your enterprise with the world in any manner whatsoever, and place you in a proper context with the world. Wherever Arjuna was, Sri Krishna was behind him. Otherwise, the Pandavas would not have succeeded in the Mahabharata war. It was an All-Being flooding energy into the Pandavas. You do not require many things in this world. You require only one thing—the force that is everywhere. The many soldiers of Duryodhana could not stand before that one person, just as millions of splashed water drops cannot equal one ocean. The ocean is only one, and the water drops are countless. Let them be countless; number does not mean anything here. It is the qualitative comprehensiveness that is more important.

Your greatness lies not in the accumulation of facts that you may have achieved. You have got a lot of baggage of information, but it must enter into you and make you not a professor of knowledge, but a possessor of knowledge. The knowledge has entered into you, and you are the knowledge itself. Knowledge is Being; Being is Knowledge. That strengthens you. This is the reason why the Bhagavadgita's last verse highlights the necessity of our collaboration with the Universal Principle in all the enterprises of our life.

Never think that you can do everything yourself. This egoism and self-assertiveness should leave you. When the Mahabharata was over and Sri Krishna left this world, Arjuna became a poor non-entity. He who could lift the

mighty Gandiva-dhanush and thunder before millions of soldiers could not lift a walking stick because the energy of the universe was withdrawn. The extent to which the soul permeates your body, to that extent you are healthy and happy. If the soul is crying inside and only the body is becoming robust by eating and exercise, it will not suffice.

Human effort is to be set in tune with this universal power in such a manner that there ceases to be a difference between the two—as, for instance, with a high voltage electric wire. When you touch a high voltage electric wire, are you touching electricity, or touching wire? In a similar manner, you may look like a human being, like an electric wire on which you can hang a wet cloth for drying, but if that high voltage power of the Universal Being is charged, you do not become merely a wire or a medium for the communication of that force; you yourself stand representative of that power. An Incarnation, an Avatara, is nothing but a human personality charged with the energy of the whole cosmos; and you can also be one such. The Srimad Bhagavata Purana says that endless are the Incarnations. Every one of you can be that, provided this little wire that you are is charged with the high voltage force of the Universal Existence.

Every day you must find time to think like this. Do not waste your time gossiping and chatting with people and going here and there. Until you attain success in this art of living, give first preference to meditation, and give it as much time as possible. When you are seated in meditation, what do you feel? "The world is coming inside; it is liquefying itself; it has entered my blood cells; the particles

of my personality are getting energised; the sea of force which is the universe has entered me; I am feeling that I have become hard like steel, strong like a hill, radiant; everything is within me." The world is very rich in its resources. It is not poor in any manner. If the resources and energies and powers of the world enter you, you become a world individual. Sri Krishna was a world individual; the whole world was inside him. That was the Visvarupa, as we are told.

You are also like that. Don't think that this is not for you. It is for you. You are not a poor individual. God has not created any poverty-stricken individual in thought. Monetarily, in the sense of possessing the objects of the world, you may look poor in comparison with millionaires, but is thought also an object of poverty? Can you not even think great things? The ideas of your mind move the whole world.

The whole world is only Idea, finally. As Plato said, Idea is the Ultimate Reality. Think, and you can shake the Earth. You do not require bulldozers and machine guns; a thought is enough. Idea is the Ultimate Reality—the Idea, which has concretised itself in the form of these physical elements that you are beholding in front of you.

"The world is my idea." This is a sentence with which Schopenhauer begins his great wonderful thesis, *The World as Will and Idea*. You will be shocked; what is Schopenhauer saying? "The world is my idea"; that is the first sentence of the great work. And that is what Plato said, that is what the Upanishads say, that is what the Bhagavadgita says. Ultimate Reality is Idea. Idea means

consciousness, Universal Thought, *chit*, which is All-Being; this is the Ultimate Reality. Bring your mind to the focus of this kind of feeling even when you are walking on the road or speaking to people. Do not cut yourself off from the underground foundation of this thought.

You cannot forget what you are even when you are very busy. You cannot say, "I don't know what I am, because I am very busy these days." Whatever be the business, you will not forget what you are. In a similar manner, whatever be the activity that you are engaged in, you cannot forget the vitality of your life which sustains you, which will make you deathless in the end, and blessedness will be your destination also. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj will guide you. He is present even now. The whole ashram is charged with his immanent presence. Those who come here are blessed. The more you stay here, the better for you. The air is charged with his presence, and it is charged by all the sages and masters who have lived in this area, Muni-ki-Reti, which means 'the sand trodden by the masters'. Vasishtha, Vyasa, Rama, Laxmana also happened to come here. Who knows how many masters trod this very sand on the bank of the Ganga, on which you are also treading? Blessedness is before you. You have come here, and that is a blessedness. It has become possible for you to come here.

Beautiful is the experience. The moment you cross Brahmananda Ashram, pass the police station and enter this place, you are in a blessed atmosphere. You are secure. Something is vibrating here. Something is speaking in a different language. You feel wonderful, happy, and would like to come again. Why do these ideas arise in your mind?

It is because mighty sages have thought these ideas, and they have left them here reverberating through every sand particle of this place. So, be blessed.

Chapter 12

THE TRIDENT OF THE SADHANA PROCESS

There is a very interesting secret about the first and last words of the Bhagavadgita. It starts with the word *dharma:* dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre (Gita 1.1). The first word of the Gita is *dharma;* the last word is *mama:* nītir matir mama (Gita 18.78). If you join them together, it is *mama dharma*. So, the Bhagavadgita tells you *mama dharma*: your duty. Don't you think it is interesting? *Mama dharma* is the subject of the Bhagavadgita.

You should have a daily routine, a program for your day. Sri Aurobindo has written that you have to divide the whole day into four parts—six hours for meditation, six hours for work, six hours for sleep, and six hours for other things. Sometimes we have to work for more than six hours; this is the fate of the people working in offices these days. But, if it is systematically done, and the arrangement of the work is computerised in a beautiful manner without any kind of pressure, perhaps in six hours you may finish the work of the day. Six hours you sleep; very good. Six hours of meditation is a wonderful thing. Very few people are able to meditate like that for such a long time. And we have other titbits, for which he has allotted six hours: you have to take bath, to go for a walk, to eat, to take rest, to meet visitors, to read the newspaper or go somewhere; that you have to do within six hours.

Though it looks very fine, you feel you cannot get on like that. Why? Think it over for yourself. Firstly, the debility is in the duration of work; you have to work for

eight hours, at least. Sometimes, officials even work till midnight. They carry on till late hours, and sometimes have to work at home also. It is up to you. Though Aurobindo's idea was very good, you can have your own program. You have to sleep well. You should not cut short your sleep due to any kind of enthusiasm.

Yuktāhāravihārasya yuktaceṣṭasya karmasu, yuktasvapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥkhahā (Gita 6.17), says the Bhagavadgita: moderate eating, neither in excess, nor to the point of starvation; *vihara:* a diversion, a little change for your health also is necessary—activity in a moderate manner—neither being excessively active like a busy-body, nor a do-nothing; *svapnavabodha*: necessary sleep—neither you oversleep, so that you may become dull and lethargic, nor you cut short your sleep. That is to say, the sign of good sleep is that when you wake up in the morning, you feel refreshed. If you have good sleep, you will wake up refreshed.

The feeling at the time of waking up from sleep is the indication of the condition of your health. When you wake up in the morning, don't jump up from your bed. Make it a point to sit quietly for a few minutes. Close your eyes. The *tamas* of sleep has ended, and the *rajas* of activity has not yet commenced. You are in the middle, between the *tamasic* condition and the *rajasic* condition. So, you may say, it is a flash of *sattva* that is available in the early morning when you wake up.

The meditation should be along the lines we have discussed. An ocean of information has been supplied to you. Along these lines, try to collect yourself. Actually, the

quality of your thinking at the time of your meditation is what is important. It is like a spark of fire. It is only a momentary phenomenon, but yet it is radiant enough and sufficient for igniting your enthusiasm.

How do you improve the quality of your meditation, apart from the fact that you may have to sit longer for this purpose? Even if you sit for several hours, the mind may not get ignited. You will feel that nothing has happened, though you have sat for hours, because the mind refuses to accommodate itself to your requirement. The refusal may be due to various reasons. It is not that everyone can do real meditation; only a very few can do that. The mind refuses to act, just as sometimes horses will refuse to move forward, for their own reasons.

Distress of any kind, anguish, expectations which are dubious in their nature, financial penury, and a sense of hopelessness that oftentimes catches hold of people for various reasons in their life may bring some such situation that the mind will say that you have better things to do than meditation. People who have a family have such an experience. It is not that every family man is happy. Only one who has a family will know what it is to have a family. All are not born with a silver spoon in their mouths. They have to work hard with the sweat of their brow, and they are not satisfied with what they earn. Even if they are working in a factory or an office, sometimes their salaries may be inadequate, and the expenditure to maintain a family may not be in harmony with the salary that is earned. You may have to borrow, and borrowing is the worst thing that one can do. You will have another agony of

having to pay back your debt. Many such things are there. Very dexterously, you have to adjust your daily program considering all these difficulties in your life.

No one in the world can be said to be entirely free from problems. Everyone has a difficulty, but how to handle it is an art that you may have to discover. Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam (Gita 2.50): Expertness in your dealings is also yoga, says the Bhagavadgita. In handling all your day-to-day enterprises, you must have expertise. There are certain things which you cannot handle, even though you may try your best. When handling a situation, you may apply yourself to the task to the maximum limit of your resources. When everything is found to be inadequate and you have no support whatsoever, then only can you give it up.

Many a time, we make a mistake in not distinguishing between what is possible and what is impossible. There are certain things which are possible, and you can try to do that; certain things also are impossible, and those things you should not try. The attempt at achieving the impossible is a source of suffering to the mind. "Give me the will to change what I can, and the courage to bear what I cannot, and the wisdom to know the difference" is an old proverb. But for us, the wisdom is not coming forth. We try to change what we cannot change. There are people who try to change the entire society, all of humanity, with a new perspective. Yes, in a very few rare cases that attempt may succeed, but mostly it becomes a failure and a great sorrow befalling the person who has made the attempt. To understand your own capacity and the position that you are

occupying in society is important. You must understand in what situation you are placed. You have to know fully your social placement. Do not make mistakes and imagine something which is not you.

With your determination, coupled with proper understanding, you may be able to organise your day, allotting enough time for sleep, for work, for diversion and some recreation, and for meditation. Again, it has to be reiterated that if you have understood the true spirit of spirituality, you would realise that meditation is not one of the works that you are performing. Though some time has been given for various things and some time for meditation, it does not mean that meditation is one of the functions that you have to perform. It is the vitality behind all your performances. Vitality cannot be regarded as one among the many. It is the all-in-all.

You may find it hard to accommodate yourself to the requirements of the meditational process, because again and again the old habit of thought will persist in thinking that meditation is a religious requirement imposed by scriptures, saints and Gurus, while the world is real indeed, as real as anything else. One of the torments into which we may enter in our spiritual aspirations is that the world, and the activities in the world, will look more concrete than the requirement of meditation. Meditation oftentimes appears abstract because it is a thinking process, and thinking is abstract while the world is very solid. All the things and people with which you come in contact in the world are solid events in your life, while meditation looks like some airy, ethereal performance in respect of something of which

you have no knowledge. The fear of the contrast between an ethereal, airy pursuit in comparison with the realities of life will harass the mind.

In the earliest stages, you do not require any guidance. Whatever be the success in your meditation—success or no success—sit for 15 minutes before you go to the office, and let it be a ritual, almost. But if you are very honest and determined to pursue this path as an all-inclusive recharging of yourself in terms of the Ultimate Reality of life, then you may require daily guidance from a teacher. It is something like walking on a tightrope or learning to handle and ride an elephant. When you take to exclusive meditations, guidance is necessary; otherwise, things may turn topsy-turvy. The emotions are strong, senses are very impetuous, the world is very real, and people around you are more real than anything else.

The pursuit of God, the practice of meditation, may look like the pursuit of the will o' the wisp; something may be there, or it may not be there. Nobody has seen God, and nobody has ever seen the success that anyone has attained in meditation. We hear that it is good, but we don't know anything about it. We have not practically seen the results of it. Such difficulties will arise. In these lessons you have been told that you are a Total Being attempting to put yourself in a state of en rapport with the Total Being of the universe, which is called meditation. Meditation is not a work that you are performing, in the same way as your existence in this world is not a work. When you are living, existing, and breathing, that condition cannot be regarded as an activity of your life. It is prior to all activity. Similarly,

the thing called meditation may look like a work or activity, but it is something more than that. It is a recharging of your whole personality with a condition of superior health.

To regain health is not a process of acting or working; it is not work at all. To regain health from a condition of illness is the gradual rise into a wholeness of your being, from the condition of malady which is the illness. All the activities of the world are included in meditation. This is something which is not easy to understand. All your duties are included in this great duty of meditation, because thought is so powerful that it can bring about transformations even in respect of things which are so solid and real to sense organs in this world of human beings.

The last, penultimate instruction in the Bhagavadgita is to renounce all duties, dharmas, for the sake of some other duty: sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja (Gita 18.66). Many people put a question: What is it that you are renouncing? People are asked to pursue and practise dharma; instead of that, we are told here to renounce all dharmas. What is it? You are renouncing a dharma for the sake of another dharma, which includes these renounced dharmas. The lower wholeness is included in the higher Wholeness. A larger Integration includes the lower integration. Dharmas, or the duties that you perform in life, are of course very necessary because they are connected with your very being itself, but they are lower forms of holistic experience. As you rise higher and higher in your dimension of being, the duty so-called becomes more a consciousness of your being, rather than the

entanglement or association of your being with something outside.

Finite beings, finite individualities, personalities as we are, are perforce made to relate to some other thing externally, which is called work. The work that you are doing every day is only an attempt to whitewash this peculiar suffering unit called finitude, and you are trying to feel that the finitude is diminished to a satisfactory extent by coming in contact with other finites called other people, other things in the world, so that you feel—wrongly though—that the connection of one finitude with other finitudes is a sort of enlargement of finitude in the direction of the infinity. It may look like that, but it is not so. All works are perishable. All relationships will come to an end one day or the other, notwithstanding the fact that you cannot get on in this world without relationships and without some kind of performance.

Actually, the intention behind this connection of one finitude with other finitudes is to attain the non-finite. This cannot be done by merely dovetailing one finite with another finite, as many wrongs cannot make one right. Many untruths joined together do not make one truth. So, a multitude of finitudes put together in a collaboration or a parliamentary action do not bring truth because they are only quantitative enlargements, not qualitative. Your dimension should increase qualitatively, in the sense of your being itself becoming larger, not appearing to be wider on account of possessions which are external things. If you know a little of these things, meditation will bring you great satisfaction. In the state of meditation, you are touching the

borderland of that power, which actually is what you seek even in your daily routine performances of work, duty, and the like. This you have to understand as far as possible.

You cannot go to this height immediately. You have to frequent again and again ashrams, guides, masters, and also study more and more, as much as possible, to recharge yourself into the concept of this ultimate validity in the practice of meditation. However much you may try to accommodate yourself with this thought, it will slip from your mind because the senses are more powerful than your conceptualisations. The senses are connected with visible, solid, practical realities, and the mind conceptualises and synthesises the reports of the sense organs. It has actually nothing new to tell. It begins to perform a real duty of enhancing the quality of your dimension only when the senses are withdrawn. When sense restraint is practised, the energy of the senses, which move in terms of the objects, revert to their source, and so the mind thinks not in terms of sense perception, but in terms of the origin of its own emanation from consciousness.

Study, *svadhyaya* is also something very important. You will not be able to go on meditating, and do nothing else. When the actual entry into direct meditation on the Supreme Reality of life is found to be impracticable on a particular day for some reason or the other, stop the meditation. Don't tire the mind and whip it up unnecessarily when it is not willing to do it. At that time, take up a scripture—anything that enthuses you, rouses your feelings, and enables your spirit to rise—whatever be

the scripture or a textbook that you may find most suitable for the purpose.

When you are calmed, and your mind is properly prepared after this study of a scripture, you may take to meditation a second time. But, even then, if you find it is difficult, take to mantra *japa*. A mantra is a summoning of the Ultimate Being by associating it with the principle of sound. Just as everything has a name, the Universal Reality also may be summoned by some kind of description, a designation. Previously I mentioned to you to call upon the Absolute by simply shouting, "The Absolute Being, come on! The Absolute Being, come on! The Absolute Being, come on!" This is a mantra. The sound that you produce in this manner of the utterance of a formula that describes the characteristic of the Ultimate Reality charges you with an enthusiasm. Or, otherwise, you can take to any mantra *japa*. If you have an *ishta devata*—a god whom you worship dearly—a mantra of that deity can be taken up for your daily *japa*. A few rounds of the *japa mala* with chanting for some 15 minutes, or even half an hour, will prepare your mind for meditation.

So, three prongs of this trident of the *sadhana* process may be said to be meditation, *svadhyaya* and *japa*. All the three may have to be attempted every day. Keep a few minutes for *japa*, a few minutes for study, and a few minutes for actual meditation. But more than all these, there is *satsanga*. Nothing can equal *satsanga*, the company of a great person who will sustain your enthusiasm for spiritual living. You must have *satsanga* as much as possible. In the conditions in which you are living it may

not be possible to have it daily, but sometimes, as much as possible, for a few days, a few months, as it may be practicable, you may resort to *satsanga* of these great masters.

Suppose that also is difficult. Where are these masters? You cannot find them. At least you must have heard that there were great masters. Though today you find it difficult to locate a great master, you can imagine there were great masters. Keep a portrait of them in front of you. It may be the great master Bhagavan Sri Krishna, Ramachandra, Vasishtha, Vyasa, or great Nayanmars or Alvars, or any great saint or sage whom you consider to be a great master. Place the portrait, a picture, or a photograph of that great master in front of you, and go on gazing at it. What you see with your eyes, you should also think at the same time. There is a direct connection between sight and thought. It is up to you to choose whose portrait you will keep in front of you. If you love something immensely, keep it in front of you, and your mind will go towards that. Nothing can attract you unless it is also an object of affection. Is there anything that you love most in this world? Let it be anything. Keep it in front of you. Go on looking at it, and the mind directly concentrates itself on that form or that concept which you love, because nothing can be stronger than love as a force in this world. All other forces are secondary to love, which is the highest of forces. So, *ishta* is the name that we give to this form that you place before yourself for the purpose of meditation—the dear one. *Ishta* means 'the dear one'. What is the dear one to you? Nobody can prescribe this to you. Sometimes, you may have to go to

a teacher and mention your present mental condition, and that Guru may be able to tell you which kind of form is suitable for your meditation.

If you have terrible attachment to certain things in this world—so much so, you cannot sleep unless you have it—then you can have it. There is no objection, but have it in such a way that you don't ruin yourself. This, again, has to be done with the guidance of a Guru. You don't have a dear object only to end your life with it. You have to live, not die. You may have a dear thing, and kill yourself afterwards. There are people who commit suicide, hang themselves, or fall from a tree for the sake of a love; they become martyrs in the name of their patriotism. It is not proper. It is necessary to live as long as the *prarabdha* requires you to continue in this body. So, your affection for a thing, though it is permissible—because, after all, it is an affection, and you cannot get on without it—it has to be made a part of your life with discrimination and control. You can enjoy, but enjoy with great control, and not in an abandon and loss of yourself. All this requires advice from a Guru. You cannot understand all these things. Some problem arises in front of you and you cannot know how to solve it. It will simply give a shock, and you will not know what to do. When you have lost something which is very dear and important, you don't know how to get on with this loss. You must have a referee, someone to whom you will turn when there is agony in your mind.

So, with these preparations, try to find out which is the *ishta* for you. Perhaps, you may be fond of the great saint Guru Nanak; you consider Guru Nanak as a great master.

Keep a photograph, picture, portrait of Guru Nanak. "Great Master! I am seeing you. Great Master, protect me! Great Master, energise me! Great Master, bless me! You are all powerful. Therefore, protect me; remove my agonies. Make me your own, Great Master! I am at your feet!" Tell this to Guru Nanak, or any deity, any *bhagavan*, any Guru—Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, or Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Sadasiva Brahmendra. They will come and protect you. Saints never die, because a saint is a spirit that has reached a great height of experience. So, such a spirit cannot die. It can be summoned at any time.

You can summon anything. That power you have got, if you really want it. The whole point is that you must really want it, and you should not want it only as one thing among the many other things that you also want. That would be *vyabhichara bhakti*, as it is called. It is a hypocrisy of affection: "I love you, but I love many other things also equally as I love you." This kind of love is not real love. The mind wants many things, and one of the things is yourself. This kind of thing is not *ishta*. "I love you, all-in-all, completely, as everything, and bestower of everything that I require." Mortal objects in the world cannot bless you with such a thing. So, your must-have *ishta* does not mean a perishable object, because a perishable object can give you only perishable satisfaction. Thus, when you do not have an actual Guru whom you can befriend and receive instructions from, you must have something imperishable in front you for your purpose of concentration.

Therefore, we have *japa, svadhaya,* meditation*, dhyana,* and *satsanga* with great ones. Even now, there are great

people in this world. It does not mean the world is bereft of great masters. The only thing is, you cannot find where they are; it is difficult to locate them and to recognise them even if you actually rub shoulders with them. Somehow, if you are sincere, you will come in contact with these Gurus. The Almighty Lord, who is seated in your heart, who loves you very much, who is your real friend, will bring you in contact with a Great Master. The Guru will come to you, instead of your going to the Guru. Suhṛdaṁ sarvabhūtānāṁ jñātvā māṁ śāntim ṛcchati (Gita 5.29): "Remember, I am your real friend," says the Great Master Yogi, with humility in the Bhagavadgita. He will come to you for every little thing, and satisfy you with His succour.

Study the Bhagavadgita every day. I mentioned to you that some *svadhyaya* is to be done every day. There are many holy books. The Bhagavadgita is very good because it tells you what your duty, *mama dharma,* is. The Bhagavadgita is not easy to understand, though you may chant it any number of times. Its intricacy is very difficult to make out. It is a comprehensive teaching, touching every aspect of life. Or you can have any other book—the New Testament, or the Koran, or the Bible. Whatever you like, take to it with the heart, and study that.

Never forget that God sees you; all your thoughts and feelings, your actions and your performances are seen by millions of eyes around you. You are always watched with a caretaking eye, and it notes all your deeds. Whenever you do something, or speak, or act, remember that you are doing it in the presence of an all-seeing eye. Every atom is an eye of God. Sarvatokṣiśiromukham (Gita 13.13):

Everywhere He has got eyes. Every sand particle is an eye of God; it sees. Every brick, every leaf of a tree are all eyes of God. They see. They see, not merely to punish you for your bad deeds, but also to protect you, to warn you and take care of you, and to provide you with all your needs—to see to your *yogakshema*, and to give you what you need and take care of you in every way.

So, trust in God; do the right. When you do the right, you must remember that it is possible only if you trust in God. Only a person who trusts in God can do the right. Otherwise, your concept of righteousness may sometimes be tarnished by a little bit of your personal selfishness. The great Master Jesus Christ said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Ananyāś cintayanto māṁ ye janāḥ paryupāsate, teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānāṁ yogakṣemaṁ vahāmy aham (Gita 9.22): "Whoever is intently thinking of Me, is contemplating on Me, is united in his heart with Me, I shall take care of that person continuously and provide that person with every little need." The world will follow you, instead of your running after the world. The tables will be turned completely; the subject will become the object, the object will become the subject. God will be with you for ever and ever.