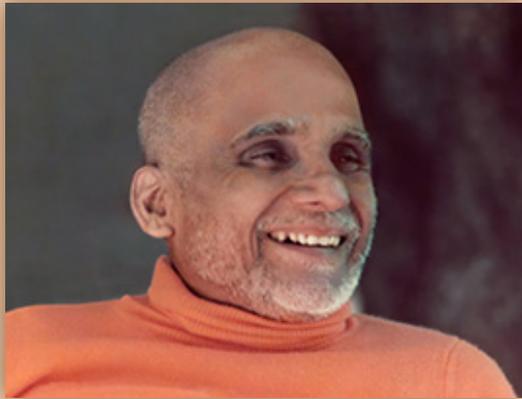


A TEXTBOOK OF YOGA



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ABOUT THIS EDITION

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Publishers' Note

This is a series of discourses that Swamiji gave in the Ashram from March to May in 1991.

Chapter 1

THE TRUE NATURE OF OUR EXISTENCE

Philosophy is said to be the investigation into the causes of phenomena which are around us, and in which we are also involved. We see things happening, events taking place, but mostly we do not know why they occur at all. We can observe winds blowing, rain falling, the sun getting hot, etc., as a routine affair in our daily lives, but many of us will not be able to explain why the winds should blow. Why should it rain at a particular time? Why is the sun hot or cold, as the case may be? Why are things what they are? Questions of this kind have often evoked no proper answer. Many a time we find ourselves helpless in knowing what is happening at all in this world, and why we are what we are.

The only thing that seems to be impinging upon us and has a direct effect upon our lives is a series of troubles, responsibilities, difficulties, problems and the like, which we confront every day. Even if we are daily confronting problems, responsibilities and troubles, many of us, educated though we may be, may not know what our problems are. People many a time complain of difficulties in life, but if we ask them to make a list of all their difficulties, they will not be able to make a list. There is a chaos even in thinking about one's daily confrontations. "What are your problems, sir, about which you are daily complaining? Tell me all your problems. How many are they?" It will be very difficult to enumerate these problems. Even those problems which we are facing daily with open eyes do not seem to be very clear to our minds.

Our ancient seers and masters have boiled down all these problems, or confrontations, in life into three categories: troubles that arise from within our own selves, troubles that arise from people and living beings outside, and troubles that arise from sources which are usually called celestial in their nature, such as cataclysms, drought, earthquakes and thunderstorms. By 'celestial', we do not mean actually coming from the gods in heaven, but coming from that which is above our normal ken of operations.

If you would not mind me using one or two Sanskrit words, I may tell you how these ancient masters have designated these problems. Troubles that arise from within our own selves are called *adhyatma*. Here *atma* means one's own self, whatever be the concept of our self. The so-called 'me' is called *atma*. We have problems arising from our own self. We have a headache, stomach trouble, indigestion, fatigue, fever; we have mental disturbance, are worried, have emotional tension and sleeplessness. All these may be considered as problems arising from one's own self. They are called *adhyatmika* problems, or psychophysical problems. *Adhyatmika* may be translated as psychophysical: arising from the mind and body.

There is another major problem involved in our personal life, which is the death of this body, which we may not categorise with these well-known problems. This body has to be cast off one day. That is the greatest problem, we may say, among all other problems considered in total. The worst problem is the event of our impending death in this world, which is unavoidable. Whether one is good or bad, high or low, rich or poor, everybody has to go. As the poet tells us, "Sceptre and crown must tumble down, and in the dust

be equal made.” We will not know the difference between this and that when death takes place. And it can take place any day. This also is a very serious matter before us.

We have other problems, such as problems from people. We say, “See how people are behaving!” There is political tension, social tension, communal tension, animosity, hatred, quarrelling, war. These troubles that arise from outside are called *adhibhautika*—socio-physical, we may say. The first one was psychophysical; this is socio-physical. Here the word ‘physical’ may include political, communal, and so on.

The third variety of trouble is what I mentioned earlier. We do not know when it will rain; and when it rains, it may come with unexpected force. Or rain may not come. We complain of drought, famine, and so on. All events in the world have been classified into this threefold enumeration of human confrontation.

In this predicament of our having to face a threefold responsibility, what are we going to do? If we just casually look at this situation with our mental eye, we will find that we will not be able to take even one step forward. There is nothing that we can do. We may feel that we are totally helpless in this matter. But, we also have something in us which oftentimes tells us that things are not as bad as they appear. If everything is utterly meaningless, chaotic and helpless, we will not be able to lift a finger and will not have any impulse to do anything in this world. If everything is a chaos, what can we do?

Together with this particular level of our psyche which tells us that things are almost beyond our control, there is another element in us—a part of our psyche itself, we may say—which tells us that there is always a hope for the future. Among many other types of hope

that we entertain in this world, one of the most intriguing hopes is that we are not going to die tomorrow, though there is no saying as to why we feel like that. Who told us that tomorrow is not our last day? But let anybody say anything; we think: "I know very well that it cannot be tomorrow." Who is telling us that it cannot be tomorrow? This is the higher aspect of our personality, which lifts us above the involved consciousness, the mind that is involved in phenomena, to which I made a brief reference.

We have, as it is said, a lower nature and also a higher nature. The lower nature makes us feel that we are puppets among people. "What can I do in this vast sea of humanity? I am one among many; I can do nothing. Problems are manifold, and I am single." This is the lower nature speaking. The frailty of the physical body, the ignorance of the mind, and the finitude of individuality itself in the midst of a large society of people—this consciousness of ours is actually our lower nature saying that we are just small units in this world of humanity, of nature as a whole.

Do we not we feel very helpless and small before this vast astronomical universe? Look at the sun and the moon and the stars; look at this vast sky. No one knows where it ends, where it begins. Astronomy and physics tell us that because the universe is expanding, the stars are receding and are rushing into outer space at an incalculable speed, with a distance between them which is measured in what are called light years. The speed of light is 186,000 miles per second, and the distance light travels with this speed for one year is one light year. And millions of light years—enough to make us feel giddy even by thinking about this—such is the distance, they say, that obtains between the stars, which seem to be studded in the sky like diamonds before our naked

eyes. What are we before these things? We are very small creatures crawling on the surface of the Earth, and the Earth is considered to be a very tiny dot in the galaxy, even among the planets in the solar system. Everywhere we seem to be cornered from all sides, and we seem to be nothing before the might of the astronomical universe and the sea of humanity around us. Is this our fate, finally? Sometimes we feel that it is. Nothing can be done before this mighty universe. It is beyond us. All things are above us and beyond us. Uncontrollable is this whole situation, astronomical as well as social.

But there is, as I mentioned, a higher nature in us which tells us that we can conquer nature. We want to probe into the mysteries of existence; we want to control mankind; we would even like to become the emperor of the whole Earth, if we can. Practically, it seems not to be a possibility, but there is a feeling inside that it can happen. "I can rule this whole world, under given conditions. I can control the phenomena of nature by certain operations, by investigations, by experiments and observations. I can overcome the world, control it, master it, harness it, and use it." Such desires are also in our minds. So we seem to be double personalities—sinking, as it were, on the one side, and raising ourselves to incredible heights on the other side. We are small and big at the same time. We are finite, and we are also infinite.

This is an introductory presentation of the circumstances of life in which we seem to be involved. All this has to be probed into very thoroughly. The structure of these situations, as well as the causes of these phenomena, have to be studied. This investigative process, this in-depth analysis of the human situation, is called philosophical study. Philosophy does not mean

any particular doctrine or school of thought, as you may imagine or might have been told. Philosophy is not a school of thought of a particular historical occasion or time. It is the attempt of the mind to probe into the causes of events in the world, of circumstances of every kind. This is the attitude of philosophy.

The ancient masters have taken time to go deep into this circumstance of life, and took the initial step with what one can consider as the immediate fact of life. You have heard that there is a thing called yoga. Yoga actually means union with the fact of life. Without going into technological jargon, briefly and simply we may define yoga as union with the fact of life. Now, what that fact of life is, it is up to you to find out. Or, we may say, union with reality in every degree of its manifestation is yoga. You have to be in union with every fact of life and every degree of reality, if possible at all times, at every time. This is the purpose of yoga.

Now, let us take into consideration the immediate fact of life, which seems to be before us as an indubitable presentation about which you have no doubt at all. I am taking you to a peculiar mental operation where you have to concentrate your mind carefully. When it is said 'a fact of life' or 'a reality of life', which meaning is etymologically and grammatically clear before you, what is actually meant? A thing about which you have no doubt at all may be regarded as a fact. If something is dubious and uncertain, that cannot be categorised as a fact because it may not be a fact, inasmuch as you have a doubt about it. Is there anything at all in this world about which you have no doubt? People say this world exists; some people say this world does not exist as it appears before our eyes. People say that things are very bad; some people say, no, they appear to be bad but there is

something else behind it. All kinds of things are told historically, economically, geographically, geologically, astronomically, and so on. As science advances, the previous discoveries are cast out as not facts. Centuries of scientific advancement have passed, and we find that even great scientists such as Newton are considered as not having touched the vitality of life.

Every day we discard the previous discoveries that we considered as facts and replace them with other facts. A fact that can be cast away as no longer being a fact cannot be regarded as fact at all. A transitory fact is no fact. It must be there permanently. It should be there always, and we can never raise a question about it; only then can it be considered as a fact. Such a fact, what is it? The entire world, which is moving in the process of evolution and casting away earlier shapes of its circumstance for the sake of newer ones, cannot itself be considered as a fact—because it moves. Anything that is in transition cannot be regarded as an ultimate fact. So is human history, which is a river moving forward, as it were. History moves onward and forward with all its ups and downs and vicissitudes. These are all enigmas before you. But there is something about which you seem to be very clear, and you do not have any doubt. Do you exist, or have you any doubt even about your existence? Let the world be there, let the world not be there. Let people be there or not. Do you exist? Yes.

There are some people who call themselves sceptics; they doubt everything. A question is raised in philosophical circles: Can the doubter doubt that he is existing? I met a Buddhist theologian who said, "Yes, I even doubt that I exist. I am not even sure that I am existing." He carried his scepticism to the breaking point. Then a question again arises: Do you doubt that you have a doubt about your existence? There the

questioner has to close his mouth. You cannot doubt that you are doubting your existence because then the doubt gets cancelled. So the sceptic cuts the ground from under his own feet. There is something about which you are not in doubt. The point is that you certainly exist and, as I mentioned, you cannot doubt that fact because if you doubt it, you are doubting the very fact of doubt itself. Hence, accept that you are existing: "In this matter, there is no doubt. I do exist."

Now, what kind of 'I' is it that exists? When you say "I exist", what kind of 'I' is this? Mr. so-and-so, Mrs. so-and-so, this brother, this sister, this boss, this subordinate, this rich man, this poor man—is this the 'I' to which you are making reference when you say "I do exist"? When a merchant says "I exist", he does not mean that his richness exists, because his richness may not always exist. The same applies to other associations with oneself. You cannot define yourself in terms of associations and qualifications, because they may be there or they may not be there. Minus all associations and relations, you can be. If everything goes and nothing exists, you will be there. What kind of 'you' is this? The immediate prosaic answer would be: "This me, this I that seems to be undoubtedly there is this five-foot or six-foot tall, two-foot wide physical personality. This is what I can consider as me, for all practical purposes—this me which I can see with my own eyes, which you can also see with your eyes. This physical body of mine which has dimension and weight, this material substance which I can touch and sense, is what I can call myself. What else can I say about myself?"

Go a little deeper into this matter. Is it true that you are this physical body? Because you cannot visualise anything else in you except this body, you say, "There cannot be anything else to me." Do you mean to say that

this 'me', this 'I', is the total aggregate of the limbs of this physical body? The answer will be, "Yes. These hands and feet, this nose, these eyes, these lungs, this heart, this flesh, bone, marrow, and so on—all this put together in a proportion is me. I am all these things assembled in a particular way." Are you sure that this is the answer to your question? The first answer is, "Yes, what else? I am this conglomeration of the physical elements."

If some limbs are not there, some part of 'me' will not be there. Is it true? There are people without legs. Are they a little less in their 'me' or 'I', in comparison with those who have two legs? Suppose there is a person who has no legs and no arms; a large percentage of 'me' has gone away. Ask him, "Are you wholly existing, or only partially?" He will say, "I am whole." He will not say, "I am a half man." The limbless person is not a half person; he is a whole person. How is it possible? If all the limbs are necessary to make you feel whole, how can limbless people feel that they are whole? Legless and armless, fifty percent has gone; he should feel that he is only fifty percent, and not a whole person. But that is not so. If fifty percent of the body is not there due to amputation or some accident, the person is still whole. What do you mean by this feeling of wholeness? "I am full, sir." He is as great a person as any person who has all his limbs intact.

Do you agree that there is a defect in your definition of the personality as just this body with all the limbs? You have to think thrice before saying anything further. "So, 'I', this 'me', does not seem to be merely a conglomeration of these limbs of the body, because even without them I seem to be existing. But what is this 'I'? The personality itself is in doubt. In the beginning, I thought everything was clear to me. Now I

am feeling that there is some mistake because I have analysed this situation a little further and feel that even if fifty percent of the physical body has gone, I will still be whole.” How is this possible? How could you be whole, when half of you has gone? Is it not a contradiction? “Maybe, but still I am whole.”

Ancient thinkers, philosophers, masters and sages have analysed this situation further. You cannot easily answer this question as to why you feel whole in spite of some percentage of the body having gone. The analysis conducted is in terms of certain experiences through which you are passing. What are the experiences through which you are passing? In waking life, you have an externality consciousness. But you are not always in the waking condition. You also go to sleep and dream. When you dream, you have a consciousness, just as you have a consciousness in waking. But there is a difference. The sense organs—the eyes, ears, etc.—are active in waking life; they are not active in dream. In dream, the physical body is not an object of your consciousness. You are not aware that you have a body, yet you are aware of something.

Now, think of this situation. Are you existing in the state of dream? Certainly. Are you existing with body-consciousness, or minus it? You are totally bereft of body-consciousness. In the beginning, you thought that this body is ‘you’ because there was nothing else that you can say about your body. Then it became a matter of doubt because you felt that the body does not seem to be the entire ‘me’, because even if you are bereft of certain limbs, you seem to be whole. And now you are in a third predicament—that you seem to be capable of existing even without being conscious of the body. Why? Because in dream, which is a state of existence, which is also a

state of consciousness, you are totally free from association with the physical body.

The third conclusion is, you can exist minus consciousness of the body and minus consciousness of your wealth, property, relations, family, circumstances, and so on. In ordinary life you identify yourself with family, political conditions, etc., and you get mixed up with them to such an extent that you are always thinking of yourself as a father, mother, husband, wife, etc. You have no other definition of yourself. But in the dream state, these associations are severed; you can exist independently, minus these associations—minus even the body. In the state of dream, you are existing even without the body. What is it that is existing in dream? It is a mental operation. You are existing as a psyche, rather than as a body. Let us take for granted that you are the psyche—that you are more a mind than a body. Let us come to this conclusion. Are you sure? It is clear that you can exist only as a mind, minus the body, because it is seen in dream. Now go deeper.

When you are fast asleep, what happens to the mind? It does not think. It sees nothing. There is no consciousness whatsoever of anything at all when you are fast asleep—no body, no social relations, not even the mind. Now, think of this situation again. In the state of deep sleep, you exist, isn't it? Certainly you do exist in sleep, minus associations of every kind. You are not a president, a minister, a rich man, a boss, a husband or a wife. You are not anything—not even the body, not even the mind. Did you exist in deep sleep? How do you know that you existed in deep sleep? Who told you? Are you verifying this by comparing your experience with somebody else's? Did you wake up in the morning and ask somebody: "Did I really exist yesterday?" No, you do not put questions like that. You do not have to verify by

any kind of experiment whether you really existed in sleep. But without any kind of verifiable medium, how did you come to know that you did exist in sleep when you had no consciousness of existing? Minus consciousness, there is no experience. You had no experience at all in the state of sleep—no consciousness. What makes you feel that you existed there? Who told you?

Now here is a further analytical process, which is psychological and philosophical. You may say, "I know that I did exist in the state of sleep by the memory that I have. Yesterday I existed, and I had a very good sleep." People say, "I had a very good sleep." Who makes this statement? Mr. so-and-so? That Mr. so-and-so was not there; he was totally dissociated from what existed in the state of deep sleep. Who is saying that they had a memory of sleep? Tell me, what do you mean by memory? You use the word 'memory': a recollection. What does it mean?

Memory is a consequence that follows as an aftermath of a conscious experience. If you have no experience, there will be no memory afterwards. That means to say, in order to have a memory of having slept and having existed in the state of deep sleep, you must have had some experience in that state. Minus experience, how could you have any memory? You would be like a brick. A brick does not remember anything. But you are not like a brick in the state of deep sleep. Though you look like a brick for all practical purposes, it does not seem to be like that because if that were the case, there would be no memory. Were you having an experience in the state of sleep? At that time, you cannot say that you had any experience, because experience minus consciousness is unthinkable, and there was no consciousness. Therefore, you can say you

had no experience. But if that is the case, there is no memory. Again you are in a contradiction here. Somehow or other there seems to have been some sort of an experience even in the state of that total unconsciousness which is sleep—but for which, there would have been no memory afterwards. What experience were you having in the state of deep sleep? It was not an experience of body, not of mind, not of any kind of external social relation; it was just existence. What kind of existence? The existence in the state of deep sleep was free from associations of every kind. See how some great truth comes out from this little analysis.

Were you very happy in sleep, or very unhappy? Even an unhappy person wakes up with happiness after sleeping. Even if there is a wound which is giving agonising pain, you feel a little refreshed after a good sleep. The joy of sleep is incomparable, as everyone knows. The restfulness, the blissfulness and the composure that you feel in the state of deep sleep is incomparable. It cannot be compared with any kind of happiness that you can think of in this world—which means to say, you can be happy without any relation with anything, if the time for it comes. Not only can you be happy without any relation with things, it is the greatest happiness. Other types of happiness are elusive; they can run away from you any day. There can be bereavement of causes that appear to be giving you satisfaction in life. But here is something which will not leave you.

This is an incidental, secondary matter. We shall not touch upon it just now. The point is that you had a kind of peculiar existence-consciousness, we may say, though you cannot verify it by any method of observation. By inference of the circumstance of deep sleep, you can come to the conclusion because of the

memory following it that there must have been a state of consciousness; otherwise, memory cannot be explained. You existed, pure and simple, a bare fact of being, unrelated to circumstances outside—not even related to space and time, let alone other things.

Again, listen to me carefully. You had a consciousness in the state of deep sleep. You cannot say that there was anything else. “I have a consciousness that I slept.” At that time, did you have a consciousness of anything other than the fact of having slept? No, there was no consciousness of anything else. There was no consciousness of the world of space and time and objects. “It was only a consciousness of my having been there. There was no other consciousness.” Your consciousness of having been there means a consciousness of your existence. What was it that was there in the state of deep sleep? Consciousness of existence: existence which was conscious of itself. Do not allow the mind to slip away from this fact that you existed as existence which was conscious of itself, that only consciousness was existing.

Now, I will use two other Sanskrit words. In Sanskrit, Existence, Pure Being, is called Sat, and Consciousness is called Chit. In Sanskrit philosophical terminology it is said that you were in the state of deep sleep as Sat-chit, Existence-Consciousness. Inasmuch as you were also happy, you were also associated with Ananda. So what was your state? Sat-chit-ananda is the Sanskrit definition of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. You were existing as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. Sat is not existence of something; it is pure, unadulterated, featureless, transparent Existence. Chit is not consciousness of something, but is Consciousness of Existence only, so it is not an objective consciousness. It is unrelated Consciousness, pure and simple.

Unrelated Consciousness is something worth considering. You may ask, “What is the meaning of unrelated Consciousness? I have never heard of such a thing, because all consciousness is related to something—related to the world outside, to people outside, to this body, to this mind.”

We have abrogated all these associations; now we have come to the conclusion that we seem to be something fantastic, and not as we thought ourselves to be. “I never knew that I am like this! I am not a bundle of social relations—not even this body and mind. I seem to be something which I never thought myself to be. This is a great discovery of myself.” It is featureless, unrelated Existence which is conscious of itself—conscious of only itself, not conscious of something else. It is pure Existence, pure Consciousness, pure Bliss, unrelated to anything else. “Wonderful! This is me!”

‘Unrelated’ means not having anything external to it. Anything that has no externality also has no relativity. Therefore, we call it absolute. It is absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss—not related consciousness, related bliss, etc. Incidentally, anything that is absolute, which is not relative, is also timeless. Eternity was scintillating in you when you were in deep sleep, of which you are not aware. This fact has to be investigated further, and deeper. Let us see how we can do it.

Chapter 2

THE INDIVIDUAL AND CREATION

It was concluded that the essence, the true being or the reality of an individual is something quite different from what it appears to be on the surface to the perception of the naked eye. We do not seem to be what we appear to be. All our perceptions in the world seem to be misguided, far removed from the facts that govern life as such. We landed on the conclusion that we can exist independent of every kind of relation, which we actually do when we are in the state of deep sleep.

We are under the impression that relations are important; and life is nothing but a bundle of relationships. Whenever we define ourselves or describe conditions in life, we express ourselves in terms of relations, connections, associations, and that is how we understand life. We think that life has no meaning if it is not related to something that appears to be externally dovetailed to it. By analysis, we now understand that this is not the case. We have an independence of our own, a personality that can stand on its own legs. It is not always essential for a person to be hanging on somebody else for his ultimate survival, though it looks as if we cannot exist without depending on external factors. It was also noted that this dual aspect of our personality is due to our involvement in phenomenal relations on the one hand and, on the other hand, our being totally free from every kind of relation.

We have, as it is philosophically said, an empirical side and also a transcendental side. Empirically we are bound to the body, to human relations and to natural circumstances; transcendentally we are absolutely free.

This transcendent freedom that is at the root of our being is the hope of our life. Our aspirations, rocketing up to the skies, can be explained only in terms of a transcendent reality that we seem to really be. Otherwise, our long-stretched aspirations have no meaning. They cannot even be conceived.

The desire to live as long as possible, even for hundreds of years if it is practicable, can be explained only if we are free from time. A person bound to time cannot aspire for a timeless longevity or a durationless existence. Because of the involvement in the time process, we seem to be decaying and heading towards death. But because there is something in us which is not so involved in time, we hope for a better future, though we do not know where that future is and what kind of future it is.

There is both an infinity of longing and an endless, durationless desire working together at the same time, telling us that we are not bleating sheep but powerful lions with immense strength. But the mind is a trickster, about which we shall study a little later in our course of discussions. All this put together leads us to the conclusion that we are essentially independent existence, free from empirical relations. This was noticed in the state of deep sleep, and we did exist there in a more pleasant way than in any other empirical condition of waking life.

Again, please remember all the processes we discussed earlier. These things that we are discussing are not just information that is poured on your heads, but something which will benefit you in your practical existence in this world—which will mould you, and make you something superb and novel. If you could exist merely as a kind of consciousness, which was the case in sleep, this has to be deeply pondered over. What

could have been the nature of that consciousness? What is meant by 'consciousness'?

Psychologically speaking, consciousness can be defined as a subjectivity that is aware of something. The pure subjectivity in us, which we experience in the state of deep sleep, is aware of something. We are aware of something now in the waking state, but this awareness in the waking condition is not of our subjectivity. We think very little of our own personality in our day-to-day existence; we think mostly of things outside. Just imagine what you are thinking from morning to evening. Do you go on thinking of yourself? You think only that which is not you—things outside. But in the state of deep sleep, the reverse process takes place. All that importance that you attach to the outside world is severed from your experience, and you are what you are; you stand by yourself. In ordinary waking life, you are involved in things which are not you, but in the state of deep sleep, you are only in yourself.

Would it be good to be in yourself, or would it be good to be not in yourself? This is a great question. Would you like to always be other than what you are, or would you like to be what you are? Certainly, you would not like to lose yourself in contemplating that which you are not, because all contemplations on that which you are not imply a loss of yourself. The more you think of objects outside, the more you have lost yourself. Therefore, misery rains upon you. The more you think of things outside—persons, the world, etc., and involvements of every kind—the more is the loss of your personality, the larger is the world for you, and the smaller you are at that time. Unless you are very small, the world does not look big. Your feeling of smallness is proportionately related to the bigness of the universe. The more astounding and inscrutable is this universe

before you, striking marvel in your mind, the more you feel finite at that time. Is this the case?

It has been noticed that a thoroughgoing analysis of the nature of consciousness in our deep sleep will give an answer to this question. Are we puppet-like in this world? The most difficult thing in the world is to understand one's own self. Great seers have proclaimed: "Know thyself and be free." You will be wondering, "How can I be free by knowing myself?" Most people think that they know themselves very well. Don't you know who you are? You will reply, "Yes, I know myself very well." You have a passport description of your personality. You may ask, "How can I consider myself as free? The passport itself is a bondage, so what do you mean by gaining freedom by knowing one's own self?" Here is a metaphysical quandary before you. You will find that this is difficult to understand. "What are you telling us? Can I be free by being myself?" This is because a little shadow of your original wrong notion of yourself still persists. You seem to be carrying your finite psychophysical definition of yourself even to the description of the state of deep sleep when you feel doubtful about what this freedom of "I am just what I am" could be. However much you may go deep into this matter philosophically, you will find that a psychological difficulty persists. The persistence of this difficulty is due to the mind interpreting transcendental matters—the mind that is involved in space, time and relations.

You have to listen to me carefully here again. The mind that is involved in space, time and relations is trying to understand that which is not involved in that way. So in the early stages, it looks like a difficulty and a contradiction. The involvement of the mind in external relations is so profound that you seem to be incapable

of thinking in any other manner at all. Even if you agree for the time being that your essential nature is pure Existence-Consciousness, when you start thinking of it, you wrongly locate it somewhere.

Do you not feel that this Existence-Consciousness is in you? But this is a wrong definition of yourself. In the state of deep sleep, you are not inside yourself; you are just what you are. So, do not say that Consciousness is inside you. There is no insideness there; it is just what you are. Difficult it is to conceive this. The Existence that you are, the unrelated Being that you are, the pure Consciousness that you are in the state of deep sleep is not something inside you, as if you are outside it. So do not make the mistake of juxtaposing a wrongly related psychophysical individuality with that which you really are.

The whole point is, we cannot get out of this clutch of psychophysical involvement, however much we may try. And where doubt persists, a kind of fear also persists simultaneously. Whenever there is doubt, there is also fear: "Where am I heading?" Here, a very subtle investigative approach is called for. Yoga philosophy and psychology tell us that an impure mind cannot study this subject. A mind full of desires, with suppressed emotions, torn feelings, internally non-aligned—persons with such a mind are not in a position to understand this subtlety.

In the Yoga System of Patanjali, it is mentioned again and again that the mind has to be purified before it embarks upon investigations of this kind, because you are trying to rise above yourself, together with an attempt to rise above the world. This attempt will not end in success if you are already involved in the world and very much fond of yourself as a body and a

personality, and loves and hates tear you apart day in and day out.

Every yoga student is, to some extent at least, a sincere, honest, purified mind, with no muddle in the conscience. There should be nothing in your conscience that pricks you. You should be very clear that your search is honest, it is one hundred percent sincere, and you are not just making a joke with it. If this sincerity is at the back of your pursuit, you shall certainly be able to achieve your purpose.

This Consciousness which is Existence, which is what you are basically, is not somewhere. This also is an important thing to remember. Where is this Consciousness that you are? Is it lying on the bed when you are sleeping? Is the Consciousness just as wide as the cot on which you are sleeping? The mind may say "Yes, it is so", but it is not so. The Consciousness is not sleeping; the sleeper is somebody else. You cannot locate Consciousness in space and time, because Consciousness is that which is conscious of space and time. Therefore, it cannot be involved in space and time. Space and time are objects of Consciousness. How do you know that there is space, time or objects? The knower cannot be involved in that which is known. If the knower is involved in the known, there cannot be knowledge of the known.

Now we have drawn another conclusion: This Consciousness that we are is not involved in space, not involved in time, and not involved in any kind of physical or external relation, merely because of the fact that if such involvement has taken place, the awareness of there being such things would not be there. If Consciousness is not involved in space, it is spaceless. If it is spaceless, it is dimensionless. If it is dimensionless, it does not have a location. For the purpose of our

understanding at present, it would be everywhere. That which is not located in space is spaceless, dimensionless. We may say it is infinitude. Are we all-pervading in our basic essence? Is this not an astounding, wonder-striking, unbelievable conclusion? You will say, "I was thinking that I am only a little person somewhere, living in a little room. Am I something more than this?" This is a great solace. This message of yoga, this message of Vedanta, this message of the ancient masters is a solace to us when we appear to be sinking in this world of problems galore.

If this is the case, then our entire attitude to life changes. How would we live in this world of persons and things if this is our real nature? The conclusion that follows from this analysis will be clear to each one of you. You will not be a person afterwards; you may perhaps be called super-persons. Persons who have transcended the consciousness of personality and are able to live a super-personal existence are called super-human beings—super-men, super-persons, super-individuals.

To think this, to be brooding over this, to be conscious only of this, is the greatest spiritual meditation that you can think of. No meditation is greater than this. What is it that you are thinking? The mind will shudder with a fear of its being lost in this vast ocean of a discovery that it cannot contain within itself. It is like an ocean entering a little pot; the pot will not be there anymore. Infinity seems to have entered this finitude of human individuality. This vast world of perception is a universal object, as it were, presented to this universal Consciousness.

The seer of this world is not a person. We have already come to the conclusion that you, as a seer of this world, are, in your own roots, a universal

comprehensiveness, but you look like a little individuality because this essential universality of Consciousness has been locked up within the little prison of this body conditioned by the sense organs, and the whole sea of Consciousness is peeping through these apertures of the sense organs and seeing itself in the world of objects—as it happens in dream, for instance. The big things that you see in the dream world—space, time, mountains, rivers, sun, moon, stars, everything seen in dream—are presented outside. They seem to be as much external as the world is in waking life. But what is this mountain in dream made of? Is it a physical substance? You can touch it. You can hit your head against a wall even in dream. You can feel hunger and thirst. What are these substances in dream made of? You may say this world is made of physical substances, hard material. What is the material out of which the dream object is made? It is made of mind-stuff, psychic essence. If the mind is not to be identified with matter, then the world of dream also cannot be considered as a material perception. What we call dream is psyche perceiving psyche by externalising itself in a mode of alienation of its own psychic individuality.

We are told that, in this waking world also, a similar cosmic operation has taken place. As an individual psyche segregates itself into an objective substance in dream, in the process of creation the universal Consciousness segregates itself, as it were, as this vast cosmos. Thus, cosmically, creation has taken place and this world has come into being before us in the same way as individual operations take place in dream.

The process of the evolution of the universe is described in a series of categories, in a descending order, so that we may be able to recognise our placement, our

relationship with this world of perception. Where are we located? In what place in this world of vast dimensions are we, actually? In the dream world, where we observe a dream world in front of us, where are we located? Are we in some place? It looks as if we are in some place because the perceiving psyche, the dreamer, is naturally in the dream world, and is located in the same fashion as the waking individual is while perceiving the world outside. Yet, the truth is different. The perceiving individual, the dreamer, is involved in the psychic operation of its split into the seer and the seen, so that the idea of the location of the dreamer being in one particular place is another miscalculation of the psyche.

In a similar manner, a miscalculation has taken place when we observe a world that is totally outside, as it were, while it cannot be outside under the circumstances we have discussed just now. Scriptures, which are the authority before us for understanding the process of evolution, tell us that the manifestation of the universe is a centralisation of universal Consciousness as a potential for manifestation, just as the dream world is a manifestation of a potential of the psyche to so manifest itself. We may even say it is a desire. The potential for the manifestation of this vast universe is a pressure point of a universal character, manifesting itself everywhere like a vibration. It is a tremendous occurrence, which we cannot conceive in our minds at present. It is something like what scientists call the Big Bang. Let it be a big bang or a small bang; something took place. How did it take place?

Actually, that state of the universe which was prior to what scientists refer to as the occurrence of the Big Bang was not a solid substance; it was nothing but a vibration. We cannot understand what a vibration is. It is subtler than even electricity. Electricity is a gross

form of vibration, a potentiality for some occurrence. That is all we can say about it. The potentiality suddenly manifests itself as a condition prior to creation, which is called space, in the same way as it happens in dream. To be able to perceive a dream object, there must also be a dream space. The objects in dream cannot appear to be outside unless there is a dream space. If the space is not there, no object can be there, and there will be no dream. If there is no dream space, which goes together with dream time, we will see nothing. So we are told that a vacuous atmosphere, as it were, was cosmically created. As in dream the waking subject ceases to be for the time being and divides itself into the condition of the dreaming subject and the dreaming object, the universal Consciousness alienates itself, as it were, by ceasing to be itself for the time being, in an apparently created vacuum called space, for the purpose of the manifestation of a futurity which is the physical universe, just like dream. The difference is, one is individual and the other is cosmic.

The solidity of the objects that we perceive through the sense organs is the consequence of their being located in an atmosphere outside. Anything that is external to Consciousness looks material and solid. The universal Consciousness alienates itself. "God created the world," say the scriptures. What was the material out of which He created the world? Was it iron and steel, brick and mortar? What is the substance out of which this world was made?

This question has led to one hundred answers in various religious parlances; and the more we think of it, the more we wonder at the structure of this creation. If the universal Consciousness is the only existence finally, how could it create the world out of a material outside itself? The Vedas and the Upanishads tell us

that God Consciousness, universal Consciousness, materialised itself spatially and temporally, as it were, in a cosmic fashion and appeared as this cosmos, as our own mind manifests itself as this body.

There are stages of this condensation of Consciousness into the apparent diversity of creation. It is not a sudden creation of diversity. It is a graduated, step-by-step delimitation of Universality into lesser and lesser forms of itself until it becomes a little individual, down to the atom. But in all these processes of delimitation of the universal Consciousness in the process of creation, the pure Selfhood is not lost sight of. Everyone, everything, every state and every degree of reality maintains an identity of itself.

We will not be able to understand what this conscious-ness of self-identity is unless we refer to our own selves. You maintain an identity of yourself. You are a self-identical individual: "I am what I am." The vehemence with which you assert your self-identity is characteristic of every so-called individuality in this world. Even an atom is an individual by itself. It maintains its self-identity. It has a nucleus, it has space-time inside it, and it is a solar system by itself. It is a world. One atom cannot become another atom; it is just what it is. It can collide and it can bond with another, but it cannot be other than what it is.

Would you like to be another person, or would you like to be just the person you are? The loss of self is the greatest loss, and so every individual in creation maintains its identity of wholeness. Hence, the manifestation of things is actually the manifestation of lesser and lesser wholes from the ultimate Whole—which is a real whole, and not a conditioned whole. We are all conditioned wholes. Our personality is a whole by itself. We are not fractions. We think: "I am not half

an individual, or one-fourth of a person. I am full." But there are other 'fulls'—namely, other persons and other things in this world. So this wholeness that one feels in oneself as an individual is a conditioned wholeness; it is not unconditioned. It is conditioned by the existence of other wholes.

People say, "I am a free person." Naturally, we have some freedom. But we are not wholly free, because if we were wholly free, absolutely free, there would be no freedom for other people in the world; we would be depriving them of their freedom. Each individual has a tendency to manifest its own freedom to the extent of its own wholeness of personality. We have only conditioned, limited, sanctioned, licensed freedom, but not total freedom. Total freedom is only in that condition of wholeness where there is no conditioning of the wholeness.

The theory of creation brings us to the daylight of the fact that the Universal, or God—the Ultimate Absolute, which is the final Whole—delimits itself into smaller and smaller wholes. Another example of how this could be is the way in which our physical body is made. This body is one compact whole, as it were, as it appears to be. We do not feel that we are little pieces clubbed together into a mass that we call the body. Nevertheless, we are not one indivisible mass. This body is made up of tiny cells. The cells are joined together with such force of cohesiveness that it looks as if we are one compact whole. There is a cementing element which brings these cells into a tremendous cohesiveness, an apparent indivisibility, which is the reason why we feel that we are one whole; otherwise, we are houses made up of little bricks. Do we not think that this building is one single, solid mass? It looks like that, but it is made up of small bricks kept one over the

other and held in position by certain other structural items such as iron rods, etc. It is not one mass.

In the same way as little wholes such as the cells in our body can join together to give the impression of a larger whole which is this physical personality, so is everything in the world. The reason why this wholeness is felt even in a conditioned existence is the pervasion of the universal Consciousness. So, the transcendent is also immanent. We are not little cells. We are not any one of the cells, though we are all the cells. You may ask, "How do I come to the conclusion that I am all the cells, though each cell is different from the other? Is it not a contradiction in thought itself? How can many things create a sensation of oneness?"

Do we not feel that we are one? Or do we feel like a bundle of little things moving on the surface of the Earth? This indivisible Consciousness, which is Universality in our essential being, is the reason why we feel this totalness, the holism in our own individuality, while actually there are little wholes of which we are made. So the entire creation, the whole universe, is apparently diverse, but basically it is a unity. It is a manyness in a singleness.

The Veda mantra tells us: *ekam sād vīprā bahudhā vadanty* (R.V. 1.164.46). Great sages tell us that One Reality is parading, as it were, masquerading in this form of a variety of things. This manifoldness of the universe, this perception of variety of any kind, inwardly or outside, is a drama played by Consciousness. The whole universe is an enactment of this universal Consciousness. It is a play. If we can witness this drama as a director thereof, we will enjoy it. But if we are involved in it, we will see it piecemeal. The total will not be seen.

The universe of creation is, to repeat once again, a descending order of finite wholes, starting from space and then coming down to the elements of air, fire, water, earth, down to the little physical elements, to the atom. This whole cosmos is, for the purpose of visible perception, a physicality and a solidity—as we see, of course. But inside, this solid world is made up of subtle potentials. The entire physical universe is called *bhautika prapancha*. Inside this physical universe are subtle potentials, like electric energies, called *tanmatras*. *Tanmatra* is a Sanskrit term indicating a cosmic vibration taking place inside the physical universe, a vibration solidifying itself into this visible form.

Subtler still, inconceivable, is the space-time relation. The most difficult thing to understand is the relation of things to space and time. We mostly feel that we are inside space and inside time. Newtonian physics said that the world is contained in space and time as glass globules are contained in a soda bottle. As things are inside a basket, or materials can be inside a cup or a vase, Newtonian physics thought that the physical universe is inside space and time.

But later developments of science tell us that the world is not inside space and time. It is itself space and time, solidified, and externalised by a kind of causal relationship. The great dictum of the Vedas and the Upanishads coincides with the modern theories of physics—relativity, quantum, and so on. The most exteriorised materialism of physics has, fortunately for us, landed itself on the lap of the Upanishadic dictum of there being only one Absolute. We shall consider this further in the next session.

Chapter 3

YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

The conclusion that we drew was that our basic reality is Consciousness. Inasmuch as its characteristic precludes any division within itself, and also precludes the existence of anything that is outside itself, it follows that Consciousness should be universal in its nature. That is to say, it is all-pervading, and there is no point in space where it is not. It has to be so, because if it were not so—if there had been an internal variety in Consciousness, or an external division or relationship of any kind—there would be nobody to know that there is such a division inside or outside, because the knower is Consciousness only. If Consciousness has a division within it, if it is partite, if there is one part of Consciousness differentiated from another part, if between two parts there is some gap which is not Consciousness, who will be able to know that there is such a gap? Consciousness alone can know that there is a division within itself. The consciousness of there being such a gap between two parts of itself would imply its presence even in the gap itself; and so, the gap gets abolished.

So is the case with external relation. There is no internal division and external relation for Consciousness. It just is. We defined it as pure Sat—pure Existence, pure Being—and, as it is aware of itself, we called it Sat-chit; and inasmuch as it is utter freedom from trammels of every kind, it is Ananda, Bliss. The Supreme Reality, therefore, is Sat-chit-ananda. It is not some particular location; it is not a thing; it is not a

person. It is a definition of that ubiquitous Absolute Being.

If this is the nature of Reality, how is it that we are seeing something in the form of a world outside, as if there is a division between the seer and the seen? Our philosophical or analytical conclusion is that in conscious perception there should not be a division. Consciousness cannot become an object of its own self, nor can there be an object outside itself. Such being the case, how are we to explain this world experience which seems to be a contradiction of the nature of Ultimate Being? Because of this contradiction between the nature of Ultimate Reality and our practical day-to-day experience, we call our experience *samsara*, or involvement in something that is not real.

Our perceptions contradict Reality. In what way do they contradict? The knowledge of this situation requires a little bit of insight into the nature of creation itself, of how the world came into being. If we know the process of the creation of the universe, which also includes the creation of our own selves, we will know, to some extent, where we stand in this world. Otherwise, we seem to be under the puerile impression, like children, that we are well off here on the surface of the Earth, in some locality, in some country, in some family, in some little cottage. This is the idea of our location, as far as people like us are concerned. Are we really located in such a prosaic manner as we seem to define ourselves? In this structure of creation, can we say our location is in a hut, in a little bungalow, on a little land? There seems to be something more about it than appears on the surface. There is a fundamental error in the process of human perception, or any kind of empirical perception.

In the process of creation, what is said to have taken place is a sudden split, as it appears to take place in the dream world. In dream, we have become the seer as well as the seen. Now we are in the state of waking. Our mind is integrated, we may say, because we have a total psychic operation. That is why we are sane, logical, sensible and intelligible. When we say our mind is perfectly in order, what we seem to mean is that there is no gap or split in the operation of the psyche. There is a perfect alignment of the parts of the psyche so that the psyche, or mind, becomes a wholesome, integrated operation.

This psyche of ours, which is so wholesome in waking, appears to become something other than what it is in the dream world. It can appear as a large mountain in front, with space, time, and so on. Who is the seer of this dream? It is the very same mind which has become the object. It also manufactures the process of perception, such as space and time. It is not just the segregation of the waking mind into the subjective side and the objective side; there is a third element of the possibility of perception of the objective world. There must be a connection between me and the object outside so that I may be aware that there is an object outside. This is very important. If a wall is in front of me, I must be able to know that there is a wall in front of me. How can I know it unless there is some kind of intelligible relation between me, between the so-called seeing mind, and the object outside? The wall is not inside my eyes. It is far away. How do I know that it is there? I can see even distant things without them being inside my eyes.

How people perceive things is a part of perceptual psychology. Mostly, the study of general psychology does not go deep into this matter. They do not wish to

be philosophical in their nature. Psychology is not philosophy—though, in India especially, philosophy and psychology are related to each other as inseparables; philosophy, religion and psychology go together. But in the West, they have been isolated. Religion is different from philosophy; philosophy is different from psychology. And even in psychology, we have general psychology, abnormal psychology, industrial psychology, experimental psychology, and so on.

The psychology of perception has an implication within it, namely, the intelligibility involved in the perception of an object outside. Let us take dream as a very clear example before us. How do we perceive the objective dream world? We will be surprised to realise that this waking mind, so-called, which is our true mind, has manufactured a peculiar dramatic circumstance in the dream world, where it is the director of the drama, the audience, the enacting process, and even the light on the stage. If there is no light on the stage, the performance will not be visible. That light is something which people do not notice, though without which, no perception is possible. When we are observing a dramatic performance, we do not go on looking at the light, though we know very well that without the light, nothing is possible. We are totally unaware of there being such a thing called light. We are absorbed in the objective enactment, and not in the condition that is precedent to the very enactment itself—namely, light.

Similarly, in the dream world, as it is in the waking world, we are so involved in the object outside and so engrossed in the value that we attach to that object, or the meaning that we seem to be seeing in it, that we have no time to go deeper into the very condition of this perception. How did this perception become possible at

all? The mind has become the subjective side, it has become the object of perception, and it has also become the intelligence connecting the subject with the object. This analogy of the dream phenomena will be a kind of explanation of what must have taken place, or what has taken place, as scriptures tell us, at the time of creation. We may compare our waking mind to a total absolute. For all our daily practical purposes, it is that. That totality of the absolute psyche of our waking condition has become the subjective side, the objective side, and also the link between the subject and the object.

The same thing has happened in a cosmic fashion. By analogy, we may transfer our psychology of dream perception to the psychology of cosmic universal perception. If we are to study this subject in terms of the statements of the scriptures, especially the Vedas and the Upanishads, we will gather that there was an impulse to divide, as the waking mind has an impulse to become an object in the dream world, whatever be the cause. Why dreams take place is a different subject, which we will not enter into now.

The impulse to divide an organic totality into subjective and objective sides is the cause of dream perception. This total cosmic impulse is, according to scriptures, the will of God. "Let there be this," and it is there immediately, by the very affirmation of the Will. "May I become other than what I am." The universe is the otherness of God, the self-alienation of the Absolute, the Supreme Being beholding Itself, as it were, through the mirror of space and time.

Place a mirror in front of you. Do you see yourself? Is it possible for a person to see one's own self? Can you become an object of your own self in perception? You know very well that in logical parlance, A cannot become B. That A is A is the law of identity, and that A

cannot be B is the law of contradiction. You cannot be something which is seen, because you are the seer. But in a mirror, you can see yourself. You have objectified yourself through a medium that makes it possible for you to behold yourself as an other than yourself.

Have you really become other than yourself? No. Remove the mirror, and the object is not there. The mirror of cosmic perception is the space-time-cause complex. Space is a name that we give to that intermediary vacuum or emptiness, as it were, which is necessary for alienating the subject into the object. Even in dream, space is necessary. The dream space is absolutely essential; otherwise, we will not see anything there. The space-time complex is the medium; it is the mirror through which the seeing mind beholds itself as if it is another.

God willed to be as if He is another. In the Purusha Sukta, and in certain other analogous mantras of the Vedas, the enunciation is made that all this universe of variety is the limbs of the Absolute. The Purusha Sukta begins by saying *sahasraśīrṣā puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt, sa bhūmim viśvato vṛtvā 'tyatiṣṭaddaśāgulam* (P.S. 1): The millionfold variety that is apparently visible as this universe is the head, the eyes, the hands and feet, the limbs of the Supreme Being. The Bhagavadgīta says the same thing in its Thirteenth Chapter. *Sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādam tat sarvato 'kṣi-śiro-mukham, sarvataḥ śrutimal loka sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati* (B.G. 13.13): Everywhere are ears, everywhere are eyes, everywhere are feet, everywhere are heads, the limbs of God.

The idea is that in the dream world, the whole thing is the mind. The mountain is the mind, the trees are the mind, the sun and the moon and the stars that we see in the dream world are the mind, the space is the mind, the time is the mind, and the causal relation is the mind.

The entire activity is the mind. In dream we see a tiger pursuing us, and we run and climb to the top of a tree. The tiger is our mind, the running process is our mind, the tree is our mind, and even the climbing is our mind.

All this mysterious activity that we can see—we can become a butterfly in dream, we can become a king, we can become a pauper, we can even be born and die in dream—all these things, wondrous as they appear, are the dramatic activity, the peculiar magical performance, as it were, of our mind. So this is, again, an analogy from our own personal experience to understand what the Veda means by saying that the whole universe is God's limbs spread out.

But has God really become something other than what He is? Has God become non-God merely because we see something as the form of creation? The answer to this question is: Have we really become the dream mountain? If that is the case, we would not wake up into the person that we were. The mountain would wake up. There is no mountain; it has gone into the integrated mind. Though the dream world is really perceptible, and in dream we can hit our heads against a real wall, yet nothing has happened.

There are varieties of creation theories, the majority concluding that the world has somehow come from God. But this 'somehow' is difficult to explain. The creationist doctrines of a realistic nature say that there is an actual modification of Reality into the form of this world. What is meant by 'modification'? Is it as milk becomes curd or yogurt? When milk becomes curd, milk has ceased to be what it is; it has become the curd. If that is the case, the matter is very serious. There will be no milk afterwards. We can drink our curd, but we cannot ask for milk again.

If God has really modified Himself into the yogurt of this world, there is no use asking for God, because God has ceased to be. He has become this which we are seeing with our eyes. That is a very dangerous doctrine because then there is nothing to aspire for; all that we are aspiring for has died into this form of the manifested world. This doctrine is called Parinamavada, or the doctrine of transformation.

Our aspirations do not permit this kind of argument of the realistic doctrines. We long for higher and higher things. We long for endless things. We long for eternal life. We do not want to die. We want to defy death. We would like to possess the entire space. We would like to overcome time itself. How does this aspiration arise in us if the root of it has ceased to exist?

The analogy once again comes to our aid. Creation seems to have taken place, and very realistically indeed, but not as milk becomes curd. It is as an appearance. Is not a dream an appearance? Or has the mind really become the stone, brick, forest and trees that we see in dream? In spite of the hard, realistic perception of the dream world, it is psychic in its content. All the objects in the world of dream are psychic in their nature; they are not physical.

In a similar manner, the entire world of perception, physical as it may appear in an astronomical sense, is a modification of Consciousness. We may call it condensation, centralisation, pinpointing, etc., of the universal Consciousness itself. It has become the seer of this world, it has become the world that we see, and it has also become the process of perception, in the same way as the dream world has manifested itself from our own waking mind.

Now, what happens to us in the dream world? We take it as real. We can get frightened in dream, and we

can feel happy in dream. All the experiences that we seem to be undergoing in the waking world can also be undergone in the dream world. If a tiger pounces on us in dream, we may scream, and the screaming may be real. We will yell out that a tiger had come, and get up. Such reality is attributed to the object of pure psychic content. In the dream world we get attached to things, and we are also repelled by things. In dream we can become emperors, and we can also become beggars.

There was a king called Janaka, of hallowed memory. One day he dreamt that he was a butterfly, and the intensity of the feeling that he was a butterfly was such that when he woke up, he did not know whether he was King Janaka dreaming that he was a butterfly, or he was the butterfly dreaming that it is king. So he asked Yajnavalkya, "Is Janaka dreaming that he is a butterfly, or is the butterfly dreaming that he is Janaka?" "Either way it can be," was Yajnavalkya's reply. Now, what do you say about this?

Humorously, someone said that if a poor person can dream for twelve hours that he is a king, and if a king can dream for twelve hours that he is a beggar, what is the difference between these two persons? If for twelve hours the king is a beggar, and for twelve hours the beggar is a king, who is the king and who is the beggar?

What do you understand from this analogy? This is a mystery of psychic phenomena. We call it a jugglery; we have to call it so because if God has really become this world, there is no use of asking for God-realisation, because He has ceased to be. But that cannot be. We ourselves are standing witnesses of the refutation of the doctrine of God having died into the form of this modified world.

Our attachments, our aversions, our loves and hatreds, our habit of grabbing property, and even our

love for life and our fear of death can be bundled up into a single phenomenon of utter confusion in the mind. There has been a muddle of our psychic operation, making us believe that it is absolutely real. Do we not sometimes weep when we see a movie that is projected on a screen? Sometimes we cannot sleep after having seen certain movies. We are elated, we jump in joy, or we cry.

What have we seen? There was nothing there, actually speaking. It was a shadow dance. The shadow dance was three-dimensionally projected into the structure of the mind with such vehemence that we take it for reality, and then we weep or jump in joy. For us to be happy or unhappy, objects need not necessarily really be there. Even non-existent things can make us happy and unhappy, provided our mind is connected to it.

Suppose a lady's son is serving in the army in a foreign country, and for years he has not come back. He is perfectly well, but false news reaches her that he has been killed in battle. The mother can collapse and die of a heart attack, even though nothing has really taken place. An unreal phenomenon can kill her. But suppose he is really dead, and for ten years no news about it reaches her. She is perfectly all right.

Therefore, what is the cause of our sorrow? Is the cause something that is really happening, or is it our mental operation? This is the reason why yoga psychology tells us to be careful in our emotions, perceptions, loves and hatreds, and in taking things so seriously that we die for them. Things are not to be taken so seriously in terms of emotion.

Yoga psychology also distinguishes between ordinary psychic perception and what is called abnormal psychic perception. This is incidental to our

studies, but it is important. When we look at a thing, we may look at it in two ways: as just an object that is there, or as an object that is connected with us. Do we not see a tree there in front of us? What concern do we have with that tree? We pass by it a hundred times every day and do not even recognise its existence. Suppose there are trees in our own garden, around our house. We will go on seeing every leaf. "How beautiful is this flower! How tender is this leaf! This is the tree that my grandfather planted here in the orchard." But there are so many trees in the forest, and nobody bothers about them. Some fall down, some wither away, and some are cut. Suppose somebody cuts the tree in our garden, how would we feel?

Now, why this difference? This difference is generally the subject of what is called abnormal psychology, where emotions are connected. *Raga* and *dvesha*, like and dislike, are connected with one kind of mental operation, whereas in others it is a general consciousness of something being there in front. If our emotions are disturbed or stimulated in any way, that is something quite different from ordinary perception. We sit in a railway compartment and see hundreds of other people also sitting there, but we do not bother to know who they are. They are like things, not like human beings. We are not concerned about them. But suppose it is a marriage party of our own group. Everyone is known to us and anything happening to anyone is happening to us also. What is the difference? Are the other passengers not human beings? Can we say that only those in our group are human beings? See the wonder of the working of the mind!

Inasmuch as all experience in this world is mental finally, yoga students should be very cautious and not get involved in objects of perception to such an extent

that it may ruin their health, spoil their career, and disturb their normal relationships with things. In order that our relationships, internally as well as externally, may always be normal, and we do not land in any kind of abnormal situation, yoga psychology prescribes the disciplines known as the *yamas*: *ahimsā satya asteya brahmacarya aparigrahāḥ yamāḥ* (Y.S. 2.30). They are disciplines connected with internal alignment as well as external relation of a harmonious nature. It is an imposition upon us by a moral or ethical mandate. Are we to become disciplined and good only because there is a policeman outside? Or can we be disciplined and good even if there is no government? Should somebody hit us on the head so that we may become good?

The *yamas* and *niyamas* are like policemen. They compel us: You must be like this. But that kind of morality is not going to help us much. The thief who does not carry on his profession because of policemen around does not cease to be a thief. He is a thief nevertheless. If gold is heaped in front of us and nobody sees us, and if our minds are not disturbed by its presence, we are not thieves. So our morality, ethics, goodness of behaviour and detachment should be there not because the scripture says or the institution penalises, or because we are afraid that God Himself will put us in hell. We must realise that it is always good to be good. Why is it good to be good? What is the harm if we are not good? We cannot immediately have a real answer to this question.

Children in school who are given lessons in morality may put a question: "Sir, that man is so bad, and he is thriving very well. Why are you telling me to be good?" Sometimes the teacher cannot immediately give an answer to this question. We ourselves may also feel upset, irritated, by seeing these things. Our behaviour

seems to be conditioned by certain disciplines imposed upon us. But yoga discipline is not an imposition. Meditation is not an exercise, like physical games. It is a demand of our inner nature itself. We have to find the answer ourselves as to why it is good to be good and why it is not good to be attached to things. Do we not feel happy if we are attached to loveable objects? Certainly. But yet, we are told that we should not get attached to anything, even if it looks loveable and attractive. Why? You answer the question yourself. You may ask, "Something is beautiful, attractive and loveable, and you said 'Do not get attached to it'. Is there any sense in your instruction?" There will be a revolt from inside. The scriptural instructions and the Guru's orders, whatever they be, will create a revolt inside the student's mind when he is told something contrary to what he feels inside. Now, why does he feel totally different from what is said to be good?

Spiritual practice is an inner demand, not an external imposition. It is not that somebody is sitting in meditation, so you also sit. You feel a need for it for some reason of your own. You are a good man because you know what the meaning of a good man is. You are a gentleman; you know what the meaning of it is. Are you a gentleman because it is good to be a gentleman in the eyes of people? Is it a social psychology? Is goodness a social characteristic, or is it a personal requirement?

These students and teachers of moral science tell us that goodness is good not because it brings some benefit to us, but because goodness itself is a benefit. It is difficult to understand this. You may ask, "What is the benefit if I am good?" The answer to this cannot come immediately, because your relationship to the whole universal structure is not clear to your mind. You must first of all know what is the meaning of being good.

Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj always said, “Be good. Do good.” But tell me, what did he mean by being good? Have some idea in your mind. Goodness is a gradational adjustment of your own existence with the structure of reality outside. This is a very pithy, sutra-like statement that I have made: an adjustment of your total being with the various degrees of reality manifest before you, including all the environment, up to the cosmos.

Thus, from the study of the process of creation which seems to be involving a peculiar split of the subjective side and the objective side in an otherwise total cosmic existence, what we learn is that empirical perception, sensory perception, and the affirmation of the ordinary psychic operations and the egoistic nature are not normal, finally, in the real sense. None of us is ultimately normal from a purely spiritual and philosophical sense, if normalcy is to be defined as perfect harmony with the structure of things. Who is in such harmony with the structure of things? We are always dissonant. There is repulsion, fear, agony, anxiety, and the expectation of anything arising on account of the continuous non-alignment of the inner operation of the mind with external manifestation. The mind in dream that sees the dream world is not set in tune with the objects of dream. That is why, in dream also, we can have joy and sorrow. But if the dream mind was to know that it is itself appearing as the objects outside, there would be neither joy nor sorrow.

Why are we told that saints and sages have neither sorrow nor joy in their minds? They are not dead people. They are fully aware of all things, but their awareness is so tuned up to the nature of things that nothing affects them either positively as love or negatively as hatred.

In the structure of this creational process, we are all now placed in the position of a percipient, a seer of this world, and we behold a vast phenomenon of space, time and objects. Yet, there is an invisible content pervading this process of perception. There is an intermediary intelligence pervading everywhere, between you and me, which we cannot see because it is the seer. If the dream percipient were to also perceive the intelligence between itself and the object, there would be no dream. The dream would vanish in one second. It is necessary not to know certain things in order that we may enjoy a false performance—like in a cinema, for instance. If we go on thinking that, after all, it is a shadow on a screen, we will not enjoy the movie. Similarly, if not for the intermediary intelligence pervading everywhere, the perception of objects will cease in one second. The perception of the world will vanish.

In our studies of this cosmic process of creation, we come across certain words such as *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva*. The subjective side is called *adhyatma*, the objective side is called *adhibhuta*, and that invisible content between the subject and the object is called *adhidaiva*, which is the divine principle superintending over all kinds of perception by the subject of the object. They are called gods. In India we worship many gods. Are there many gods, really speaking? Yes and no. There is only one God, perfectly correct, because we have concluded that the Ultimate Being should be universal undividedness of consciousness. Therefore, there cannot be more than one God. But, why are we worshipping so many gods? This series of many gods is nothing but the intermediary link of consciousness between various stages of the connection between the subject and the object.

There are various stages of the descent of the Absolute into this perceptual world of physicality. These stages are sometimes called the realms of being or, in Sanskrit, *lokas*: Bhuloka, Bhuvanloka, Svarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka. What is meant by all these? They are inner contents of the perceived world.

I will give an example as to what this inner content of a thing can be. Inside an object, such as a stone, there are molecules. Inside the molecules there are atoms, and inside the atoms there are finer contents, electrons. Inside them, there is something mysterious. Like that, there are seven stages of inwardisation of the structure of a particular thing. This inwardisation of the content of the whole world in seven stages—call them inwardisation in an ascending order or externalisation in a descending order—are these worlds cosmically which, in Sanskrit, are called Bhuloka, Bhuvanloka, Svarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka.

In every *loka*, in every world, in every realm of this internalisation of the cosmos, there is subject-object relation; and in every subject-object relation, there is an intermediary intelligence. That is what is called the god. And as there are countless relationships of subject and objects, we also can say that millions of gods are there. Therefore, it is not that Hinduism has many gods. It is a way of perceiving things, an interpretation of the various processes of the coming and going of things. So is the meaning of *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta*, *adhidaiva*. *Adhyatma* is the perceiver in any realm, in any stage of ascent or descent. *Adhibhuta* is the object in any stage of ascent or descent. *Adhidaiva* is the god in this ascent and descent. Thus, there are three things: the very clear existence of the percipient like you and me; the existence of an object like a wall, a building or a

mountain, which is also very clear; and the imperceptible divinity which is superintending over both the subject and the object—a very important thing that we always miss in our observations, which is the cause of our trouble in this world. If we can transfer our perceiving consciousness to the intermediary transcendent element between the seer and the seen, we will become supermen in one instant.

Chapter 4

THE TRANSCENDENT AND THE IMMANENT

We noticed earlier that in our knowledge of things, in our perceptions, three phases or processes are involved, namely, that which is the seen object, that which is the seeing consciousness, the individual concerned, and the third process is an intermediary superintending principle which makes the perception possible.

On account of the transcendent character of this intermediary principle, it cannot be perceived by an individual. It is that which, finally, sees all things. While the seer, as the individual subject, sees an external object in space and time, this so-called thing which we cannot understand, which eludes the grasp of all understanding, is the seer of both the subject and the object.

I see you, and you see me. When the one sees the other, the seer is called the subject and the seen is called the object. But there is a seer of both the subject and the object; that is the transcendent seer. Inasmuch as this transcendence is operating between every subjective side and every objective side in the various levels of the developmental process of creation, there is nothing secret in this world. Everything is known to someone. You cannot hide yourself in a corner and do something, unknown to people. A great hymn in the Atharvaveda says that when two people in a dark cave quietly whisper to each other, thinking that nobody sees them and nobody knows what they are saying, there is someone who listens to this whispering, which is like thunder reverberating through the cosmos.

Therefore, be very cautious. Everything in this world is public. There is no private life, because your privacy is known to a super-public intervening principle which knows the movement of every single leaf in a tree, which can count every hair of everyone created in the world, and which knows the number of the winkings of the eyes of everything that is created. As the Upanishad puts it, this is a terror before everybody. *Mahad bhayaṃ vajram udyatam* (K.U. 2.3.2), says the Kathopanishad. Great fear is this, that you cannot exist without being known by somebody. You cannot do anything, even privately, without being observed by someone.

If this fact has gone deep into your heart, how would you live in this world? You may say that it would be difficult to live in the world, but I say that only then will you live correctly. Your real life will start only after you accept this great principle operating everywhere, within and without—not as a terror, as the Upanishad puts it, but as your great protector and caretaker. It sees that you do not go wrong. The law is not there to punish you; it is there to guard you and to see that everything is well.

This transcendence of the process of perception of things is the divinity of the cosmos. We may say that the study of the object as such, pure objectivity, is the function of physics or chemistry, the study of the pure individuality of the subject is psychology, and the study of that which is the eluding transcendence may be called religion, philosophy, theology, spirituality, yoga, or any name we like.

So, what is religion, philosophy, yoga? It is not merely the study of what is going on inside us, and also not merely the study of the objective universe by observation and experiment. It is a total operation of our whole experiential condition. The life of yoga,

spirituality, religion—the life of God—is something difficult for an ordinary individualised point of view to grasp because we are always used to thinking in one of two ways. Either I think of myself or I think of something else, other than myself. But we forget there is something totally different from ourselves, as well as from the other. We think that the world consists of only two things: that which is seen and that which is seeing. Who knows that there is a third thing? The world does not know it, so the world also does not know what is yoga, what is spiritual life, and what is religion.

If this definition of true religion were to go into our hearts, I think the world would become a heaven in three days. There would be no conflict, no war, no suspicion, no doubt, no fear from anything. There are some people who think that they can bring heaven to the earth. Well, it may be possible, but it is only a question of 'may be'. The practicality of it is so remote that it is almost an impossibility because of the simple fact that the egoism of human individuality is so vehement and hard like flint that it will never permit this acceptance of the world being ruled by something other than what sees or what is seen. No man will accept it. No man can know it. Therefore, it looks as if the world will remain like this. The world can become a heaven under special conditions, and one may or may not be able to fulfil those conditions. On the objective side, it is a kind of physical science that is the area of study. Inwardly, it is a study of the mind and psychology. Transcendentally, it is religion.

Now, here the word 'transcendence' has to be properly explained. You may be under the impression, because of the conditioning of the mind to certain usual ways of thinking, that transcendence means somewhere higher, some kilometres above. That is not the case. It is

not a spatial, geographical 'higher up' that is called transcendence.

Our mind is conditioned very much, right from its inception, into the process of thinking only in a certain regimented fashion, and new ways of thinking cannot be introduced into it so easily. The mind always resents change; it wants only stereotyped things. It will immediately resent any change that we introduce. "This is no good," is what the mind will tell us.

Transcendence is not above us in a physical sense. It is not merely an ascension from the level of the seer and the seen, but is also an inclusiveness of both the seer and the seen. You have to listen to all this very carefully. This so-called transcendence, which we cannot observe or understand, is inside us and is also inside the object, apart from being above both the seer and the seen. Philosophically, we may say the transcendent is also immanent. In religious parlance, people say that God is above the world and is also in the world. We have heard it said many times, but still we may not be able to understand the meaning of this statement 'above the world'. We think that above the world means beyond the sun and the sky, beyond space and time. We think of God as being transcendent, above the world, and we think that 'immanent' means God is hidden inside a particle of sand, etc., but actually it is a peculiar arrangement of consciousness that is to be understood as both a transcendence and an immanence.

How could one be both above and below? The mind cannot grasp this point. Can a thing be inside as well as outside? That which is inside is only inside. How can it be outside? We have never seen such a thing.

I will give an example how transcendence can also be immanence. We have all passed through certain stages of education. The lower classes are transcended

by the higher classes; the higher class is above the lower class. In what sense is it above? Is it two feet above or one kilometre above? It is a logical ascendance, and is not physically something higher up. The higher degree of education is above the lower degree, and therefore we may call it a transcendent level—transcendent because, in a very special sense, it is above the one which we have already overcome. But it is also immanent. How?

That which we have transcended as a lower category of education is included in the higher. We do not reject the lower when we go to the higher; the lower is automatically absorbed into the higher. The lower is inside the higher, but not inside as something sitting inside a room. This is also a logical concept. We have to apply our mind very cautiously in understanding what this transcendence and immanence mean. It is not a physicality of transcendence or immanence; it is not something being on the terrace above and something being in the room below. These ideas of physical spatiality have to be abandoned when we think in purely logical or scientific terms.

This situation is what we may call the cosmic structural pattern of this world, these phenomena. We are living in this kind of world. What is our situation finally when we live like this, in this atmosphere that has been described? All instruction in every branch of knowledge is included here. The study of the nature of the Ultimate Reality is considered as inclusive of every other study of the arts and the sciences that we can think of. The nature of the universal Self is inclusive of the characteristics of every other thing which appears to be other than the Self.

Now, this other than the Self, or the anti-Self, the non-Self, or the *anatman*, as people sometimes call it, is

also to be properly understood. What is meant by the *anatman*, or the non-Self, when we have already been told that everything is included in the Self? Where is the otherness of the Self?

If we wrongly imagine that in our higher degrees of education we have rejected the lower degrees as something outside our higher level, then that lower becomes an *anatman* to us, while it is really not so. The *anatman* does not exist because it has automatically been absorbed into the Atman that is above; yet, by the interference of the old habit of thinking through space and time, that which is below, or which has been transcended, may be regarded as something outside that which has risen above it.

People always say, "I am above." Such mistakes are committed even in official circles. Suppose there is an official. He is above all his subordinates. Everybody knows that. In what sense is he above? Is he sitting on top, on a pedestal? Suppose there is a District Collector or a Commissioner who has a large jurisdiction around him. The Collector is ruling the entire district. He pervades the district as an authority connected with that area. But he does not physically pervade it. It is his operative transcendence—the Collectorness, we may say—that is pervasive. There is a difference between the personality of the Collector and the Collectorness that is in him, because if the Collectorness is removed due to retirement or by any other way, he no longer has authority over anything.

All the residents in the district are, in a way, subordinate to this one person—not because he is physically larger than other people, but because there is an element called the ruling principle. This ruling principle is invisible. We cannot see the Collector, really speaking; we see only the person. What we see is the

physicality of the person. The Collectorness in him cannot be seen, though we conceptually foist it on him and say, "The Collector is coming." The coming is only of the physical body. Because of the presence of that transcendent Collectorness in him as an immanence, we mix up two things and when that person is coming, we say, "The Collector is coming."

The transcendence which pervades the entire district is also immanent in that particular person. We should not look upon him as a person, but as an operative transcendence, a vehicle by which the entire district moves—something like an *avatara*, or incarnation, we may say. The Universal element pervading the entire district is incarnated in that particular individuality, so although he appears as one person like other persons, he has a greater power than any other person in the district. The greater power is due to the transcendence of his invisible authority, which is also present inwardly as an immanence, so he is visible and invisible at the same time.

Therefore, the transcendence is an abstraction, as it were, to the unthinking mind; and even the concept of God, Whom you are aspiring for through your studies and yoga practices, may look like an abstraction. This is why you cannot sit for meditation for a long time and cannot completely devote yourself to it. There is a fear inside you that the object of your aspiration—the Universal, the transcendent—appears to be merely a concept in your mind, and the reality is the solid world that is in front of you.

Actually, the reverse is the case. The more invisible a thing is, the more real it is; and the more tangible it becomes, the more unreal it is. The solidity of a thing is not the reality of the object. The invisible force that is the constitution of the object is the reality. The 'I am' in

you is not the physical body; the 'you' visible to the photographic camera is not your real reality. In a similar manner, just as this 'I am' in you, which is invisible, is more real than the visible object which is your physical personality, the concept of God should not remain merely as an abstraction in thought—even as 'I am' is not a concept in your mind but is a solidity for you, more solid than the solidity of a physical thing. Hard is this to comprehend because the mind etherialises everything that is perceived by a process of knowledge, and solidifies and converts into reality that which it sees with the eyes or is made tangible to the senses.

A great tragedy, as it were, has befallen the whole of creation. The stories of creation tell us that there was a fall of man. We know the story of the fall. There was a headlong coming down, like Trishanku, with legs up and head down. This is also a logical process. When there is a fall, what falls, actually? Has some solid object fallen? No. It is a reversal of consciousness that has taken place. A topsy-turvy perception becomes what we call ordinary human perception.

These interesting things are not known to the prosaic mind which is accustomed to the ordinary studies of our educational institutions. Are we seeing things properly? When we continuously see a thing for a long time, we are likely to mistake it for the real process of perception. If we go on telling a lie a thousand times, it becomes a truth; so when we are accustomed to an erroneous perception for our whole life, we cannot imagine that there can be another way of perception at all.

In the previous session I mentioned the phenomenon of seeing yourself in a mirror. Some reversal takes place even there: the right looks left, and

the left looks right. You must have observed this. So when a reflection takes place, this is also a kind of fall, we may say. The original face has fallen through the medium of the mirror into the structural pattern of the objective perception of your face, where you see yourself as topsy-turvy. If you want to know more about this topsy-turvyness, you can stand on the bank of the Ganges and see yourself reflected in the water. You will find that your head, which is above, appears lowest, and that your feet, which are the lowest, appear as topmost. This is what happens in a reflection.

The individual is sometimes called a reflection of God—that is, a reflection of the Universal. It is called a reflection in one particular sense. An analogy should not be stretched beyond its limit. Every comparison has a limit of its own, and only certain features are supposed to be illustrated by any kind of comparison. We can say that an elephant is a quadruped and a cow also is a quadruped, but it does not mean that an elephant and a cow are identical. The comparison is for one purpose only. The reflection aspect is to indicate that the individual, which is a reflection of the Universal through the medium of space and time, sees things upside-down, and perhaps right as left, left as right, and so on.

If we study the whole story of the process of creation, we will realise that the individuality of percipients came later than the cosmic structure of what are known as the *tanmatras*, the physical elements, etc. The cosmic aspect of creation came first; the individual aspect came afterwards. Hence, when the will of the Universal manifested this creation, this world that we see as if it is outside us was not an 'outside' for anybody, because there was nobody to see it. All these 'anybodies' cropped up later on, like tendrils, from the large form of this cosmic creation. We

are all individuals, like offshoots, who have arisen afterwards. A segregation of the inner constitution of this cosmic setup took place in some manner, and individuality shot up and began to behold its own parent as if it is an object outside.

This world is our parent from where we were born, which is to say, we are a part and parcel of it. We are organically connected, vitally related to this world even now. There is a living relation between ourselves and all things that we see outside. The world is not so much outside us as we are made to apprehend, yet we feel that it is outside. This isolation of the individuality of percipients from the cosmic whole is the so-called fall. When it takes place, there is a complete loss of consciousness of the original. We can never imagine for a second that we are a part of this universe, because this screen of space and time prevents us from knowing it. The biblical Genesis says God kept a flaming sword at the gates of heaven so that mortals could not enter, so that the fallen mortals would stay outside. The flaming sword is this space-time. It will not permit us to pierce through it and notice the connection that we have with it. Blessed are those who can pierce through it!

Now, this has taken place during the process of creation. The so-called individual *adhyatma* has been isolated from the total, creating a perceptual process of an object which is the world outside, *adhibhuta*, and it becomes totally oblivious of the *adhidaiva*, or the divine principle. The God-consciousness in us is completely dead. We are either conscious of the material world or we are conscious of only ourselves as this person. What can be worse for us? It is so bad that we call it *samsara*, a veritable hell into which we have descended.

In your study here, you are actually undergoing a disciplinary process of a new kind of education by which this new knowledge will become a part of your very existence itself. There is a difference between ordinary knowledge and spiritual knowledge. Everyone has ordinary knowledge, everyone has some sort of education, but this knowledge of chemistry, physics, mathematics, etc. is outside you. It is not a part of your life. When you live your daily life, you are not actually implementing it in your personality. Your knowledge has not become you. It is a commodity. It is a qualification, an adjective. It is not yourself, so it cannot help you. It is like a shirt that you are putting on. The shirt is not yourself, though the shirt is very important. It makes you look different, but you are the same person nevertheless, because the knowledge has not become vital to your life.

I told you earlier that Existence is Consciousness. It is another way of saying that knowledge is life. Existence is knowledge. Your knowledge is your existence. You are a moving embodiment of the knowledge that you have acquired. When you move, it is knowledge that is moving. It is not that your knowledge is in the studies, in the libraries, in the textbooks or in your certificate. Your knowledge is visible. Your whole personality is an embodiment of the knowledge that you have acquired through education. It is vibrating through you. Your face shines. If your face does not shine, if it is drooping and crying, and if you find yourself in the wilderness, and the world stares at you as a reality which you did not become acquainted with in your schools and colleges, then the knowledge is like water that has been poured on a rock and the rock has not absorbed it. But yoga knowledge is a different thing. It is not knowledge in the ordinary sense of the term; it

is not knowing something outside you. When you study an atom or a plant, you are studying something outside you. When you study physiology, you are studying a corpse. Here, you are studying yourself.

The most difficult thing is yourself. You can handle anything in the world, but not yourself, because there is no means of handling one's own self. There is a method by which you can handle things in the world; but what is the method that you will adopt in handling your own self? There are no instruments, there is no *modus operandi*, there is no means at all. Without a means of handling it, how will you handle a thing? If you want to control yourself, how will you do it—with your hands and feet, with your fist, with threats to your own self? Nothing will work, because you cannot become the teacher and the taught at the same time. How could it be? It is not possible. But in some way, you are going to be that.

In the yoga educational process, you are the teacher and the taught. It is not that somebody thrusts knowledge into you. Knowledge that is already in you is made to blossom into a beautiful flower of real experience. Never believe that knowledge is outside you. That which is imported cannot become your property.

Now, again, to bring back to memory all the things that we considered up to this time, the universal Consciousness is immanent in you even now. Hence, education is to be understood as a bringing up to the surface of your awareness in practical living that which is hidden in you as an immanence, and which sometimes looks like a transcendence. The knowledge of the Self is the knowledge of the universe and, vice versa, the knowledge of the universe is the knowledge of the Self, because the cosmic structure which is this

creation is involved in the aspect of the immanence of the transcendence, about which we have been discussing just now.

How would you know the whole world if you know yourself? Again a doubt will arise in your mind. This doubt arises because you have again slipped into the old cocoon of thinking that this 'me' is only this body. Bring back to your memory once again—a hundred times a day, by hammering this idea into yourself—that the whole universal setup is scintillating through you. The transcendent is also the immanent.

The largest generality of the cosmos is present in the littlest atom, including your own self. Is this not a great solacing message to you that the whole universal force is vibrating through each individual? If it could be made part and parcel of your living experience, what authority, what power, what glory, what bliss, what desirelessness! Everything will manifest itself automatically.

Poor things that we are, we go back once again to the old habit of this Mr. so-and-so, this body, and say, "I am coming." "What are you doing?" There is no 'what you are doing' and 'what I am doing', and so on. These ideas have no meaning, finally.

I am telling you all this because now you are to be placed in a new atmosphere, a total vision of an altogether different kind of perspective of all the things that you have been experiencing up to this time. You should not leave this course as you came. You should go as totally different persons in the sense that you see things which you saw earlier, but in a different manner altogether. Instead of a table, you will see wood; instead of an ornament, you will see gold; instead of the form, you will see the substance. Your vision will totally change because of the entry of your educational process

here into the substance of things, which is within you and also above you in the sense I have described just now.

Contemplate this daily. Do not forget everything and again start thinking as you did previously. That should not be the case. This is a kind of medicine that is being given to you for the illness of life. It has to be swallowed and absorbed. It has to sink into your being. You have to live it; and then you will see that you are different persons. You will all be smiling. You will not cry afterwards.

Chapter 5

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE IN YOGA

In the previous session we noted that the process of perception is threefold. The objective world is designated as *adhibhuta*; there is a perceiver of this objective world, which is called *adhyatma*; and we also noted a transcendent element operating between the percipient seer and the perceived objective world, called *adhidaiva*. If we confine ourselves entirely and wholly to the study of the objective world, we become physical scientists—chemists, or perhaps biologists. If we confine ourselves only to the study of the operation of the perceptive process, we become psychologists, psychoanalysts, psychopathologists, etc. If we emphasise only the element of transcendence, we become devotees, religious people who search for a creator God who is above this world. These three approaches are basically the fundamentals of our experience in life. We cannot think in any other manner. Either we look outside, or we look inside, or we look above. There is no other way of looking at things. If we look outside, we are scientists. If we look inside, we are psychologists. If we look above, we are religious seekers.

But we observed that the principle of reality is an integrated wholeness, and a consciousness of this wholeness is not supposed to be a tripartite observation, taking each item independently, as it were, with no relation to the other principles. Studies of psychology should not forget that there are realities which are external, physicists should not forget that there are realities which are internal, and both should not forget that there are features in this world which

elude the grasp of observation through science and through analysis by psychology. There are more things in heaven and on earth than philosophy dreams of, as the poet told us.

When we enter into the field of the practice of yoga, we have to have a basic knowledge of the philosophical foundations of the very practice. The concept has to be clear before we actually take a practical step. Practice is based on theory. For instance, we have theoretical physics and applied physics, pure mathematics and applied mathematics, pure physiology and applied physiology. So also we have a philosophical background of yoga and an actual implementation of it in practical life.

The philosophical foundation is that our existence in this world is inviolably involved in this threefold segregation of Consciousness—though it is really not segregated. Many people say that the world is not really there; it is a kind of illusion. Maybe it is so, considering the fact that our definition of the world as something being there in front of us, totally isolated from us, cannot be a fact, finally. If that is the case, the world as we understand it is not there. But something is there. That something is the real world.

If nothing is there, we would not be even aware that there is something external to us. The world as we conceive it and perceive it is not there. Our perceptions and conceptions have, therefore, to be thoroughly investigated, and we have to enable ourselves to delve deeper into the fundamentals, the very degrees of reality that seem to be above and beneath our normal perceptions.

We should not enter into the field of yoga practice with preconceived ideas, with a conditioned mind. We have studied something, and we have some idea about

things. We should not bring these ideas into our study of yoga. First of all, there has to be a deconditioning of the mind. Communal, religious and philosophical prejudices should not be allowed to enter into this adventure of a totally new approach to things. A Hindu thinks in one way, and a Christian thinks in another way. This kind of thing will not do. We may think in any way we like, but we have to develop a faculty within us which may safely be called impersonal in its structure—impersonal in the sense that it can accommodate into its framework of operation any thought, any field of activity, any outlook of life, and any concept of God.

All these concepts, religious or political, have a fragmentary value which is applicable and useful under certain given conditions, but not always, in the same way as certain medicines work under certain conditions of the body, and a universal prescription cannot be given for all conditions of the body. We have certain types of religious or cultural backgrounds. In certain matters, a Westerner thinks in one way and an Easterner thinks in another way. Western thought is mostly empirical, and Eastern thought is of a different type, but we should be able to know how and why these differences have arisen.

When we go into the in-depth cause of the differences of cultural patterns and religious outlooks, we will find they arise on account of a sectional view that is taken about things in the world, ignoring certain other aspects whose existence we do not take into consideration. Certain ideas are inborn and are in the very veins and blood of our personality. Communal hatreds, of which we hear very much these days, have mostly a religious background—religion leading to clash instead of leading to God-consciousness, all of

which has to be attributed to a purely fragmentary, isolated or communally selfish outlook of life.

If religion should be defined as the longing of the human soul for God, one must know what this human soul is. Is it made of a Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist or Jain framework? What kind of thing is the soul? Is it a Jain soul, a Buddhist soul, a Hindu soul, a Muslim soul? Have we such souls?

Great disciplinary training under competent teachers in institutions which are favourable for this practice is necessary, and sufficient time also has to be given to it. These studies here are for a short time, and are not a final answer to your queries. It is a preparation for enabling you to develop a mode of thinking which is totally new, and entirely oriented in a fashion that may be called comprehensive or universal in its nature, but the actual practise has to be done by you. This course does not mean that your program is complete. You are only shown the path, but the walking has to be done by you. Light is shed on the way, but you have to move along the line indicated by the light. This is a light that is being shed upon the path of your life, and you have to take it very seriously in the sense that you have to do something, after having learned something.

In your studies, or in any kind of study, for that matter, certain subjects are taken up for consideration. You take up particular subjects: history, geography, mathematics. What do you study in yoga? What is the subject? Easy answers will not come forth. Are you studying yourself? Many people say it is actually a study of one's own self. The study of man is really man. It is true. But what exactly is this 'yourself' when you say you will study yourself? Will you lock yourself up in a room, not seeing anybody and having no concern with

society and the world, and delve inside your physical individuality to focus on what the mind is thinking and how the breath is moving? Is this what you mean by 'study of one's own self'?

Some people say that the world is very big and its realities are actually glaring before us every day, from morning onwards. You are something in your own personality; yes, of course, granted. But what about the world in front of you? Are you not hitting your head against it every day? What is the purpose of merely sitting inside and brooding over something that seems to be there inside your body? What about this world which is troubling you every day? That is another aspect of the matter. People have never been satisfied either with encountering the world outside in a business fashion—a managerial, political fashion, or whatever it is—nor have people been found to be happy inside and wholly satisfied merely because they have been sitting quietly in some distant place such as Uttarkashi. So while granting that, finally, it is the study of your own self that is involved in the study of yoga, a broad idea about what this selfhood can be should be entertained, about which we have studied something earlier. In previous sessions, we have considered some aspect of this self. A self is just what you consider yourself to be. You have some idea what you are; that is the self. But what is the idea that you have about yourself? What do you think you are?

There are, according to ancient traditional analysis, three aspects of this consideration of the self. This is a muddle before your mind, and mostly you do not think of these aspects. Anything that you consider as vitally connected with yourself is also a self. Something without which you cannot exist, something which is, according to you, a very essential ingredient in your

existence itself, cannot be regarded as something outside you because that conditions your existence. You love it, hug it, want it, caress it, and keep it with you to such an extent and with such intensity that, for all practical purposes, it is yourself only—like a mother clinging to her only child, or even like a wealthy man clinging to his money or a politician clinging to his power. It is so very intimately connected with your existence itself that you cannot say that it is outside you. It is so because if that is not there, you will feel like crumbling. When the power goes, the man becomes like a mouse; he does not know whether he even exists. When the wealth goes, the man dies of a heart attack. When the child goes, the mother commits suicide. Why does this happen? A child cannot be the self of the mother, so why is there so much consideration for that little thing, to such an extent that one can sacrifice one's own life? If your selfhood can be abolished for the sake of another thing which you regard as inseparable from you, something has happened to you in regard to your relationship with that thing.

Your so-called self—Mr. or Mrs. so-and-so, whatever you are—encased within this body, as you wrongly think, has escaped the clutches of encasement in this body for certain peculiar reasons which you cannot always understand, and entered into the child, entered into power, wealth, land, property, etc. This self, which really cannot be regarded as a self because it is outside you and you have no control over it, nevertheless seems to have such a hold over you that it is one kind of self. It cannot be regarded as the primary self because it can leave you one day. All your possessions, all family relations, all wealth, all power, everything can go. Therefore, that kind of thing which appears to be inseparably connected with your existence cannot be

regarded as a primary self because it can leave you at any time, and so it is called a secondary self. In Sanskrit, it is called a *gaunatman*. *Gaun* means secondary. All things in this world which you love intensely and consider as part of your very life are secondary selves.

You also have to handle this secondary self properly. Do not say, "I have left my family. They are not connected with me. I am staying in Gangotri. I have abandoned my property. I have committed my pension." People sometimes say that, under the impression that this secondary self has gone. But it cannot easily go, because it is a psychological concept. This secondary self is also psychological. It appears to be physically there in front of you, but your involvement in it is a psychological affair, and so it can harass you even in Gangotri. "What is this? I am sitting here. I had so much. I was a judge. I was a magistrate. I had a lot of property." The inner voice will harass you by telling you that you have lost something when you are physically somewhere, unknown to people.

Therefore, keep in mind that there is a self called a secondary self, or *gaunatman*. Let us see how to handle it in the course of time. But do not say it is unimportant. Your husband, your wife, your children, your money, your property, your land, your power, your position—they are all important to you. Their absence can kill you; such sorrow can descend upon a person. You will be wondering how it is that you get involved like this, but it is so. No one is free from it. But you have to free yourself from it by the application of certain techniques which are peculiar to yoga practice. Very difficult it is, because you are touching dynamite, as it were. Severing vital relations is like death; and one may really die if such severance is attempted prematurely.

I told you that there are three aspects of this concept of self. One is this secondary aspect of self, the *gaunatman*, to which we cling as an object of affection and necessity. Another aspect is called the *mithyatman*, a false self, such as this body. We very much regard this as ourselves. It is certainly so. How can we say it is not? But in our earlier studies, we observed that there are conditions or circumstances in our daily life where we can exist even without the consciousness of this body.

You have to remember all that we studied earlier. In dream and sleep you do exist; that is what we observed. How do you exist minus consciousness of this body which you otherwise consider as your own self? There is a falsity involved in the concept of the body as the self. Many illustrations, such as the amputation of limbs, demonstrate that physical diminution does not diminish the consciousness of self. The consciousness of selfhood is the same in a puny person as in a giant. The giant does not have a larger concept of self; the concept is the same. It is a kind of self-identity of consciousness. As I mentioned, even if all the limbs are removed, you will still have the consciousness of identity of self. All this shows that the body is not the self. Otherwise, you will feel that you have lost yourself by the amputation of limbs. You do not feel like that.

Even though this body is a false self which you consider as a real self in your daily activities, it has to be properly taken care of. People sometimes refer to it as Brother Ass. You cannot throw it away, because it has to carry the burden. Who will carry the burden if the ass is not there? It has its purpose, yet it is a great problem for you. As handling objects of affection in the world is a problem, handling this body is also a problem, though you know very well by our philosophical analysis that this is not the true you.

Thus, there are these two aspects of self: the secondary, and the false. The third aspect is the primary one, about which I have been haranguing for a number of sessions. The primary aspect is indicated by the condition in which you are existing in deep sleep. It is an indication, a mark, a symbol of what you are really from the circumstance of sleep: pure Consciousness of Being. I am repeating a little bit of what I told you earlier so that you may not completely forget it.

This pure Being-Consciousness is our essential, primary Self; and this Being-Consciousness cannot be located inside the body. Though by some mental operation it looks as if we are sleeping inside the body, really it is not so. It is a larger operation extending beyond the ken of this physical limitation. This pure Being-Consciousness cannot be segregated into localities of people—something here, something there. It is incorrect to say “I am one Being-Consciousness and you are another Being-Consciousness” because Consciousness cannot be segregated or partitioned. It cannot be divided into parts; it is an indivisible whole. This indivisibility also implies its infinity and eternity. This is briefly the conclusion that we drew earlier in our studies. So it is true that in yoga you study your own self, but you must look at this involvement of the self in at least three ways. Which self will you take up for your studies when you study yoga—the secondary self which is the object of affection or concern, or this body, or something which you cannot grasp?

Yoga teachers of yore have systematically arranged the process of study. There are scriptures on yoga which are especially devoted to practical consideration, the most outstanding being Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, which is entirely practice and psychology; and we also

have the Bhagavadgita and the Upanishads, to mention only a few.

A gradational approach is prescribed. What is the first thing that you do when you enter into yoga? Generally, you start doing yoga asanas, physical exercises, pranayama, sit quietly thinking, and then you meditate for a little while. This is good. This is a kind of kindergarten approach in the early stages, but you must feel that one step forward has been taken. For three months you have done yoga exercises, breathing exercises, and sat in meditation. You must feel within yourself that you have taken one step forward. You should not think that you are in the same condition that you were three months earlier.

“I have done something, but I have to do something more. I have taken one step forward, and I am now a little larger than what I was earlier. I am now qualitatively better, and the dimension of my personality is perhaps enlarged in some way. I am healthier, happier, more satisfied, and fewer are my desires.” If these feelings arise in your mind, you have taken one step. Otherwise, it is something like trying to walk on the road by lifting both legs simultaneously. You will not move forward. You have done a lot of walking, but you are in the same place. That kind of thing should not happen.

Studies in yoga, therefore, have to be taken up in a systematic, degree-wise fashion. The usual instruction given to us is, that which seems to be immediately impinging on us like a chronic disease and cannot be easily avoided must be taken up first. It is something like knots being untied. Suppose you tie a knot in a rope, and then tie another knot, and then tie a third, fourth and fifth knot. If you untie these knots, the topmost knot will be untied first, not a knot below. The first knot that

was tied will be taken up last; the last knot will be taken up first.

Now, what is it that is first, and what is last? This process of creation—the evolution of the universe, into which we had some insight during our studies here—will tell you which came first and which came last. The first was God Almighty Himself; and you should not touch Him suddenly, immediately. God is very respectable, beyond. The last thing in which we got involved is something else. What we observed was that there was the Absolute, pure universal infinity, which became the cause of the manifestation of the precondition of externality called space-time, which vibrated into certain forces. In Sanskrit they are called *tanmatras*, cosmic vibrations which condense themselves into the objects of hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, smelling, and then solidify into the physical world. These constitute the entire realm of being, all the degrees of reality in creation—the fourteen worlds, as they are called. Then comes the tripartite segregation: the object, the subject, and the transcendent link which we understand as existing between them. Then our concern turns to the threefold type of selfhood, about which I mentioned something just now.

Having understood this much, where do you stand now? When you wake up in the morning, what is it that engages your attention first? Do you think to yourself, “How am I?” No. You think twenty things which are outside. “Today I have a lot of work. I have to meet this person. I have to go to the shop. I have to go to the court. There is a case today, a hearing, and I have to meet this person for this, that reason.” Some fear, some anxiety, some commitment seems to be hitting your head when you get up in the morning. All this is involved with the world outside. You do not think of

yourself, of God, or of anything; nothing comes to the mind. You have commitments in the world: "I have to go. I have to catch a train. I have to book my ticket for a flight." How many things are in your mind?

You think only that which is totally external. Your relationship with externals takes most of the time. You have to adjust yourself to these conditions very cleverly because if you make a mistake in the adjustment, you will come a cropper. Most of your time goes in adjusting yourself to changing conditions. You have to put on extra clothes if it is very cold, and you need an umbrella if it is raining. If it is very hot, you have to take a cold bath; and if you are tired, you have to take rest. If there are some people who are impossible in their behaviour, you have to know how to adjust yourself with them. If a creditor comes, you have to know how to speak to him, and so on. Every minute there is an adjustment of personality, and it is a strain. You cannot be totally free and carefree; you have to make adjustments with so many things. This is the first thing that you have to take into consideration in order that these things should not harass you too much when you are trying to go deeper into the realities of life. In Patanjali's system especially, brief statements are made about the methodology to be adopted in establishing harmonious relations with the external world. These are called *yamas*.

Generally, the world behaves with you in the same way as you behave with it. This is so because, basically, you are vitally connected with the structure of things outside. The world will do tit for tat; as you do to it, so it will do to you. If you smile, it smiles; if you grin, it grins; if you show you teeth, it shows its teeth; if you hate it, it hates you; if you love it, it loves you; if you want it, it wants you; if you do not want it, it does not want you.

This is a peculiarity with the behaviour of things outside, the so-called 'outside'.

The *yamas* in Patanjali's system are the technology adopted by the ancient master to see that we do not place ourselves in a disharmonious situation with anything outside. You must know how to handle anything in this world in a harmonious way. If there is some dissonant sound coming from somewhere, you have to develop within yourself a kind of assonant reaction towards it. If a small thing comes, you have to become small before it; if a big thing comes, you have to become big before it. You have to adjust yourself accordingly with what is in front of you.

This is well said, but actually it cannot easily be practised because it is a day-to-day technique and is not a general instruction for all people, for all times. How you can adjust yourself cannot be said off-hand, because it is a daily affair. What you will eat tomorrow, you cannot say today. It depends upon your condition tomorrow. So how can I tell you that tomorrow you should eat a particular food? Every day—at every moment, almost—there is some new encounter for you. This difficulty goes in the case of those people who have the blessing of living with a great master who guides them. Every day you will have some peculiar difficulties, and you cannot envisage tomorrow's difficulty today.

"Oh, today is very difficult for me! I have a headache. I sat and meditated on the point between the eyebrows," you will say. Now, you cannot understand why you have developed a headache. You have to ask somebody. What is the connection between concentration at that point and a headache? You have a backache, or your knees are aching, or you have no appetite, or you have some fever, or there are tremors in the body, etc. What can you do about that? You

cannot be a physician of your own self, because you are a patient.

Thus, blessed are those who have a real teacher—a Guru, we may say—in whom they have full faith. You should not go on changing Gurus, thinking that another Guru is better than this one. Then you will be simply hopping like a grasshopper, and nothing will come. Once you have taken to one course, it is final.

In the beginning, daily adjustments seem to be easy. You hear what I say, and say, “Yes, I understand. I will try to do that.” You may do that for some time, but later on you will find that it is not so easy because the mind will revolt. “What are you doing to me?” the mind will say. “I want this only. I will not accept anything else.” And what will you do about that? You say you will adjust yourself. But it says, “No adjustment. I want this.” Oh, very difficult! Naughty children are difficult to handle.

So what do you do at that time? Very careful, loving handling is necessary when you want to restrain something. Even when you oppose an enemy in war, you do not simply jump in like a fool. There are methods and manoeuvres in the handling of an army’s movement. Even when you have an undesirable trait, it cannot be simply dubbed as evil. Nobody likes to be called evil. You must know how to become a good physician to that which you consider as bad and convert it, transform it, transmute it into good. Opposition is not the way. To put it briefly, it is a juxtaposition of yourself with the circumstance in front of you by a method that is purely educational psychology.

Therefore, the first thing that you have to take up is to see what your involvements are in the public world. Do you owe something to people, some debt? If you have borrowed some money, pay it back. Never go to

Gangotri with borrowed money and then start meditating. That is no good. Then it will harass you. Every paise that you have borrowed must be returned; otherwise, it will pinch you. Your heart will say that something is wrong. Even if you have uttered a harsh word which has deeply hurt someone's feelings, you must make amends for it. "I am very sorry. In a mood I uttered this. I beg your pardon. I will never do it again." Otherwise, you will keep it in your mind and think, "Oh, very bad. I ought not to have done that." A thought, a word or a deed which is upsetting must be carefully handled. Do not do anything which is harmful. A thing which is harmful can be harmful to both sides. It is not harmful to only one side. Both your side as well as the other side will be hurt by any kind of harmful act, word or thought. This has to be taken care of. A long list has to be made. But you cannot make this list because you think, "What is wrong with me? I am perfectly all right. I have studied well." You have to find out whether everything is well or not by a continuous life of a little isolation in an atmosphere where you are not too much engrossed in externals. That is why people go to ashrams and study under a teacher, etc.

Thus, the essential point is to first take into consideration your involvements outside—the social and natural conditions—so that you may not be worried about things that are happening outside or things that have happened outside. And do not feel that you owe something to someone. You should not owe anything to anybody. That should be your principle. You should not take more from the world than what you have given to the world. Equal to what you take, you must give. It is good to give more than you take; but if you take more, you will have to repay it in the next birth and you will be reborn in order to clear the debt. All debts of every

kind—in deed, in speech, as well as in thought—have to be reconciled.

You have to be clean, first of all. Even in your social relations, you should not look like a funny person or something impossible. There is a verse in the Bhagavadgita. *Yasmān nodvijate loko lokān nodvijate ca yaḥ, harṣāmarṣa-bhayodvegair mukto yaḥ sa ca me priyaḥ* (B.G. 12.15): You should live in the world in such a way that you should not abhor anything in the world, nor should you behave in such a way that the world abhors you.

Well, you may try your best to see that you do not abhor things, but how will you expect the world not to abhor you? The world will not always appreciate you under every condition. But the Bhagavadgita, which has been told by a great master, must have some meaning. You must not behave in a way that will be considered as abominable by the world outside and, also, you should behave in such a way that you will not be affected by things that are taking place outside. Such is the word of the Gita. You do not shrink from anything, nor do you behave in such a way that the world may shrink from you. A good person you must be. This is the first principle.

Chapter 6

THE THREE ROOT DESIRES

The necessity to be in a state of accord, assonance and harmony with the world outside is not merely a requirement on the part of yoga practice, it is essential even for a reasonably comfortable life in this world. The world is not so very unimportant as to deserve our total neglect or to assign to it a kind of secondary importance in relation to our own self.

I mentioned previously that the world is called the secondary self, the *gaunatman*, in the sense that it is something that is foisted upon our personality by an involvement of our consciousness in a very specific manner. Most people cannot be sure as to how they are involved in this world. Everything is taken for granted, usually. That something is happening in the world, and we are seeing it happening, and we have to do something with it, is a crude, rustic way of interpreting things. But things in the world do not happen unnecessarily or randomly, so we should not take them lightly.

The world's importance arises on account of our consciousness being involved in it. The content of consciousness is what is important, or rather, the very existence of a thing is conditioned by the extent of the involvement of our consciousness in it. If the consciousness is withdrawn from a thing, it does not exist for consciousness.

We are told that there are realms of being above this world of which we are totally unaware. They do exist, and perhaps they exist more significantly than this physical world; yet, they do not exist for us. In our daily

considerations, we do not regard them as being there at all. Let them be there or let them not be there. Let the forces of nature be operating or not; we are not concerned with earth, water, fire. We are concerned with people, relations, and a little bit of our daily occupation.

As far as any person is concerned, the world exists to the extent of its involvement in one's consciousness. This is why it is called a self. You will be wondering how the world is called a self, how an object is a self. Its selfhood arises on account of your self, which is consciousness, being involved in it. If you are not consciously involved through your mind and through your affections, that particular thing does not exist for you. Therefore, the world cannot be handled very easily because it is another way of handling a larger social extension of your own self. You cannot say you will renounce the world. There are people who say that they have no commitments; but you have every commitment because you are living in the world. If you are not living in the world, you have no commitments.

Now, what is meant by saying that you are in the world or not in the world? The very consciousness of there being something outside you creates fear. The Upanishad says *dvitīyād vai bhayaṁ bhavati* (B.U. 1.4.2): Wherever there is another beside you, there is fear. Even if in the whole world there are only two people living, there can be quarrel and war.

The position that one maintains in relation to another beside oneself is important. The world cannot be renounced in a slipshod manner, as we usually think, because it is like renouncing one's own self in some way. A part of yourself goes when you renounce the world. If you leave a geographical location and go a thousand kilometres away to another place, it does not

mean that you have renounced that place. That place will cling to you as a part of yourself as long as your mind is there in some way—either because you want it, or because you do not want it. Even if you do not want a thing and you are conscious that you do not want that particular thing, it will still cling to you. The attachment of a particular thing to consciousness is either positive or negative. It is concerned, that is all, a kind of concern that you have about things. It may be any kind of concern.

Hence, the usual religious ordinance or requirement that seems to be a part of yoga practice—that renunciation is a precondition for spiritual evolution—is to be taken in its true scientific spirit. You can renounce a thing only if it belongs to you. A thing that is not your property need not be renounced, because you have no business with that thing; and what is there that can be called your property?

There are two ways of looking at this. How did you happen to own any property in the world? You did not bring it when you were born from your mother's womb, nor will you take it when you leave this world. A thing that was not with you in the beginning and will not be there in the end, how did it become part of you in the middle? It is by a kind of psychological association. "This is my land," you say. That land was there even before you were born. How did it become yours? An operation of thought takes place, and you begin to imagine that it has a vital connection with you. And if you sell that land to somebody else, that vital connection is snapped because the mind says that it does not belong to you anymore. That land has not moved from that place; it is just there. Even if it has been purchased or sold a hundred times, it will be in the same spot. Nothing has happened to it. It may not even

be aware that the sale process is going on. But something is happening in the ethereal world of somebody's mind. Do you call this an important situation to consider?

The concept of property is psychological; you cannot physically possess anything. Even if you have a valuable thing in your grip, in your hand, it cannot be called your property, because it is still outside. It can drop away. A thing that can drop from you cannot be called your property. And what is it that will not drop? There is nothing. There is nothing from which you cannot be bereaved, and there is nothing which you cannot lose. Therefore, there is nothing which you can really call your belonging. This is one aspect of the matter.

The other aspect is the involvement of consciousness. Are there things in this world in which you are consciously involved? This requires a tabulation of the items of your involvement, which is to be done gradually, with a calm thought. The so-called spiritual diary is nothing but a method of self-checking that people adopt by putting questions to themselves.

You cannot know what kind of involvement with things that your consciousness actually has because the conscious mind operates only in one level at a particular time. It cannot operate in all levels at the same time. If a wedding ceremony in your family is going to take place after a month, for one month you will think about only that. All other things will be brushed aside from the conscious level. It does not mean that other engagements are not there, but the pressure of the immediate phenomenon will be so great that, for the time being, other involvements are suppressed. All things cannot come to the mind at the same time. There are various levels of operation of the mind, and it can

think only one thing at a time. Though it looks as if you can think many things at a time, it is not so.

Like a cinematic picture in which only one picture comes at a time but it looks as if there is a living movement, the continuity of the mind in its daily operations is actually a rapid movement of little bits of thought, as a cloth is made up of little bits of thread. The mind is involved in only one particular occupation at a time. People who are so totally involved in certain things that they cannot think anything else in the world will not even be aware that they have other commitments. Each problem will start pricking you at different times.

If you are students of yoga who are intent on a real practice for self-development, you can adopt this method: Have a diary, and when you wake up in the morning, write down the first thought that occurs to your mind. As far as possible, write down all the thoughts that arise in your mind throughout the day until you go to bed at night. When you are busy working, you may not be able to do this always. But if you sit quietly for a few minutes in the evening, you will be able to gather a general idea of the processes of thought that occurred to your mind throughout the day. Let there be a list of all the thoughts that arose in your mind on one particular day, from morning to night. Do this for one month. Let there be thirty pages of your diary, giving a list of thirty sets of ideas that occurred on thirty days. You can strike a common denominator of the whole process, and you can know something about yourself. "This is the kind of person that I am. For one month I have been basically thinking this kind of thing. I encountered this. I faced that. I handled this in this manner."

When I speak of your need to make a checklist of your thoughts, this also includes the things that you faced, encountered, and had to deal with in your daily life: how many people you met and your reaction to them—how you felt about it, how you handled it, etc. After a month's practice like this, you will be able to take the cream of your thoughts from this large assemblage of various bits of thinking for so many days. The whole of yoga practice is a psychological process. A student of yoga has to be a good psychologist. It is not that you have to teach psychology to somebody; rather, you have to teach yourself how your mind is working.

It is true that we should not be attached to things and there should be an amount of renunciation spirit in ourselves. The initial step in yoga, as I mentioned in the previous session, is to set ourselves in a state of harmony with things, which is another way of saying that we should not be attached to things.

Now, not to be attached may look like detachment. Is it identical? Is non-attachment the same as detachment? They seem to be the same, but they are slightly different. There is a positivity of meaning in 'non-attachment', whereas the word 'detachment' implies a little bit of negativity. It will look that we have to cut ourselves off from connection with certain things when we speak of detachment. But when we speak of non-attachment, it will mean a kind of conscious adjustment of being free from association with things. They look identical, but there is a slight shade of difference.

Association with things arises on account of desire for things. 'Attachment' and 'non-attachment' are words that have connection with the amount of desire that one has for certain things. This secondary self, this *gaunatman*, this world of objects which we like or

dislike, all this is nothing but a phenomenon created by the various forms of desire arising in the mind.

There is a little bit of philosophy behind even the act of renunciation. What are these desires that seem to be pressing you so deeply into involvement in so many things in this world? What do you want from this world that makes you concerned with it so much? It is a muddle. At present, in the beginning, it will look like chaos. "There are so many desires," you will say. "I want many things, many involvements."

You require certain things from the world outside in order to compensate for the finitude that you feel in your own self. You feel small before the big world and, in a sense, you are little because you are one individual. The physical body requires its own security and sustenance. It cannot itself manufacture all the things that it requires. There are a hundred things that it needs every day. You know very well that these needs are available only in the world outside; they cannot come out from the body. The food that you eat, the water that you drink, and the many other needs of the body do not crop up from the body itself. They come from a secondary source, which is the world outside.

So for physical sustenance and security, to see that the body continues to exist safely, you have to see that certain appurtenances from outside are continuously associated with it, and those associations should be made one's own. They should not be precarious. "Tomorrow I may get; tomorrow I may not get." The body does not want this kind of thing. It should be assured that it will permanently get what it wants. For that, there is a struggle. Day in and day out you struggle to see that these associations are maintained. Otherwise, if it is only the promise of a possibility and it may not actually materialise, anxiety crops up: "For how

long will I get it?" So you make investments, and so on, for the future.

Apart from that, there are other needs of your personality which require you to be concerned with the world. It is not that you are concerned only with this body. There are certain other things with which you are very much concerned and would even die for, such as recognition in this world. Do you wish to be a non-recognised non-entity in the world—just riff-raff, a man of straw? Would you like to live like that? It is like death. You have food to eat, you have a house to live in, you have good clothes to wear, but you are a nobody in this world. You would rather starve for days and run about in search of ways and means to see that you become a recognised person. Even starvation does not matter. Therefore, you should not think that eating is the only important thing. I mentioned that this body has to be maintained by food, clothing, etc. It is true, but there are other things, for the sake of which you may even renounce the pleasures of the body for some time. You will not sleep when there is a question of name, fame, authority and power, which are mere thoughts, and which cannot be seen with the eyes. They are not objects like food, clothing and shelter, but they exist. Do they exist? Where do they exist? Can an unseen thing be called existent?

Many people say that to believe that something exists, it should be capable of observation; it must be visible. The greatest thing in the world, which is name, fame, power, authority—for which people can die—is not visible. That shows we have a personality in us which is not necessarily a visible phenomenon like the body. There is an invisible person inside, which is more important than the physical, visible person.

You must listen carefully. The first thing you require is to exist in this body; and you want to exist for a very long time, not only for three days. So the struggle for existence involves, on the one hand, the worry about appurtenances necessary for the maintenance of the body and, on the other hand, the qualification that they should be enduring. Why should you add that qualification? If you are comfortable today, is it not sufficient? Why do you worry about tomorrow? It is because you feel that you must exist tomorrow also. What is this peculiar thing that the mind is thinking? What has happened to it? What is the harm if you exist very comfortably today and tomorrow you do not exist? One day is as good as any other day. What is the harm? If you are given something for only one day and afterwards are denied everything, it is as good as being given nothing. You think that this is no good; but why?

There is a desire for continuity in the durational process of time, about which you must bestow sufficient thought: the existence of the body for a long time—if possible, endlessly. You do not want to physically die. You would like to continue your existence. How long would you like to live in the world? You cannot say. Would you like to live a hundred years? It is a good thing; rarely do people live for a hundred years. Suppose, theoretically at least, you are granted a lease of life of three hundred years. You will feel happy and comfortable, and not worry afterwards. Suppose two hundred and ninety nine years are over; one year is left. What will you say at that time? Even three hundred years are not sufficient. It is not the number of years that are important for you, though it looks as if you are very much concerned with them. You do not want to die at all.

Why does this happen? This is an in-depth point for consideration. The desire for perpetual, continuous existence even in this body is a reflection of the timeless eternity that is masquerading inside you. There is a great man inside this little man that you appear to be, and that big man is eternity. He says no, he cannot die.

The fear of death is an unavoidable phenomenon that goes together with the desire that you should not die. There is a contradiction in your thoughts. On the one hand, you know that you must die; on the other hand, you know very well that you should not die. How is this? These two types of thought arise in your mind at the same time because you are involved in two worlds at the same time: the phenomenal and the noumenal, the empirical and the transcendent. Time and timelessness—you are involved in time and, also, in that which is not in time. The higher world to which you belong, which is timeless in its nature, tells you always that you should never die, because really you will not die as an eternity. But your involvement in this body, which is perishable, tells you this hope has no meaning. Your hope will not be fulfilled. You will perish.

The other aspect is psychological. You want to have a good name and a lot of fame in the world. You should be a recognised person, with power and authority. You would like to have a good name, not merely while you are alive, but you wish that even after you die, people will know that you were an important person. Your name should not vanish. Would you like to be a great, noble man in the eyes of people now when you are alive, and after you die they call you an idiot? You do not want that to be said about you. You will not even know what people are saying, so what does it matter? You have died, but still it is as if you are hearing what people say.

The eternity in you tells you that people are still speaking this way.

See the mysterious, chaotic working of the mind! You do not want that even after death your property should go to some wrong person. What is this 'wrong person'? Once you have gone, you do not even know whether the property exists or not. Do you know what property you owned in the last birth? You do not know; and the same thing will happen in the next birth. Why are you worrying what will happen to your bank balance and land after you die? Why do you think like that? The eternity in you persists because there is an inner continuity in your consciousness saying that it is no good losing things even after death, so even after death you must be a great man in this world.

The mind and the body act in this manner in two different ways. Though I mentioned only two things, mind and body, there are many involvements in these two classifications. For the time being, we shall be satisfied with only two. The bodily requirement is the source of the struggle for physical existence and for security, etc. The mental requirement is the way in which you seek to be recognised and have power, authority and position in this world.

The Upanishads are great psychologists. In their wonderful psychological analysis they have said that, finally, we have only three desires. Though we seem to have a bundle of desires, every desire can be boiled down to these three desires. In Sanskrit they are called *eshanas*: *dhaneshana*, *putraishana*, *vittaishana*. The desire for physical possession and security, the desire for perpetuation of oneself in time, and the desire for name and fame—these are the three desires. All other desires are included in these.

You look very small physically. As you are just one person among many other people, what is your importance? In a large sea of humanity, you are one drop. You will feel very miserable about it, and you do not want to feel that way. You think, "I am a big man." You cannot become physically big; you know it very well, so you impose upon yourself a bigness by social association by what is called authority over other people, by becoming a king or a minister or a president, etc. When you are invested with this kind of position or authority over a large area of land and people, it looks as if your personality has grown so big that you are not one person among many others; you are one big person, under whom every other person is subsumed.

A king thinks that the entire population of his kingdom is inside him and that he can do anything with them. Physically it is not so, but psychologically he feels it is so. The entire country is inside him, as it were; he holds it in his grip. The largeness that he required has been achieved by this expansion of the *gaunatman*, or the secondary self. Why does this desire arise? It arises because the finite hungers for the infinite; the little thing craves for the big thing. The thing that is confined within a little dimension wants to break that dimension and become dimensionless. How large should your kingdom be? Kings are never satisfied; they go on annexing more into their kingdoms. The whole Earth and even the sky must be theirs. There is no end for this desire to expand oneself.

The endless desire to expand yourself physically, socially and politically is the desire of the inner infinity in you to assert itself. You will never be satisfied with any amount of property, belongings or kingdom that is given to you unless an endlessness of belonging is achieved, which cannot be possible. So you will die

without fulfilling desires of this kind. No one dies having fulfilled every desire. On the one hand, the infinity that is incipient, latent in the finitude of your personality asserts itself when it eagerly seeks to expand itself in the form of kingdom, authority, wealth, property, etc. Then there is the desire to perpetuate oneself. This desire is a great phenomenon in the world because to be cut off by time is worse than death. You should not be cut off by time. Perpetuation of your position is very important—perpetuation physically, as well as psychologically.

Physical perpetuation is wrongly attempted through the desire for progeny. People who have no children cry and go to all the gods and pray that one child should be born, as if they become gods merely because a child is born. Children are a nuisance, as everybody knows, but still they are necessary; otherwise, people cannot exist. Why is there so much desire? It is a false manipulation by the devil inside, which is a distorted form of the desire for perpetuation in time, which says that continuity by physical progeny in a lineage of children and grandchildren, etc., is equal to one's being there in the process of time. But this is really not the truth. So this is another misconception that takes place.

The Upanishads say there are three things: the desire for physical expansion by the accumulation of property, wealth, kingdom, etc., the desire to perpetuate oneself through progeny, which looks like actual continuance in time, and the desire for endless recognition, that one's name should be remembered even after the body goes. You have no desires in this world except these three. You can go on thinking a thousand things, but you will find that they come from only these three, which are like a big umbrella covering all your desires.

In this circumstance of your placement in this kind of world, what are you supposed to do when you seek salvation? Can you imagine how much inward effort is necessary on your part to take steps along the line of yoga practice? These involvements should be disentangled. They should not be severed by a sword. You do not kill your desire; you disentangle it and untie the knot.

It is said that there are three knots: Brahma-granthi, Vishnu-granthi and Rudra-granthi—Brahma's knot, Vishnu's knot and Siva's knot. Perhaps these three knots have some connection with the three desires that I mentioned just now. They are very much emphasised in kundalini yoga and hatha yoga, etc. They are the *tamasic*, the *rajasic* and the *sattvic*; they are the outward, the inward and the universal. They have to be carefully handled by educational methods which do not ride roughshod over them.

The whole of yoga practice is an educational process. The student is not hit the head with knowledge in order to force it to enter. It is not a sudden jerk or a push that is given, but it is a gradual entry of a river into the ocean of the mind of the student. Desires are not to be abandoned. You cannot abandon a desire as if it is some outcast. The point is, the desire should not be there. You have to find out why it has arisen. I have told you something about the reason why desires arise. They arise due to a misconception in the mind that eternity and infinity can be had by these associations, which is a hopeless affair and a futile attempt. Eternity cannot be had in time, perpetuation is not possible, and endless possession is also not practicable.

Therefore, all the efforts of man in this world are finally baseless. He is born like a psychological pauper and dies like a psychological pauper, but in the middle

he looks like an emperor. This is no good. We do not want to go like paupers. Therefore, let us have some education, some knowledge.

Chapter 7

THE STABILITY OF BODY AND MIND

Yoga amounts, finally, to a study of the Self, which has been defined as Consciousness. Yoga is a study of the Self; it is a study of Consciousness. That yoga is union is a well-known definition. It means that yoga is the art of union with Consciousness itself, which is another way of saying it is union with the Self.

In our considerations of the nature of the Self, we observed that there are three phases of the Self. It does not mean that there are three Selves. There are three presentations of the Self. The external self is all things in the world with which we are connected by any means whatsoever—by like or dislike, etc. We call this self the secondary self, or *gaunatman*. We have been going into some detail as to the nature of this external self, from which a gradual extrication has to be attempted. We spent the entire previous session considering this matter. What is this external self in which we are involved—the whole of society, people, things, and so on?

To repeat, Consciousness is involved in the order of the creation of things, right from the beginning. There is a gradual involvement from the higher to the lower until it condenses into solid attachments, physical associations, and clings to visible objects. By proper analytical methods, we realise that too much involvement in external affairs is not a beneficial thing.

Kings become beggars, possessions leave us, friends desert us; nobody in this world can be fully trusted. We realise this when our hair becomes grey, sometimes when it is too late to mend. We realise that all those

who we thought were friends were not really friends; they were only *matlab* friends—friends for a purpose. And there is no security even in respect of property, money and land. Varieties of circumstances can make one lose all one's property. These circumstances may be legal, political, social, and so on. Conditions which are historical in their nature are so eluding and unintelligible that no one can trust anything. Tomorrow's fate, no one knows.

This is a kind of application of *viveka*, or the discriminative faculty, by which we guard ourselves before we find that it is too late. *Viveka* is a process of guarding ourselves from untoward conditions that may befall us. Any condition can befall any person in the world. No one is exempted from the process of evolution.

When we are youthful, our blood is warm and we are enthusiastic, so we do not realise this matter. We think we can become kings or amass a lot of wealth; we can occupy a high position in society; we can have the whole world as our associate and friend. As we become more mature in life, we see through the realities of things and begin to feel uncomfortable even with our own brother. All associations seem to be flimsy in their nature and we are likely to stand alone one day, dissociated from everything.

The lives of saints and the history of the world, these are the two things that you must read to know the fate of mankind and the types of experience through which one has to pass in life. Do not say that you are exempt. "Somebody else's plane crashed, not my plane." You should not say that. Anybody's is everybody's.

The political and social history of the world and the lives of saints tell you how people have passed through varieties of experiences, all which lead to the conclusion

that this world is not yours. Nothing in the world is yours. Nobody is yours. Nobody belongs to you. Nobody is your servant, your property, your friend. This is *viveka*, discrimination; this is understanding.

Then, what happens? This secondary self gradually drops off, like an old shirt. This discrimination is a panacea to cure the illness of attachment to external things, which constitute the secondary self. You will never feel comfortable with anything in the world. Everything is a very difficult situation. You are always guarded.

There is a homely illustration given by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa of how spiritual seekers have to be guarded in this world. You cannot be simply sleeping, as if every-thing is milk and honey. It is not so. The illustration is of a person who is caught up in heavy rain at night. He has travelled a long distance, and he is exhausted. He has not eaten. Finally he finds a little hut, a deserted place, and he enters it. He finds it is a very comfortable shelter from the lashing rain. He is tired; he would like to sleep. When he reclines and tries to doze off, he looks around and sees that a snake's head is slowly protruding from a little hole. He is not comfortable. He looks to the other side, and another snake is slowly coming out of another hole. He finds that there are also two or three scorpions moving behind him. Will he sleep, even if he is tired? He cannot go out because it is raining. He will be watching all around. Like this, you have to live in this world. Do not be too comfortable.

Read the lives of all the great kings who came to this world—all the dictators, all the Caesars. They wanted to possess the whole Earth; see what happened to them. Never be attached to things. Do not say, "It is mine." Do not say, "Without this, I cannot exist." You can exist, and

one day you have to exist independently. All these are illustrations of how you can free yourself from this entanglement in the false externality of selfhood, the entire world of association of any kind.

Then what happens if you succeed in this attempt? You go to Uttarkashi; you go to Gangotri. You say you have seen the world, and you go to some ashram, some dharmashala, and stay completely alone. "Nobody is there. I am alone." What is alone is only this body, which is also a kind of self. So from one self, you have now come to another self. Both your attachment to involvement in a social household, and your political desire, have gone. Either you have understood things correctly, and so you do not want to have any further association, or you have become so old that you do not want to have, and cannot have, any connection with anything.

The external self has gone; you have dropped it. But your false self—this *mithyatman*, this body—clings to you. You cannot get rid of it as easily as you can get rid of associations with the world. You can leave everything and sit somewhere without having any association with things, but you cannot leave this body somewhere and sit somewhere else. That is not possible. So here is a greater difficulty for you.

Yoga is union with the Self. Now, what kind of self? It is union with the real Self, which is something well known to you. You cannot say that this body is the real Self. It is a false Self. We have seen through our analysis of the three states of consciousness—waking, dream and sleep—that our real Self is indicated in our condition of sleep. It is not this physical body, which has to be cast off one day. Our physical body will die, and we will still continue to exist.

In a similar manner as you exercised discrimination and understanding in respect of the external self, you have also to do something with this bodily self. It has to be handled in a particular manner. With your detachment, or non-attachment to things outside, the disharmony that existed earlier between you and the world outside has almost been eliminated. Now the disharmony that is between this body and the world of nature has also to be looked after. You felt that this external self is mainly a kind of psychological self. Friendship, love, hatred, wealth, position—these are all only ideas in the head. They do not physically exist outside, yet they harass you very much.

This body is of a different character. It is made up of the five elements. Earth, water, fire, air and ether constitute the building bricks, the substance of every formation in this world, including your own body. In a cosmic sense, you may say even this body is a kind of thought. But it is too much for you to think like that. You must go slowly. It is more difficult to handle the body than to handle the world of relations outside. You can make adjustments with the world, but you cannot make any adjustment with this body. It has its own say.

The problem with this body is that it is considered as an independent entity, outside the world of nature—which is made up of the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether—notwithstanding the fact that it is not outside nature. The building is not outside the bricks. The bricks and the building are inseparable. Why is it that you consider your body as independent of the external world of nature, though it is made up of the same substance as the world outside? It is due to the intense affirmation of consciousness in a particular location. Desires, which are the forces generated by a particular affirmation of consciousness, cause the



gravitation of particles of matter around themselves, and the formation of the body ensues.

This body is a shape taken by particles of matter due to the attraction, or the gravitational pull, of the desireful affirmation of a centre of consciousness, which is called the ego, or the *jiva*. Otherwise, there is no reason for believing that the body is existing totally outside nature. We cannot feel ourselves in harmony with the trends of nature. The seasons change, and we cannot accommodate ourselves to that. We feel very uncomfortable. If it is raining, we do not like it; if it is hot or cold, it is no good; if the wind blows, it is also no good. Nothing is good for us. The body cannot accustom itself to these conditions.

There are various laws of nature, which the body does not always follow. Persons who are acquainted with the system of natural healing, called naturopathy, know something about how natural laws operate in the world and how we live an unnatural life. We fall sick for various reasons—psychologically, as well as naturally.

The yoga technique prescribes certain methods of adjustment of the body with the world of nature. There are various methods. One of them is the well-known system of the practice of yoga exercises: yoga asanas. You do exercises every day, but you must do it as yoga, not as an exercise. It is not a game or a physical training that you are performing. Yoga exercises, these asanas, become yoga only under certain conditions; otherwise, they are mere exercises like football, cricket, and so on. How do physical exercises become yoga? I said that yoga is union with Reality. What kind of union with Reality is possible by the exercise of the limbs of the physical body? There are various answers to this question.

Firstly, you must realise that you are a psychophysical individual, a mind and body complex. The so-called person that you are is a very interesting blend of mind and body, thought and physicality, idea and form. You cannot be simply the body without the mind, nor are you merely the mind without the body.

You can very well appreciate the effect of the mind on the body when you consider that mental disturbances have an impact on the body. When you are grief-stricken, when you are bereaved, when you have lost all property, when your life is at stake, see how thoughts affect the body. They can make you physically sick. Intense thought, of whatever nature, can have such an effect upon the physiological system that it will look as if the body is crumbling. People who are grief-stricken do not eat for many days. Why should they not eat, when the eating is done by the body? Your mind is not eating, but the mind says that your body should not eat. It has got a control, an authority over the body. Suppose you have suddenly lost all your wealth in the stock market. What will you do? You will go and lie down, as if you are dead. Why should you physically lie down when the body is perfectly all right? The mind tells the body that you are finished, and so you do not eat; you lie down. This is an example of how the mind can affect the body, showing how intimately the mind is connected with the body.

Similarly, the other way around, the body can affect the mind. Suppose you inhale chloroform, or some anaesthetic has been injected into your body. The mind ceases thinking; you become unconscious. Chemical changes in the system can bring about psychological changes. Hence, the body can influence the mind, and the mind can influence the body. That is to say, you are

a beautiful blend of physicality and mentality, form and idea.

So when you do yoga exercises, who is doing the exercise? It is very important to remember this point, especially as these exercises are supposed to be union with Reality. What Reality? In these earlier stages, it goes without saying that the body, being part and parcel of the physical world of nature, has to be set in tune with it.

There is mostly a physical imbalance in people, and physiological functions do not take place in the manner they ought to really take place. You have some kind of complaint from some part of the body. There is no adjustment of the parts of the physiological system. Either you cannot breathe, or you cannot think, or you sneeze, or you get a stomach ache, or something else. In the same way as the mind has such a connection with the body, there is another thing which also has a connection with the body, which is called prana. Your breathing process has a tremendous influence on the physical condition and, incidentally, on the mental condition also.

The prana pervades the whole body, right from the toe to the centre of the head, and it flows through the nerves of the body, the *nadis* or fine nerve currents, keeping you feeling alive as a whole person. The body by itself is a corpse; it has no life. It is the prana that makes you feel that there is life in the body, just as an iron rod becomes hot due to the fire that passes through it, but the rod itself is not hot. When you touch a heated iron rod, you say it has burned your finger. What has burned you is not the iron rod, but the fire in it. Likewise, the prana pervading the entire body, down to the minute cells of the system, gives you a sensation of equality, wholeness, and a feeling of healthiness.

Therefore, three factors seem to be before us when we take a step in the practice of yoga. Now we are carefully going into the inner circle of yoga from the outer arrangements, about which we have discussed enough. Yoga exercises actually commence yoga proper. Asana is the beginning of real yoga. When you do the asanas, three factors must be taken into consideration: your thoughts, your body, and the pranas.

Suppose your mind is intensely disturbed or agitated for some reason or other, and you are in a state of torn emotion. That is not the time to do physical exercise. You should not say yoga will make you all right. In that condition of the mind, asana cannot make you all right. Sometimes, it will even make you worse. The mind has to be in perfect agreement with the body; only then can the body cooperate in the practice of these exercises. If your mind does not want it, you will ache all over, and the asana will not do you any good.

Desires of the mind, which actually constitute the mind, have an influence upon the flow of the prana. Wherever your thoughts are, there your prana also is. When you think something, the mind moves towards that thing, of course. But more than that, and apart from that, the prana also moves towards it. The idea of the object creates a love-hate relationship with the object, and the prana energises it.

The prana in the body does not always move in an equilibrated fashion of harmony. When the body becomes old, it looks ugly, and some parts of the body demand greater attention than other parts. The sense organs demand a lion's share of pranic energy. A particular sense organ says that it must have all the energy for itself. "All the water should flow through my field," as quarrelling villagers sometimes say.

When you go on seeing something with great attention, as in the projection of a moving picture, you do not hear or think about anything else. You do not even know what is happening around you. When you go on gazing, the prana is impinging upon the screen. Or when you hear the beautiful performance of an orchestra, the prana is directed in that fashion. When you eat a good meal and are highly delighted with it, there also the mind is thinking of it, and so the prana goes in the direction of the digestion of the food. Any other activity also demands the movement of the prana in a similar manner. Inasmuch as you do not always think in a harmonious manner and your thoughts are distracted, the prana in the body also moves in a distracted fashion. There is no harmonious movement of the prana. It is in a jumble everywhere.

Yoga asanas, correctly performed in a sequential, systematic manner, have something like the effect of acupuncture upon the system, by which certain knots in which the prana is tied are untied, and they are made to flow in an even manner. The yoga exercise teacher should know all these things, and know what particular difficulty each student has. All students of yoga exercises are not uniform in their nature. They have mental, psychological, emotional, and even physical differences.

In the earliest of stages of the yoga practice, everything goes well; there is nothing wrong. But in advanced stages, you have to take these factors into consideration. What is the mind thinking? If the asana is performed by the body but the mind is not participating, then there is no cooperation between one part of yourself and another part. If you are physically doing *sirshasana*, the mind should also be doing it

simultaneously. The thoughts move together with the movement of the limbs.

There is a Chinese and Japanese technique called tai chi. It is an exercise which is a psychophysical movement of the whole system, bringing about a kind of meditational activity of the entire organism. It is something very beautiful. Tai chi is a system of blending the thought and the body in a kind of yoga exercise, in a manner that the thought, the prana and the physiological organs are set in a harmonious movement.

The point that I am driving at is that when you are engaged in the performance of a yoga exercise, your mind should be happy to do that exercise. It is not an imposition that is inflicted upon you, and it is not something done as a routine, whether you want to do it or not. It is a very necessary thing, and the mind is happy about it. The whole point is that your mind has to be happy with what you are doing. You should not do a thing when the mind is unhappy about it. You should not say, "This is a stupid thing to do." You should say, "I shall do it, and I am glad to do it. It is good for me. I am happy and pleased." Then that exercise will benefit you. Even when you eat, you must feel happy. "Beautiful! I like this food." If you go on condemning it, the food will become poison.

Yoga asana is also a mental asana, as well as being physical. It is also emotional. Unhappy people will not derive benefit from mere physical movements. By a carefully ordained performance of these exercises, the disparity that is usually there between the functions of the body and the laws of nature is diminished. The appetites of the sense organs become less and less intense. Passions get gradually subdued because appetites, passions and desires are the vehemence of the sense organs in respect of their attachment to only

this particular body, irrespective of anything else in the world.

The more are you concerned only with this body, the more is the appetite, the more is the desire, the more is the passion, and so on. But the less is your concern with this body and the greater is your understanding of its relation with other things in the world, the less is the appetite, and you can get on with fewer physical comforts than when you are totally physically bound and want infinite physical comforts.

Asana is described in various ways in such textbooks as Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Siva Samhita, etc. They are all good. You can have any exercise for the purpose of your health, but if you are serious about the higher achievements of yoga practice, you need not go into all the asanas. For the purpose of maintaining sound health, a dozen asanas will do, the aim behind the performance of these yoga asanas being the maintenance of a steady posture of the body.

What is the steady posture? As I mentioned, the steady posture can be defined as a harmonious balance maintained between the physicality of your body and nature's laws. That is one aspect of the matter which is very important, of course, so that you may not fall sick. You are friendly with what is operating outside in nature and with how nature works.

In the Ayurveda system of medical science, there are prescriptions of how you have to conduct yourself during different seasons. It does not mean that you should eat the same food all 365 days of the year. When the seasons change, the diet changes. The Ayurveda Shastra, such as the Charaka Samhita and others, say that during the monsoon season there are certain items which you should not eat, such as yoghurt. If you eat yoghurt and cold food when it is heavily raining, you

will have a sore throat, feverishness, etc. There are certain seasons during which you should not eat pulses because they cannot be digested. During some period, milk is not taken. At other times, vegetables with many seeds inside, such as eggplant, should not be eaten because the seeds cannot be easily digested.

When the sun is very hot, you have to behave in one way. When the cold wind is blowing or it is raining, or at the junction of seasons, such as spring and autumn, when people generally fall sick, certain other things have to be done. An adjustment of diet is prescribed in the Ayurveda Shastra; and other things are also there, such as your habits, your way of working, the time of sleeping, and so on. We have wonderful sciences in India even for having a physically comfortable life, let alone higher things like yoga practice.

The ultimate aim of the yoga practice of asana is steady posture. It is steadiness, harmony with nature's prescriptions, and basically it is steadiness in seatedness. Yoga is meditation, finally. A particular operation of thought is called meditation. For that, you have to be seated. Why should you be seated? Can you not lie down, stand up or walk? When the mind is concentrated, the body loses its mental grip, and the mind will not pay sufficient attention to the maintenance of the balance of the body when it is concentrating on something else. If you start standing and concentrating, you may fall down, and if you lie down, you are likely to go to sleep. Hence, lying down and standing are not considered as proper postures for yoga meditation.

The seated posture, *āsīnaḥ sambhāvāt* (B.S. 4.1.7), is a sutra in the Brahma Sutras: Success follows from a seated posture. You can see by experimenting every day. Do not do meditation, do not think anything, but at

least be seated. Do not get up and move about. For half an hour continuously, sit in one posture. See what difference takes place in your personality. You will feel a kind of tingling sensation flowing through the nerves. You will feel a fixity of posture. And if you sit for a long time, you may even feel as if you are a very heavy hill. That sensation will follow.

Seatedness is the proper posture. Various instructions are given for the purpose of maintaining this steadiness of posture. In the beginning, you can lean against a wall so that you may not feel an ache in the spine. Use a cushion so that there may not be pain in the knees. Later on you can sit any way you like.

Physical steadiness of the posture is achieved by the continuous maintenance of it on the one hand and, at the same time, the entertaining of a thought similar to it. Again the same question arises: The mind should not be somewhere else. It should also be in that posture. The mind should be concentrating on something which is steady.

In an aphorism of Patanjali there is an interesting prescription: *prayatna saithilya ananta samāpattibhyām* (Y.S. 2.47). Feel completely relaxed. Do not be rigid. Feel that you have practically isolated yourself from the body. You are not there in the body. This is a kind of relaxation method. Do not be rigid, because then you will feel pain. *Prayatna saithilya* means effortlessness. Your work should be an effortless performance, without rigidity and pain; then the performance is a happy one. People dance and act in drama theatres spontaneously, not with rigidity and fixity. In a similar manner, let there be an effortless seatedness of the body.

The mind is also to think of something which is fixed. What is fixed in this world? We may think of the

Earth itself; it is very steady. You are as steady as the whole planet Earth or the solar system. The word '*ananta*' is used in this sutra: *prayatna saithilya ananta samāpattibhyām*. Think of the *ananta*. What is the *ananta*? There are two meanings for it. One is the traditional meaning, and the other is the philosophical meaning.

The Puranas say that a huge snake with millions of hoods, called Ananta, is supporting the physical world. An old grandmother's tale says that earthquakes are due to the tremors caused when this large snake shifts the load of the Earth from one hood to another hood. Then the Earth shakes, and there is an earthquake. How steadily that great snake is positioning the entire cosmos! Some Puranas say that the eight directions of the Earth are maintained in position by eight elephants, called Diggajas. This is all mythology, theology, etc., and is only to suggest the way in which you can think of the position to be maintained.

Ananta also means without end—that is, non-finite, infinite, endless. Can you think of endlessness? Think of space from all sides. Imagine that you are moving in space to the right; you are moving further and further to the right; the space has no end. You are moving to the left—no end, no end. You are moving high up, to the top—no end, no end; and then you are going down. Imagine that, at one stroke, you are moving in all directions in space. Immediately you feel a kind of fixity of your mind. You must think all six directions at the same time: the four quarters, plus above and below. Endlessness, from all sides, engulfs you in such a manner that you have nothing to think. When there is nothing to think, there is fixity of the mind as well as the body. This is the way in which you can attain stability of

yoga posture for the purpose of higher achievements in yoga.

This is something about this false Self—this body. I have not told you everything about it, only a little bit. This body is connected with physical nature; it is made up of the same elements as this world is made, and you have to live in a state of harmony with the natural seasons, etc. It starts with yoga asanas, and asanas lead to the posture of the body. This is one thing. But there is something more about this false body.

The body is not a solid stone sitting here, so that you can just take it for granted. It is also a tremendous involvement, and it is not solid. In the same way as your relations with society outside are not one solid arrangement and are a juxtaposition of various techniques of mental operation with things and persons outside, so is the case with this physical personality. It is not entirely physical, though it looks like that. It has internal components, which are the reason why this physical body appears to be in this form.

This physical personality is not a solidity, in the same way as your relations with society outside are not one solid arrangement. It is a juxtaposition of various techniques of mental operation with things and persons outside. This physical personality is not entirely physical, though it looks that way. It has internal components, which are the reason why this physical body appears to be in this form. So merely doing asanas may not be sufficient. Something else also has to be done in order to control this body; and when I say 'body', I mean all that constitutes your personality.

Your personality is the body. The outermost part of this personality is the physical body, but there are internal layers which Vedanta philosophy, Sankhya

philosophy and others tell you are the body of sense organs, the body of vital energy, the body of pure psychic operations, the body of intellect, reason, and many other things. If you are ignorant of these internal citizens of this little world of your personality, and imagine that you are only this solid body, you will be thoroughly mistaken.

So from the outer world of social relations we have come to the physical body, and now we shall see what else is inside this so-called individual personality.

Chapter 8

THE YOGA OF THE BHAGAVADGITA

Yoga is a positioning of oneself in a state of perfect equilibrium. What is this 'oneself' which has to be so positioned? This has been the subject of our studies. We have, in this connection, noticed that this so-called oneself has at least three definitions, three aspects, and may be said to constitute a threefold reality: the external self, the personal self, and the universal Self.

The first six chapters of the Bhagavadgita are engaged with this subject of the positioning of the personality by disciplining it gradually from its lesser, grosser entanglements until it reaches a position of self-integration, as it may be called. There is a distracted atmosphere around us in the beginning; nothing seems to be in order. This is the presentation before us in the First Chapter. Not only are things not in order, they seem to be at loggerheads with one another. A situation of war, the worst thing that we can think of, is before us in the First Chapter of the Gita.

This is exactly what we see in the world when we look at it with the naked eye. Nothing is in a state of alignment. Everything is independent, as it were, maintaining its self-identity in a state of conflict with another, which also maintains a similar self-identity. What is war? It is a clash of entities which maintain their self-identity irrespective of what another is or what one's relation to another is. Selfishness gone to the extreme in a person, a community or a society leads to battle and war. Seen on its surface, human society, the world as a whole, appears to be of this characteristic. "Each for oneself and the devil take the hindmost," is an

old saying which tells us how the world seems to be going on. "Do what you like, I mind my business; and if you interfere with my business, war will take place." Here is the First Chapter of the Bhagavadgita.

There is something else about it, which is not the subject of our studies here, namely, the inability of the individual to engage itself in war while war is actually going on, for a reason which may be considered as purely personal. The world is so big, humanity is so large, that we seem to be isolated before it, and it would be next to impossible for us to think of facing it. Yet, we have no other way than to face it every day. This was Arjuna's peculiar predicament. He had to face it; otherwise, what would he do in the state of a conflict that had already arisen? But actually, when he was face to face with it, he found that it was too big for him. It was too large.

The world appears to be bigger than us, and people around, constituting humanity, are vaster and perhaps stronger than us as particular individuals. How will we face this world, and people in general? One of the questions and doubts of Arjuna was: "This is an impossibility. What is the good of waging war when there is no surety of victory? Do we go only to die there?" No one engages in war merely to die; the idea is to win victory. And everyone has a hope in their heart of hearts that they will win victory over the conflicts that seem to be between themselves and the world outside. Every minute is a struggle of every person against the odds that are created by the world of humanity and of nature. Otherwise, if we have always a fear that this will not go far, or nothing will come, or it is certain that we will be crushed by the world, we will not lift a finger. There is a hope inside that victory is ours. "Let the world be big and people be many; what does it matter? I

shall overcome them, and I shall have my say.” This is why we struggle. But yet, there is a diffidence that this may not be as simple as it appears. So we think: “Let me sink down into an inverted, hibernating condition of self-satisfaction and self-complacency. Let the conflict be there.”

There is a dual factor involved in this situation that is before us. On the one hand, there is the finitude of our individuality in comparison with the largeness of the world of humanity and nature. On the other hand, we cannot rest quietly with this consciousness of finitude in us. How long can we go on feeling wretched? It is intolerable. Can we always go on thinking that we are prisoners, weaklings, helpless persons, unwanted individuals? Can this state of affairs go on for a long time? We want to overcome the barriers of our personality.

The first six chapters of the Bhagavadgita engage themselves with these interesting methodologies of gradually introducing into the sense of finitude of the individual a sense of largeness, not of a social character, but of the character of true infinity. There is a difference between largeness in the sense of quantity and largeness in the sense of infinity. Infinity is not quantity; it does not mean something big. Infinity means something else altogether. The fullness of feeling that may be sometimes in us for certain reasons cannot be identified with a quantity or a substance. We can feel full, filled to the brim with satisfaction as if everything has come to us, but this feeling of inclusiveness, completeness, is not to be equated with the quantity of possessions in the sense of things in the world.

If we have a large estate, a lot of money, and authority over humanity, that may appear to be an

extended form of our existence, but it is merely a thought operating. An individual remains an individual, a finite person remains a finite person, notwithstanding the fact he may look like the emperor of the whole world. A king is not identical with the world that he rules. This is the difference between true infinity and false infinity. If we are the ruler of the sky, the entire space and the whole world, it does not mean that we have become as big as space because rulership is a concept in the mind; it is not an existent reality.

But the integration of personality that is to be attempted in yoga is an endeavour towards the achievement of infinity. Unfortunately, language has no better word than 'infinity' to describe a condition which is both super-quantitative and super-qualitative. The sense of fullness, which is the characteristic of infinity, is neither a quality nor a quantity. It does not mean that when we are really happy our happiness has somehow or other been foisted upon us, or that we have been whitewashed, colour-washed or dressed up with happiness. Our sense of fullness, which is the satisfaction that we feel at that time, is not a quality that is added to us as an adjective; it is we ourselves. If the happiness were only a quality that had been added to us, we would remain something other than that quality; therefore, we would not be happy because it is outside us. But we do not feel that a kind of qualitative adjunct has been placed on our heads in the form of satisfaction; we have ourselves become the satisfaction. This is to give an indication of how true infinity differs from possessiveness or the satisfaction of having something outside oneself.

The Bhagavadgita techniques are difficult to understand, and many people do not know what it says. Some people say the Gita tells us to work hard. "Do! Do! Do

not keep quiet. Your duty is to stand up, be brave, be a hero, fight.” This seems to be, in the eyes of many readers of the Gita, the message it conveys. The Bhagavadgita does say that; it is perfectly true. Vigorous, enthusiastic words are used by Bhagavan Sri Krishna to instil into Arjuna a force necessary for girding up his loins for intense activity in the form of battle. By reading these words, by emphasising this aspect of the teaching, many people say the Bhagavadgita is a karma yoga shastra because it tells us to do something. From the beginning to the end, there is only a hammering on doing something. But the Gita is not merely that. It is a doing of a different characteristic, of a different nature altogether. It is not doing something like digging in the field or doing business in a shop. It is not that kind of doing that the Gita speaks of, though we have to agree it is a kind of doing.

It is to be remembered that Arjuna’s questions did not cease until the Eleventh Chapter. Until then, he went on asking question after question. A kind of inclusive presentation had to be injected into the very consciousness and feeling of Arjuna in order that all his queries may cease forever. We think that he saw a total inclusiveness of true Infinity, which is called the Virat Svarupa; but the Virat Svarupa cannot be seen. It is experienced, just as we cannot see our happiness as an outside something. It was a tremor of the soul—an earthquake, as it were, of the entire personality—that shook up Arjuna’s existence, and God invaded the very existence of man. At that time, the consciousness of doing gets transmuted into a divine operation. What would we do at the time when our soul is in tune with that presentation of inclusiveness? That ‘doing’ is actually the doing of the Bhagavadgita; it is a God-man’s action.

It is always emphasised in the Bhagavadgita, together with its injunction to work, that action should be based on understanding. *Buddhi yukta* is the word used in the Gita. Bereft of understanding, activity loses its significance. You will say, "I very well understand what I am doing. What is the difficulty?" Understanding the work that you do in the office is not the same kind of understanding that is referred to in the Bhagavadgita. That understanding is explained to us in the Third Chapter. It is called *sankhya*, the actual relationship of subject with object, *purusha* with *prakriti*, consciousness with matter, oneself with the universe. That understanding is lacking in us, though we have a little, puny type of understanding when we are actually working at a desk.

It is only in the Sixth Chapter that the Bhagavadgita achieves its purpose of explaining the theme of total self-integration, the positioning of the individual for the purpose of meditation. This positioning is what is called *asana* in a higher sense. *Asana*, as we noticed earlier, is a physical posture, a seatedness of the body for the purpose of higher contemplation; but this is a positioning of the whole personality, and not merely the physical body. As mentioned at the end of the previous session, this personality is involved in various layers, and the knowledge of them is also essential. Our personality is not like a solid rock. There are constituents inside our personality which make up what we are. These constituents are called layers. In Sanskrit they are called *koshas*: *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya* and *anandamaya koshas*. They are sheaths which cover the true us, or the soul that is inside us—the true soul that we are. Like onion peels, one inside the other, there are peels of our personality. But in an onion, one peel is different from another peel,

whereas here the peels are not so very different. There is a gradual tapering of one peel into the other, so that we cannot easily say where one sheath ends and another sheath begins.

Imagine a part of a lake becoming frozen in cold climates. The surface becomes hard ice, but there is water beneath it. This liquid underneath gradually gets solidified into the ice on the surface. 'Gradually' is the word. There is no sudden jump from the liquid to the solid. In the beginning, it is a tendency to solidification—an impulse of the liquid to become other than what it is in the form of solidity, gradually, so that we cannot easily say where the water ceases and the ice starts. Something like that is what is happening in the formation of our personality. In the process of creation, to which we have made sufficient reference, what has happened to the individual is a cutting off of a centre of awareness from its universality. This is what is called the fall of man. The isolation of a part from the whole is the fall.

In the Aitareya Upanishad particularly, this nature of the fall is described in very artistic detail. When this severance takes place, for whatever reason, it looks as if a blow is dealt upon the head of this little self-affirming, isolated part. This blow is the kick that is given by the Universal to the particular. It becomes unconscious, as happens when a blow is given to anybody. We are completely oblivious of what has happened. Darkness prevails, whose symbol we see in the state of deep sleep. The severance of the part from the whole is not a joke; it is worse than death. Even death is better than that. It is the vitality of one's own self being severed, as if every nerve is torn from one's own existence. No one can imagine what that state is. When pain is intense, we are not able to feel it because we become unconscious.

We can tolerate a little pain, but cannot bear too much, and so we become unconscious. It is death, as it were.

The obliteration of the Universality, of which the individual is an integral part, is the darkness that is seen in front, which is identified with one's own self. "Darkness prevailed in the beginning of things," say the scriptures. "God brooded over the waters of creation." These waters of creation are nothing but a universal darkness that was created for the purpose of giving some significance to the individuals who have been severed from the Universal.

Now, there is the tendency of this individualised condition of the obliteration of consciousness to germinate into activity. Consciousness never dies. Seeds may be lying in the earth for years but, when rain falls, they germinate into tendrils. Likewise, how long this darkness continued, how long there was this obliteration of consciousness, one cannot say. But a time came when there was an upsurge of activity. This darkness, the original covering, is what is called the *anandamaya kosha*—a thick layer of dust and darkness, clouds piled up one over the other. Since consciousness is always alive and it is never destroyed, it wishes to be conscious of itself. Consciousness has to be conscious of itself; otherwise, it is not consciousness. One cannot always lie in a condition of death, as a corpse. It is said that for some time it lies like a corpse. At the time of creation, a blow was given and it cried in pain, says the Upanishad: "I feel the agony of my limitation." We know the sorrow of feeling finitude inside. We experience it because even now we are finite, and are very miserable indeed. But we wish to forget that misery by imagining that many things belong to us and all is well with the world; we have many friends and a lot of property to take care of us. This falsehood of feeling keeps us intact.

Otherwise, we would have died in three days. This is why they say that the world is unreal.

This consciousness that is in a state of obliteration of its union with Universality asserts itself in a different manner altogether, in an inverted fashion. It begins to see itself as if in a mirror. Consciousness has to be conscious of itself, as I said, but in this condition of darkness, it cannot be conscious of itself as it ought to be. It has to be conscious of itself as we are conscious of ourselves in a mirror. We cannot know ourselves except as we appear through a reflecting medium, that is, a mirror. It projects a medium, and creates an aperture for the manifestation of itself. It objectivises itself. Pure subjectivity is only infinity, and that has been severed. Now there is an objectivised feeling of one's own existence. A false subjectivity through the object is created by a consciousness of itself through the aperture it creates through the darkness. The principle aperture is the intellect. The intellect is the greatest faculty available to the human being. All our rationality, logic, philosophy, and the greatest genius we can think of is in the intellect, but it is a manifestation of darkness, ultimately. It is objectivised.

The highest intelligence available to man in rationality, reason and intellect is a clouded form of the otherwise infinitude. This is why it is said that the intellect is not always a safe guide. It can be scientific, it can be objectively logical, but it cannot present us with the universal Truth of things. Intellect is an externalised medium of consciousness, and Truth is not externalised; it is universal. Therefore, we cannot know Truth by reason alone. And inasmuch as the highest faculty available to us is reason, in this condition of ours—of intellectuality, scientific observation, experiments, etc.—Truth cannot be known.

But some sort of truth is necessary. We cannot live only in falsehood. So consciousness projects a world of apparent reality, called *vyavaharika satta*, which is pragmatic reality, empirical reality, workable reality, tentative reality. It manufactures, in the form of visualising the Universal as an external to itself, the world before us. This world that is seen in front of us is actually the Universal manifesting itself, but we cannot know that. The intellect tells us that it is outside us.

The faculties with which man is endowed are called, in our present-day style of speaking, psychological operations. The psyche that is spoken of in psychology is inclusive of various types of operation, one aspect being intellect or reason. But we do not always think and argue only in terms of reason. There are other ways of our reaction to things, namely, there is a faculty called feeling. For the purpose of manifesting another function, which is feeling, the reason adjusts itself to another aspect of its functioning, called mind. In Western psychological parlance, the word 'mind' includes all types of psychological function. It is only in Indian psychology that a distinction is made between certain types of psychological function. The word 'mind' has to be used cautiously; it is an English equivalent of psyche, but usually, in Indian psychology, the mind is a designation for one type of psychic functioning, especially feeling.

We know how feeling differs from reasoning and intel-lection. We can understand certain things very well, but we may not feel them. So the internal organ—the *antahkarana*, as it is called—has various functions to perform, four of which are laid before us for our consideration.

Intellect is one aspect. It is the faculty of judgment and decision, logical argumentation—the mind which

feels and thinks in an indeterminate manner. The perception of the mind is indeterminate, and the perception of the intellect is determinate. When we see something in front of us, the mind thinks that there is something in front, but does not know what it is; this is called indeterminate perception. "I am seeing something in front of me." The mind says that something is there, and then the intellect says that it is a tree, or a stump, or a person is standing. That is determinate perception. So the intellect and the mind differ by way of determination and indetermination of their perceptive function: intellect and feeling.

The third—though it may be called the first because it originated in the beginning—is a faculty called egoism. The word 'egoism' also has to be understood properly. When we say a person is very egoistic, we mean he is a proud person who boasts, who gives airs to himself. Such a person is called egoistic. But in the philosophical parlance of yoga psychology, ego has to be understood in its very subtle signification. It does not mean merely pride. Pride is only a very crude form of its manifestation. The translation of ego is 'self-sense'. The feeling that 'I am', this consciousness of 'I-am-ness' as an individualised identity, this self-sense, as we usually call it, is the ego sense, *asmita*. *Asmi* means 'I am', and the 'I-am-ness' is the ego sense. This is also a psychological function.

Yoga psychology tells us there is a fourth aspect, which is what is called memory. Our mind, our psyche, our *antahkarana* can know now what happened sometime back. Therefore, knowing is not always direct perception through the sense organs; it can be memory, or even inference.

After creation takes place and individuality is formed, consciousness projects these faculties for the

purpose of its sustenance in this world of individuality. I am describing how personality is created in the process of creation. First of all, there was Universal Existence. Then there was an isolation from it. A part came out and lost the sense of its identity with the Universal. There was darkness. There was no knowledge of anything. Then there was intellection and mind, and the other faculties mentioned. The perceptions now gradually become grosser and grosser. When we become grosser and grosser in our perception, the objects become more and more distant from us. They become more and more solid in appearance. In the earliest of stages, there was no object at all. Later on there was only the appearance of there being something external. Then it became solid content, solidity to such an extent that it cannot be associated with the perceptive consciousness in any manner whatsoever. "I am one thing, and you are another thing." Total distinction between the seer and the seen took place.

How long can we remain in this condition of isolation from our true identity with the Universal Being? Not for long. But, though veritable hell has befallen this 'part individuality' in this state of wretched experience, it has to make good the loss. Great loss indeed is the loss of contact with the Universal, but what is the use of weeping that we have lost it? Something has to be done to make good this loss. "It is better to rule in hell than to serve in heaven," said the poet. Why should we be a servant of the Universal? Be a lord in hell, that is better. We would not like to serve even a king because, after all, we are a servant. We would like to be an authority, even if it be in a piggery. We have authority over the pigs. What is the harm? Why should we be a servant of the king? It is not good. Let us

rule with authority, though it is in hell, but never serve in heaven.

With this peculiar contortion of feeling, the individual self-sense manufactures a world of its own, an individuality, and an implementation of sensations to contact an apparent world which it has projected outside for its own satisfaction in this so-called hell. These appurtenances, these tentacles or antennae that it manufactures for the purpose of sustaining itself in this wretchedness, are the sense organs: the eyes, the ears, and so on. They tell us that everything is well with us. "Don't weep. Everything is nice. Beautiful colour, good sound, soft touch, good taste, good smell—what else do you want? Are you satisfied?" The soul says, "I am satisfied." It is crying inside, and outwardly it says, "I am satisfied." What is use of being satisfied with beautiful dress, golden gowns and a crown on the head, when there is typhoid fever inside? This kind of satisfaction is no satisfaction, yet we have to say something. We are crying inside, but we say, "I am all right, no problem." This is the world in which we are living.

It is incumbent upon everyone to see to it that the prodigal son returns to the father one day or other. One cannot always be a prodigal emperor; it is no use. Prodigality will make us weep, as the story in the Bible tells us. Afterwards the son cried, and had to go back to his parent to recover his original identity that was of real utility. Yoga practice, spiritual life, religion proper, is the attempt of this wretched soul to go back to its originality, which is the true heaven of its existence, and not merely try to go on ruling in the hell that it has manufactured here.

The soul projects sense organs for this purpose. It then solidifies itself into a true existence which it wants

to feel as really and perceptibly there, and manufactures this solid body. We cannot go on merely thinking that we are existing; we must be seeing it also. Imaginary wealth is no wealth. "I must see it and touch it. Here it is. This body is solid. I can see it. I can take a photograph of myself." Do not take photographs of this stupidity; there is no purpose in it. As some mystics say, a photograph is a shadow of a shadow. This body is a shadow of the Universal Being, and you are taking a shadow of that shadow.

The Bhagavadgita tells us that we have to build up our true personality which was originally there before we ran away from our true Father. In the Sixth Chapter, it tells us how we can safely position ourselves in an act of concentration with that Supreme Identity which was originally ours. The first six chapters of the Bhagavadgita are a psychological preparation for building up a self-identity necessary for the purpose of higher meditation.

I mentioned that our movement is from the external to the internal, and from the internal to the Universal. Some commentators on the Bhagavadgita say that the first six chapters are concerned with the external and the internal, the next six chapters, from the Seventh to the Twelfth, are concerned with the Universal, with which we have to get united, and the last six chapters consist of the manner of our identity with the Universal.

In the beginning, we were distracted psychic entities. This distraction has ceased. A kind of alignment of the inner components of the personality has been achieved when we reached the apex of the teaching of the Sixth Chapter. The Bhagavadgita is the greatest yoga shastra. Everybody should know what it teaches. It should not merely be learned by rote and chanted as a holy text. It is a medicine for the illness of

the soul of the human being. No yoga shastra can equal the Bhagavadgita. That one book is sufficient for us. As it is difficult to understand, it has to be read with great caution, under the guidance of a teacher.

The Sixth Chapter is the art of the integration of personality. These layers or sheaths that I mentioned are not always in a state of harmony among themselves. Psychologists call it a non-alignment of individuality. Some patients say that they are not aligned inside, and so they suffer. What do they mean when they say that they are not aligned? They think something, feel another thing, understand a third thing, and want a fourth thing altogether. Their relationship with things is slipshod.

Our connection with things in the world is not clear. One day it looks like this, another day it looks like that. Today we say we want this, and tomorrow we say we want something else. Today we say this place is good, and tomorrow we say that place is good, and so on. This is a non-alignment of the psyche, and it has to be taken care of appropriately. A systematic alignment of these layers has to be attempted. They have to be positioned. Asana is of the entire personality, not merely of the body.

All the *koshas* are in a state of unison. *Yadā pañcāvatiṣṭhante jñānāni manasā saha, buddhiś ca na viceṣṭati, tām āhuḥ paramāṃ gatim* (K.U. 2.3.10), says the Kathopanishad. In one sloka, in one verse of the Kathopanishad, the whole yoga is described. *Yadā pañcāvatiṣṭhante jñānāni manasā saha*. *Pancha* means five. When the five sense organs do not agitate among themselves, do not clamour for different types of satisfaction, when they stand together with the idea of one thing only and the intellect does not oscillate, one is in a state of attention. This is called yoga.

What the eyes see, what the ears hear—what the sense organs cognise—what the mind thinks and the intellect understands, all these should be uniform. They should be one and the same thing. That is real attention. Hearing one thing, seeing another thing and thinking a third thing is not attention. The senses have to be melted down into the substance of which the psyche is made. The psyche has to melt down into the pure reason, and this has to be the subject of concentration.

The concentration of the mind in yoga is not an ordinary, distracted or isolated function. It is not one part of the psyche that is meditating; it is the total psyche. In yoga psychology, the word '*chitta*' is used. *Yogaś citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ* (Y.S. 1.2): The restraint of the *chitta* is yoga. That is Patanjali's terminology. Here, *chitta* means the total psyche. The reason, the feeling, the memory, the inference, thought of any kind, all stand together in unison. Who is meditating in yoga? Do not say, "My mind is meditating." You are meditating, not your mind. It is not your servant that is doing the work; you yourself are doing it. Otherwise, you could tell a servant to meditate for you. You have to do it for yourself.

The Bhagavadgita tells how you can become the 'true you': an individual who is a totally aligned, complete, compact whole, who is satisfied and wants nothing else. Such a person can leap across this sea of the gulf between you and the Universal, as Hanuman jumped across the sea to Lanka.

Chapter 9

PREPARING FOR MEDITATION

Having known so much about our own selves during our sessions of the consideration of various aspects of life and creation, it becomes incumbent upon us to place ourselves in a position that is befitting the structure of this vast atmosphere in which we seem to be placed. The word 'yoga', translated as 'union', is a simple act of being friendly with the atmosphere, the environment, the structure of creation. If we deeply think of it, we will find it is a simple matter to be just normal, friendly, harmonious, and to be in a state of at-one-ment with That to which we really belong and from which we can never be separated.

What is the problem? It is so simple. We are not being asked to do something unnatural, something out of the way, some duty, some obligation—something that has been foisted upon us as a work that does not belong to us. Meditation is not a work; it is a state of being. It is an affirmation of what we really are. Now, here immediately a response will come from you: "I know very well what I am." It is only to decondition your minds from the old idea about yourselves that we had to take so much time to go into several kinds of in-depth analysis. To be what you are would also mean to be in harmony with everything inextricably related to you. Again, you have to remember the three aspects of the self which we deeply considered in a previous session. What you are is a blend of all the three aspects of the self, though these aspects will gradually melt down into a singularity of the concept of the self as you advance in the practice of the process of yoga meditation.

It was also pointed out that, in the context of the consideration of asana, or posture, meditation requires a seatedness of your personality. The position, the posture of your body, should be seated—not walking, standing or lying down—for reasons which you already know. Where will you be seated? In the railway station? In a hotel? In your house? Where are you going to sit? You have to find a place for sitting. Place, time and method may be regarded as three important factors in yoga practice, and all three should be proper. An improper place, improper time and improper method will yield no result.

Now, what are these proper methods, proper timings and proper places? You know very well what you are aiming at. What are its characteristics? Meditation is an endeavour on your part to behave in your own self in a manner which is harmonious with the characteristics and behaviour of that which you are aiming at. A friend is a person whose behaviour, whose conduct, whose outlook and whose requirement is set in perfect tune with the person to whom he is a friend. People who think differently cannot be friends. Even the outlook of life should be similar. They have to aim at the same thing.

Meditation is a development of friendship with God, and you cannot be a friend of God unless you are able to think in the manner He thinks. You know very well that disparity of conduct cannot become a qualification for friendship. There is no secrecy between friends, so you should not keep something private which you will not reveal even before God Himself. Then you cannot be a friend of God.

After having heard so much, can you visualise what kind of thought could be God-thought? What would be the way in which God visualises this creation? What

would be His attitude to this world? You may say, "I have never seen God. How can I know what He thinks and what He feels about things?" You need not see God to answer this question. The question can be answered by an effort on your part to place yourself in a position which can safely be regarded as something like the position God occupies in this universe. You have to transfer your consciousness to another location. Actually, meditation is nothing but this transference of consciousness from the location of the body to the location that is the object of meditation.

Inclusiveness, freedom from every kind of exclusiveness, universality, absence of any kind of want, presence everywhere—these may be said to be the characteristics of God. In a way, this is a characteristic of Consciousness. That which is everywhere should have an attitude towards things which cannot contradict its being present everywhere. If you are everywhere, in all things—if Consciousness, which is your essential nature, is also the Consciousness which is the Self of all beings—what would be your attitude towards things? Thus, your own extended outlook, developed in this manner, may be said to be the outlook of God Himself. All things are within, and there is nothing outside Consciousness. This is the position which you may associate with God's existence.

The place, the time and the method should not be in any way disharmonious with your expectation from the practice of meditation. The troubles of spiritual seekers arise from a difficulty in freeing themselves from the atmosphere of likes and dislikes, loves and hatreds, and the idea of possession of property, wealth, relationship with people, and the like. To avoid this difficulty, people generally leave an urban atmosphere, a large city of noise, and go to mountaintops, sequestered places

where people around are not in any way disharmonious with their spiritual ambitions and aspirations. This is the first step that people generally take. They go to an ashram or to a temple, or even to a dharmashala, or to any place other than that with which they are habituated—a place where circumstances prevailing outside do not excite their old desires or even bring the memory of old desires.

The timing of the practice is the second factor. Will you be sitting for meditation at any time? In advanced stages, any time is good. “Any time is tea time,” as people say. But in the earlier stages, you will find that the body will not easily cooperate. Even the mind will resent this practice. Hence, a graduated movement along this practice should be attempted. Never jump, and never expect a double promotion. Every step, every stage, should be carefully passed through. People say many things about this time factor. Some people say that early morning, before sunrise, is a good time to meditate; some people say it is good to meditate before going to bed, and so on. These are prescriptions of a traditional nature. Though these prescriptions have some meaning, they need not be taken too literally because whatever is feasible and comfortable, causing no pain either to the body or to the mind, may be considered as suitable for your purpose.

Painlessness is also a very important factor; otherwise, it will become a kind of infliction, an imposition, a mechanical routine that will bring nothing in the end. Anything that is done with resentment is not a fruitful activity. Neither should the body resent, nor should the mind resent. You should feel happy. How do you feel happy? The position of the body, the asana, should be so flexible that it should not cause agony either in the joints or in the back, etc. That is a minor

point which is known to you. But the more important factor is the mind. Is the mind amenable to the ordinance that you have passed on it, that at this time of the day you will do this thing? Like an army commander, you are issuing instructions. Generally, nobody likes to receive instructions. They think: "This is a hopeless thing, as if I don't understand. Why do you give me instructions? What is this man ordering?" The mind should not be given instructions. It should not be ordered. You do not like to be ordered by anybody; you know this very well. It is not very pleasant.

There are three ways of handling a thing. One is by saying, "I am saying that this should be done, and you have to do it." The second way is, "It is very good to do this. If you do this, so much benefit will accrue to you. See how the same thing was done by so many people in earlier days, and they had blessings of various types. That person lived like this. That king, that emperor, that saint, that sage, that genius, that scientist, that litterateur—see how they lived. This is a very good thing. How glorious and great they were! You should also pursue this method. Don't you think this is good?" This is a more pleasant way of handling a thing than saying it has to be done. The third way is, "Please do it. It is good. It will be very beneficial. Do you know what will happen to you if you do this? Your efforts will gradually fructify into a glorious achievement which will be so blissful, so inclusive, and everything that you want will come. So why don't you do it?" These are the three methods to be adopted for the mind, whichever is convenient at the appropriate time.

There is a basic fear in the heart of every person that the achievements in spiritual practice, or meditation, are somehow or other irreconcilable with the values of life. Everyone has this little suspicion in their heart of

hearts. Sometimes in religious circles the feeling goes so deep that the world is entirely condemned as anti-God: "It is the number one evil. Even this body is an evil; it has to be disciplined, tortured, crushed, so that it may not raise its head. Extreme asceticism and renunciation are called for because everything that is usually considered as pleasant and worthwhile in this world is dubbed as evil. The whole world is anti-spiritual. Therefore, the pursuit of spirituality is a movement in a direction opposite to what the world is taking." This is the attitude of a section of thinking which is partly philosophical, partly religious—a kind of fundamentalist attitude, as people generally say these days.

Well, you may have this attitude, but will you tear yourself away from that to which you belong? Let this world be shunned as anti-God. Do you believe that you are an integral part of this world, and your vitality, your very breath, is connected with the structure of the world itself? Do you realise that renunciation of the world includes renunciation of what you yourself are?

There is another mistake committed in the attempt at the renunciation of things. "I have renounced the world. I have renounced family relations. I will renounce all connection with the world." People sometimes make statements of this kind. Now, where are you sitting at this moment if you have renounced the whole world? Can you find an inch of space to exist anywhere if the whole world has gone and has been abandoned? Do you realise that you also have gone with the world? A person who has renounced the world has automatically renounced his own existence together with the existence of the world. If this can be achieved, it is wonderful. You have gone with that which has been

renounced. If something has gone, you have also gone with it.

But the ego principle will not permit this. It says, "It is a renunciation of everything other than my own self." Unfortunately, in this predicament, 'my own self' is the ego principle. The renunciation of the world, *vairagya*, which is always considered as a prerequisite for spiritual practice, is a highly misconceived and abused concept. Many a time it becomes a formality of outward demeanour without any internal transvaluation of values.

A little bit of philosophical insight, in the sense of a good knowledge of what it is that you are going to do and where exactly you are involved, is also necessary when you practice yoga. Rushing headlong without thinking properly is not going to bring you anything. You should not rush in spiritual practice. Every step should be a firm step, carefully taken and well placed, so that you may not have to retrace it afterwards. Later on, you should not feel that some mistake has been committed. Take time; do not be in a hurry. God is not going to run away. He will be always there. Even if you take years, what does it matter? Go slowly, and do not slip down.

The time factor for meditation is that time when you are inwardly very happy in yourself, with no occupational thought in the mind. There should be no other occupation for at least three hours from the time you sit for meditation, because if there is something to be done immediately after, a part of the mind will go to that thing which is also equally important. Catching a train, going to an office or having a case in a court—these thoughts should not be there; they should be far away. Otherwise, there will be restlessness on the subconscious level. The time should be such that, at that

hour or minute of your sitting, there is no mental occupation other than that for which you are sitting. It may be morning, or it may be any time. You select the time for yourself because you are the person who does the meditation, and nobody else is prescribing particular timings for you.

But the most important thing is the method that you are adopting. The place and the time are secondary matters. Later on you will know very well which place is good and what time is proper. But what are you doing when you sit for meditation? All sorts of things are told by people. "I think nothing," is one answer. "I drive away all the thoughts," is another answer. "I think of my breath," is a third answer. "I think of my heart," is a fourth answer. "I concentrate on the point between the eyebrows," is a fifth answer. Now, what is your answer? In meditation, you are directing the attention of your mind on something. Concentration—or meditation, as you may call it—is an attention on something, a continuous fixation of the flow of the consciousness through the mind. But, on what? On that which you want. This is a simple answer.

Meditation is the attention of the mind on that which you really want. The psychology of the mind is such that you will certainly get whatever you deeply want, from the recesses of your being. There is nothing in this world which you cannot achieve. Even so-called impossible things can be attained. The impossibility is only due to extraneous factors intruding into the practice. Actually, nothing is impossible. The only condition is, you must really want it. Anything that is wanted by you wholly, wholeheartedly, from your very soul, will be at your service. The heavens will descend, if only you want the heavens to descend. But if you have

doubt in your mind and think that this is an impracticable thing, then you are to blame.

Choose for yourself what it is that you want to contemplate upon in meditation. It is no use reading a book, asking questions to various Gurus, and getting into some sort of a routine of practice unless it is really the thing that you want. I mentioned that one of the methods is the concentration on the breath. Let it be; go on with it. But is it the thing that you want? Are you entering into spiritual life, religious practice, meditation, because you want to breathe properly? You will feel that this is not so. "What I want is not merely breathing, though it is true that I would like to breathe well." Then what is it that you want, finally? This question cannot easily be answered unless you have a very good philosophical mind. You want only that which is truly there and which is going to fill you with a completion of your being, and you may add various qualifications such as deathlessness, immortality, or you may say God-being.

That concept has to be clear in your mind, and it can be entertained by various techniques which are prescribed in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. That on which you are concentrating or meditating is a kind of god. By 'god', I do not mean the Creator of the universe. I mean something that is complete, without which you cannot exist, and which promises you every kind of fulfilment. That is why it is called a beloved deity. The Sanskrit term is Ishta Devata. It is a very dear, beloved thing. The object of meditation is not merely a technique of discipline. It is a very beautiful, dear, inseparable thing. Have you seen anything in this world which is dear to you, which is beloved, before which the heart shakes, is thrilled, enthused or enraptured? Have you seen

anything like this in the world? Or you are in a state of dispiritedness always, and nothing pleases you?

Generally, nothing in the world can please you always. A certain stimulation of the psyche may appear to be pleasing for the time being but that stimulation may cease, and then the pleasure also ceases. It is said that all pleasures in this world are stimulations of the nerves. So, to always keep something as your final goal is difficult in this world. Even wealth cannot attract you for all times. High position in society cannot be always secure. This is the reason why the yoga shastras, the scriptures in yoga, prescribe an adjustment of thought in such a way that it will create before itself something very dear. There are no dear things in this world, finally. They perish, and you are bereaved of them. You can lose anything in this world, even the dearest thing. Hence, to perpetually hold on to something which is dear is difficult here; but there must be something. Inasmuch as the Ultimate Reality of all this creation is a substance which is inseparable from consciousness, your Ishta Devata, or beloved deity, also is a form of consciousness. If God Himself is consciousness, the object of your meditation cannot but be that.

You should attempt to create a presentation before you; you have to create a god for yourself. How will you create a god? The consciousness, which is your essential being, adjusts itself to a particular formation of itself, before itself, which is associated with all the qualities of permanency, inclusiveness, blessedness, beauty and perfection. The object of meditation should not only be dear; it should also be perfect, inclusive, in which you can find the fulfilment of all your wishes. All that you want, you will find there. It is a divinity because it transcends all the things of this world in its perfection and inclusiveness.

It is difficult to conceive of such an object. You may ask again and again, "What is this Ishta Devata? Who is my Ishta Devata?" Inasmuch as a student in the initial stages cannot prescribe this concept for himself or herself, a ready-made concept is placed before the student. Your Ishta Devata is the god whom you worship. Everyone has a concept of God. It may be adequate or inadequate, perfect or otherwise; it does not matter. The very concept of God is a concept of that in which you will find your fulfilment. It does not matter what that concept is. In all religious practices, in all religious circles, there is a prescription of a concept of God which they consider as final for them. This is a purely religious idea. It may be Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, or whatever it is. There are people who do not belong to any religion, or at least they say so. But, they still have some concept of what they finally need, as one cannot always be negative, wanting nothing and having nothing to regard as final.

The choice of the particular deity is left to you; and if you cannot choose it for yourself, it has to be entertained with the consent of a teacher whom you consider as competent: your Guru. The choice of this Ishta Devata is a purely personal matter, and it cannot be the topic of a public lecture. It is a relationship between the Guru and the disciple, because each person differs in their concept of the Ishta Devata, or the beloved deity.

Whatever that deity be, it is something which has a peculiar characteristic differentiating it from all other things in the world. And that differentiating factor is that it is above you, and not just outside you. Your god is not sitting outside you, in front of you, or entirely external to you. A thing may be appearing to be outside you, and yet it may be transcendent.

There are illustrations of this kind even in the world. If a person is holding an authority over a particular atmosphere, that person appears to be outside. You can see that person who is holding the authority, so you may say that person is external to you. But that person's importance or authority cannot be seen as an external object in front of your eyes. It is a pervasive principle transcending you, so you should say it is above you, not outside you. I hope you understand what I mean. Authority, kingship or administrative responsibility is not an external object, though the person holding that responsibility may look like somebody sitting on a chair. Here is an illustration of how something which is very important is really above you, transcending you, superior to you; yet, its manifestation may look like something placed before you as an object or a person.

Thus, you can have a picture of the Ishta Devata in front of you—a god that is a painted picture, an idol, a concept, a symbol, a diagram, whatever it is. And yet, you need not regard your deity as something sitting in that particular symbol. Just as responsibility and authority are not identical with the personality of the individual concerned, the god whom you are worshipping is not identical with the symbol or the image, though it is the medium of the expression of that divinity which is otherwise transcendent.

Hence, the god on whom you meditate is something above you. A very clear concept of how it is above has to be entertained. Inasmuch as it is above you, it fills you. Inasmuch as it is above you and is transcendent to you, you are inside it—just as you are included in the pervasive atmosphere of someone's authority, in spite of the fact that you are an independent person.

Therefore, this god whom you are worshipping, concentrating upon, this deity or Ishta Devata, is a

perva-sive force above you, transcendent in every way—filling you, and including you. So you will feel an expansion of your being in meditation. You will not simply be sitting and thinking something, and then getting up. Even if your meditation along this line is only for a few minutes—even if it be only for five minutes—you will get up with a sense of fullness, as if a great authority has been injected into you, to give a homely example. A great power has been given to you. You will feel a sense of inclusiveness, fullness, strength, completion, expansion of being at that time. That will happen to you in meditation. You will not get up in the same condition as you sat. “I have done the meditation, but nothing has happened.” It cannot be like that. Five minutes of sitting is enough if your mind is clear and you have properly grasped the spirit of the very idea of meditation and that which you call the object of meditation.

The object of meditation is not something outside you. This is very important. If it is outside, it cannot come to you. All things that are external to you will leave you one day, so this externality is only a secondary aspect of this object of meditation. The real feature of it is transcendence; therefore, it can never perish, because it is beyond you. It includes you. It cannot leave you. This god will possess you always. You will literally be possessed by a god, and in a few minutes of your seatedness in meditation you will feel as if some nectarine dish has been poured into you. I am not joking. It is a fact.

You are your master. You are the maker of your destiny. Some people say man creates God. In whatever sense they speak, there is some truth in this statement. You have created your god—but you are yourself that, and cannot be isolated from it. You are the miniature

Universality. You are a drop of this Absolute, and therefore that supreme inclusiveness scintillates through your littleness. Thus, this little so-called 'you' is also very big. Therefore, the bigness that you are is the object of the meditation of the so-called littleness that you are. The little you is contemplating on the big you, so you are contemplating on yourself only, finally, in an enlarged form.

Meditation is wonderful. It is not something which somebody may do when they become old and retire from life. Without it, nobody can succeed in anything in this world because meditation is contact with Reality, and who can succeed without such a contact? Thus, we enter into a stream of movement in the direction of a glorious achievement, which is the aim of meditation.

Chapter 10

RECIPES FOR MEDITATION PRACTICE

I mentioned in the previous session that the object of meditation is really not a sense object, as something placed outside before the eye. It may appear to be placed outside, but it is actually a symbolic externality of something which is really not outside. I also gave you an illustration of how this can be. Mostly, it is difficult to understand how a thing that is outside can also be transcendent, and not just outside. This requires a little bit of a special type of attention on the subject.

It was also pointed out that the mind cannot pay sufficient attention to anything unless it visualises an entire fulfilment of its longings in that particular object of concentration. Nobody will go on thinking something with no purpose behind it. Attention, concentration, meditation is not a purposeless activity. A great meaning, significance and value is already there. But often the value is not fully recognised, the reason being the difficulty in entertaining a proper concept of the object, or rather, the objective of meditation. As has been pointed out, it is an *Ishta Devata*—a very dear, beloved thing. Longing is supposed to be the principle qualification of a spiritual seeker. You have to long for it, ardently wish for it, and feel miserable without it. That is the characteristic of the attitude of a person towards that which is dear and considered very near.

I also mentioned that it is difficult to find anything in this world which can be so dear to anyone, because all dear things in the world are relatively so. Absolutely dear things cannot be found, because they come and go. In this world, the dearness—the value attached to a

thing—is circumstantial, conditional, and never absolute. Circumstances create value and meaning in things. If the circumstances change, there is no value in anything though it was, once upon a time, a very valuable thing.

Hence, one has to present a trans-terrestrial objective before one's own mind. Any object can be as good as any other object for the purpose of concentration. That the object of meditation should be loveable is, of course, a special feature which may demarcate it from other objects of concentration. That is an emotional and purely personal aspect. But philosophically considered, even those things which cannot be regarded as very beautiful or attractive can be considered as an object of meditation if they are seen from a purely scientific point of view.

Scientific objects are not necessarily beautiful things. They need not attract our feelings and emotions; nevertheless, they may be very important and may call for our exclusive attention. It may be a small particle or some little thing which we consider as quite adequate for our purpose. You may wonder how this so-called little thing will take you beyond yourself in meditation. This is so because the whole universe is concentrated in every little thing in the world. This is something very important to remember. The total cosmos can be seen scintillating in even a particle of sand. Though the universe seems to be so big and the sand particle so insignificant, its insignificance vanishes the moment it becomes a replica, a representation of all the forces operating in the cosmos. One can strike the centre of the cosmos by striking anything in the world. This is why the poet has exclaimed that we cannot touch a petal of a flower in our garden without disturbing a star in the heavens. The connection between a star in the heavens

and a flower in our garden is capable of appreciation only if we know the scientific structure of the cosmos.

There is no distance between things, finally. Space is an illusion which creates an artificial distance between things. Facts like telepathic communication, which can produce effects at so-called distances, are instances which prove that really there are no spatial distances. The most remote object can be operated upon by a thought because remoteness is not actually a basic fact in the structure of things. Space and time themselves are not ultimately real. Hence, that which is past, that which is future and, of course, that which is present can also be contacted by thought. We can materialise the past in the present, and bring back into the present consciousness that which appears to be in the future, because the time process is not absolute. It is relative to the other relative factor: the distance, which is presented by space. Such being the case, anything—a little plant, a flower, a dot on the wall, a candle flame, or anything, for the matter of that—can be considered as a representation of the great ideal that we see before us for our liberation.

This also explains the philosophy behind what is known as idol worship. It is not 'idle' worship; it is 'idol' worship. An idol is a symbol; and who in this world is not worshipping a symbol? Those persons who have an overweening attitude towards ritualistic worship and the adoration of idols and symbols do not understand that no one can exist in this world without some kind of symbol that is considered as most valuable. Whatever you hold in your hand is a symbol, finally. A coin or a currency note is a symbol of monetary power, which itself is invisible. A photograph of some dear person—your father, mother, or whoever it is—is an idol that you are worshipping. If some dear relative has passed

away, you hang a photograph of that person on the wall of your house. Is it not a symbol? Is it not an idol? Any gesture that you make is also a symbol. The idol so-called, which is worshipped in religion or taken as an object in meditation, is a nail, as it were, struck in the wall to hang the coat of your mental operation. Something must be there to hang on to; otherwise, the mind cannot operate.

The concentration of the mind on an object is like the bombardment continuously effected upon a particular spot, so that it splits and opens up its internal constitution. Like in the breaking of an atom, this releases its forces. Continuous thinking is a bombardment, a hitting, a striking and a breaking up of a knot, as it were, which has presented itself before us as a symbol, an ideal, or an object of concentration. All objects in the world are knots of Universal force; they are concentrated essences of the all-pervading Reality. Every cell in our body is also the whole body. One can study a person by studying a little hair or one cell of any part of the body. The entire organism is concentrated in every part of the organism, so nothing in this world is unimportant. In that sense, everything is also divine. It is divine because the Universal pervades and is hiddenly present in everything that appears to be outside and segregated.

Yathābhīmata dhyānāt vā (Y.S. 1.39) is an aphorism of Patanjali, in which he very compassionately tells us that any object in this world can be taken as a suitable ideal for our meditation. Several objects are prescribed, but finally it is told that we can take what we like. It is so because we can tap the source of the universe at any point, just as we can touch any part of our body from head to foot, but it is our body. In all the realms of creation, in all the forms of manifestation, we will find

the one essence pervading. Therefore, we can take a scientific object or take a beloved object for the purpose of concentration.

The processes of meditation can be classified into three categories: external, internal and universal. Mostly, things appear to be external, as we know very well. It is the habit of the sense organs to tell us that all things are outside. The vehemence, the velocity, the force with which the sense organs compel the consciousness to rush outside into the spatio-temporal context is such that we can never for a moment imagine that things can be anywhere but outside.

Hence, the prescription in the beginning is to take anything that you see outwardly or anything that you can conceive in the mind as an object of your meditation. This is especially seen in adoration, worship, concentration on symbols and idols because they can be seen outside. You physically prostrate yourself before it, you offer a garland to it, you wave a holy light to it, you dance before it, you sing its glories, and you consider it as your be-all and end-all. It is not that you are fond of that little visible something in front of you, but you are fond of that which it represents.

Do you not salute a national flag? The flag is a piece of cloth, but it is not a cloth for you when you salute it; it is the spirit of the nation that is embedded in that otherwise meaningless piece of fabric, and that is its value. A photograph, how valuable it is! You cannot trample on it, saying that it is a piece of paper and ink. It may be so, but you cannot trample on even a currency note; it is an insult. After all, it is paper and ink, but you do not say that. It has another value altogether.

Seeing invisible forces and values, and considering them as superior to that which is seen with our eyes, is the philosophy of idol worship. What I mean by 'idol' is

any representation before us, concretely placed before the mental vision for the purpose of concentration. It can be a solid image made of stone or metal; it can be a painted picture or a diagram; it can even be a dot. Ma Anandamayi used to sign her name as a dot. That dot was her signature, and people used to worship it. Let it be a dot, but it has been placed there by someone who is not merely a dot, and so it becomes a symbol of superior, supreme adoration.

The externality of the object of meditation is due to the power of the sense organs operating even when we think divine things. The senses are not to be ignored or set aside as something irrelevant to us. Their power is well known to us. When we open our eyes, we see nothing but that which is outside, and when we close our eyes and think, we visualise that which is outside. A mental externality is projected in a space that is mentally construed. Considering the power of the sense organs, which will not allow us to think in any other way than in an external fashion, we give concession to the activity of the senses. This concession is not in the form of license for them to do whatever they like, but is a help that we demand from them even in doing something which is not actually their area of operation. The visibility of an object as the idol or the form of worship is a concession that we give to the work of the sense organs: "My dear sense organs, you want to see something? Here it is. You can see it." But we utilise this concession for a higher purpose, as a patient is given a pill to be swallowed for a purpose which is quite different from the pill itself.

Therefore, the externality of the object is the sensory aspect of it; and this aspect cannot be ignored, in order that we may not suppress the senses beyond measure. The sense organs are not at all regarded as

holy, spiritual or divine by people in general. We condemn them. We hear it said everywhere that the senses have to be controlled, but we must understand that these sense organs are part of our psychophysical existence; and when we say that they have to be restrained, we must know what it is actually that we are speaking about. We are trying to peel off our skin, or perhaps trying to suppress our own self, and suppression is not an art that is advised in the techniques of yoga. Suppression is the worst of things. It is like keeping a cobra inside a basket and covering it with a lid, as if it is not there. But if we lift the lid, it will be there with its hood stretched out. So, we should never suppress a cobra; and the mind is like a cobra.

Sometimes, when the senses become very powerful, it is suggested that we may divert our attention to something more innocuous. People who are accustomed to chewing tobacco are told by homoeopaths that there is some medicine which is a substitute for the stimulation that is caused by chewing tobacco or betel leaves. It is a substitution. People who have diabetes are not supposed to eat sugar, but in order that they may not feel that things are insipid, some other kind of sweetness such as saccharin is given to them. In a similar manner, sometimes it is suggested that a diversion of the attitude or the working of the sense organs may be attempted, without actually telling them that we are not going to give them what they want. We should not tell the senses that we are going to deprive them of all their demands. Then they will revolt. We can tell them that we are going to give them something, but not give them exactly what they ask for. We can give them something which will attract their attention and satisfy them in an innocuous manner for the time being, like homoeopathic medicine which cures the disease by

an administration of something which itself is a part of that disease. *Similia similibus curantur* is the philosophy behind homoeopathic medicine, which means 'like cures like'.

The desires of the sense organs are like diseases, and you have to cure these diseases—not by the allopathic method which suppresses them, but by a method which is harmonious and not opposed to them. This is a subtle matter, mostly personal, and difficult to imagine in these initial stages. The problems that you will face in meditation, you will not be able to know now. Even if your practice goes on for months, or two or three years, you will not know exactly what the sense organs are capable of because the senses will not interfere with you unless they begin to feel that you are bent upon doing some harm to them. If they think that your meditation is only a childish play and is not going to affect them in any way because they will still be given what they want, it will seem that everything is going on well. But if you are serious in the matter, and you are not going to think in the manner that the sense organs would like you to think, then you will see what they do. If instead of telling the creditor to come tomorrow or the day after, which is a palliative method, you tell him that he will get nothing, you will see what he does. Suppression is the worst of methods.

Diverting the attention is a little better than suppression, but the most beneficial process is sublimation. Sublimation is the melting down of the force of the sense organs into almost a kind of liquid of spirituality. The power of the sense organs is like a knot—*granthis*, as they are called. You are not asked to cut the Gordian knot, but to untie it gradually. Force should not be applied by the application of will. The meaning of the word 'sublimation' should be clear to

you. It is eliminating the very cause behind the impetuosity of the sense organs.

Why do children behave in a naughty manner? There are turbulent children who behave badly in school and at home. Their parents and teachers find it difficult to handle them. Generally, they slap the child on the cheek and say, "Keep quiet! This is not the way of behaving, idiot! See what I will do to you." This is a very undesirable way of treating children when they are behaving boisterously or naughtily. The Montessori method, known to educationalists, is a very understanding method. It is a happy process of psychologically entering into the feeling and the difficulty of the child, even if it behaves in an inhuman or unsocial way. Such a Montessori method may be psychologically applied to the sense organs, which are like naughty children. They will never listen to what you say. They are truant; they will never go to school. They are bent upon getting what they want.

Sublimation is the most difficult of all methods. It requires tremendous understanding. Inasmuch as this understanding is the prerequisite for all practices in yoga and meditation, so much time was taken in our earlier sessions to consider the philosophical, the metaphysical and the foundational aspects of the practice. Otherwise, we could have directly gone into meditation: sit and think something. That may have been quite all right; but really, it would not have been all right because, finally, sublimation—which is the prerequisite of the diversion of the sense energy into the meditational method—is possible only on a higher understanding of our relationship with the universe.

The senses are impetuous because they do not understand what our relationship with things is. They want to grab things outside because, first of all, they

think that things are really outside—which is not a fact. You have now understood why things are not really outside. The senses insist on not only believing that things are outside, but that they are desirable and must be had. This is also a mistake in the way of thinking. It is not true that things are outside, and so asking for them is due to a mistake in the thinking itself. Secondly, it is not true that things are really desirable. That is also an emotional blunder. These two primary difficulties can be melted down by a process of sublimation by a philosophical analysis of the structure of the universe with which we are connected in a vital, organic, living fashion.

Here is something by way of an introductory remark on the characteristics of externality that introduces itself somehow or other, willy-nilly, in your practices. This externality can also be considered as, finally, a kind of internality of the structure of the universe. All things are inside the universe; but to the sense organs, all things are outside. Even if they are considered as outside, are they also inside the universe? You are also inside. You see me sitting here outside and I see you sitting outside, but in the light of the inclusiveness of everything in the universal structure, we may say everything is also inside. Therefore, in a larger perspective, an external object can also be conceived as an internal something. The very external becomes an internal. It is also universal because everything in the world is connected to everything else. So a so-called external thing can also be an internal thing, and it can also be a universal thing.

If it is too difficult for you to think in this manner, let us consider the internalised something which is inside the body itself. This technique is adopted by those who take to methods of meditation associated with

breathing or with the nervous plexuses in the body, called chakras, or even with sounds such as *anahata*, as they are called—certain sounds that the prana makes when it moves inside. You can concentrate on internal sounds. If you close your eyes, and close both your ears tightly, you will hear some sound inside. It is not a sound made by contact of one thing with another thing, like a bell being rung. It is *anahata shabda*, as it is called. *Ahata* means struck; *anahata* means non-struck. It is a sound that is produced by not striking anything on another thing. It is an automatic rumbling sound of a very subtle, melodious nature, like the movement of clouds when they create a mild rumbling of thunder. *Anahata shabda dhyana* is one method of internal concentration.

Meditation on the chakras, such as the *muladhara*, *svadhisthana*, etc., is also a method. It is all very good indeed, but it should not be attempted without proper initiation because these centres get stimulated when they are bombarded with our thought or concentration; and when they get stimulated, certain forces are released. In the initial stages, the forces that are released are not very conducive. In the Puranas there is the story of the Amrita Manthana, the churning of the ocean. When the gods and demons churned the ocean for nectar, what came out first was not nectar. Poison was the first thing that came out—fumes which burnt everybody. The deadly poison that arose in the beginning when the churning was going on for the sake of nectar could not have been tolerated by anybody in the world. We are told in the Purana that Lord Siva was prayed to, and he drank it.

In the beginning, you will have before you only that which you do not like. You will think that nothing is happening, that the whole meditation process is a

waste. This is also a kind of trick played by the mind so that you may not go on with it. But that smoke and dust is something that arises when you sweep the room for the sake of cleaning it. Do you not see dust rising up when you sweep the floor with a broom? But afterwards the dust settles, and the whole room becomes clean. The *tamasic* character of the personality manifests itself as these fumes—as something detrimental, and very unpleasant. You will have unpleasant experiences in the beginning. In the most initial stages, you will have no experience at all; you will think that nothing is happening. If the concentration is very intense, you will have experiences even in a few months, but if it is dull, it may take years.

In the earliest of stages, there will be no experience. The practice will be just mechanical, like a religious routine. Afterwards, you will find some difficulties before you. Many difficulties are mentioned in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras: pain in the body, distraction of the mind, inability to concentrate, and some kind of doubt as to whether it is worthwhile doing anything at all, or perhaps some mistake has been committed in the choice of the object, or whether this Guru is good or another Guru should be found. These doubts will arise in the mind, and you will find that nothing is moving forward. The *tamasic* nature manifests itself in this way. If you have somehow succeeded in overcoming it, the *rajasic* nature will come and throw you out of gear completely, and make you run here and there searching for better places than the present one. "This place is no good, that place is no good, this method is no good," and so on. You will be doing something in a perfunctory and desultory manner. Such is what happened during the Amrita Manthana, or the churning of the ocean. In the beginning it was deadly poison; then tempting objects

such as jewels started coming out—attractions, beauties, which thrilled the gods and the demons, both.

So, what do you get in meditation? In the beginning you get tremendous opposition, so that you may not do anything at all. Then temptations arise: this is good, that is good, all that is good—but it is not really good. Meditation on these chakras may stimulate certain *tamasic* or *rajasic* forces. You may become wild in your mental performance. People become abnormal in their behaviour. They become irascible, angry and upset over even the littlest of things, and look upon everybody with suspicion. They have abnormal desires. People become kleptomaniacs, sometimes. Even very well-to-do people who are living a very good life can steal a pencil from your table. This is an irritation of the senses that is created by certain unknown suppressions. These things, among many other things which I will not explain here, may become the consequence of unintelligently concentrating on the chakras. This is why Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj very wisely used to say that this kind of meditation on the chakras, the kundalini method, is not meant for people with desires in their mind. And who has no desires? Everyone has desires.

Therefore, a more polite, harmonious, sublime, pleasing, loving method of *bhakti*, or love of God, may be a safe method of meditation. Do not consider *bhakti* as an inferior method. It is love of God; and without love, without affection for that which you seek, the progress will be retarded. Only that which you want will come to you, that which you do not want will not come to you, and wanting is nothing but an expression of affection.

The internal method, to which I made reference, can also be a concentration on internal structures such as the chakras, etc. But it is to be carried on with great

caution under a competent master. Otherwise, give up that method. Do only *japa* of a divine name, with concentration on the Devata, or the deity of that mantra, which will do you immense good. This is about the internality of the object, which otherwise looks as if it is outside.

I also mentioned that which is outside and that which is inside is essentially a universal object. The universality of a thing, when properly conceived, will put a check upon all irregular activities of the sense organs, because the senses will not ask for that which is everywhere. They want only that which is in some place; they are exclusive in their demands.

The best method of sublimation of the sense powers is to introduce universality into the concept of the object of meditation. Let it not be outside or inside, because the senses will take advantage of this little finite concept. Whatever be the object of your meditation, it is finally a symbol of universality. This is the important factor because then the sensuality behind it will automatically get eliminated.

These are certain recipes for you in your practice of daily meditation, for a purpose which is higher than yourself, higher than what you see in human society, higher than this world of perception. This is the way to God-realisation, finally.

Chapter 11

THE RISING OF THE SOUL IN TOTAL ACTION

It was pointed out that anything can be taken as an ideal for meditation, inasmuch as all things in the world are inseparably related to the world as a whole. Every object in this world may be considered as a kind of knot of universal energy; therefore, we can untie this knot and release the energy by concentration on that particular spot called the object of meditation, and the knot opens up.

A knot has a peculiar characteristic. What we call egoism, or a sense of ego, is also a psychic knot. It is a centralisation of idea, consciousness, thought, or whatever we may call it, at a particular chosen spot, conditioned by space as well as by time so that this knot prevents the entry into itself of the larger force that is pervading the whole creation. It becomes self-enclosed; selfishness becomes the rule of its operations. It is just itself, and nothing else can there be in the world. It is not merely a philosophy adopted by egoism, but it strongly believes that nothing anywhere can be equal to it, and it is the principle judging factor of anything and everything. This attitude is a kind of definition of what self-centred means.

I used the word 'knot' both in a physical sense and also in a psychic sense. Psychologically, we may call it the consciousness of finitude, ego-sense; and physically, it is any object, including an atom. Even an atom is governed by the principle of egoism. It cannot permit itself to be other than what it is, physically and chemically. The electric forces that determine the structure of the atom make it what it is, and

differentiate it from every other atom. If this atom can be broken by bombardment, if the knot can be untied, the littleness of the energy that is there will become the largeness that is at the back of it, and it will look as if the whole ocean, so to speak, is rushing through a conduit pipe. The effect of it is unimaginable. This is what will happen in meditation.

The process of the releasing of this energy is important. Though you have understood what I told you, you will not actually be able to put it into practice on account of the habit of the mind to think only in that old fashion to which it has been accustomed right from childhood. You have been told by society, by your family, by your community, by your culture, that this is what it is and it cannot be anything else. Children are oftentimes told by their parents that the man next door is their enemy. The children are told again and again, "The man next door is our enemy. He is not our friend. Don't go there, to the other compound. This is our land. That is our enemy's land." It looks as if it is a very good education that is being given to children—a fine education indeed, of a very fine ethical character. It is told to us by the circumstances of the society of individualities—physically, socially and psychologically—that each one is what one is, and others are different from what one is. This is a wrong psychology which tells us something about what appears on the surface of things. No doubt everything looks different from everything else—but it only looks different. It really is not, because behind the millions of these little concentrated knots of force which are the objects of perception there is one universal sea gushing forth and wishing to introduce itself into these little knots.

It is said that at every moment, God calls everybody. God calling is another way of the universal force wanting to enter into the finitude of egocentric centres. The release of this energy, which is in our own selves as individuals as well as in objects outside, is the principal motive of the meditational practice. This, as I have mentioned to you earlier, has also a philosophical background, namely, the aim of the realisation of a cosmic purpose, which is a universal realisation, called God-realisation in religion, and sometimes known as Self-realisation, or the attainment of deathlessness, or the reaching of infinity and eternity. These are some of the words that are used to explain what you are aiming at finally through spiritual meditation.

But your heart has to be there. The meditator is the heart, principally; it is not merely the thought. You have to realise that you are where your heart is. You are not where your intellect is; this is a wrong notion. Let the intellect be anywhere, even in the atomic structure of the solar orb in the sky, but where is your heart? It may usually be in your kitchen, in your bank balance, in your family, or in something well known to everybody. But where is the heart during the time of meditation? Are your feelings, which are the principal function of your heart, absent during the so-called mental operation of meditation?

This is a very principal issue which has to be taken into consideration, the clarifying of which is the purpose of the *yamas* and the *niyamas* in the sutras of Patanjali, and yoga shastras in general. The heart will have its own reason, which your reason cannot understand. Rationally, everything is established and scientifically proved, and no one can gainsay this truth; but the heart says, "Yes, but I have something to tell." Let what it is be told. Why are you hiding it? It will say,

finally, "This is not for me, and I wish that this other thing should be there."

Why does this happen? It is because your philosophical clarification has been entirely intellectual—bookish, rather—and it has not been a matter of your feelings. Your feelings have not been convinced, though philosophically it has been very well established to the intellect. "Why all this effort, finally?" is the question your heart will raise once again. "What for is all this effort? Going to institutions, studying philosophy, rolling beads, reciting mantras—what for? What am I aiming at, finally? Is there nothing better in this world? Is it not possible for me to be more comfortable in this world without doing these things? Are there not other ways?" Your mind will say, "There are, of course, other ways, and I can be very well off by taking an altogether different course than this."

You will not have these difficulties now because you have been told again and again that this is good for you, and so the voice in your heart has been silenced. Because of the pressure of the teaching and the repeated instruction that is being given to you on the worthwhileness of a higher pursuit in life, the little demoniacal voice of the heart, the sensory argument, has been hushed. It will not raise its head as long as you are within the campus of a spiritual institution or in an atmosphere of this nature.

But for how long will you be in this atmosphere? You will be in your office, you will be a clerk, you will be an officer, you will be a typist, you will be a family man, you will be a landowner, you will be a moneylender. Certainly, you will be all this. At that time, what will you think? Will these instructions that I gave you come up for your succour? To obviate these difficulties, it has been told again and again that a little

check-up of personality is to be attempted every day, and your daily routine of work and occupation should be integral, and should also include a little time for the consideration of the higher values of life. They are not merely higher; they are the true values of life. That they are the only true values of life, and not merely higher values, is a matter which will take you immense time to accept.

Coming to the point—to brass tacks, as they say—when you sit for meditation, you may have to prepare your personality for the task of bombarding the object of meditation for releasing the energy thereof. The preparation is of various kinds, according to the kind of initiation that you have received, the type of instruction to which you are accustomed, the books that you have read, your religion, your faith, your affiliations, etc.

I would suggest, among many other things that are of course quite good, a calm and quiet recitation of the Om mantra, as it is called. The word 'mantra' may make you think that this is some religious exercise. A mantra may be connected with religion, but this thing which is called Om or Pranava is a super-religious symbol. It does not belong to any particular religion. It is a vibration that you are attempting to produce within yourself, a vibration that is of a more general nature than the intensely selfish vibration that is usually within us. We have the vibrations of attraction and repulsion which are embedded within us, in our psyche. Though we are not always attracted or repulsed, there is a propensity within us to attraction and repulsion. A person who is susceptible to anger can be regarded as an angry person, though the anger is not manifest. A person may not be stealing, but if he is capable of doing that, he is a thief. Your capacity to be something is what

you are, though you may not be manifesting it at a particular time.

The usual propensity of the individual personality is to confine its vibration to its psychophysical individuality, and not permit the entry of any other vibration. For this purpose it is that a symbolic act of introducing a larger vibration into our own selves is attempted through the recitation of Om. The recitation should be very harmonious, calm, quiet, leisurely, without hurry, without any kind of excitement in the mind. Chant Om continuously for about fifteen minutes, and let one recitation gradually taper off into the next one, so that these fifteen minutes of recitation of Pranava, or Om, will look like a mass of vibration inundating you, flooding you, arising from you, spreading around you, and becoming larger and larger in its ambit as the chant goes on successively, one after the other.

If a little pebble is thrown into the middle of a large mass of water—a tank or a reservoir—a little ripple is created around that spot where the pebble landed. Then the circle goes on expanding little by little, until it reaches the edge of the water. Some such thing will take place when Pranava is chanted, when Om is chanted. The vibration that you generate within yourself is like a little ripple, and its circumference slowly enlarges. Let it expand as far as possible. Try to feel that this mass of energy, which you yourself are—this concentrated knot of force which you are—is gradually being released. The knot is untied. This little attempt on your part to concentrate on your own self by means of this chant of Om becomes a medium of the expansion of this energy into the other centres of a similar nature so that, by your feeling, you begin to inwardly touch what is outside you. You yourself become bigger, in one sense.

Now you are very small. You are inside this body; you are just this body. This knot feels that it is only this knot, and that it is nothing more: "I am just this person, this little thing, and I am not anything else. When I walk, I feel this little thing is walking. When I do anything, I feel this little thing is doing something." This feeling of this little personality remains for twenty-four hours a day, and there is no other thought. But, actually, it is not a little thing. It is a surface appearance of a larger force, which is hidden inside this little finitude of individuality which is this so-called you.

Therefore, chanting Om in this manner is also a kind of concentration, an intense concentration. It is *japa* and meditation combined. If it is continued for a sufficiently lengthened period of time, it will have a tremendous effect. Even if you do not think anything in the mind, if this recitation goes on continuously, in a sonorous manner, and gradually increases from fifteen minutes to thirty minutes, you will see a difference in yourself. You will feel that your emotions are calmed, your nerves are cooled down, and agitation ceases. You will even feel healthier, better. You have become a different person, as it were, as if a kind of psychic acupuncture has been done on you by this chant. The knots have been pricked and have been made to release the energy which was otherwise locked up in that particular centre. All ill health, all sorrow, all tension, all agitation is due to the concentration of consciousness on this knot and not permitting the entry of healthier sources of energy that are pervading everywhere. These sense organs are like closed windows that completely block the entry of forces from outside, from nature and creation. Sunlight and fresh air cannot enter the room because you have closed the

windows. You are living in a dark little closet and imagining that it is the entire world.

Thus, one method, among many others, is the recitation of Om. And, to repeat, this should be made part of your daily routine. You are all very busy people, no doubt, but let this also be a necessary item in your daily routine. Because of your heavy work in the office, etc., you may sometimes find no time at all. Actually, the length of time is not as important as your feeling inside, the quality of the chant, and the intensity of your concentration.

When a person is drowning in water, there is an intense concentration of thought on something, though it is not a long period of thinking at that time. Because you are drowning, it is an instantaneous thinking of a tremendous concentrated form. When everything has gone, one's life is at stake and the earth is shaking, a thought arises in the mind. That is an example of intense concentration. When you have lost everything or you have got everything, there is concentration of the mind.

The tremendous result that is expected to follow should be considered as sufficient reason for the development of the concentration. You are sure that you are not merely going to pass the exam, you are going to stand first in the exam. There are some students who are sure that they will stand first because everything is at their fingertips, and they can answer any question. But if you are dubious and there are certain things which are not clear, you do not know where you stand. Are you certain that you are going to get something, that you are going to achieve it? The certainty must be there that you will have it in this birth itself. It is not merely a statement; it is an intense possibility. Your feeling is the determining factor of the progress that you make in

your meditations. Feelings rule the world; everything else comes afterwards. You can achieve anything by appealing to feelings.

One of the sutras of the great sage Patanjali is *tīvra samvegānām āsannaḥ* (Y.S. 1.21): Quick is the result for those whose heart is ardent in its aspiration. Ardent longing, impossibility to be without it, craving for it, and sinking the mind into this one thought even in the midst of every other occupation—in whatever work you do, your heart knows that it is a means for an achievement that is transcendent.

On what will you meditate? We tentatively answered this question in the previous session. Anything and everything can be the object of your meditation. Your Ishta Devata—that which engulfs you with love and affection, and with the expectation of fulfilment—is the object of your meditation. That is your god. Where your love is, there your god is. Here, the love that is spoken of is a total pouring forth of the soul of the individual for its final expectation of achievement. Finally, the meditator is the soul itself. It is not the *buddhi*, *chitta*, *ahamkara* or *manas* that is meditating individually, isolatedly, in a segregated fashion. The whole of you asks for it.

As I mentioned, when you are drowning in water, the whole of you expects something. The whole of you does not usually manifest itself in daily life. When you work, when you think, when you speak, when you eat, part of your personality is outside. Even when you eat, you do not wholly think of the food; part of your mind is elsewhere. That is why the food is not appetising and cannot be properly digested. You do not give sufficient respect even to the food that you eat because some percentage of your mind is in a railway train or somewhere else.

Here, in the case of meditation, that should not be the predicament. We are not doing some occupational duty when we are in meditation. Somebody is not asking us to do it as a job, for remuneration. This is a different thing altogether. It is the 'must' and the 'ought' in this life. The difficulty that you may sometimes face is the arid, abstract form of this concept of achievement even in the thought of God, in contrast with a solid reality and value of this world that you see with your senses. These senses, this ego will go on saying, "Whatever you may say, I have something else to say." The reality of the world sets itself in contrast with the reality of the object of your meditation when the object appears to be conceptual, ideational, a thought process, while the world appears to be a solid, tangible thing.

You have to persuade and convince yourself to accept the real truth about things, namely, that all the so-called solidity of the world is ideational, finally. It is only a centre of consciousness. There are no solid objects. Do not be carried away by the substantiality and the solidity of the world, because this substantiality is nothing but an electrical vibration produced by the action of the sense organs; and if the five sense organs do not operate, the world of solidity will not be there.

Is there not solidity even in the dream world? Stones and mountains appear in dream. Are they not facts for your perception? You can eat a solid meal in dream. You can hit yourself against a solid wall in dream. Therefore, solidity can be purely conceptual even though it may look external and entirely different from the perceptual process. The dream world, the dreamer's perception, is a great example before you to understand how this world is operating. The reality of the world, which is so tantalising, catching and enrapturing to the sense organs is finally, cosmically interpreted, the same

nature as the enrapturing objects and the solidity or the substantiality of things that you see in the dream world. This is a little bit of philosophy in order to give you enthusiasm for the practice.

In the earliest stages of meditation, everything will go on well. The body and the mind will get adjusted to your instructions. But after about twenty-five to forty percent of your practice has become successful, you will find certain unseen, unforeseen and unexpected difficulties arising. They will arise from the body as well as from the mind. Even for three years, you will not find that anything is happening at all because of the lukewarm nature of the concentration process. In the beginning, no one can be so intense and ardent in concentration, on account of other external factors intruding themselves. But if you are tenacious in the practice and persist in it wholeheartedly for a long time, giving sufficient time for it every day, certain unknown phenomena will manifest themselves before you. One of them is a complaint from the physical body, which will say, "I am not feeling well, so today it is not possible to think like this." Why does it say that? You may put this question to your own self.

Aches in the body, pains of different types, and an inability to be seated arise on account of a peculiar borderland which the pranas operating inside reach, automatically, by the very fact of the concentration of the mind. I am not speaking about pranayama here; this is a discussion on concentration and meditation. But the pranas are affected even by a thought. Mostly, the pranas are servants of the mind. Whatever the mind says, the pranas will do. If the mind thinks something, the prana directs itself to that particular thing, whether it is inside the body or outside the body. If you think of a tree, the prana will jet forth in the direction of that

object. It can touch even a star, if the mind is concentrating in that manner. On account of the desires of the mind, which are multifarious in their nature, there is usually a disharmonious movement of the pranic energy in the body.

The attempt of the *kumbhaka* process in pranayama is only to harmonise the working of the prana through the body. Usually, the prana is not harmonious because the thoughts themselves are not harmonious. Varieties of thoughts arise in the mind—sometimes pleasant, sometimes unpleasant, sometimes very disturbing, sometimes jubilant, etc. These thoughts interfere with the harmonious working of the psychic content, and so the prana is also affected.

When you go on meditating in this manner for a long time, with sufficient attention paid on the object of meditation, you are perforce entering into a new field of action of harmonising, stabilising and introducing a kind of symmetry and system into the working of the prana. Then there is an agitation. You are introducing a rule into the working of the prana which was not its original rule. When a change is introduced in any performance, in the beginning there is doubt and resentment about it: “What kind of thing is coming?” In the earliest stages, the pranas resent this introduction of your new type of meditation, and so they sometimes create tremors in the body. Oftentimes, those who are accustomed to meditation may have felt a shake-up, a jerk. Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras tell us that *aṅgamejayatva* (Y.S. 1.31) is a shaking up, a trembling caused by the pranas because they seek a new course of movement, a course quite different from that to which they have been accustomed under the orders of the sense organs. The pranas act according to the orders they receive from above, which are the sensations.

We live in a sensory world. All of us have something of the sensory pressure even in our thoughts and our feelings. We think sensorially, feel sensorially, argue sensorially. Finally, it is only the sense organs that are ruling the world. This is the way in which we live. This is also the way that the pranas act. Now a new system of law and order is being introduced into the organisation of the body, and in the beginning there is a suspicion about it. "It may not be good. I will not do it. I will not cooperate." But if you insist on it, there is tremor, agitation, pain, and a cessation of activity for some time. There can even be a dislocation of the working of the physiological organs: lack of appetite, sleeplessness, and new kinds of pain in the neurological system which you have not had earlier. But these are secondary matters. The main problem will arise from the mind itself. It will get fatigued.

Physical fatigue can be tolerated to some extent, but mental fatigue is intolerable. It will not permit you to do anything at all. You will say, "This is no good." Psychic fatigue is a very peculiar phenomenon before us. Why do we feel exhausted? What is the reason? There are two reasons. One reason is that perhaps the mechanism of the body and the mind has been loaded with some work or performance beyond its capacity. Even a donkey cannot carry bricks beyond a certain limit. Maybe the work load has increased so much that the mind cannot get on with it any longer. The other reason is that we do not like that work. We do not feel that anything is going to come out of it. It is not that the workload is too much, but that it is useless, so why should we do it?

In meditation, the workload may not be much because you are not going to meditate all twenty-four hours of the day, so that complaint is irrelevant here.

But the mind may say that this is not worthwhile, finally. People come to the Ashram saying, “For the last twenty years I have been meditating, but I am in the same condition. I have not achieved anything—no visions, no sounds, nothing like that.” The mind may be concentrating, meditating for twenty years, but it is like an unwilling labourer—a person who works without heart, without mind, and without knowing at all what is actually being done. The god of the object of meditation has not entered the heart.

Unless God calls you, your heart will not concentrate on God. Many people say, “Only the grace of God is the final solution.” Grace implies the cooperation of the Almighty Power with your effort. There is a question whether effort is necessary or grace is important. This is difficult to answer because grace and effort go together. The response from the cosmic forces is directly connected with the effort that you make from this side.

In the Bhagavadgita, for instance, the symbolism of Krishna and Arjuna seated in one chariot and wanting to achieve a single purpose is an illustration of the need for a combination of effort and grace. Why should Krishna be there? Arjuna alone is sufficient; he knows how to fight the war, so why should Krishna sit there? Or, Krishna is almighty and can do everything, so why should Arjuna be there? The individual and the cosmic are commensurate with each other, and they have to join hands in a mysterious manner. *Yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pāṛtho dhanurdharaḥ, tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama* (B.G. 18.78): Where God and man work together... You should not expect God to do everything for you; then you will not even lift your plate. This is a mistaken understanding of the phenomenon of grace in religious practice.

Because you are conscious of being there as a person, an effort on your part is called for. It is true that, finally, only God does everything. It has to be accepted. But if that is the case, you immediately cease to be there. But you also seem to exist there, and you are conscious that you exist. Arjuna felt that not only was Krishna there; he was also there. You are yourself the creator of the problem. You create the problem by feeling that you are also there. Do you not believe that you are there? Or do you believe that only God is there? Because your feeling that you are there is inseparable from your very existence, your effort is called for. But as you are a part of the universal energy, grace is also necessary, and so grace and effort go together.

Thus, prayer to God is also a very essential medium for your success in meditation, together with your own effort of concentration. When a little child is learning to walk, its mother holds it up by the hands, but the child also moves its legs back and forth. Both efforts, at the same time, are necessary. If the mother lets go, the child may fall down; but if she merely holds on, what is the purpose? The child will not learn how to walk. A little effort on the part of the child to move its legs should go together with the support of the mother, until the child is able to walk on its own.

Ultimately, yoga is a super-religious practice. I do not want to call it religious, because it does not come under the category of any kind of religious denomination. It is religion in the sense that it is connected with ultimate divinity, but we may also say it is super-religious. Yoga is the art of intense human effort of the total soul rising up into a complete action because when God calls us, the whole totality of the universe responds. The response does not come from any particular part of the world.

The Bhagavata Purana tells us that when Suka Maharishi, the son of Vyasa—a little boy who was a *brahmanishta*—was walking, unconscious of even his own physical existence, Vyasa called, “My dear boy, where are you?” The answer came, “Father, I am here.” But who gave the answer? Every leaf of every tree around started vibrating: “I am here.” It was not a little boy responding. Before that boy stones would melt, leaves would speak, and every tree, every shrub would smile. The response comes from everything because of That which is there in everything. When God calls us, the whole world calls us. If God loves us, the whole of humanity will love us.

Chapter 12

THE FIRST STEP IN SAMADHI

Effects follow causes. But in the process of meditation, causes follow effects. That is to say, the meditational technique is a reverse order of the movement of consciousness as related to the process of the evolution of the universe. We have noticed in our earlier studies that the first conceivable evolute is space and time. It is something which cannot be seen with the eyes, but which precedes everything. The perception of things—the consciousness of anything, for the matter of that—is conditioned by the presence of a pervading factor called space and time. Therefore, we may say that the first thing created was space-time—a complex of arrangement, a precondition to the consciousness of the existence of the world itself.

You have to remember all that we went through for the last several sessions. Space-time is a potential for vibration, which gyrates in a particular fashion as required for a specific formation of a universe of this kind. The type of world in which we are living, the kind of creation that is around us, is determined by the kind of vibration that is generated by the specific order of space-time at the beginning of creation. If the vibrations were of a different kind, there would be a different world altogether. It would not be the world that we see with our eyes.

Hence, the first evolute is space-time, which has the latency of the production of a further effect, almost comparable to what we today call electrical vibration, or perhaps subtler than that. These perceptual potentials are known in Sanskrit as *tanmatras*. *Tat* means 'that';

matra is 'a potential'. 'A potential of that' is the meaning of the word *tanmatra*. There are forces behind every physical formation in the world. These forces are not objects of sensory perception, but without them no perception is possible. Just as we cannot see our own eyes even though everything is seen with the eyes, these potentials cannot become an object of sensory perception although without them, no perception is practicable.

These *tanmatras* are difficult to explain in ordinary language. They are a vast sea of energy, released by the vibrations of the space-time complex—or the space-time continuum, if we would like to call it that. The so-called potentials arranged themselves in a particular pattern, mixing in a specific proportion. In Vedanta psychology, the proportionate mixing up of these potentials is called *panchikarana*. When this mixing up of the potential elements in a given proportion takes place, we begin to perceive. Things are placed in an external context, as it were, and we begin to be conscious of our own selves as a physical body.

We are also like objects in the world. Inasmuch as we can see ourselves, we are objects. But we regard ourselves as subjects for another reason altogether, namely, that our consciousness is able to peep through the apertures of the sense organs and become conscious of what is external to it. The physical world, including the bodies of the individuals of all species, manifests itself in this manner. Creation, in a cosmic sense, is only this much. That is to say, right from the origination of space-time up to the manifestation of the five elements, all the realms of being, all the *lokas* or *bhuvans*, all the planes of existence are constituted of these *tanmatras* and the physical elements. The *tanmatras* are also known as *sabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa*, *rasa*, *gandha*, which are

the potentials for hearing, seeing, touching, tasting and smelling. These potentials are not abstractions or mere theoretical existences. They are as real and workable as electric energy, for instance.

When creation takes place in this manner, down to the earth of physicality, cosmic creation is complete, almost. But there is another type of creation, called individual creation, which we manufacture by ourselves due to an ignorance that is incipient in our personality. No individual, no human being can be fully conscious of what has happened prior to the manifestation of this body. We think that we have come from our mother's womb; that is all we know. But something else is behind it which we cannot know on account of the pressure of the physical existence of this body and the velocity of the sense organs. On account of this ignorance of our prior relation to the cosmic setup of things, we assume a kind of independence that is totally unbecoming in the light of our relationship to the cosmic setup, and this independence becomes the source of a new type of psychological world that we create before ourselves by the work of the mind in all its operations.

Our relationships with things—we may call them social relations or psychological relations, whatever they be—do not form part and parcel of cosmic creation. For instance, we like certain things and we do not like certain things. The cosmic creation does not manufacture likes and dislikes. We manufacture them under the impression that they are for our good, but they are for our bondage. There is no evil in cosmic creation, but there is evil in individual creation. The existence of the world as a physical presentation cannot harm anybody, but its so-called relationship with a particular individual or group of individuals can create circumstances of great suffering.

In Vedanta psychology, the cosmic creation is called *Ishvara-srishti*, and the individual creation is called *jiva-srishti*. A human being walking on the road is just like any other human being from an anatomical, physiological or even psychological point of view. But we foist certain characteristics on to this cosmically valid physicality of the individual we see walking on the road, and say: "This is my brother." "This is my enemy." "This is my mother." "This is my sister." "This is my husband." "This is my wife." Creation by Ishvara, or cosmic creation, does not manufacture husbands and wives, brothers and sisters. They do not exist at all for the eye of the cosmic setup. But for us, only they exist; nothing else exists. Here is the distinction between the cocoon that we have woven around ourselves by our psychological operations, called *jiva-srishti*, and things as they really are by themselves.

Now here, in this little brief introduction that I placed before you to brush up your memory of the lessons we have gone through earlier, we have to place ourselves in a proper position for this great divine technique called meditation. As I mentioned at the very outset, in creation effects follow causes, whereas in meditation the order is reversed. You have to retrace your steps in the manner you came down. Where are you standing now? You are in a bundle of psychological relationships. You are not very much concerned with the physical world. Let there be a mountain; what does it matter to you? Let the river flow. Let there be the Earth, let there be the sun, the moon and the stars. Who bothers? You give scant respect to these things, but your respect goes to tinsel, some paltry thing you call your own, or to what you call not your own. You have to free yourself from this chaos of psychological muddle before you first set foot in meditation. Are there relations in

this world? Do people belong to you? How did this idea arise in your mind that something belongs to you? Who thrust this notion into the head of a human being? Is there an agreement or a bond, a written document showing that something is your belonging?

If you carefully go through the process of the entire creativity of things with an impartial eye, you will find these things are just a chimera. They do not exist by themselves. There is no such thing as belongings, property or ownership. It is a concept in your mind that they are your property. When you quit this world, you will leave all that which you considered as your belongings. If it really belonged to you, you would carry it with you when you go. Why should you not carry your luggage when you leave this world? This demonstrates that it does not belong to you. The world tells you, "Go and mind your business!" The world tells you, the relations tell you, everybody tells you, "Go! We have nothing to do with you." You caught hold of and hugged varieties of things in this world—humans and material objects—and all of them tell you, "Go alone to the cremation ground. We shall not come." Will your relations go into your funeral pyre? If they are yours, let all the relatives also enter the pyre. Here, nothing is yours. You stand alone, by yourself.

When creation took place, you descended from the cosmic setup of things directly, individually, by yourself. You did not bring relations with you. Nobody was there to be regarded as your relation or your belonging of any kind. Then you imagined certain things and created a new world of your own, which is called *jiva-srishti*. Therefore, the first step in true religion, true spirituality, true yoga is a consciousness, a freedom from these attachments that have automatically been created by the ignorance of the individual's true

belonging to a larger dimension of things. Our real home is elsewhere. We are living in a dharmashala or a *choultry* on our journey to another destination, but we are caught up in the dharmashala and we begin to say, "This is mine." We think that everything in the dharmashala belongs to us, but actually we must quit the dharmashala the following morning. This idea is not in our minds.

First and foremost, you should not just sit and brood with this muddle in your head, under the impression that you are meditating. Are you clear, or have you got subtle longings? You may be physically isolated from people, from your relations. Well, everybody is physically very far from the money they have in the bank, but what does it matter? They still have a consciousness of ownership. A physical distance from objects which you consider as belonging to you does not mean you are detached from them. Detachment is a dispossession by the consciousness itself of its having a relation with things. This is philosophical analysis, spiritual investigation, *viveka*, discrimination, application of proper understanding. Only if your doors and windows are open can a fresh breeze enter you. The grace of God, to which I made reference earlier, is the entry of this enlivening breeze of the cosmos into our own selves when we open ourselves to its influx and entry.

Meditation proper begins when the psyche is completely cleansed. The *yamas* and *niyamas* of Patanjali and the *viveka*, *vairagya*, *shat-sampat* and *mumukshutva* of the Vedanta philosophy all point to the single fact of your being prepared for the entry of the cosmic powers into yourself. In the earliest of stages, you will feel as if you are standing alone in a wilderness.

A fright of there being nothing around you will take possession of you.

There are two kinds of *vairagya*, or detachment. One is that you are physically far away from those things and persons in whose midst you were living previously, but you have the conviction that you can go back to that very atmosphere if you want. This is like a life of retirement. A retired person leaves his house, leaves his office career, and goes somewhere far off. It is a kind of detachment, of course, but this detachment will not work because the mind is sure that it can return to the original condition once again, if need be.

It should not be possible for you to return. Then you will see what kind of aloneness will take possession of you. Having a lot of things which you can make use of, but tentatively not making use of them, is not a sense of aloneness, really speaking, because the mind says they are there, after all, and you can take them whenever you want. They should not be there at all, and you should be incapable of returning to that old atmosphere. Everything has gone; and really it has gone. This feeling and conviction of there really being nothing that you can call your own can be created by the loss of all things due to conditions of society, or by an inner arrangement of your own consciousness which refuses to attach itself to anything. There is no necessity for you to wait for the day when society kicks you out. You can deliberately kick it out of your consciousness by knowing what things are made of, finally.

Well, it may be true that the things of the world are made of such stuff as dreams are made of. But, they are still worse. Even dream objects can be seen for the time being, and they seem to be giving us a tentative satisfaction. Dream objects are much better than what we consider as near and dear in this world. Because the

things of this world do not exist at all, they are not even as valuable as dream objects. With these deliberations, you must detach yourself from the involvement of consciousness in pleasant things, or even in what you call unpleasant things. The pleasant and unpleasant are created by the human mind; they do not exist in the cosmos. This is very important to remember.

After this inward analysis and conscious conviction, your true meditation starts. When you are absolved of all these social relations of attachment and aversion, you begin to find yourself as part and parcel of the physical cosmos. Now you do not feel that way. You never feel, even for a moment, that your body is made up of the same substance as the physical world. You are made up of only wealth, belongings, love, and a merrymaking atmosphere of family life. This is what you think your life is. But really, your life is a different thing. It is an actual belonging to the very physical nature itself. The very stuff out of which a tree is made, or a brick is made, is also the stuff out of which this body is made. Thus, your real friend is this nature, this world outside. People, in the sense of a psychological or social relation, are not your friends. Nature is your friend because the very substance of your body is the substance of nature. This meditation is the first step in cosmic meditation.

Earlier I had given you some indications of different types of meditation. Now I am trying to take your mind along another line which may be called cosmical contemplations, where true yoga begins, where you begin to see things as they really are and not merely as they appear to your eyes. You are not contemplating on concepts, but on realities as they are. Can you imagine for a moment that you belong to this vast physical nature? Sit for a few minutes. Go to your room or to a

temple or under a tree or to any other place, and sit for ten or fifteen minutes. Begin to contemplate that every atom in the world is vibrating through your body, and every atom in your body is coextensive with the structure of physical nature outside. The sun and the moon and the stars are touching you, as it were, because of the inseparability of the substance of physical nature from your own physical body. The Yoga Sutras consider this as a kind of *samapatti*, or samadhi.

An attainment which is superb in nature is called *samapatti*, and the equilibration of consciousness with the structure of things is called samadhi. Both these mean one and the same thing. Your consciousness is set in tune with the structure of things, with physical nature, so that physical nature does not stand outside you as something to be handled by you, to be harnessed, conquered or utilised. Are you going to harness your own self or put your own self to use? Such ideas will not arise. You have no need of conquering nature. These days we speak of conquering nature in scientific and astronomical terms. This is ignorance, pure and simple. Why do you wish to conquer yourself? You are not outside yourself. It is a stability that you have to establish in your own consciousness, in terms of your belonging to nature as a whole.

Naturopaths sometimes say all these things in the parlance of medical science. Medical textbooks such as the Charaka Samhita and the Sushruta Samhita on the Ayurveda Shastras tell you how the cosmic elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether are vibrating through your body. You are prone to illness of various types because of the disparity between the working of nature outside and the body inside. You are at war with nature when you assert your physicality and independence beyond a certain tolerable limit, and fight with nature

instead of considering it as your friend and well-wisher. Nature is not merely a friend and well-wisher; it is inseparable from you. You are yourself nature.

You are now in a state of cosmic consciousness. Do you realise this? If these thoughts have really entered your mind and you have appreciated what it means, you are veritably on the borderland of a universal appreciation of things. You will love a leaf in the tree; you will embrace the stem of a plant that is in front of you; you will be happy by looking at the flow of the river; you will be rejoicing by looking at the sun; the very sky will thrill you. You will no longer complain that the world is wretched, very bad, hopeless. There will be nothing hopeless in this world. The entire nature will reveal a beauty, like the opening of a rose flower. The ugliness of the world, the uselessness of it and the dearth that you see is because of the extent of the separation that you have established between yourself and the world of nature outside. The more are you distant from nature, the worse is the world for you, so you create hell. Hell does not exist by itself.

I am using the terminology of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which uses the specific words *samapatti* and *samadhi*. These words are a little difficult to understand, but they need not frighten you. It is a simple matter of being always in a state of equilibrium with the perceptible objects in the world. Everybody is a friend. "My dear friend, please be seated. My enemy, get out!" You do not have to say that. There are no such things as friends and enemies in this world.

The first stage of *samapatti*, or *samadhi*, is an earnest attempt, deeply felt from within, to commune one's consciousness with all perceptible phenomena, the world of nature involved in space and time. I will give a little hint on certain subtleties of the system of

Patanjali's yoga. As I mentioned earlier, in the earliest stages of this practice of communion with nature there is a consciousness of the similarity between you and the world of nature outside. This is one aspect of the matter. Another aspect is the dissociation of the objects of perception from false associations foisted upon them.

Who is coming? It is Rama coming, or it is John, James or Jacob. Who told you that this person is Jacob or John, or Rama or Krishna? Is it written on their skin or in their blood? Are they made up of their name? The name is an unnecessary psychological foisting. Though a name may be necessary for social life, it is not really a part of the existence of that person. Nobody is a John, a Krishna or a Rama. He is just what he is, like anybody else. Tomorrow he can have another name. There are people who change their names by an announcement in a government gazette. He is this name today, and tomorrow he is another name. That means to say that the name is not an essential ingredient of the human personality. Yet, you are so much attached to your name that even in sleep, you know you are that person only. Suppose a person by the name of Krishna is in deep sleep and I say, "Mr. Jacob, please get up." He will not wake up because even in sleep, he knows that he is not Jacob. So much attachment he has to his name. But if I say "Krishna, get up", immediately he will get up. So you know how much association you have consciously established between yourself and a flimsy quality called name.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras say that in the practice of meditation, dissociate the object from the name that is attached to it. That is one aspect of the matter. You are not Krishna or Jacob; you are not this, and you are not that. You are just some person, whatever the person be. You can be anything, any person; what does it matter?

Today you are an officer, tomorrow you are something else, but you are the same person. So the Yoga Sutras tell you to dissociate the truth of the person from the name.

There is another thing as well. You also have some idea of the person. When I see a thing or think of a thing, I associate some qualities of my own making with that object: This person is like that; this thing is like that; gold is valuable; iron has such a value; the tree is sandalwood; this is a mango which is worth eating. Various qualities are associated with the objects of perception by the thought of the object. It is easy to dissociate a person from the name, but it is more difficult to dissociate the thing from the idea that you have of that particular object. Actually, your idea of the object is not the real object. From your context of location in this world and the manner of your mental operations, you have some notion of the object, but why should you think the object is made like that? Gold is very costly, though it has no value at all, actually. It is like anything else. It is like stone; it is like mud. It has become valuable because of certain characteristics and a utilitarian value that you have foisted upon it. If the whole earth was gold, perhaps gold would have no value. If it is rare, then it has some particular worth. Hence, the idea, the value, the utility of a thing, or the notion that you have about a thing, is not a part of the thing.

The thing as such, the object as such, is to be the ideal of contemplation. Can you meditate on something free from the notion that you have about that object, and also free from the name associated with it? This is a tree in front of you, a sandalwood tree. Why do you call it a tree? You could have called it by any other name. It is some substance, made up of some material which is

also the material that is the component of other things in the world. It has a shape, it has a form, it has a location. It need not be called a tree; it can be called anything. It is something, a substance belonging to this cosmos of physicality. Remove the idea of tree. Do not say, "It is a very valuable thing. I can extract oil out of it because it is eucalyptus." Remove these ideas. Let there be oil or let there be nothing, it does not matter. It is just what it is.

The concept of the object as it is in itself, free from the notion or the idea about it and the name attached to it, is also connected with this first step of meditation. Technically, this step, this stage, this communion, this *samapatti*, this samadhi, is called *savitarka*. The idea is that it is a total revolution that you are introducing into the very process of thinking—veritably a revolution, a transvaluation of everything, including your own self. You begin to find yourself in a new world, as it were. It will look as if you have woken up from a long dream. Look at the change that you must endeavour to practise in this technique of meditation. The whole world has changed; it is a different world altogether. You have to think differently from the way that you thought earlier. It is a totally different operation of the mind. Then you see a thing which is not at all the thing which you saw earlier. You see the world of nature, not friends and enemies, not belongings, not things that are yours or not yours, not beautiful and ugly things, not useful and useless things. You will see things as they really are, located in some particular point in the context of creation.

Here is what the Yoga Sutras call the first step in samadhi. Though it is called the first step, for us it is something like the final step, because even this cannot be attained easily. You have understood the whole

thing, your mind is accepting it, but the old habit of the mind in thinking in terms of its own relations persists to such an extent that it is flowing through your very veins.

To get into the habit of this new perspective of thought which, according to the Yoga Sutras, is the first step in samadhi, is indeed a herculean task. Days and nights have to be spent in order to achieve at least a modicum of it. Man instantaneously becomes a kind of superman with this new outlook, this new sense of communion, a new detachment and a new sense of belonging—not to people and things, but to creation as a whole.

Chapter 13

STANDING INSEPARABLE FROM THE UNIVERSAL

We were discussing the meditational process. As it is said, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. In a similar way, we may say all our endeavours in any manner whatsoever, through any religious practice, through any type of faith or philosophical study, converge at a point where the differences—whether philosophical, psychological or sociological—melt down into a single target of attention. Until that time, we are all different.

We have many religions, and perhaps we even have many gods to worship. We have many aims in our lives. We speak many languages, and belong to many countries. Everything seems to be multifaceted, multifarious. This continues until we reach the point of meditation. Just as many roads can take us to the top of a mountain and at the apex of the mountain there will not be many roads—there will be only one spot where all the roads, whatever be their number, converge at a single point—so is the case with this great effort of humanity to find its perfection through different types of activity and the pursuit of various ideals.

We have, in these sessions of study, noticed the various aspects of human personality and the different involvements of oneself in the levels of reality, facets of existence, and outlooks of life. They were designated by different kinds of nomenclature: as political involvement, social involvement, communal involvement, linguistic involvement, religious involvement, and involvements of various types such as

family, personality, etc. Then we gathered our attention into a kind of inward endeavour and practice called yoga, which begins with the discipline of the physical body, the prana and the sense organs, which joined together for a single concert which is called meditation.

We also had occasion to notice how meditation becomes the be-all and end-all of psychological endeavour, how meditation is everything and all things. In the earlier stages, meditation looks like one of the practices to which a person can get habituated. Later it becomes the only practice, and it is not just one among the many. It transcends even psychological operations. It becomes no more a mental work; it becomes an endeavour of the whole of our existence. The total being of the person wells up into the task of the communion we call the art and consummation of meditation.

I will repeat what was mentioned earlier, that meditation ceases to be a work or a function of the mind. Rather, it becomes a rising up of all that we are—body, mind and soul put together—in a single focused activity. It is not of the mind, sense organs or of any part of our self, but of our Self. Everything, every bit of what we are, inwardly and outwardly, is totalled up and brought into a focus of attention for a purpose which is the liberation of our finitude—a finitude not merely of the sense organs or the mind, but of ours. Thus, we brought ourselves to the borderland of the consideration of a great step that we have to take, which is called *samapatti* in the language of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras—a kind of communion with That out of which our personality is constituted.

In the previous session, our attention was to the structure of nature as a whole, nature made up of the five elements, and the attempt to see the very same structure, the very same substance, in our own

personality also. Our body is made up of the same elements as nature outside. I said it is a very advanced step, a serious step, and perhaps a final step.

It may look very difficult. On the one hand, it is indeed difficult because no one in the world will think like this. No one will have the need to feel the identity of the structure of one's personality with that of nature or the world outside. The very idea looks funny because we know very well that we are inside the world and we are not a part of the world. No one thinks that he is a part of the world because if that were the case, there would be no need of doing anything in the world. There would be no work, no effort, because all effort is a confrontation of our personality with the external atmosphere.

Who are we going to confront when we envisage the world outside if we are basically inseparable in terms of the brick and mortar of our personality? Patanjali's Yoga Sutras tell us that it is a very difficult thing because we have never been able to think like this. Our educational career has been totally free from this instruction that is necessary for recognising ourselves as a vital part of this cosmic structure. Therefore, it looks as if we are introduced into a new world altogether by the Yoga Sutras; but it is actually the simplest thing to understand. To do work in the office, to build a house, to be an engineer, all these are very difficult things indeed. But to feel the communion of ourselves with That out of which we are made should not be so difficult. Truth is always simple and easy to understand. It is untruth that is difficult to understand. We have to struggle hard to get on with untruth. We have to pile up many types of falsehood in order to justify it. Truth is very simple. Once we utter it, the matter is closed. We do not have to go on saying it

again and again. But an untruth has to be repeated several times, lest it should be discovered as a falsehood.

What is the truth of life? It is your inseparability from the substance of the world outside. This is what the yoga scripture says. There is an intense feeling of this communion of the substance of your personality with the substance of nature outside, an intense feeling commingling in actual being itself, as if you have become the entire nature in yourself—as if you are thinking and feeling through the eyes of nature, as if the very heart of nature is throbbing in your own heart, as if the sun and the moon and the stars are your own eyes, as if the rivers in the world are your own veins, as if the mountains are your bones, as if the world is your body. This feeling melts down into a deeper consciousness of your being of this nature. Yoga calls this *savitarka samapatti*, which is the first step. You may say it is a very difficult thing, that it looks like the final step; and yet, *yogins* say that it is the first step.

The terminology of the ascent along these lines of *samapattis* is, of course, well known to students of yoga. The earliest, the lowest, the first step, is called *savitarka*, where there is a mingling of the object with its form and the idea that one has about it. I am just repeating what I said in the previous session. Anything that we conceive or perceive has a threefold character blended into it. It is just what it is. Apart from that, we are associating it with a name, a designation. We call it by some name, and we have some notion about it.

In the second stage, which is *nirvitarka*, the object as such is entered into. I begin to see you as you are and not as I think you are, and do not call you by a name which is generally associated with you. I shall divest you of the name that is associated with you. I shall not think

anything about you. I shall try to see you as you would like to see your own self. There is a difference between how you see yourself and how another sees you—a great difference, indeed. The way you see yourself now may often, in some respects at least, be similar to the manner in which other people see you. You are an official, working in some office. Others know that you are such, and you may also confirm that you are such and such an official. You will not forget it. On a surface parlance of looking at things on a purely social level of human concourse, your knowledge and idea of yourself may not be correct. You may be correct in saying that you are an official working in some office, in some category of performance, and this is also what people think about you. But really you are something different from this function that has been associated with you or foisted upon you, temporarily, for a social purpose.

Are you not something when you are free from that office? That something which you are when you are divested of your office function is a greater reality of yours than the assumed reality of your office job. Even if retirement gives you a better idea of your own self than while you were in an office, even as a retired person you will have some misconceptions about yourself. You may feel that you are a wealthy person owning a lot of land and property, many bungalows, etc., and have many relations and friends. This idea about yourself may continue even if you are divested of the authority of an office. But this idea is also not correct because it is not true that you are always possessed of wealth or that you have relations, friends, land and property, buildings, etc. Look at the manner of the different layers of misconception which you have about yourself, let alone what others think about you.

You may not like many of the opinions that people hold about you, but have you a good opinion about yourself? There also you are mistaken. Suppose you are divested of all your belongings. Will you call yourself a wealthy person? That designation of wealth will vanish. Suppose you have no land, no buildings, no relations, no friends. Are you still something, or are you nothing? Now you will have a different idea about yourself. "What am I? I cannot be regarded as an official; that has gone. I am not even a wealthy man. I have no property. I have nothing to call my own. All has gone." You will no longer designate yourself with these qualities or adjuncts which you had connected with yourself; nevertheless, you are there, existing. What is your opinion about yourself at that time? You will feel you are a person totally undressed of all associations, both social and psychological. You will stand naked, as it were, before nature's reality. You will begin to feel, "I have nothing. Everything has gone." Everything has gone, but you have not gone. That is the whole point.

When everything has gone, still you are persisting. That 'you' which continues to exist even when everything has gone is your reality. There you will find that you are inseparable from nature. You do not require any kind of clothing at that time. Nature does not wear clothes, it does not own property, and is not a friend of anybody. No kind of association can be there with nature. This is a new type of analytical approach I am presenting before you to show the outlook that you have to develop for communing yourself with nature as it is in itself, in *savitarka samapatti*. You do not commune yourself as a rich man, as if a rich man is going to nature, a wealthy man is encountering the cosmos, an official is standing before the world. It is nothing of the kind. It is very hard for you to understand

why such a difficult thing is considered as the first step. All these things appear to be beyond your head. You have never heard these things, you have never thought like this, and even now you find it very hard to hold on to these ideas for a long time. It is a total impossibility for you, yet it is the first step in yoga.

The second step, which is called *nirvitarka*, is, to mention again, the real you getting united with the reality of the cosmos, minus association with space and time. The first step—all this interesting detail which we have been discussing—is associated with the concept of space and time. Whatever be the notion that you have about yourself, even correctly, whatever be the idea that you have about nature, though it may be very appreciable and correct to a large extent, still you find that you are locating nature in space and time. This is Newton's concept of the physical universe, that it is something contained in a cup of space and time. Do you not feel that you are inside space and time? This is a defect in thinking. You are not inside space and time, really speaking. Space and time are part and parcel of the structure of physical nature, as we are learning these days. This physical universe of the five elements, including our own body, is a manifestation of space-time itself. We may call it a condensation of space-time.

Here again we have the difficulty of how hard substances like stone and brick and can be regarded as a condensation of space and time because space seems to be empty, and time is indescribable and enigmatic. We cannot see space, and we cannot see time. We see some emptiness, and something called time, in a concept of the mind. But, space and time are not mere voids, and they are not just empty concepts. They are the very background and the matrix of the later developments in the process of evolution, in the form of

the *tanmatras* and the five elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether. If space and time are not a vessel in which the physical universe is contained, as we wrongly think, but physicality is just a form of space-time itself, then thinking the universe in terms of space and time ceases.

It is not possible for ordinary people to entertain these areas of thought and meditation. You cannot go on thinking like this for a long time. You will become giddy; you will fall asleep; you will feel that this is not for you. You may appear to understand what I am saying, but you cannot carry it for a long time. The very first step was difficult, and the second step becomes even more difficult because here is a prescription whereby you are not to think of space outside, and not even to think of time. Why is it so? It is because, in the same way as nature is not outside your body, space-time is not outside nature. As you are not outside nature, nature is not outside space-time. This is how you begin to withdraw yourself in an ascending order of concept, or push yourself forward, as it were, into the causes of the effects that appear as this phenomenal world.

I mentioned that in creation, effects follow causes, and that in meditation, causes follow effects. That is to say, from the lower, you go to the higher. The lowest is the political concept, the social concept, the physical concept. Then you go to the higher concept of your inseparability with nature, which is physical. Now you go still further into the concept of the inseparability of nature as a whole from space-time itself. This is the second stage of *samapatti*, or samadhi, where you do not know what is happening. I can describe it only in this manner. There is no language which can describe this condition because all language, all definition, all description is in terms of qualities and relations. When we speak of anything, something is compared with

something else and some quality or adjunct is associated with another quality or adjunct. But here, this becomes an impossibility on account of there being no qualities, no relations, no adjuncts whatsoever outside what you consider as the object of your meditation. Who is meditating? The 'you' that meditates ceases to be there because it has already gone into the very substance of the object of meditation, which has become all nature and all space and time. It looks as if nature itself is contemplating itself. The earth is contemplating, nature is meditating, the whole cosmos is becoming aware of itself. You are no longer meditating; you have now gone beyond meditation.

Meditation is a very simple thing. It is a kindergarten stage, as it were, compared to all this that we are discussing now. You are on a very high level where you are not contemplating anything; you have become one with nature. So, who is meditating? Nature is contemplating itself as existing. But even that is not sufficient. It is now not contemplating itself as existing in space and time. The idea of nature thinking that it exists in space and time also has gone. What is left now? Here your speech becomes hushed, and nobody is there to tell you anything. Language ceases, thought does not function further in the manner it was functioning earlier, and you are caught in a whirlpool of a cosmic tide that is flooding over you. You are no more a human being. You have no friends around you, and nothing to see. What is existing? Here, all human effort ceases. Up to this time there was effort to do something, to think in some way, and then see that you do not get distracted into some other way of thinking. Now, at this moment, the effort itself ceases.

If the effort ceases, how do you progress onwards? For this there is an Upanishadic declaration that a

divine hand starts operating at that moment. Up to this time you have been doing something, but now you cannot do anything; you have become totally helpless. When your limbs are removed and you are melting down into the substance of the world, what effort is possible on your part? How is it possible that there can be further progress? The Upanishad says that some non-human or super-human power takes care of you at that time. It takes you up by the hand, as it were, and leads you along a path which is not visible to the eyes but can be felt by your consciousness. It is the point, as it were, where you are directly in contact with the ambassadors of God. Until that time, you are far away from these great personalities. Even to contact these ambassadors is very difficult. You have to struggle so much, with such force, with agony for such a long time even to contact these officials of God—and God is still further.

However, it is a wonderful thing to meet these great officials. Once they raise their green flag, you will have no problem. Then, in modern style, you may say, they will present you with a green card to the Absolute, and you shall have no problems. You cannot move because you have no eyes, you have no legs, you have no limbs; you are not a person. There, the movement is of consciousness; consciousness moves into consciousness. All this wondrous description is associated with the second stage. This is the *nirvitarka* stage. Actually, in these first two stages of *savitarka* and *nirvitarka*, you are still in the level of the physical cosmos, though you have by some means overcome the limitations of the concept of space and time.

There is something higher: the *tanmatras*. You have to remember the process of evolution. I mentioned that the Original Absolute appears as *adhibhuta* on one side,

adhyatma on the other side, and *adhidaiva* in the middle; and the *tanmatras*—the potentials of hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, tasting—become the latent forces which, by a certain permutation and combination, become the five elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether.

Up to this time we have been considering only the level of the physical elements, either with the association of space and time or without such association. Now we are going to consider pure potentials, not the physical universe. These are the *tanmatras*, as they are called, the universe as constituted of pure force. The concept of force is also difficult to entertain because we know only electric force and so on, but this is something more than electricity. It is prana, in one way. What is prana? You may in a way compare it to electric energy, but it is subtler than that; it is vitality. There is no vitality in electricity. It is a dead force. Electricity is a tremendous force indeed, but it has no life, and it cannot understand. Because vitality is something which has motivation, it therefore transcends the concept of force as electricity.

In this realm of the *tanmatras*, you enter into a non-physical environment of continuity which is spaceless and timeless. Modern science sometimes calls it the space-time continuum. It does not mean that there is space and time. It looks like a continuum of the melting together of even space and time, which means to say, a spaceless and timeless continuum—a fourth dimension, as we are intriguingly told. The fourth state is something like that. It transcends the three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping.

So we have *savitarka*, *nirvitarka*. Then there is *savichara*, the third stage, where the *tanmatras* come into operation. The fourth stage is *nirvichara*, in which

the forces are not anymore a continuum because even the concept of the process of dynamism involves a tinge of spatiality and temporality. Even if you consider the universe as a process, and not as a substance and a thing, you are somehow introducing spatiality and temporality into it. But it is something more than that. The Ultimate Reality is not in space and not in time, and cannot be thought of as being in space and in time.

All this is an area of consideration which is totally alien to ordinary human thinking. It is something surprising, transforming, shocking, and illuminating in a new way, and makes you something totally different from what you are. You cease to be a person, a human being, a man or a woman. You do not know what you are. You will be floating in some atmosphere which cannot be considered as anything at all in ordinary language.

These are some of the processes of the communion of individuality with the cosmos. To repeat these designations of Patanjali, they are *savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara* and *nirvichara*. There are two or three more ascents and processes of moving higher up, and these are not in any way related to the physical universe or even to the forces of nature, not even to the *tanmatras*, but are pure cosmic thought. Here you are led by the ambassadors into the very kingdom of God, and you are there.

In religious circles—in bhakti shastras, or the yoga of devotion—we are told that salvation is of four kinds: *salokya*, *samipya*, *sarupya*, *sayujya*. *Salokya* is something like feeling oneself in the kingdom of God. You cannot understand what it all means. Suffice it to say it is something. You have entered the very kingdom of the Absolute. To conceive it is not practicable at present, because the mind is not yet prepared for it in this

course of study. It is a matter for you to personally attain in your individual practice. When you feel as if you have landed on the runway, as it were, of the kingdom of God—you have landed your plane in the airport of God's kingdom—you feel a thrill. You have not seen anything of God, but you are in His kingdom; that is itself sufficient. You are still at the airport and have not seen anything yet, but it does not matter; you are there. This is one kind of salvation, to feel oneself as present in the kingdom of God.

The second stage is nearness to the location of God, if at all you can conceive such a thing as location. You are nearer to the Supreme Being. You have not seen or felt the Supreme Being, but you feel a sensation of being approximate to That. It is a higher stage than merely being conscious of being in the kingdom of God. This is called *samipyā*, nearness.

In the third stage, you look like one of the denizens or citizens of that kingdom. You are not a foreigner with alien clothes entering into that kingdom. You begin to shine like anybody else there. You look like everybody inhabiting that kingdom. You become a shining personality, and that kind of being and contour cannot be described. This is called *sarupyā*, having the same form as the people, the individuals, the salvation-attained souls inhabiting that kingdom.

The last is, of course, entry into God's Being; that is *sayujya*. This is something like what is told to us in these yoga techniques of an ascent that is going to rise higher than these stages that we have already considered as *savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara* and *nirvichara*—where pure universal thought begins to operate, and we stand inseparable from the universe itself.

Chapter 14

CONSCIOUSNESS ALONE IS

Before you move forward, it is necessary for you to see that your feet have been firmly planted on the ground and all things are clear to you. The advance along the line of yoga is something like a military operation. You are conscious that there is an encounter. This is the first step. As is the case with the awareness of an army general, so is the case with a yoga student. The yoga student is aware that there is going to be an encounter. What kind of encounter? Whom are you going to encounter?

From a military point of view, it is an encounter with some other country. In the case of a yoga student, it is an encounter with people outside and with the world in front of you, because they have always been too much for you. You suspect the world and suspect everybody in the world, as every country suspects every other country, basically, though the suspicion will not be openly manifest in behaviour. You do not go on declaring that you suspect everybody, but you do suspect them. You are always cautious about even nature itself.

After this awareness of there being something to be faced, an assessment of the situation takes place. What kind of strength does the other party have? It takes a lot of time to understand this. Who is it that is facing you? After a lot of investigation with the application of various methods, you come to a conclusion about the strength of the other party. Then comes an assessment of your own self. What is your strength? To what extent are you in a position to face this encounter? If your

strength is not equal to the strength of the other side, you will not suddenly go for an onslaught. There will be peace negotiations, give-and-take policies and, for some reason or other, the matter will be dragged on for an extensive length of time.

This also happens to the yoga student. You have some idea of the world, and of people around, and about your own self; but it is not a complete knowledge. There is a fear, together with a longing. There is a longing to face the encounter, but a fear that it should not be done hastily. The world is so large and people are so many that you have to take all these factors into consideration before you take any step.

Well, you know to some extent what is the strength of the world and what is the strength of people. But you may not be fully aware of your strength because mostly you look like a fraction of this vast sea of power that is around you, and you may not be prepared to risk your life and your career in facing this world which is so large, and people who are so many. But sometimes you will gird up your loins and put on courage, saying, "I have a strength within myself which may not be the physical strength of an elephant, but it is a strength born of my thought and feeling." *Atma shakti* is the power of soul. "God will bless me." This is what the seeker thinks, even in the beginning itself. "God will bless me" is a way of thinking that one's own effort and energy may not be sufficient, and that some other support is necessary.

Even the powerful Pandava forces were not confident of winning victory. They had the assistance of the gods in heaven, but even then they required some collaboration from a friend and well-wisher, who was Bhagavan Sri Krishna. That is why we go on saying, "God bless! God's grace is, of course, there. God will not

let me down.” The Pandavas knew that Sri Krishna would not let them down. In the hour of difficulty, he is always there to render succour.

So the seeker feels, “After all, even if my efforts may not be sufficient and adequate, God is there to see that I am honest in my aspirations, and He will bless me, certainly.” You have a hope that you will win. Afterwards, the war actually begins. What do you do? Do you know what a war means? It is not a foolhardy jumping into something. It is a tremendous arrangement of factors which moves forward, backwards, sideward, and so on, sometimes visible, sometimes not visible. Sometimes the manoeuvres are clear, even to the other side. Sometimes it looks like you are doing nothing, only keeping quiet, but actually you are not keeping quiet. The Pandavas kept quiet for a very long time, but that was not actually a keeping quiet; it was a preparation for an onslaught. So even if the force of a military strength appears to be keeping quiet, it is always on guard and ready to take the necessary step.

Likewise, as with many other similarities of this kind, there is a yoga type of military operation with the whole world that is before you. It is very important to realise in the beginning itself that you have the required facilities, appurtenances, equipment, to face the difficulties in yoga. The equipment is your inner strength of conviction, first of all, and a feeling that inasmuch as you are on the right path, success is bound to come. Many a time success does not follow, even after years of effort. But the Bhagavadgita is behind you as your philosopher and guide, and it tells you that you should never look to the end result of your effort even if it be in the form of an expectation of success, because when you have done your duty, the consequences will

automatically follow. You need not have to bother about whether they will come today or tomorrow.

Many are the circumstances which go to contribute to the appearance of what is called victory, or success. *Adhiṣṭhānaṁ tathā kartā karaṇaṁ ca pṛthagvidham, vividhās ca pṛthak ceṣṭā daivaṁ caivātra pañcamam* (B.G. 18.14) is a verse in the Bhagavadgita, which tells you how many factors are involved in the production of an effect such as success, for instance. Your physical and mental strength is one factor. Suppose you are a sickly person; you are coughing, have aches of every kind, fever, and also the mind is oscillating. You may not be considered ready for this work. The psychophysical condition is one factor: *adhithana*. *Adhithana* is the basis itself, which is your mental and physical condition. You must be very clear that your condition is perfectly fit for this adventure.

Then comes *tatha karta*, the intention behind the adventure which you are trying to embark upon. This is a very important factor. Why do you do anything? What is the intention behind it? Vague, various and multi-faceted are the answers to this question. If you ask any yoga student, "Why are you practicing yoga?" each person will give a different answer. One will say, "I want freedom." Another will say, "I want to become a teacher of yoga." A third will say, "I want to regulate my breathing." A fourth will say, "I want to increase my height." These are the answers. Or rarely, without actually knowing what they are saying, one may say, "I want to attain God, whatever God is." Even this good answer that you want God is not a clear answer. It is a child's answer about something which you cannot understand. The intention behind your practice should be very clear. Each one of you is your own master in this respect, and do not make mistakes by having wrong

motives or intentions. That is the implication of the word *karta* in this verse of the Bhagavadgita. *Adhiṣṭhāna* is the psychophysical condition; *karta* is the intention of the person inside—the ego, as it is called.

Kartā karaṇam ca prthag-vidham. The third factor is the facilities that you have to do this practice. Have you adequate facilities? Have you a room to stay in, or are you outside in the wind? Have you some means of eating a single meal in a day, or are you starving? Is there any other opposition from anywhere? Is there any kind of hindrance, whatever it be, from inside or outside? All the facilities necessary for this practice should be there. These are the *karanas*, or the instruments of action. These instruments are not necessarily physical instruments; they are conditions that are to be considered as conducive to doing yoga practice. So, *adhithana*, *karta* and *karana* are the three factors mentioned.

Vividhās ca prthak ceṣṭā. The fourth factor is the possibility of your being engaged in various types of activity, while your intention is to be engaged in only one kind of activity. *Vividha ceṣṭā* is the practice of circumstances which are also possible in your case, though your intention is to wean yourself from all these possible extraneous actions and concern yourself with only one type of action. That is, if you have the facility to do something, you may do it, though that is not your intention. For instance, even if you have no intention to commit theft and are not thinking about it, but are placed under certain circumstances where to commit that action is most easy and nothing will happen to you if you do it, then the possibility of stealing may manifest into action.

Actually, there should not even be the possibility. Even if gold is heaped in front of you, the idea of owning

it should not arise in your mind. Even the idea should not arise. You should not have doubts in the mind. "If I do it, it is all right, though I was told that it should not be done." You have a dubious attitude at that time. You want it, but some other pressure from inside says that you are not supposed to do that. This is a conflict in the mind, a psychological conflict. These are the possibilities of action, from which you have to sever yourself gradually, and engage yourself in only one kind of action.

Now comes the last thing, the last straw on the camel's back, as it is said. *Daivam caivātra pañcamam*: The will of the cosmos will decide your fate. You will say, "Oh, this is something very terrible. After all this which was so nice to hear, you have said something which is like a thunderbolt on the head, that finally it looks that it is not in our hands." You do not know what the judge will say in the court, all your arguments notwithstanding. Finally, it is the whim and fancy of the judge. One sentence is sufficient, and the case is lost. You may ask, "Is it so? Is the Bhagavadgita frightening us by saying that finally the will of the Universal is the ultimate factor and if that will is not operating, nothing will work? Are we dependent on that will? Are we totally subservient to something outside us so that we are at the mercy of something? Then what is the good of any effort? Everything that has been told seems to be useless if, finally, we are helpless in the hands of a power that is beyond us and totally external to us."

But this is not the case. You are not told that you are helpless and you are at the mercy of somebody else. The difficulty arises because you have somehow slipped into the wrong notion that the Universal will is outside you. This has been the point that we have been hammering again and again, that the object of perception, even if it

is God Himself, is not external to you. So the Universal will, which is the final conditioning factor of all your victory and success in yoga, is not a frightening externality. It is not an outside judge sitting in a court, apart from you. It is a judiciary operating in your own heart. Because the will of the cosmos also operates within you, your will is not working in a fashion totally dissonant with the will of the cosmos.

These few words are only a description of the preparations that one has to make for this great, adventurous march of the soul to what you consider as the unknown—the unknown being your own higher Self. You are going to pursue your own higher Self. These things about which you have heard up to this time—such as the *adhidaiva* which is the intermediary consciousness between the *adhibhuta* and the *adhyatma*, the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether, the *tanmatras*, and even space-time—are not outside you. In the previous session I had taken time to explain to you that this is the fact. Even space and time cannot be regarded as being outside you, but they look entirely outside. You cannot say that space is inside the body; you do not feel it. Even time appears to be moving outside. You can see the hands of a clock moving, though you feel that inside yourself, no time is moving. But it is not so. Your growth from babyhood to this condition of adulthood is the working of time inside you. Decay and death are also the work of time. And the dimension of your personality, of your body especially, is the work of space. You have length and breadth. You are a three-dimensional being, are you not? These three dimensions of your personality are the work of space; and growth, decay and death are the work of time. Hence, space and time are not only not outside, they are universally operating.

Even the highest liberation that we are seeking is within us, in one way. "I want moksha. I want freedom, liberation," is the asking of a seeker. But we are asking for freedom from what? The idea of freedom is ingrained in the very existence of our being. Our own existence is asking for freedom from its own limitations. Our physical finitude in this world of nature and people is the lowest, the most initial of all the concepts that we have about ourselves and, on account of it, we cannot be totally free from this discomfort that we feel inside ourselves. To overcome it, we move earth and heaven every day by occupying high positions or amassing large wealth and so on, because to be always conscious of one's finitude and smallness is an utter misery which is intolerable. But all this effort of ours is futile finally, due to the nature of its own insubstantiality because we remain the same finite fools when we depart from this world, shedding this body and all these appurtenances that have been foisted upon us by way of position in society, wealth, land, etc. They will not come with us.

Little we were when we were born; little we are when we depart from this world. We are also little while living in this world, but it is difficult for us to be always aware that we are little because it looks worse than death; so we start whitewashing ourselves with all kinds of ideas of possession and position, etc.—all of which are mere eyewash, indeed. Friends depart, positions go, and we go from this world in the same way as we came into this world.

One cannot go on with this state of affairs for a long time. Any effort on the part of man in the manner described—empirically, sensorially, socially, etc.—will do no good because we have always been outside the structure of reality and never had an occasion to enter into our vital connection with the world of nature,

whose various degrees of manifestation have been described to you earlier.

With these preliminary remarks, I now come to the point actually on hand, a continuation of what I told you in the previous session. *Savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara* and *nirvichara* are the names, designations or appellations that are given to these four stages of inner communion with the Reality of the universe. The first one is the attempt to be in a state of unison with the fact of an object, free from the name and idea associated with it—to know a thing as it is in itself minus descriptive adjuncts and ideas connected with it, etc.—and to take the whole cosmos of physicality of the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether as the very substance out of which your body is made, so that you cannot see this world as something totally alien to you, as you see a building outside. This building of the universe is not outside you, though an ordinary building looks as if it is outside you. The reason is that the very bricks of the universe are the bricks of your body. The very cells of your physical personality are made of the atoms of the universe. This thought requires deep affirmation, again and again, so that you will be able to know what *samapatti*, or communion, actually means.

Has any one of you, at any time in your life, tried to be in communion with something? You have always been outside—with desire, longing, hatred, and a sense of possessiveness. Is it not a tragedy of life? Have you spent five minutes in your life with a feeling of utter union with something? There has been nothing of that kind. Such hardcore egoists we seem to be, that we cannot be in a state of utter friendship and communion with even a pencil or a wristwatch because they are outside. We love a wristwatch, a pencil and a fountain pen, but they are not 'I'; therefore, they are not as

important as 'I'; therefore, we cannot love them as much as we love ourselves; therefore, our love is futile. It comes to that, finally.

This is a very important matter, and not merely a story for you to hear and then go away, because here is your future destiny. If you cannot love anything in the sense of a communion with it—not merely love in a psychological or a psychopathological sense—then this life is certainly not lived properly. It has been wasted. You have been existing, but not living. Put a question to your own self. Make this note in your diary: "Have I felt a communion with anything in this world since my birth, or have I suspected everything from the beginning itself? Did I keep it apart, and love it with caution?" Is there any such thing as love with caution? Can you call it love at all? But is this not the way in which you treat things? And can you treat the world and God in that way?

You love God with suspicion: "If He comes, very good; if He does not come, I will manage without Him." This is wanting God while having some suspicion. God knows it very well. He is not a fool. He understands that your mind is doubting. A very important factor which you have to underline in your diaries and notebooks is that it is essential for you to develop the faculty of feeling communion with things. If you love things with doubt, that will not work; that magic will not be of any use. You should not think that the world is a fool, that you can befool it. Even a plant knows what you think about it. You cannot fool even a plant. If you say "I will pluck you tomorrow", it will understand what you are thinking. Every atom will vibrate in the manner that you think about it. The whole world is a total awareness, with eyes everywhere. The Bhagavadgita tells us: *sarvataḥpāṇipādām tat sarvato'kṣīṣiromukham* (B.G.

13.13). Everywhere there are eyes; there is no secret place in this world. Therefore, a doubting Thomas cannot be a yoga student.

So here is a point for you to emphasise to yourself: What is it that you are in communion with? You cannot be in communion with anything whose value you doubt. "It is a very good thing, this person is very nice, but..." You should not add 'but'. No father, no mother, no friend, no sister, no boss, no money, no wealth will unconditionally become your servant. They are your well-wishers only under certain conditions. This kind of conditioned relationship is not to be a yoga student's relationship with people and the world outside.

Thus, these stages of *samapatti*—*savitarka*, and so on, the four stages mentioned—are graduated ascents of a communion of more and more intensity as one advances further. Under ordinary conditions, it is impossible for a person to feel what consciousness will be there when one is in communion with something. If you have never felt communion, you do not know what it is. It is exceedingly delighting, enrapturing, making you lose consciousness, making you mad for it, as it were, in which condition you do not know that you are existing; you know only the existence of that which you are looking at and is enrapturing you.

Even if it is really outside you, it can rouse up the spirits of a sense of communion within you, though actual communion does not take place even in the best of artistic and aesthetic perceptions. You can be drowned in joy by beautiful classical music, you can be drowned in ecstasy by looking at a beautiful sculptural piece or an architectural edifice, or you can be drowned in joy by reading excellent literature or poetry, but even then it is not enough because you cannot call it communion. But if even these things with which you are

not actually in communion—you are not one with them, they are outside you—still thrill you to such an extent that you cannot put a book down until you read it completely, and you go on gazing at the beauty of a painting, etc., if even the semblance of a psychological communion with things which are attractive can thrill you, what would be the thrill that you will feel when the soul is in communion? No word or language is adequate. That joy, which is not a joy of the mind but of your deepest recesses, will gradually manifest itself. You must read the lives of saints to understand what all this means—how they behaved, how they felt and expressed themselves.

These four stages of *savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara* and *nirvichara* are actual communions; they are not merely meditation processes of the psyche. Identification with the thing as it is, identification with the physical universe, identification with the universe inclusive of the space-time factor, concentration on or union with the *tanmatras*, which is the third stage of communion, then the *tanmatras*, or the universe of force, being considered as also inclusive of the space-time complex, is what we have covered up to this time.

To know what remains further, you have to bring to your memories once again the process of the evolutionary stages, which was the subject of our studies at the beginning of this course. The Absolute is the only Reality. God Almighty is the only existence; only the Universal is there, and no particularity exists. Then there was a condensation, as it were, of this Universality into the potential for the manifestation of a universe, which is something like cosmic sleep. In Vedanta psychology, it is called the condition of Ishvara. The ultimate is Brahman; the potential for manifestation is Ishvara. Then, the potential manifests

itself like a dream where there are faint outlines of the possibility of the actual concrete manifestation of the universe, which in Vedanta is called Hiranyagarbha. The actual, final concrete appearance is Virat.

In a famous text called the Panchadasi, the philosopher describes this process something like this. The Ultimate Reality, Brahman, is something like a pure cloth, untainted or untouched by any extraneous material. We purchase pure cloth, linen or a white sheet, from the market. This pure, uncontaminated existence, without any kind of external adjective, is comparable to the Supreme Brahman. Now, in the process of painting, after the cloth is brought, it is stiffened with starch. We cannot paint on cloth as it is because there are holes, etc. Starch is smeared over the whole cloth, and it becomes stiff. This is the potential for the further action of painting. As is this potentiality in painting, so is the potentiality of the creative process. The Universal, the uncontaminated, non-objective Absolute wills, as it were, to become something, as the painter wills to do something by means of daubing the cloth with starch. Then what happens? The painter draws an outline of the intended picture with a pencil. This outline will give us a vague idea of what he is going to paint, though the clear picture is not there. This faint idea of the outline of a future universe is the next stage, which is called Hiranyagarbha, and is like a cosmic dream. When the colour is filled in by the painter and the picture is ready, it is like Virat, the whole universe that we see. God the painter has painted Himself, as it were, with the brush of His intention to become the universe of perception.

These stages are what finally become the so-called object, if at all you can call them objects, of your communion onward, beyond *savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara*, *nirvichara*. When you cross these four stages

of even the consciousness of the universe being inclusive of space-time, you are filled with bliss. This communion with bliss arises not from any possession of things, but from the inner Reality itself. Without any kind of contact with things, it arises from all sides, not only from one point. If you eat a delicious mango, the joy comes from only one side; it does not come from all sides. But here, the bliss spoken of arises from every part of existence. It floods you from all sides and all quarters: top and bottom, left and right. This inundation with bliss, this kind of communion, which is of course indescribable in ordinary language, is a *samapatti*, or a communion, and it goes by the name of *sananda samapatti*. *Sananda* means filled with bliss. *Ananda sahita samapatti* is *sananda*.

You may say that you understand what bliss means because you might have been happy for some reason or other. Suppose you got a double promotion and your salary was doubled, were you not very happy? So you know what happiness means. But this is not the kind of happiness that we are speaking of because these double promotions, salary, etc., are perishable things. Perishable joy is not real joy. Here is an imperishable joy which arises not from anything that you acquire from outside, but from what you really are. You cannot say anything in this condition, because what you wanted has come. You do not want anything, actually, except security and joy. If you go to the root of the matter, you will find that you do not want buildings, money, and so on. You do not want anything except a sense of perfection in yourself and a continued happiness. If all the factors that go to make you permanently happy are there, you do not want anything else. That kind of thing has come. It has come forever, and not only for a few minutes or days. What will you

do afterwards? You merely become conscious of being in a state of bliss. There is nothing else to do. This state where you are just conscious of being in a state of a universal flooding of bliss is called *sasmita*, a last state of *samapatti*. *Asmita* means 'sense of being', a consciousness of one's being. You are conscious of your being in a state of Universal bliss. This is *sananda samapatti*.

All these stages of communion mentioned—*savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara*, *nirvichara*, *sananda* and *sasmita*—are considered by yoga scriptures and yoga teachers as a communion with a seed: *sabija*, as it is called. The idea behind this statement is that even in this tremendous, wondrous attainment, which is actually impossible even to imagine, there is a little seed of your being conscious that you are. That seed also has to go. No one can tell you what happens when you are not even conscious that you are—when there is only Consciousness. It is not a state of consciousness of the fact of you being there. It is not a consciousness of something, but Consciousness as such. Here we are taken to giddy heights, with which we close our session.

Chapter 15

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION 1

Student: In the dream state, do the will and the discrimination work as powerfully as in the waking state, or is there a difference?

Swamiji: The will and the discrimination work as powerfully in the dream state as in the waking state, only in a different order of space and time. In terms of the degree of reality, the experience in dream is qualitatively a lesser level than in waking, yet it has all the characteristics of the waking state. For instance, the human being can be regarded as a higher level of reality than an animal, yet all the biological functions are similar both in the human being and in the animal. Whatever man feels, the animal also feels; nevertheless, the animal is in a lower category of reality than the human. So there is a distinction between the degrees of reality, but they are identical from the point of view of structure—qualitatively different, structurally the same.

Student: Is it because of this qualitative difference in the degree of experience that the dream state is lesser than the waking state, and therefore all concepts and memory are less in the dream state than in the waking state?

Swamiji: Yes, you may say that. Correct.

Student: In the state of samadhi, do thoughts exist?

Swamiji: There are two kinds of thought. In Sanskrit, one kind of thought is called *vishayakara vritti*, and the other kind is called *brahmakara vritti*. The meaning of these two terms is that while the mind thinks of an object external to it, it assumes the form of that object and is cast in the mould of the object—even as molten

lead cast in a crucible takes the form of that crucible. This operation of the mind in terms of the cognition of an object outside is what, in psychology, is usually called a psychosis; and this is what is meant by the Sanskrit word *vishayakara vritti*.

Now comes the answer to your question of whether there is a thought in samadhi. There is a thought, but it is called *brahmakara vritti*. In samadhi the mind does not think of anything outside it, but thinks that in which it itself is involved. *Brahmakara vritti* means cosmic psychosis; *vishayakara vritti* means objective psychosis. The samadhi *vritti*, the samadhi psychosis, is cosmic in the sense that the perceiver—the cogniser, or the one that is aware—gets merged in that of which it is aware. So you may say that the mind functions in samadhi also, but in a cosmic fashion, not in a particularised, individual fashion. Virtually, you may not call it mind at all. It has ceased to be the tormenting type of mind which we people have. It is a liberated mind. Nevertheless, you may call it a mind if you like because it is aware—not of an object outside, but of the total cosmos. So the mind is there, or you may say it is not there, either way.

Student: What is the law of nature?

Swamiji: The law of nature is what nature thinks in its mind. Your law is what you are thinking in your mind. Nature cannot be said to be thinking of anything outside itself, because outside nature nothing exists. Everything is inside nature, so if nature is thinking, what will it think? It will think only itself. So this total, inclusive thought of nature thinking also includes space and time because

they are part of nature. Nature thinking is something like God thinking, because it is said that nature as we see it manifest in the form of this universe is God's body.

This is also one of the conclusions of *acharyas*, etc., that the world is the body of God. Hence, if nature thinks, it will think only itself. It cannot think anything else.

So when you have to follow the law of nature perfectly, you have to think as nature would think. That is total harmony with its entire structure. Then it is something like being friendly with God Himself. To be friendly with nature is virtually to be friendly with God; and to think as nature thinks is something like thinking like God Himself. The total thought of the entire creation may be said to be the law of nature.

Student: Nature is said to be inside God.

Swamiji: God is a consciousness without the intervention of space-time and the causal relation of things. Nature, at least as we hear it said in the scriptures, is a visible form of the very same consciousness. The distinction between God and nature is something like the distinction between the soul and the body. You have got a soul and a body. You cannot say that the soul and the body are the same, and yet you cannot say that they are totally different. If they are totally different, the soul can be kept here and the body can be kept there. That you cannot do, so they are not two things; and yet, you cannot say that the body is the soul, nor can you say that the soul is the body. The soul is a manifestation. To express this more concretely, you may even say the condensation of universal Consciousness appears as this nature. It is something like water becoming ice.

Student: What is the difference between God and God-realisation?

Swamiji: A person who has realised God is called a God-realised soul. There are seven stages of God-realisation. These seven stages are mentioned in one way in the

sutras of Patanjali, and in another way in the Yoga Vasishtha—especially in the Yoga Vasishtha.

When a person is free from all the desires to which ordinary people are accustomed, and thinks in the mind: “I want God only. My desire is to have God. I don’t have a desire for anything else”, this thought itself can be regarded as the first stage, or step, towards God. You need not call it God-realisation, but nevertheless it is a great thing even to be convinced that you want only that. One cannot easily think like that. Most people have all kinds of ideas. But if you are convinced that this is the only thing that you want, it is the first step that you have taken towards God-realisation. In the language of the Yoga Vasishtha, it is called *subhechcha*: the desire to do the good thing, the only good thing being the love of God. This is the first step.

The second stage is *vicharana*. You do not merely think, but you start analysing into the ways and means of moving still further: “How can I go? What steps am I taking? What are the sadhanas?” Going on thinking like this, going to Gurus, and reading scriptures so that your mind becomes active in that direction, is the second stage.

The third stage is that the mind is almost detached from all objects. It is called *tanumanasi*. *Tanu* means thin, thread-like. The mind becomes thread-like, as if it is breaking.

The fourth stage is the actual spiritual condition. The first three are the stages of a seeker, a *sadhaka*. The last four are the stages of an actually realised person. The fourth stage is called *sattvapatti*, which means the light of the cosmos will start flashing in your mind, like lightning. Just as you see lightning flashes when there is a cloudy and rainy atmosphere, like that you will see lightning flashes, illuminations, etc., from inside.

The fifth stage is *asamsakti*. You will have no desire even to see a thing, let alone desire to have it. The eyes do not have any interest to see things; the ears have no desire to hear anything; the nose has no desire to smell; the tongue has no desire to taste; the hands have no desire to touch. Even the desire to be conscious of the existence of something outside goes.

The sixth state is *padartha-bhavana*. You will begin to see matter itself shining like gold. Now it is all brick and mortar, iron, and all kinds of things. In the state of *padartha-bhavana*, it will all look like shining gold. Things will not look like material objects, but as if one thing only is pervading everywhere, as if the whole world is made up of gold. Now you see mountains, trees, people, things, but afterwards it is like all ornaments look like one gold. The true Reality will be seen at that time.

The last stage is that you will actually merge into it. You will also become that very gold, and there will be no distinction between the knower of it and that which is known. These are the stages of God-realisation. In the previous stages there are differences, but in the last stage there is no difference. You will merge into it.

Student: Have I realised God?

Swamiji: Are you a realised person?

Student: Yes.

Swamiji: I am very glad. [To the class] You have got a Guru. Your Guru us here! I am very glad, sir. You are a confident boy. But be careful, very careful. [Laughter] God is the most kind mother. No mother can be so kind as God, but no judge in a court can be so severe as God. So how will you compare these two aspects? He is the most severe judiciary, and the kindest of mothers. These two qualities cannot be found in one person in the world. Generally, a mother

thinks in one way and a father thinks in another way. But there, one person is like both. This judicial impartiality is the same as the kindness of a mother. It is difficult to explain because such a thing is not seen in this world.

Student: Does rebirth take place immediately? How is it decided what one will be in the next birth?

Swamiji: Rebirth need not take place immediately. It can take place immediately if the karma is very intense; otherwise, it may take its own time. The decision will be taken by the desires which remain at the time of death. Even now you can know, to some extent, what you will be in your next birth by analysing your own thoughts.

Today at sunset time, sit quiet. Go on thinking from the morning onwards, till this moment, what your predominant thoughts have been. Of course, you might have been thinking of the Academy, going to the kitchen, taking bath and washing clothes; these are all secondary matters. But basically, in your subconscious, what have you been thinking the whole day? Yesterday, what did you think? The day before yesterday, what did you think? This is why it is said that it is very important to keep a spiritual diary. You cannot remember what you thought ten days ago. If you keep a diary and make notes, you can know the balance sheet of thirty days of thinking. You can say that these are the basic thoughts that occurred to your mind. This is what you will become in the next birth, to fulfil that desire. You can yourself know what you will become in the next birth. You need not consult any scripture; your thoughts are very well known to you. What do you want? Ask your own mind what it wants.

In the classroom of this Academy you say you want God, but is not like that. Go to the road, go to the railway station, go to the marketplace, and then see what you

are thinking. Those thoughts are also important. The essence of all these will be taken out, like butter from milk, and that will condense itself into a body, which is called rebirth. It is not decided by anybody else. You decide your own fate, and you create your own rebirth. Nobody is punishing you. Your thoughts are your makers, and you can, if you are impartial in judging your own mind, know what you will become in the next birth. It is not very difficult.

Student: How can I know which path is best for me? Should I choose it by myself?

Swamiji: If you can choose for yourself any good path among the many, very good. You can choose. But if you are unable to choose, you can ask your Guru. The Guru is supposed to know the mind of the disciple to some extent; and knowing you very well, he will tell what is the path for you at this moment. If you yourself can decide, fine. Otherwise, ask your Guru.

Student: Is Consciousness static or dynamic?

Swamiji: When Consciousness is in itself, it is static, but when creation takes place, it is dynamic. Electricity is pervading here even now, but it is not dynamic. It can become active by certain technological appliances which generate this active part of it—like a dynamo, for instance. If a dynamo is operating, you will see the active part of electricity. Otherwise, when electricity is pervading everywhere and you cannot see it in a general form, you can call it static, if you like. Even when the wind does not blow and the leaves are not moving, air is there, and so the wind is static. When the wind blows—it is moving, and all the trees are shaking—it is dynamic. So you can say that wind is originally static, but it is potentially dynamic. You cannot say air is static or dynamic because it can become both. In the same way, to think of

Consciousness as totally free from creative activity, you may call it static.

Student: What is the qualitative difference between the dream state and the waking state?

Swamiji: In dream, you enter a different world altogether. The qualitative difference arises on account of a new space-time that you create. There is an objective physical space-time in the waking state, and there is only psychological space-time in the dream state. That is why a qualitative difference takes place. Dreams occur due to various reasons. It is not due to one reason only. One of the reasons is that, in the waking condition, you have got some submerged desires which you cannot express in daily life. Because the intellect, which censors your actions in the waking condition, is not operating in dream, the subconscious mind comes up, just as thieves start operating when policemen are not there.

But there are also other reasons for dreams occurring. They can foretell something that is going to happen in the future; or you may be a good *sadhaka* and so all the karmas are getting exhausted. Sometimes there are very pleasant things, and sometimes unpleasant things. Sometimes Dr. Jekyll comes, and sometimes Mr. Hyde comes.

I heard that in Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life there was an incident that when he was in an intense state of semi-samadhi, a black man started coming out of his body. From the left side, a dark man emerged. It was the Kalapurusha. That evil tendency in human nature completely went out of him. You can read about many fantastic experiences, such as Buddha having an experience in his meditations.

Sometimes there are temptations, sometimes there are threats, and sometimes there are delusions. They

are all accumulated karmas of previous lives manifesting themselves in concrete form. These old karmas say they have done enough service to you, and now they are going. And when they go, naturally you see them. You never knew that they were inside you because you were so friendly with them that you never knew that they are different from you. But when they take leave of you, you find them to be pleasant things or unpleasant things.

Sometimes dreams occur due to the grace of God and the blessing of Guru. Suppose there is some very bad karma, due to which a person is to fall from a tree and break his leg. If God shows His kindness, and your love of God is intense, and Guru is also giving his blessing, you will fall from a tree and break you leg in dream. You will feel the same pain there. You will also yell; you will cry. But actually it has been ameliorated into a dream experience, and when you wake up you are perfectly all right.

Various other reasons are also there. So many reasons are mentioned by psychoanalysts, which we never consider. As far as spiritual seekers are concerned, we may say that karmas from past births, or even from this birth, are the causes of dream experiences.

Student: Is it true that all individuals are always meditating?

Swamiji: Why are you saying that? All individuals are not meditating. They may be thinking something. Every individual is thinking something, but you cannot call it meditating. Meditating means thinking only one thing; and if you think that every individual in the world is thinking only one thing, you may say they are all meditating. But each one has his own thoughts, and nobody is meditating. Meditation is one thought, and

nobody has got one thought. All people have many thoughts. So it is not correct to say that all people are always meditating.

Student: Is it possible to be in the state of *aham brahmasmi* always?

Swamiji: That is the same as being in the state of God-consciousness, if you can intensely feel and convince yourself that you are inseparable from all that you see with the eyes—all this cosmos. I mentioned a number of times in earlier sessions that your personality is made up of the same substance as the world outside. So when you think, naturally you cannot think the world outside. You think that which is a blend of both. If this intention can be driven into your mind and you can feel it intensely, that is *aham brahmasmi*.

You are asking how long can you do it. You can be in this state of *aham brahmasmi* as you long as you can maintain this consciousness. You cannot do it for more than a few minutes because you will again think that something is outside. The moment that you think that there is something outside you, that *aham brahmasmi* consciousness has gone. You can think for yourself how many times you have felt that you are inseparable from the world. It may be for a few seconds or a few minutes, but the whole day is spent thinking something else unless you are deeply engaged in this practice.

Student: In the perceptual process, does the thought come before the prana vibrates on the mind?

Swamiji: Thought comes first.

Student: Thought comes because the prana vibrates on the mind. And is it the prana that goes to the sense object when we perceive things?

Swamiji: The prana will not go to the object unless the mind starts thinking the object. Prana is mostly inside the body. It can be driven out from the body and

directed to an object outside when the mind thinks of that object. The thought of the mind in respect of an object is like a wire that connects this dynamo of the mind with that object, and then it becomes a live wire. The thought becomes a live wire, as it were, and the prana is discharged through the thought. Prana moves towards an object only when the mind thinks of the object. Otherwise, it will be inside the body only. Whatever you think in your mind is also the target of the prana. If you think something that is even at a very distant place, the prana will go there, and it will operate. There is a thing called telepathy. Telepathic action is due to the thought of the mind working in terms of some distant object and getting charged with the prana of the person, which invisibly travels because of the force of the thought. So prana moves to an object only when the mind thinks of the object.

Student: The mind thinks because of the vibration of prana.

Swamiji: The mind thinks because of desire. Prana has no consciousness. Therefore, it cannot think an object. It is like electricity; it has no mind, no brain. It can be directed to something only if the engineer is behind it to direct it in some way. Prana cannot think, but it can act. The mind acts through the prana. Prana and mind are like thought and action put together.

Student: That is also thought, Swamiji.

Swamiji: Maybe. When I say desire, it means thought only. When the mind thinks of an object, it is manifesting a desire: wanting it or not wanting it. Then it takes a step in the direction of fulfilling that desire. That step is in terms of the prana. Prana is the action of the mind. It thinks, and then acts. Mere thinking is the mind, but action is the prana. If you think that you have to lift something with your hand, the prana actually

moves the hand in that direction and lifts it. So thought and prana go together.

Student: It is the prana that vibrates on the mind and generates thoughts.

Swamiji: Prana does not generate thought. It is the mind that generates the prana—the other way around.

Student: After being established in the Self, does the person do any work?

Swamiji: Do you mean to say that God is established in the Self, or not? Do you think God is established in the Self? Then what work is God doing? It is that same work that the person who is established in the Self will do. Does God work or not? What work is God doing just now?

Student: He is not working.

Swamiji: If He is not working, then a Self-realised person does not work. You have answered your question. But if you say God is working, then a Self-realised person also does work.

There was a king who saw a mahatma and said, "Come, Mahatmaji. Sit. Tell me, what is God doing just now?"

The mahatma said, "This is not the way of putting a question. You are sitting on a throne and I am sitting on the floor in front of you, and you are asking me a question. You are like a student. I am like a teacher. The teacher sitting on the floor, and the student sitting on the throne, is not the proper way. You must sit on the floor, and I must sit on the throne. Then only can the answer come."

"All right," said the king. "I will sit on the floor." He got down and told the mahatma to sit on the throne.

"This is what God is doing," said the mahatma. "He puts the top man down and the down man up. You are a

king; you sat on the floor. I am a poor fellow; I sat on the throne. This is what God does.”

So I answered your question about what God is doing.

Student: How can I identify the presence of God?

Swamiji: When you cannot see anything outside you, and your presence, your personality, is totally identified with everything that you see, you may say that you are God-conscious. Your consciousness must be as much in union with things that you see with your eyes as your consciousness is now identified with your body. You are so very intimately connected with your body that you cannot say that your body is outside consciousness. If that intensity of consciousness can be felt in respect of all the things that you see outside, then you are one with nature, and you may say you are one with God also. It is a question of intense conviction and feeling of your heart. It can be done in one minute or it may take years, depending on the intensity of your longing for it.

Student: What is the most suitable method to realise God in Kali Yuga?

Swamiji: The common answer which all mahatmas generally give is that *kirtan-bhajan* is the best. They say that in this Kali Yuga, taking God’s name is the easiest and the best way. Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare. This is the Kali Santarana mantra, which enables you to cross over the *samsara* of Kali Yuga.

Student: What is the meaning of Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare?

Swamiji: Hari is the Almighty Creator of the Universe. Sometimes they also call him Narayana. Rama and Krishna are his incarnations. In Rama’s incarnation, he demonstrated perfect humanity, and in Krishna’s

incarnation, he demonstrated perfect divinity. Perfect universality which is Hari, perfect humanity in Rama, and perfect divinity in Krishna—all three perfections are blended together in this mantra. Therefore, it is a very great, powerful mantra. So do *kirtan* every day.

It is said that Brahma told this mantra to Narada. It may be that Narayana, the Original, must be thought of much more than the manifestations. You may say that.

Student: What is the difference between Brahman and Brahma?

Swamiji: Brahma is the creative originality, as in Brahma, Vishnu, Siva; but Brahman is the Absolute, which is beyond all the three. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are manifestations of another thing which is inclusive of all the three. The Supreme Absolute, Brahman, manifests itself as the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer. When you think of the Absolute as the Creator, it is Brahma; as the Preserver, it is Vishnu; as the Dissolver of all things, it is Rudra or Siva, as the case may be. But Brahman is beyond all.

Student: Is time a movement of consciousness?

Swamiji: Yes. Correct.

Student: If so, why does time not move backwards?

Swamiji: The mind, which is basically our consciousness, is projected outwardly through the sense organs. We think only through the sense organs, we cannot think in any other way, and the force of the sense organs is always outward. The senses cannot think backward. It is not that you cannot go back in time. You can. In certain states, you can also know the past. But usually it cannot be done on account of the power of the sense organs which push the consciousness outward, and therefore it looks as if time moves in only one direction and not in another, though time has three directions: past, present and future. But

mostly you can think only in one way because of the sense organs pushing the mind in one direction, like water gushing through a pipe. The water will go in only one direction.

Student: Is it possible for time to go back?

Swamiji: It can go back, if you control the senses. A physicist of relativity said that there was a person who came tomorrow and will go back yesterday. It means that in this cosmos of relativity where everything is interdependent, there is no past, present and future. A person came tomorrow and he will return yesterday. It has no sense, but it has all sense when time is abolished.

Student: Where is the whole cosmos?

Swamiji: What you are seeing with your eyes is the entire cosmos. You are seeing one part of it. When something is very small, the whole thing can be seen. But it is so big, so you are seeing only a part of it, like the story of the blind men and the elephant. The elephant is so big, but they saw only one part of it—the leg, which looked like a pillar. Similarly, you are seeing only a part of the cosmos, and you are calling it something. You cannot see the whole cosmos because your eyes are so small. What you see with your eyes is the cosmos only. You are walking on it.

Student: Are all mantras of equal value?

Swamiji: Yes, correct. All names are finally names of God, and therefore if you have faith that this name is really the name of God, it will take you to God.

Student: Is there any power in the mantra, or is it the concept of the mind that is the power?

Swamiji: A mantra has got its own power. Your conception also adds to it, but it has a power by itself. The very words of the mantra are arranged in such a way that they generate a kind of power when they are

chanted. A chemical action takes place when the mantra is chanted. The words act and react to produce a force. That is why even by mantra chanting itself you can realise God, and you need not think of chakras. You can completely forget them. Mantras will do the work of other yogas as well. If you are convinced that this mantra is sufficient for you, you need not do any other yoga. The mantra will take care of you. It is enough. It is a complete yoga by itself.

Student: Is there a difference between the cosmos and the within?

Swamiji: The within is included in the cosmos. The so-called within is inside the cosmos. There is no within and without for the cosmos. The outside and the inside are both included in the cosmos. So it has no inside, and it has no outside. It is one total whole.

Student: What is the Mahakaran?

Swamiji: Mahakaran means the Supreme Cause of the universe, Mulaprakriti, or God Himself.

Student: It is said that in meditation, concentration stops. How do concentration and meditation differ?

Swamiji: Concentration is the first stage; meditation is the next stage. When concentration deepens, when you go on concentrating on the same thing continuously and there is only one thought without break, that process of intensified, prolonged concentration is called meditation. When your meditating consciousness merges into the object, it is called samadhi.

Student: Does our life consist of different relationships of names and forms?

Swamiji: Correct.

Student: So relationships are not real, but nature is the real friend because nature constitutes the *panchabhuta*, and our body also constitutes the *panchabhuta*?

Swamiji: Actually, nature by itself has no name and form. You see, you are there as a person. If the body as a whole can be attributed with a consciousness of its own, it will not think that there are fingers, hands, legs, and so on. It will only see that it is existing. You are giving names—finger, hand, etc.—for your convenience. Likewise, nature itself may not be conscious of people, trees, leaves, etc. It only knows 'I am'. That is the difference. So name and form exist for us, but it does not exist for nature by itself.

Thank you very much. God bless you.

Chapter 16

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION 2

Swamiji: Have you any more questions?

Student: Who will realise God?

Swamiji: Yourself.

Student: What is that 'yourself'?

Swamiji: 'Yourself' is that who puts the question. Who put the question? Ramana Maharishi had one stock answer for all questions. He was not like me. I speak so much, but he would not speak. If any question was asked, he would say, "Who is questioning? You find out." Then that man would keep quiet, and go away. That which says or feels 'I am existing', that which is convinced that it is existing, that which has no doubt that it is existing, and is conscious that it is existing—that will realise God. This is a subtle answer to your question. Your body will not reach God. Your mind will not reach God. But that within you which says that it is, that which feels 'I am'—that will reach God. The Existence in you will reach God because God is pure Existence, and the Existence in you can reach the Existence that is everywhere. It is a union of Existence with Existence, Sat with Sat. The Existence in you—or rather, that you *are*—will reach Existence that *is*. Existence merges into Existence.

Student: What is the subtle connection between the senses and the presiding deities?

Swamiji: The connection between the sense organ and the presiding deity of the sense organ is like the connection between an electric bulb and the electricity that is passing through it. If the electricity does not pass through the bulb, it will not shine. The bulb has no

meaning; it is like a dead corpse. When it is said that the bulb is shining, who is shining, actually? That which is really shining is the deity, but the medium through which it is shining is the sense organ, which is like the bulb outside.

The eyeballs do not see; the seer, or that which sees, is inside the eyeballs and the other sense organs. The intelligence that is seeing or hearing, etc., is the deity, but the instrument through which it is seeing, hearing, etc., is the sense organ.

Student: Through meditation, *japa* and asanas, we are trying to get back to our true selves. And in trying to get back, aren't we going away from ourselves? Aren't we making ourselves more complicated?

Swamiji: You are not going away from yourself. You are going away from that which is not yourself. All that you see with your eyes is not yourself, but that which sees is the Self. You are seeing something, and that which is seen is not the Self. But who sees that? That consciousness which sees is the Self. Actually, your effort is to move towards the consciousness that sees, and not towards the object that is seen. When you say 'we', 'I', and so on, who is that 'we' and 'I' that you are referring to? "Are we not complicating ourselves?" you asked. Now, who are these 'ourselves'? It is not your body, it is not your relations, it is not your sense organs. It is that which is in the state of deep sleep, to give an instance.

You were existing in the state of deep sleep, but in what way were you existing? Were you the son of somebody, or a professional, a man or a woman, a rich man or a poor man? What were you at that time? You were none of these things. These great things that you are evaluating so much in the world have no meaning in that state of sleep, and yet you are more happy there

than when you possess the kingdom of the Earth. I have already explained this in an earlier session, that the 'yourself' which is in the state of deep sleep is pure awareness—awareness of pure Existence. You are existing as Consciousness, or there is Consciousness of Existence.

Again we are coming to the definition of Sat-chit. You existed as Sat-chit. And you were very happy; therefore, it is Ananda. So you existed as Sat-chit-ananda. Inasmuch as these words are difficult to understand, I am not using the Sanskrit words too much. It is pure awareness of Being. And, as we analysed this situation earlier, this awareness of Being cannot be only inside the body, because awareness cannot be located in any particular body or spot. This is because if Consciousness, that awareness, is only in one place, there must be somebody to know that it is not in another place, and that who knows that it is not in another place is itself only. To know that it is not in another place, it has to already be there. That means to say, your consciousness is all-pervading. So only in the state of deep sleep do you have an indication of your real nature of all-pervading pure Existence-Consciousness. To reach that state, you are trying your best to withdraw yourself from all entanglements with which you are connected in waking and dreaming.

Student: Is it true that God realised God?

Swamiji: God realised God. Yes, God is a God-realised person. Correct. Is there a difference between you and the person who knows that he is you? That is the same thing. God Himself knows that He is; and anyone who knows that he is, or she is, or it is, or whatever it is, and knows nothing else, you may say that is God Himself. The whole trouble is, there should not be awareness of anything outside. That is the whole difference between

God and man. Man knows that there is something other than himself, whereas God knows that there is nothing outside Him.

Student: What is spiritual life, and how can I have social harmony?

Swamiji: In ordinary language, these *yamas* and *niyamas* are nothing but the art of harmonising social life with spiritual life. But in a higher sense, social life is nothing but your consciousness of there being something outside you. That is all. There is nothing else in society than your consciousness that there is something outside you. Do you understand? Now, how would you like to deal with another thing which is outside you? Tell me. You deal with that thing in such a way that it does not harm you and, also, it does not harm itself. Mutual progress is the criterion of social relationship. Neither should it damage you, nor should it damage itself. So, as an answer to your question, you behave in such a way as the Bhagavadgita mentions. You behave in this world in such a way that you do not shrink from anything, nor will anything shrink from you. People are not afraid of you, and you are not afraid of anybody. This is how the Bhagavadgita answers your question, so I am only repeating what Bhagavan Sri Krishna said.

Student: What is the difference between consciousness and awareness, and what is their relationship?

Swamiji: They are two words which mean the same thing. That which knows that it is, and that which knows that something else is—that is the consciousness, and that is also the awareness. It is only a difference in words, like various words in Roget's Thesaurus. They mean the same thing. Something that knows is the consciousness. You may call it awareness.

Student: All the senses have slightly different vibrations: the mind, the intention, the will. They

become finer and finer, and then the different virtues come. Could you explain this?

Swamiji: The five sense organs are connected with the five elements. We may say that they are grossly connected with earth, water, fire, air and ether, and that they are subtly connected with smell, taste, vision, touch and hearing, and so the last one is the subtlest. If you do not smell, it will not be as serious a trouble to you as if you cannot taste; but if you cannot see, it is still worse than not being able to taste. If you do not have the sensation of touch, it is still worse than not seeing, and if you cannot hear, it looks as if the world does not exist for you. So is the case with the fine arts. Music is the highest of the fine arts because it is connected with sound. Painting is lesser because it is connected with vision. That which you can touch and enjoy is very gross. If you do not touch it, you cannot feel it—such as velvet. Anything that requires direct physical contact in order to be appreciated is a gross form of satisfaction. Where physical contact is not necessary and yet you are happy, that satisfaction is higher. To enjoy a painting, you need not go on touching it. But music is the highest. And people say that higher than music is literature, because that does not require even a sense organ. It requires only thought. So the answer to your question is that it gradually goes higher and higher.

The highest virtue is that attitude where you consider yourself as the same as others, or you consider others as the same as you. It is not merely loving thy neighbour as thyself, but knowing that the neighbour is thyself. That is the highest virtue. Anything connected with that is also a virtue, we may say.

Student: In the Bhagavadgita, God says He has created the universe, and it is very difficult to reach God. So why not make it easier?

Swamiji: Krishna Bhagavan is a very naughty boy. Rama is straightforward, a very plain person; but Krishna is very naughty. Even when he stands, he doesn't stand straight. He puts one leg over the other. Rama does not do that. And if you go to Brindavan, even the streets are all winding. You don't have a straight street in Brindavan. Krishna's teaching is also such a complicated thing. Rama's statements are very clear. He says this or that, but Krishna says like this, like this, like this, and finally catches you like this: "I created." Why did he create a troublesome thing? But he has answered your question. This question arises from an Arjuna in you, and not a Krishna. Arjuna's question it is. These questions arise on account of the vision of creation conditioned by the sense organs. You may ask who created the sense organs. It is a very complicated question. Who created the substance out of which an object is made? That will raise a further question: whether creation took place at all.

You see, there is a large granite stone. It is very hard, heavy, and you can touch it. If you look at the granite stone through a very powerful microscope, you will see only molecules. If you bring a microscope which is still more powerful, you will see atoms. If a still more powerful microscope is used, you will not see even the atoms; there will be gyrating energy, like waves of force. The stone has gone. Now you see the stone with your eyes, and not through a microscope. Are you seeing the stone properly, or is the microscope seeing it properly? Who is seeing it properly? Naturally, the microscope is seeing it properly. Your eyes have a blunt perception.

Why does the microscope not see the stone in the same way as you see it? That is to say, the subtler is the vision, the better is the perception. When your vision becomes very subtle, you will not see this world, and

you will never put a question why God created the world—because God never created the world, in the same way as atoms have not manufactured the stone. Atoms do not say, “Let us become a stone.” They have not become the stone. If that was the case, the microscope would see the stone.

This answer is not supposed to be given to people who are sure that there is some hard stone, etc. The Yoga Vasishtha warns us that if such statements of a transcendental nature are made, which an ordinary student cannot understand, both the student and the Guru will go to hell. So as I do not want to go to hell, I will not answer questions of that kind. [Laughter]

Student: According to Vedanta, we are all one, whereas according to our practical experiences, we look different.

Swamiji: I told you that when you see things through the sense organs, everything is different. When you see through the soul, it is one. It all depends upon what medium you are using for perception. It depends upon the kind of spectacles that you have. If the spectacles are made differently, you will see different kinds of modulations of objects. If it is plain glass, things appear one way. If it is coloured glass, you will see coloured objects. If the glass is broken, you will see things as also broken. Cataract eyes see two moons. Now, are there really two moons, or is there only one moon? But you are seeing two moons. Therefore, seeing does not mean anything substantial, finally. The mistake is in the vision. So just because you see many things, it does not mean they are really there. I have already answered the question. The stone is not there; only the vision must change, that is all.

Student: What was the first desire that caused the cycle of birth and rebirth?

Swamiji: They say the first desire was a curiosity. The curiosity was, "What would it look like if I assume independence and then become Myself rather than everything?" You try to find out what experience will be there if you become independent instead of becoming one with all people. There was a desire to become independent. It was a wrong concept of independence. This is what the Bible story says is the fall of man. The fall is nothing but the desire to be individual rather than the Universal. Somehow that desire arose. Why it arose, nobody can answer, because once you answer that question, you will not see yourself existing here. You will immediately vanish. A tentative answer is that it is a desire to assume an independence and a locality for oneself which arose in universal Consciousness, and as the ocean looks like many waves and ripples, the One Being looks like many people and all the things in the world.

You are happy to be like that. Even now, you are happy. You would not like to be something else. That shows there is a joy even in being independent, outside the Universal Being. Are you not happy? You do not want to die even though you are in this condition. You want to protect this individual personality. Though you say it is not a good thing, you would like to continue it for eternity.

Though independent existence is philosophically not regarded as worthwhile, it is so valuable that not even an insect would like to die. It wants to perpetuate its existence. Even a crawling creature wants to continue that existence for any number of years. That shows the desire of the consciousness to exist, though it may be existing in hell. It is the desire for individual existence that catches hold of you.

Therefore, let there be the desire to become Universal rather than this kind of desire to be independent as a localised being.

Student: What is the meaning of eternal life?

Swamiji: Eternal life means no birth, no death; always you will be the same thing. It is timeless. There is no process of past, present, future.

Student: What is the purpose of trying to raise the kundalini?

Swamiji: The purpose is the same as the purpose of raising the mind to God.

Student: How can we attain one-pointedness of mind?

Swamiji: One-pointedness of mind is possible if you have desire for one thing only. If you desire two things, the mind will swing between two things, like a pendulum. If there is anything which you like wholeheartedly, and you want only that and nothing else, then the mind will certainly concentrate on it entirely. So find out what it is that you want finally, and on that the mind will concentrate. There is no doubt about it. But if you have got many desires, then the mind will go in all directions.

Student: Is it possible to destroy *sanchita* karma by sadhana?

Swamiji: By doing sadhana, all karmas will be destroyed. Sadhana is like a fire which can burn even mountains of straw. A matchstick is so small, and the mountain of straw is so big; but even if the straw mountain is so high, one little matchstick is sufficient to reduce it to ashes. Like that is the power of sadhana, meditation. The thought of God is the most powerful energy anywhere, and nothing can stand before it. To light gunpowder, you don't take much time; to light firewood, you take more time; and if you try to burn

plantain stem, it takes a lot of time. So it depends upon what kind of person you are: plantain stem, firewood or gunpowder. [Laughter]

Student: Swamiji, if it is the psyche that perceives the psyche in the dream world, then is there a second psyche which perceives the dimension of time and space, subject-object?

Swamiji: They are all also in dream. Whatever is in waking, you will find in dream—but in a psychological sense, not in a physical sense. The difference is only the content. The content is psychological in dream and physical in waking, but the structure is the same. There is no difference.

Student: What is the root cause of sensual pleasures?

Swamiji: The root cause is the separation of yourself from the universal Bliss; and the senses are nothing but certain instruments manufactured by the fallen consciousness so that it may rule in hell, rather than serve in heaven. I am only quoting a poet.

There is nothing wrong with being social with people. Spirituality does not mean behaving in an odd way. Spirituality is nothing but what you are thinking in the mind. I can speak to you, I can serve you, I can do anything like anybody else, but you don't know what I am thinking. My thought is my spirituality. God respects what you feel and think, and not what you do with your fingers. You can do whatever you like.

A spiritual man is not an odd, peculiar person. It is not like that. He is the most sensible and normal of people. As you go higher and higher in spirituality, you cannot even know that the person is spiritual. He will look like anybody else. Only persons who are half-baked put on airs and appear to be spiritual; they wear a mala, and so on. But the more you are advanced, the less will you appear to be spiritual. That is the peculiar

contradiction. Only in the beginning stages will you put on airs. So don't put on anything. Be normal. Where your mind is, that is your spirituality.

Student: Swamiji, what is the meaning of the *turiya* state?

Swamiji: *Turiya* is a consciousness which is beyond waking, dreaming and sleeping. In waking, of course, there is a distracted perception. In dream, there is also the same kind of trouble. I told you that, in sleep, you are existing as pure Consciousness. That is true. Yet, there is a trouble there. It is covered with a thick cloud of past karmas, and you must also transcend that state.

By inference we come to the conclusion that in sleep there is Consciousness and Existence, but it is not direct experience. Direct experience is nil in deep sleep. You are completely ignorant of all things. That condition of ignorance should also be transcended, and then Existence, Bliss, or Consciousness—which is now merely a conclusion that you draw by inference—will become direct experience. That state of direct experience of Universality is *turiya*, beyond waking, dream and sleep.

Student: How can we attain it?

Swamiji: By meditation only—deep meditation on that, and thinking nothing else.

God bless you!