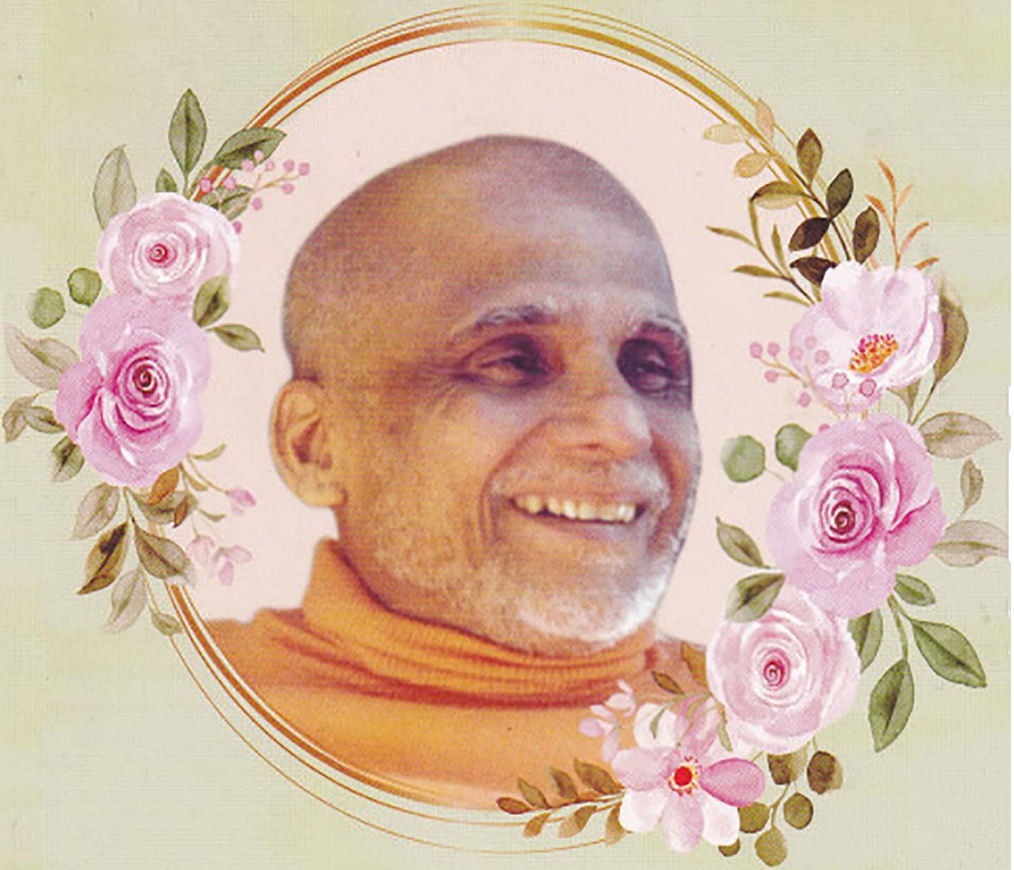
TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA



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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

The present publication is significantly titled as 'TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE,' since the main undercurrent of the message in these seven lectures is an emphasis on the need to search for one's True Self through an acute analysis of the variety of psychological involvements in which the essential Selfhood of Being seems to be enmeshed. These discourses were delivered extempore during the seven-day annual function at the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society subsequent to the Sri Guru-Purnima celebration in the year 1993. It is hoped that this veritable treatise will ever remain as a handbook of guidance to lovers of Truth.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
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12th November, 1993.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTORY

This is a period of seven days known as Sadhana Week, which this *ashram* has been observing every year during the occasion of holy Sri Guru Purnima and the sacred *Punyatithi Aradhana* of worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. In this seven-day Sadhana Week we devote our time to mustering our forces and focus our attention on what is generally regarded as *sadhana*, or spiritual practice.

Everyone has some idea of what spirituality is, and a God-fearing life is. When we start doing something in this direction, we feel the necessity to understand at the very outset what are the circumstances under which we have to take even the first step itself.

The initial step is also an indicator of the general process of the entire endeavour. The initial step itself will suggest the direction which we are taking in our effort, whatever be the nature of that effort. That is to say, we will not be able to take even the first step correctly unless the methodology or technology of the practice is clear before our mental vision.

On a careful analysis of our own selves dispassionately carried on during our leisure hours, we would notice that every living being is engaged in a twofold activity every day. One type of activity is the pouring of ourselves on the world outside, which we perceive as an external object, concerning ourselves entirely with what we see with our eyes, being busy with the things of life in general. The extent to which we pour ourselves upon the conditions of

the external world depends upon the intensity of the pressure exerted upon us by the world itself.

Sometimes the world does not seem to be bothering much about us; then our concept also is equally diminished in its intensity. For instance, there are mountains and trees in front of us; there is a river that is flowing and the sun that shines in the sky. These are also part of the world of perception. Normally we do not think that they are trouble-makers. We do not have to pay excessive attention to the mountain that is in front of us or the river that flows, or the sun that shines, etc., but there are things which draw our attention immediately and are our concern. Most of these aspects of concern are connected with our relationship with human beings like us.

There are animals and sub-human creatures in the forest who can become more dangerous in their behaviour towards us than human beings; nevertheless, we are least bothered about their existence. There are people in Junagadh, Gujarat, where lions are living. How many people there are afraid of these lions, though lions are there in the forest in the vicinity itself? They are concerned with human beings only (their next-door neighbour, the owner of the property, etc.) but not the tiger or the lion which is also nearby.

Our concern is proportionately divided on account of our involvement in the circumstances prevailing outside in the world. The nature of the involvement also is the extent of our concern and to that extent also is the proportion in which we pour ourselves outside in the world. This is a brief statement of the nature of our externalised activities

known as *pravritti*—an outward moving of our mind, our consciousness, our own selves.

When I am busy with something in the world, I have transferred myself from the location of my personality (physical and psychological) to an externalised location which is my concern in that particular locality of the world. *Pravritti* is the externalised outward-moving activity of the human personality, but we are not doing only this much. Whatever be the intensity of our longing to be concerned with the world of objects and persons outwardly, we are also aware that we have to guard ourselves and our personalities to be secure in every way.

There is an inwardised activity also taking place—sometimes consciously, sometimes subconsciously. When I am intensely busy with doing something in the world, it may be that I have temporarily forgotten my very existence as a human being and I have poured myself on an externalised circumstance, but subconsciously I have not denied my existence.

There is another kind of activity taking place which is inwardised, known as *nivritti*—a withdrawal of externalised concern in the direction of a concern for what one regards as oneself.

We are doubly conscious every moment of time in our engagements during the period of our entire lives. Every one of us is conscious of oneself as a very important item in life, notwithstanding the fact that one is simultaneously conscious of the world also outside. This is the *pravritti lakshana* on one side and the *nivritti lakshana* on the other side of human activity, endeavour and involvement.

Why does this activity take place at all? Unless we know something about our own selves and the world in which we are placed, which we are perceiving with our sense organs—unless our understanding of this entire situation is adequately clear, we cannot take even the first step in the right direction.

It is like the march of an army in the battlefield, which is intensely active at a given moment of time. The soldiers are alert for an immediate march forward. What is forward—in what direction? The forward march is also doubly motivated in the sense that it is, on the one hand, directed towards the safeguard of one's own self (the soldiers do not go to the war to die there—they go to win victory and come back safe); on the other hand, they have a concern over the necessity to put a check upon the opposing forces. They have to assess their strength; they have to assess the strength of the other side also. What is the energy, strength and the capacity of the opposing forces? Without knowing that, nobody will march forward; and at the same time, what is 'my' strength in facing this force? If everything is clear (I know my strength and their strength also), I can take an initiative in the needed direction and march in the required manner.

Sometimes the marching is held in check. The General of the army may order to stop, though they are in the thick of the field; for some reason the order will come in that way, "Attention! Hold on!" Or, sometimes, it may be an order to take a step backward: "Retreat!" That retreat order is not an order towards withdrawal from the battlefield but one necessary step in the direction of an onward march.

Even if you are descending a hill when you are going towards holy Badrinath, that descent also is a part of an onward march towards the holy shrine. We are not always going up towards the peak of the Himalayas when we move towards sacred Badrinath. There can be a coming down and a going up in the process of movement.

In a similar manner is this dual activity of the human personality taking care of itself and minding its security on the one hand being cautious about the world outside on the other hand. This dual activity is not actually a two-sided activity; it is a single concentration of a total situation which appears to be twofold. If two hands lift a heavy object, two people are not actually working there. It is one person who is lifting the entire object because the two hands are two forces applied by a single individual, though the method employed seems to be with two hands.

The True Agent of All Actions

This personality, the so-called individuality, and the world in which this individuality is located are two arms, as it were, of a single operation taking place, conducted by some power whose knowledge is essential at the very outset and whose cooperation is to be summoned every moment of time.

To come to the analogy of the military march, the army receives instructions and obtains help and guidance from the Central Government at every moment during the march. The army is concerned with its own security and it is also concerned with putting a check upon the opposing forces. Two sides seem to be operating at the same time in the mind of the army, the soldiers and the General; but a

third thing is there transcending both these operations, which is support from the Central Government.

Some such thing is happening in our daily life even in the least kind of activity: There is a central operation taking place, while I am speaking to you just now. I am here on the one side and you are on the other side. I am designated as the subjective side and you are called the objective side. I am the operator and you are the field of operation but in the analogy of the centrality of operation involved in all activity, we have to be cautious in knowing that there is something which we miss in our perception, namely the reason behind the very capacity in us to do anything at all.

The gods and the demons were engaged in a big battle, says the Kenopanishad. When victory was won, the victorious party celebrated the victory under the leadership of the king of the gods. The General of the army said, "See my strength! I have uprooted the opposing forces. I have won victory." Even the soldiers felt a pride that they have done the work: "See our strength!" The gods who had won victory felt that they had done very well. They had forgotten (and anyone can forget) that a finger cannot be lifted by anyone unless the whole body operates.

That *Something* which felt ignored, which was insulted in this victorious celebration of the gods, felt the necessity to teach a lesson to these gods. "You think you have won the victory?" the Central Government says. "You don't think that we are existing at all. The General thinks that he is everything, as if we have done nothing for him. OK, let us see to it."

This *Something*, which missed the attention of the gods and caused pride in themselves that they had won victory,

appeared in heaven in the form of a mysterious object and sat on a tree—a very terrifying figure looking neither like a divine being, nor human, nor demon, nor like an ogre. Some of the gods beheld it and were surprised and were curious to know what it was. They went and told Indra, the ruler, that something was there in their region, sitting and gazing at them with frightful eyes. Indra sent the god *Agni* to find out what it was.

The great god *Agni* who can reduce the world to ashes in an instant looked at that 'Being'; that 'Being' asked, "Who are you?"

"I am *Agni*," he said.

"*Agni!* You are a god. What can you do?"

"I can burn everything to ashes."

The 'Being' placed a piece of straw and said, "Burn it."

It was a great insult to the mighty fire to be told to burn a straw! *Agni* felt insulted and immediately rushed, but the straw would not move. Three times he rushed with all his force but the straw would not burn. He went back and told Indra that he could not understand anything. "You should send somebody else," said *Agni*. He did not say that he was defeated, but just to send another one.

Then Indra told *Vayu* to go and see. *Vayu* immediately went there and, again, the 'Being' asked, "Who are you?"

"I am *Vayu*. I can blow the whole earth." The 'Being' told *Vayu* to blow the little piece of straw. *Vayu* felt insulted and rushed but the straw would not move. So the story goes interestingly.

The illustration behind this is that pride is the fall of man. The consciousness of selfhood is the greatest bane of life—the thought that 'you' have done something. Who is

doing meditation? On what are you doing meditation? What is the object of your meditation? What are you thinking in your mind?

The Inner Personality

The whole of spiritual practice, the entirety of *sadhana*, finally, boils down to a centralisation of our forces in the direction of the object of the practice known as Yoga. The word *yoga* which is the highlight of spiritual practice suggests a coming together into a blending of forces of two sides—union of something with something. But in this practice of yoga, what is it that is uniting itself with what?

Yoga students feel that they have to unite themselves with something in this practice. What kind of 'you' is getting united with what kind of 'object'?

Firstly, you take into consideration your own self. Who is this 'you' that wishes to be united with something that is regarded as the 'object' of meditation? A great confusion follows in answering this simple question as to who is this that is wanting to practise meditation. This son, this daughter, this husband, this wife, boss, subordinate, rich man, poor man, this that I am—is this person going to meditate on something? Put a question to your own self.

You are all different types of people coming from various parts of this country. What kind of people are you? When you put a question to your own selves, you will be flabbergasted at your own incapacity to answer this simple question as to what kind of person you are.

In the presence of all people, you may not be able to say anything about yourself due to some etiquette of society. Go inside your own room and lock the door. Let nobody be

there and put a question as to what kind of person you are. Let the minister put a question to himself: "What kind of person am I?" The minister will feel miserable to find that he seems to be something different inside from what people think he is.

My real problem seems to be 'myself' only. What kind of person am I? Ask such questions to yourself every day: Am I a very important person in this world? What is my importance?

You will receive no satisfying answer: Your importance is something foisted upon you by your wealth, relations, office, etc. Minus all this, what is your importance?

Then what are you? Are you something, or are you nothing? To get a direct answer to this question you have to undergo a deep study of your own self, which is known as self-analysis. In the psychology of the study of human nature, it has been discovered that we have layers of personality within. We are many things in ourselves, not simply one solid compact mass like a rock. We are not a stone or a brick; we are like an onion, as it were, with many peels, one over the other, one inside the other, sometimes called the *koshas* in Sanskrit.

We seem to be a physical personality but our values, the worthwhileness of ours, do not seem to be confined only to the physical body. Your significance in life is not the significance of your physical vesture. Your importance, whatever it be, is not the importance attached to the body, because your body is made up of the same substance as the substance of any other person. A rich man's body is not made of gold and diamonds, and a poor man's body made of mud. You are the same mud as anybody else, even if you

are a very special person. Your worth is not the physical body's worth.

There are so many things inside: your feelings, thoughts, understanding, education, health, and what you really seem to be in the in-depth root of your personality. For instance, some mystery is revealed when you are fast asleep. All your wealth, relationships, physical strength, even the mind, cease to operate in deep sleep.

What is your worth, and what are you actually when you are fast asleep? You seem to be annihilated completely out of existence, and assuming an importance when you wake up into the physical personality, subsequently. Has anybody thought over this intricacy of one's own involvement in the structure of one's personality? Are we the body, the mind, the intellect, or are we something else? None of these seem to be what we are.

Do you believe that you were existing in the state of deep sleep? Of course; but were you existing as the body, the mind, or as an intellect arguing? In what sense were you existing? How do you know that you were existing at all? Have you any proof? People want proof for everything. Scientific-minded people argue on the basis of evidence and verifiable proof. What is the proof that you existed in the state of deep sleep? Who is to prove your existence?

This analysis is not available in ordinary psychological parlance. You will know this only through an analysis conducted through Yoga psychology. Suffice it to say that there is an intricacy involved in the knowledge of our own selves. We need not go further into this difficulty for the time being. We shall take up this subject subsequently.

On the other side, there is the world of objects, people, etc. What is your relationship with this world? Is the world clinging to your skin? Does it belong to you? Or, are you totally unrelated to the world? Many a time you may feel that you have some relationship with it, due to which fact you are compelled to engage yourself in activity in this world. What kind of relationship is obtaining between you and the world?

The concept of relation is the knotty point in all philosophical investigation and any kind of deep deliberation. Nobody can understand correctly the relationship of one thing with another thing. It is something like trying to know the relation between what you call the cause of a thing and the effect that follows from that cause. You cannot know whether the effect is inside the cause or outside it. If it is inside, it cannot be visible outside; if it is outside, it cannot have any kind of intrinsic relation with the cause.

Now, in a similar manner, we cannot say properly whether we are 'in' the world or the world is 'outside' us. Is the world outside you, or are you inside the world? This again is a problem before us. In the same way as it was so difficult to know what we are made of, we seem to be facing another kind of difficulty in knowing where we are actually located in this world. Are we inside the world or outside the world? We cannot answer this question easily.

For some time, due to certain pressures exerted upon us, we may feel that the world is totally outside and we can go for a walk on the road without being affected by the world. The world does not give any trouble to us. We can just go as if we are independent and the world is there,

away from us. The road on which we are walking does not cling to us or seem to have any connection with us organically. In that sense, the world is outside us, but is it wholly outside, or are we included in the world?

When you analyse this situation from another angle of vision, it would look that you are a part of the world. You are a part of your family, this country, a part of this international setup of humanity; don't you think like that? You are involved as a citizen of the world which cannot be regarded as totally segregated from you. But this kind of involvement, which is very much there, is not visible to the eyes.

Sensory observation cannot bring you this knowledge. Scientific observation and experiment in a laboratory is not the way by which you can know either your structure or the structure of the world. You cannot know anything about yourself by observing yourself through a telescope or a microscope or any kind of instrument available; nor can you know what an atom is made of, because it eludes the grasp of your senses; you cannot know whether it is an 'object' of your perception or whether it is something connected with your 'process of perception' itself.

The process of perception of anything in the world brings us face to face with this mysterious *Something* which seems to be operating between us and the world—this great mystery which felled the gods and made them feel utterly humiliated that *their strength was not their strength. Our perception also is not actually our perception.*

A total analysis of this kind is available to us at the very beginning of the eighth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita:

aksharam brahma paramam svabhavo'dhyatmamuchyate;
bhutabhavodbhavakaro visargah karmasamjnitah.
adhibhutam ksharo bhavah purushashcha adhidaivatam;
adhiyajno'hameva atra dehe dehabhritam vara.

You read these verses in the Gita. It is a brief statement in two verses of the entire structure of the cosmos, including me, yourself, and also including that mysterious thing which operates between myself and yourself. There is a finally responsible thing over and above all things in this world which is what they call the 'Ultimate Reality'. In religion we call it God, philosophers call it the Absolute. This is what is designated in this verse of the Bhagavad Gita as *Aksharam brahma paramam*—the Imperishable Being. *Svabhavo'dhyatmamuchyate*: the self-consciousness that you are, the consciousness of personality, is the individuality. *Bhutabhavodbhavakaro visargah karmasamjnitah.* How did this individuality emanate? The process of the emanation of all beings right from the time of creation is the *karma*, so-called. Here *karma* is not to be understood in the sense of an ordinary work of cooking food in the kitchen, etc., but the cosmic activity which is responsible for the emanation of the whole world. *Adhibhutam ksharo bhavah:* All that is regarded as external to the perceiving individual is the perishable. Everything moves, all things are in a state of flux, and nothing is permanent in this world. Such is the nature of this physical world: *purushashcha adhidaivatam.* There is a presiding divinity over and above the very act of perception. *Adhiyajno'hameva atra:* the whole activity of the cosmos, the entire work of creation, every type of activity anywhere, from top to bottom, is presided over by some principle—

without which, a leaf will not move in the tree, a finger cannot be lifted.

There are one or two other relationships which are not mentioned in this verse. For instance, there is the consciousness of righteousness. Just as we have the *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva*, there is *adhidharma*, which word does not occur in this verse of the Gita. *Adhidharma* is that presiding principle of righteousness which makes you feel that you must do the right thing and be in a state of harmony with all things.

Who tells you that you should do the right thing? Does the world tell you this, or you yourself are saying that? In fact, neither are you saying so, nor anything in the world does say so. *Something* tells you that you must do the right thing. There is another consciousness altogether which is the presiding principle over the imperative commandment known as virtue, morality, righteousness.

I may add one more principle which is not mentioned in this description of the principles in the verses of the Bhagavad Gita: *adhimoksha*. The *moksha* principle superintends over everything. The liberation of the soul is the conditioning factor behind every activity. Whether inwardly done, openly done, consciously or unconsciously done, every activity of every creature (living, non-living, known, unknown), all these are determined by the need for liberation of the spirit. Everybody asks for ultimate freedom, from the ant to the galaxies. So, add one more word: *adhimoksha*, the law of final liberation.

Such is the structure of the cosmos. In this structure, situated as you are, how would you practise *sadhana*, meditation? Answer the question: Who is meditating? On

what subject? What is the object of your meditation, and who is the person meditating? Be clear about that, and then take the first step.

Chapter II

THE CONDITIONING OF PERSONALITY

Our brief deliberations yesterday amounted to a necessity to know what exactly we are, and what it is that we are looking for, or wanting to contact, or attain. It was noticed that neither of these attempts on our part is an easy affair. When we tried to know what exactly is the stuff out of which we are made, we stumbled upon some inscrutable situation which was not a clear answer to our question.

Similar is the case with our endeavour to know what stuff constitutes this world of objects; what is our relationship with this world? We found that there is a difficulty on either side. We have, right from the beginning of our life, from our babyhood onwards, developed a kind of outlook of life with varieties of conditioning factors behind but we are not aware that our mind is thus conditioned. It is so because the very effort to know whether we are conditioned or not is again conditioned by that series of factors with which we are born when we came out of the mother's womb.

Even to know what has happened to us, and what our position here is, has become a difficult affair because we have come to this world with a background which influences us to such an extent that we can think only in terms of that background.

Something about our previous lives is known to everyone. We have been in the process of various linkages of births and deaths. This is not the first birth of ours; it is probably also not going to be the last. We are in the

position of a link in a long chain of the developmental process of universal evolution.

In every birth that we take, we begin to operate in terms of a mind which thinks in terms of what it can behold through the sense organs. What does it behold? It sees only objects—varieties and varieties, an endless series of things, persons, objects, colours, sounds, and whatnot.

Whenever a form is presented before the mind in the process of sensory perception, it receives an impression of that object, as a film inserted in a camera receives the impression of the object that is placed before it. If you go on presenting the same object several times before this photographic film of the mind, or present several other objects continuously at different times of life, a series of impressions will be laid one over the other on the canvas of the mind. The mind will look like a coloured glass or a tainted medium and its operations will be through this cloud which has grown over it as fungus grows on walls during the rainy season.

When we think at this moment, and look at the world of persons and things through the sense organs, what exactly is it that we are seeing—only that structure, form and behaviour permitted by the layer of this cloud of impressions formed upon the mind by continuous presentation of object forms throughout the various incarnations through which we have passed. We are not seeing things as they really are.

If you put on a coloured glass and look at things, you will see objects coloured, having the same hue as is the tint of the glass. If the glass is convex or concave, you will see how the object will be presented before your eyes; or you

have a broken lens, tattered in many places. If through the broken edges of the glass you see objects or persons outside, what will you see? Such is the situation in which we seem to be placed today.

When you sit for Yoga practice and meditation on whatever be your aim, who is going to think? This kind of mind, which is already born with prejudices of various types and can think like a human being only. An animal will think like an animal. A frog will think like a frog, an ant will think like an ant. Now, who is actually conducting this meditation? Is it a man or a woman, or an ant, or an elephant? Who is actually doing Yoga meditation? Who is reaching God? Is it man reaching God, or animal reaching God? Who is going towards God?

Even as human beings, we do not think as human beings ought to think. Though we appear to be human beings for all practical purposes, we seem to have also characteristics which cannot be equated with a real human being. This is so because we have passed through lower stages of evolution whose impressions also are there in the mind, which we are carrying today.

We can sleep like a rock and be not conscious of anything because we were once upon a time in the inanimate condition of evolution, which we call the lowest earth condition. We breathe and have hunger and thirst, as you can see it operating in the plant kingdom. We have qualities of a beast which can be brought out into the surface of our mind when we feel that it is called for. Do we always behave like human beings?

The individual *homo sapiens*, the man, the woman, is not a real human being. There is a mixture of various

conditions of the lower levels, also. One can be a hundred percent *tamasika* like a rock when one is unconscious, or is asleep. One can be just hungry and thirsty, wanting food and drink and nothing else as a vegetable, or plant. One can roar like a lion, show one's teeth like a tiger, bite like a snake or sting like a scorpion. All these qualities human beings have.

Such people that we are, are trying to face God Almighty in our meditational process. Is it a wonder that the mind cannot concentrate? What will it concentrate on in the muddle and dustbin that the mind is, filled with all the rubbish of previous incarnations and prejudices that have gone to the very bloodstream of the personality? These do not stand outside us; they have become ourselves.

A conditioning factor is something which is to be understood. What do you actually mean by a conditioning factor? It is not sitting outside you, pressing you down as someone external to you. It is yourself, the stuff out of which you are made. You, yourself, are a bundle of the conditions. You are not a solid person but a series of layers of structure. While we seem to be ourselves, we are really not ourselves. We are really many things inside. Anything can be brought out of us by operating upon us in a given condition. I can make you happy or unhappy, laugh or weep or rise up in rage in one second by operating upon your sentiments in a particular manner. Then what are you by yourself? Are you a revengeful animal, which characteristic can manifest itself in you in one second if conditions favourable to this manifestation are made available? Or are you like a vegetable, feeling hungry and thirsty, wanting food and drink only? Or, you are tired and

go to sleep. Or, you are so egoistic and self-conscious that you regard every other person in the world as secondary, a number two, and you are number one. You may say that others are equally important as yourself. Theoretically, for the purpose of social concordance, you may accept this position. When things go bad, you will protect yourself and let the world go to dogs. As things are not so bad, even today, we think of other people, other things, protecting animals, and things like ecological considerations. When you are drowning in water, you do not know who is drowning. The self will writhe for what it is worth.

What is an Object?

What about the object? We are under the impression that an object is in one place only. This little supporting wooden pillar is here and it cannot be elsewhere. You are sitting in one place and you are not sitting in another place at the same time. Everything is in one place only and it cannot be in another place. This is our idea of a particular object: The object cannot be in two places at a time; also, it can be somewhere at some time and it cannot be necessarily in one place at all times.

Also, we have some idea of the connection of one thing with another thing as is taught to us by our study of astronomy, physics, psychology, etc. The locality spatially, the condition temporally, and the relation by way of cause and effect connection are all inbred notions in our mind. We look at everything, any person, with this background of conditioning: My father is like this and he cannot be anything else.

The father, mother, husband, wife, brother, sister, also have taken many births. This particular location, this form, this shape of this personality whom you consider your relative is also one link in a long chain of the developmental process through which they have passed. They have an infinite series of connections behind and an infinite series in the future also, so that you cannot know who it is that you are actually seeing with your eyes.

Something is pressing forward from behind as the past; another thing is pulling from the front as the future. That which you are going to be in the future also conditions what you are now, apart from the pressure exerted upon you by what you were in the past. What you are now is a mysterious organisation of a presentation—a picture, contour, form, which has been created before you by a pressure from one side and a pull from another side. It is something like one person pushing you from the back with great force, and another person pulling you from the front with an equal force. You do not know what exactly your position is at that time. It is said that every object in this world is a pressure point, rather than a solid something.

This definition of the object applies to us also as so-called subjects. When you look at me, I am in the position of an object of your perception; when I look at you, you are in the position of an object of my perception. You are the subject when you look at me, and I am the subject when I look at you, so both of us are subject as well as object, from two different standpoints. And you know well how a subject knows itself to be, as distinguished from the object. My consideration about myself differs from my consideration of you; the consciousness which is in me as

the subjectivity distinguishes itself from you as an object outside. And you cannot look at me and consider me in the same way as you are considering yourself. Though many a time we have a mutual coordination among ourselves, and under special circumstances we try to give up this subjectivist attitude or the objectivist outlook, and mutually, like partners in a business or friends who never get separated, do act; yet this coming together of two people in friendship or collaboration is like two broken glasses getting joined together by a glue. There is here an artificial conjoining of differences.

The whole point is that this individuality is a big illusion before us. Inasmuch as every object, every person, every thing is a location at a particular point in space created by a pressure exerted by an infinite past of impressions of previous lives and an infinite future that is summoning from the front, things are not in one place only. They are everywhere. Since things have connection with the infinite past and connection also with the infinite future, we cannot say to which place we belong. We do not seem to be belonging even to this particular form of creation. There have been infinite types of creation, through which process we have passed so that we belong to all the realms of being at once. To all the seven planes above, seven planes below, as the *Purana* scriptures say—to all these we belong at the same time. Then, where are we sitting at this moment? We are sitting everywhere!

The Metaphysical Psychology of Yoga

To decondition ourselves from all clogging involvements is the first step in Yoga practice. Unless we

know what we are and what the world is about, how will we live in this world? We commit blunders everywhere because of not knowing what we really are and what other people also are.

In the Yoga System of the study of mind, a deep analysis has been made. The types of impressions created by objects of perception on the mind are also of different hues. It is not the same kind of cloud that is sitting on the mind, one over the other. There are different kinds of impressions. At least two types can be distinguished, about which also we have little knowledge. I mentioned to you that impressions constitute mental processes so that we are not thinking except through these clouds of pressures impressed upon the mind. What are these impressions? There are two types. Yoga psychology designates these as pain-giving and non-pain-giving. Certain impressions in our mind give trouble and sorrow, create anguish, disturbance, mental tension, emotional turmoil. There are certain other impressions which prevent us from knowing a thing as it is, but do not actually cause pain, consciously.

When you look at a tree in the forest, an impression of the tree is formed on your mind, but you are not in any way agitated by looking at the tree. You are not disturbed by looking at a mountain, or a river flowing. "Let them be there," because you are not concerned with them. Impressions created by objects with which you do not have an actual or direct concern at the present moment are known as *aklishta-vrittis* in the language of yoga psychology. A *vritti* is a psychosis, a way in which the mind operates. It is *aklishta*—it does not create *klesha* in the mind.

The non-painful impressions are capable of creating conditions for rebirth, whereas the painful ones may be producing suffering for the time being. We do not bother about looking at the world as it is, but we worry very much about anything else which is pricking us like a needle from moment to moment. The *aklishta-vrittis* arise due to the externally oriented structure of the perceptional faculties.

When we love or hate a thing through a process called *raga* and *dvesha,* wrongly considering that the particular object is of this kind or that kind, we create a painful impression in our mind because we are here wrongly assessing the object when involved in love or hate. Objects are not so nice that they require our affection; they are also not so bad that they deserve our hatred, or rejection. Neither are things beautiful that we should go on looking at them, nor are they ugly that we should turn away from them. Both these ideas in our mind about things are erroneous psychological gestures. These *vrittis* are *klishta*, causing *klesha*, pain.

Inasmuch as our notion about a thing is ultimately wrong, our loves and hatreds also are prejudices, irrational, which cannot be justified in the end. As unjustifiable impressions are created in the mind through wrong notions, we look at things in two different ways, wanting to grab and also reject a thing at the same time. Every perception or thought of ours in regard to an object is a double activity of the mind wanting to acquire and reject.

We have an audience just now which is a concentrated presentation before us into which we would not like anything else to intrude. You would not like a cow just to run in and disturb everyone. We do not like a dog to howl

just now in front of us here. You all would reject that possibility and welcome only that condition which is conducive to the presentation of the audience. You are not thinking of a dog or a cow just now, but subconsciously the potentiality is there. You do not wish something of that kind to take place. That you are not consciously thinking of that which is to be rejected, does not mean that its potential seed is not present in the mind. The possibility of a rejection is already in the subconscious and unconscious levels together with a conscious engagement in a cordial situation. The conscious mind is not the whole mind. What you are thinking just now through the conscious level is not what you are capable of thinking the whole day or throughout your life. Tomorrow you can think in another way when the present conscious operation ceases and subconscious impressions come up later on into operation. Love and hatred are the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

What, then, are you going to grab and reject in your meditational practice? Though during the initial stages of meditation certain things are supposed to be set aside and not allowed to enter into the mental process, afterwards they also have to be taken into consideration, since, in the end, everything is connected to everything else.

This object, this rose flower in front of me, is red in colour. The mind has grasped the redness of the object which is the rose by distinguishing the colour which is redness from other colours which also are available in the world but are not present in this particular object. If non-red things are not existing, the red object cannot be seen. Even when you see some particular thing, the very

knowledge and consciousness of the existence of that thing is possible only if there is something else also, other than the object in question. One person cannot be seen unless there are other things different from this person; else, that person will be seen everywhere. The differentiating characteristic of the mind is a subtle activity taking place in us which will trouble us one day or the other because, ultimately, creation is not constituted of double-edged positive and negative forces. There is nothing to be grasped or rejected, loved or disliked, finally. Everything seems to be everywhere because the location, the characteristic, operation of anything is connected with similar processes of every other thing in various ways.

We have to bring to our memory the very same psychology of human nature as a pressure point of influences exerted by an infinite past and an infinite future so that no one exists in the present only. All persons exist in the past, present and future simultaneously. We are now in the present moment of time; that is what we are thinking. But we are in the past and future also, because what we are going to be influences us just now and is summoning us as a future possibility—"Beware, I am coming; receive me in the proper way." The past also is pressing us—"I am also here and you must pay my dues." Where is the present? It has vanished in a second. The present is an illusion, an airy juncture point of past and future.

So also is the case with all objects in the world. The location of an object is only a so-called one of a point which also is a presentation of pressure exerted by its relationships with other things to the right and to the left, above and below, everywhere.

This much of detail about what we are and what the world and objects are is the essence of the reference I made yesterday when I quoted two verses from the eighth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. For your memory, I am repeating what I told you yesterday. Firstly, there is an *aksharam brahma*, the Absolute. There is a descending of this Being in a cosmical fashion, which is the *adhibhuta*, the universe that is presented before our senses. Then the Supreme Being, *brahma*, appears as a divinity presiding over all things: that is *adhidaiva*. The individuality separates itself from the cosmical setup and becomes *adhyatma,* the individual. Then there comes about a necessity for the *adhyatma* to come in contact with the Universal Whole from which it has got separated. That relationship between *adhyatma* and the cosmical *aksharam brahma, adhibhuta, adhidaiva*, is what I designated yesterday as *adhidharma*—the law determining the perception of the world. *Adhidharma* is also the principle of righteousness.

We are supposed to be moral and good in our behaviour, and we have to establish a harmonious relationship as individuals with the Cosmic Whole out of which we have come, from which we have been separated, and with which we have to maintain a proper relationship always. *Dharma*, righteousness, is the manner in which we have to conduct ourselves in relationship to that to which we belong; it may be this world or the whole range of all the planes. Then there is the *adhiyajna*, which is the field of activity, the world through which we are working, in which we are stationed and operating.

There is death of the individual taking place one day or the other. The conditioning factors of finitude call for the

dissolution of the human personality because it is untrue to the Universal Integration of Being, as it maintains an egoistic individuality. This necessity, this dread before every individual living, is *adhimrityu*, the principle of death. But there is a saving factor which also I mentioned: *adhimoksha*, the law of freedom.

The forces of creation, evolution, involution, all these activities (mental, psychological, intellectual, educational, social, industrial, political, etc.), are a virtual groping in the dark, searching for that which one cannot see with the eyes. What is that which we are seeking? Freedom. All things in the world, from the lowest atom to the highest creative process, tend to ultimate freedom and none wishes to be restrained by an external power. Ultimate freedom is called *moksha*.

Whose *moksha*? Who is attaining liberation—the impressions created on the mind, or the objects outside? These names I mentioned just now, *aksharam brahma*, etc., the whole set of these operative principles, have to rise up to *moksha* at once. *Moksha* is not anyone's individual prerogative. Salvation is a universal attainment which passes understanding. When we wake up from dream, the entire phenomenon wakes up. We will never be able to understand how it is that the whole world rises to *moksha* and no finite thing goes. "I find that many people must have attained *moksha* by this time; the world is still continuing and if I attain *moksha*, the same thing will be there, the world will be there, my brothers will be here. They are not going to *moksha* when I go." This feeling is an idiocy in the brain. The mind will not allow one to think correctly. When one attains *moksha*, the whole cosmos rises

up together. We may be wondering how it is possible that the whole cosmos comes up in our *moksha*. Here is the reason.

We are connected to all things; we cannot disconnect ourselves from anything. So when we rise up, the total that we are comes up. Otherwise, if we maintain the prejudice that the world has to be there even after *moksha*, then even if we attain liberation, we would be seeing this world once again from there as an object of perception. When we wake up from dream we are not thinking of our brothers that we saw in the dream—we might have had a family in dream, for instance, but when we woke up, what happened to them? Are we saying now: "Why did I leave everything? My children are all crying in the other world, from where I have come now. I have to take care of them and it is a great trouble. I have woken up leaving below all my property and relations."

The point is that they have entered into the very mind that is thinking in that way. This subtlety is difficult to grasp. The dreaming individual, together with the things that were seen in dream by the individual, got totalled up into the mind that is waking and all the world of dream entered into the waking mind. Likewise, this whole cosmos will be rolled up into the Cosmic Mind which we enter in *moksha*, the universal liberation of consciousness.

Sometimes a stupid idea arises in the mind of people: "What is the good of my going to *moksha* when others are all suffering here? Let me wait until others also go." There are really no such things as 'others'. They are there and are as important as our brothers in the dream process. The whole thing ascends, a single sea of being. For, if the whole

thing cannot go, no one also can go. There is no '*part-moksha*'; it is entire, or it is not there.

Now, inasmuch as this is the situation in which we are placed, and we have taken time to know honestly and dispassionately something about our own selves in a manner different from what we have been thinking about ourselves and the world, we may feel confident we have purged ourselves a little bit of the dross of our wrong thinking and we are on the way to correct thinking.

Neither am I as I appear to be, nor are you as you are appearing. I am something quite different from what I am looking like here before your eyes, and you are also quite different from what you appear to ordinary perception. The world also is quite different from what it looks like. It is a totally different thing, other than what it appears to be before our eyes. The camouflage has to be lifted. The masquerading veil has to be torn asunder and we have to see the object 'as such' in meditation, and not as it appears to the senses and the mind.

The appearance of the object as distinguished from the real object is also a study which we have to make when we take to meditation proper. Meditation on an object is not a meditation on the object as it appears to the sense organs; that would be meditation on an illusion. We have to catch the object in its root, *as it is*. We have to become truly friendly with the object, since we seek union with it. How can I be friendly with you unless I understand you as you really are? If I know you only superficially, my understanding of you also would be superficial and my friendship with you also would be inadequate to that extent.

Chapter III

THE OBJECT OF MEDITATION

The object of meditation is not just one among the many objects of the world; it is rather the 'only' object before us. Only when the object is considered as 'all-in-all', capable of bestowing upon us everything that we need, can it satisfy us fully. A partial truth is no reliable truth. A partial object is not a complete object; a one-fourth human being is not a human being. We do not want 'something' in the world; our basic longing is to have everything. Even if 25 percent of the things in the world are to become our possessions, the 75 percent which has gone out of our control will harass us and cause anguish in our mind: "Why should I not have the other 75 percent also?" If you are the king of the whole earth, you would like to conquer even the skies: "Why should the skies be there without my concern? I shall control even the stars." Such is desire.

The objective, therefore, is not some particular thing—it is everything. Since the chosen object in meditation, somehow, appears to be one among the many possibilities of a similar choice, the mind may hesitate to concentrate even on that object: "Why do you want me to think of this particular thing when I can have other things also which are equally good, perhaps more satisfying? Why should I drudge in an office with a given amount of salary when it is also possible for me to have a higher salary in another office?" The mind will force this question of why this so-called thing is your concern in meditation: "Is there nothing else in the world except this? What do you say?" asks the mind.

Here is the difficulty which is a psychological problem based on a philosophical profundity. It is not possible to concentrate on all things at once. We do not know how many things there are in this world. How will anyone mentally count these objects and bring them all together into a heap so that one may focus one's attention on them? Even if we are able to conceive the total of all the objects in the world, we would be omitting certain things unknowingly. It is impossible for one to be omniscient, and even the total of the world will exclude something which is outside the world.

Then what should be our attitude towards the object of meditation? How are we going to choose the object? There are two answers to this question. Philosophically, scientifically, rationally, anything is as good as anything else in the world. If one can visualise the object in the light of the discussions we had for the last two days, nothing would look unimportant, and nothing more important than the other. It is so because every part of the world is connected integrally to every other part forming a living whole. The little brick which goes to make your house is internally connected in an unknown manner with the stars in the heavens. Only an advanced investigation will be able to appreciate this truth of how a tinsel on earth can be regarded as having a relationship with a luminary in the heavens.

If all things cannot be conceived simultaneously in their internal relations, one can choose as the object what one likes best, loves most, what delights one's heart at the very sight of it. Now, what is it that can delight your heart? Here you will not be able to give an answer to your own self. You

will be finding yourself in a position similar to the fox in Aesop's Fables which knew a hundred tricks to escape from the hounds of a hunter, but when the actual difficulty arose, it did not know which trick to choose as the best, and the hounds fell on it. Such a situation should not arise. Is there anything in your life which will delight your heart wholly, entirely, always? Someone may say: "My only child delights me—the only son which I have got after a lot of *tapasya*, prayer, and blessings from *mahatmas*. I think of it day in and day out, the little child with which God has blessed me. The sight of the child delights my heart. This is my heart's love." But can anyone love anything equally under every circumstance in life?

Kinds of Love

There are five kinds of love, which are described in detail in the *Bhakti Shastras,* scriptures on divine devotion. One kind of love is the love that a parent has for a child. The father or mother clings to the child, especially if the child is a single one, an only son. The parents go on brooding over the little child. Parental affection for children is one kind of love which can be seen everywhere in every family, so forcefully operating. Another kind of love is one's affection for one's parents. You love your father and mother in a manner different from the love you have for the child. Though both are loves, they are manifest in a different way. Your love for the parent is qualitatively and in texture different from your love for a child. Love for the parent involves affection together with respect and adoration, apart from what causes clinging to one's children.

There is a third kind of love which a friend has for the friend. Chums, alter-egos, always sitting together, dining together, speaking, working, going for a walk together, cannot separate themselves. They are thick doubles in every sense of the word. The friend has an inseparable love for the other as friend: the two are equals. The love that one has for one's own equal distinguishes itself from other forms of affection in a marked way. There is a fourth kind of love which a servant has for his master. There are obedient, very reliable servants, even in this world of corruption, who love their master till his death. I have seen one such servant of a judiciary in a high court. Even till the death of that judge years after retirement, that servant was with him, serving him in the same way as earlier. It was not the judge he was loving, he loved the person: "He might have been a judge; now he is a retired somebody. It does not matter. I love him. He is my master, teacher, protector, superior. I love him." The love that one has for one's superior, call him your master or *guru*, is a love which differs from the other types mentioned before.

There is, then, another kind of love which a wife has for the husband and the husband has for the wife. This phenomenon is considered as the apex of all loves. This love is totally different in characteristic, intensity and significance from all the other types of love in a variety of ways.

These are the five *bhavas* or feelings of emotional ardour towards an object, to which we feel attached strongly. The loves cannot leave us until our skin itself goes and the bone breaks. Even if we are to think of the Almighty Lord Himself as our great object of devotion and

love, we will not be able to think of Him in any other manner than in terms of one of these emotions, these feelings.

Wholeness in Concentration

For the last two days we have been analysing the circumstances of life, both subjectively in the case of ourselves, and objectively in the case of the world, through the faculty of understanding. We exercised concentration of reason in trying to find out where we are actually placed in this world. But there is another faculty in us which is the feeling. Sometimes the feeling can overpower the understanding and speak in a language totally different from the language of logic which the understanding employs. Though the understanding tells you that you are of this kind and the world is of that kind and you are not as you are appearing to be on the surface, the world is also quite different from what it appears to be, the feeling will say that things are exactly as it sees them. One can tell a father or a mother that their child is not really their child: It has taken many births; it had many parents and it is passing through many incarnations; they are a caretaker of this child for the time being only and should not be attached to it as if they are the possessor of it; it had many parents in the past and it will have many parents in the future also, so this is not their child. If you say so, the reason of the parent may understand what you say, but the feeling will say, "It is my child only. Do not talk to me in any other style. Whatever you may say through your rationality and your scientific outlook, I do understand well; nevertheless, my feeling says it is my child, I love it as mine own."

Whose is this land? Whose is this house? Are you going to live in this house for all time to come? Tomorrow you may pass away. Why do you cling to this building, land and property as if you are going to be there using it for all time? Tomorrow you may quit this world. "Yes, I understand, but my feeling says it is my house; I shall not leave it. This is my property, I shall enjoy it."

The feeling does not always agree with the understanding. There is a clash in our personality between understanding and feeling, reason and emotion. When we gird up our loins very sincerely and honestly for the purpose of resorting to spiritual meditation, we should see that this conflict between understanding and feeling is not there. We must develop an integrated outlook of things. The object of meditation should satisfy us emotionally through our feeling on the one hand, and on the other hand it should also be known carefully as to what it is made of structurally, threadbare.

When you resort to the object of meditation, you must also know what it is that you are thinking of. Sometimes a sense object may delight you very much and you may say that it is the best object and you would meditate on it. You may ask me, "What is the harm in meditating on a sense object, as you have already told us that the object should satisfy us and I think that my particular object of this particular sense is satisfying me. What is the difficulty? I shall concentrate my mind wholly on this object which satisfies my sense organs."

Yes; in one way you are right. Take to that particular type of concentration because it satisfies you. But I did not say that the quality of the object of meditation is merely one

of satisfying. It should also be the 'only' object you can think of and there is nothing else. Here is a condition which you will not be able to fulfil easily.

Can a person love any object forever, throughout one's life? "I have taken this as my object of affection. Will I go on clinging to it until my death without changing my concentration on that?" No one can make a promise in this manner. For some reason or other, one day you will get disgusted with this so-called affectionate object. Everyone knows what the reason is for such an eventuality. The son can abandon the father; the father can abandon the son. The husband can reject the wife. Anything is possible. Under conditions only do you love things; unconditionally you cannot love anything.

Sensory pleasure is conditioned by various factors but the object of meditation should satisfy you unconditionally, not with an 'if so', 'but', and 'whereas'. Such clauses should not be introduced when you take to concentration on the object of meditation as a wholesome lifelong security and delight. The object of meditation is not only entirely satisfying to the feeling and emotions, but it is also not one which can cause a shifting of your attention to something else. The chosen object is everything, for ever and ever.

Both these conditions are difficult to fulfil. Your dearest friend cannot be your dearest friend for all times. You cannot give a guarantee that you shall be with him always. No relationship is permanent in this world, not even the closest relationship of husband and wife. There are no permanent relations anywhere. Things can separate themselves for any reason. If that is the case, which sense object can you choose for the purpose of meditation? There

is a danger in choosing a sense object as the ideal for meditation because it will compel you to shift your attention to something else afterwards when you get fed up with it due to excessive intimacy, overindulgence and the non-utility of the object after a while. We cannot even eat the same type of meal every day. We would like a variety even in our food. What if every day one eats the same food? One will want a little change. We would like to have another object. People go for different things, because no object can be a 'total' object. But it is necessary for every seeker of truth and student of Yoga to convince himself that the object of meditation is a 'total' object, not just 'one of the objects' in the world. Otherwise, the mind will jump from one thing to another thing. Why should it not, because it knows that there are other things also?

How is it possible to regard one object as *all things?* Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita's eighteenth chapter mentions that there are three kinds of appreciation, three kinds of knowledge or understanding. That perception which makes one cling to one finite thing only as if it is the sole object of love is the worst kind of appreciation. It is the least knowledge that one can have of anything. But there is a higher kind of understanding where one is able to appreciate the relationship of one thing with another thing, organically. It is not that I am sorry only if my child is sick; I will have a concern also if my neighbour's child is ill. I would not like anybody to suffer. It is not that my people alone should not suffer; nobody should suffer, since all are equally human. There is a concatenation of things. Humanity is one mass of concentration. Our concern is not only for our little family, not even for our little state or our

nation. The whole mankind is one family. We are members of the family of all of humanity, the world itself. This is so because everything is connected to everything else in the creational process of God, in the same way as every limb of the body is connected to every other limb of the body.

This knowledge which beholds the interconnection of *all things* among themselves is a higher knowledge, says Sri Krishna, but the highest knowledge is something quite different. It beholds one *Being,* from which one cannot extricate oneself. All are immersed in that Being. All the rivers find themselves in the ocean; they do not stand separately in the sea.

Likewise is the case of the choice of the object of meditation. You love that object as your dear child. There are some devotees who develop what is known as *vatsalya bhava*, the affectionate attitude towards the child transferred as God Himself seen in an image or idol. You may consider God as your child. Transfer yourself to the position of a father of this little child who is Rama or Krishna or Christ. Visibly see them as living bodies. You have a symbol. People embrace pictures, paintings of Krishna or Christ; they kiss the cross which is hanging on their neck: a great delight it is. You can embrace God through a symbol, an idol, a cross, a *murti* made of marble or metal, or a diagram. People worship it, hang it on the neck, hide it secretly and feel immense satisfaction that it is there.

Or you may have a majestic feeling as Bhishma had towards Sri Krishna. Bhishma's love for Krishna was not sentimental or rapturous as the *gopis* had towards him. He loved Krishna as the master of the universe, great force and

power, indomitable energy descended as an incarnation of the Absolute. That is the *bhava* of Bhishma, which is something like considering God as the Supreme Father, who is the Creator of the cosmos. This attitude is called *aishvarya pradhana bhakti*, God loved in His Might and Magnificence and Glory. Ramanuja, Madhva and *acharyas* of that kind advocated a love of God which is known as *aishvarya pradhana bhakti*, devotion emanating by the perception of the magnitude, magnificence, glory, power, and strength of God. "Great Master, all-powerful Thou art! Great Father, Thou art all!"

You can regard God as your beloved of heart, which is usually the most difficult thing to conceive. That is called *madhurya pradhana bhakti*, wherein one melts in the sweetness of love. In *aishvarya pradhana bhakti* one admires the greatness of the Almighty; here one tastes the sweetness, the deliciousness, the beauty, the tenderness of the exquisite presentation. God is honey. There was a saint in southern India who used to jump in joy, calling God by no other name than 'Honey'—"Oh Honey, oh Honey! Oh Honey, bathe me. Oh Honey, come! Ocean of Honey, inundate me, I shall drink You! Oh blissful Honey, come!" When you are virtually mad with the ecstasy of love of God, you will not know what word to use to describe it. "Oh my Beloved, You have come!" Afterwards, your mouth closes, because you do not know what other word you can use in respect of that thing which is simply breaking your heart due to the excess of love. At that time you have no word to speak. You keep quiet in the stillness of bliss.

Romeo sees Juliet and Juliet sees Romeo. The *gopi* sees Krishna and Krishna is dancing in the circle of *rasa.*

Mortals cannot understand what all this is. The joy of *madhura rasa* is the pinnacle of the feeling possible in a human being.

Are you able to conceive your object of meditation in that way: "Oh, my dear Honey, come!" Will you say that, or will you say that it is only a dot on the wall or a pencil, a rose flower, a picture, an idol, a *lingam?* Will you think like that? You may ask: "Why should I love a *lingam* or a *murti* which is made of metal or wood?" If you think like that, then your meditation will bring you nothing worthwhile.

When I have a love for you, do I love your bones, your flesh, or your nose? What am I loving? When I tell you that I am delighted to see you, what am I seeing? I am seeing something inside you, the 'you' which is not a conglomeration of bones and flesh. Thus, also, when you are satisfied and overjoyed at the perception of an object of meditation, you should not look at it as a metal, or a picture or drawing. It is vibrant life.

If you are capable of choosing the object properly, you can pour upon it any kind of feeling. It is your child, master, husband, wife, friend, father. It can be anything whatsoever, provided you are able to adjust your feelings correctly in respect of that object which becomes your all-in-all. The object is a representation of a cosmic force. People say that Krishna is a concentration of the total power of the cosmos. One ray of the sun, properly concentrated through a high power lens, can draw the energy of the sun. That is why this concentrated personality of Krishna could assume a cosmic form.

The object of meditation is a concentrated focus of the entire structure of the universe. To give the same example,

if you touch any part of my body, you have touched my entire body, though it is only a touching of the toe. The toe will communicate the message to the whole body. The little object of meditation is not one object as such. It is a representation of the totality of creation as a whole, because the universe is reflected even in an atom.

As you can reach the ocean through any river, can reach a place through any road, can fly with an aeroplane to any place in any direction, so also can you reach the Universal Whole through any symbol that you employ, because every symbol is a representation of the Total Whole.

All right, intellectually you have understood that every object is as good as every other; scientifically conceived, it represents all the things in the world. The whole creation is concentrated in that object, but can you love it? You have to understand it as the focussing point of the whole universal power and also be capable of loving it. You cannot simply look at it with a scientific eye merely.

There was a lady who was weeping in sorrow. She had some grief; the tears were flowing. The husband was a scientist. He came running and said that he wanted to take a little of her tears because he wanted to see what they consisted of. She said, "I am weeping and you are trying to analyse me scientifically?" Look at that man's attitude on her feelings. He had scant respect for the feelings of the weeping lady; he was concerned only with the components of the tear and wanted to chemically analyse it in the laboratory. He had no heart; he had only brain.

In a similar manner, with all your understanding of the nature of the object of meditation being one concentrated point representing the whole universe, you may not be able

to pour your affection on it: "It is only a *lingam,* a cross, a picture; how can I love it?" It is necessary to accommodate yourself to the need to love it also in the same way as you love anything in the world.

Tantra Sadhana

There is a technique of meditation prescribed in another section of the scripture known as *tantra shastra,* a technology of approaching divinity in a different manner than the way generally known to people. It is not necessary to look at an object in order to concentrate upon it. The need to have a physically visual object in front is the lowest kind of requirement. You can be immensely happy by the very thought of the object, mentally, and generate the same sensations inside, even when the object is not present physically.

What happens to you is that even when you look at an object physically, the sensations that you feel inside are psychological; physically you are getting nothing from the object. The beloved object that is physically in front of the eye does not enter one's body. It is standing outside. The object of affection, even if it is sitting on one's lap, is really outside oneself. It has not entered one's being. How, then, can one feel happy?

The happiness is a reaction set up by the nervous system inside. It is purely internal, to bring about which situation, the object outside acts as an instrument. The object of affection, physically, is just an instrument. It cannot bring satisfaction, really. The satisfaction is in the nervous titillation, mental operation, psychological acceptance.

If this is the case borne in mind, you do not need any physical object in front of you to be happy inside. Even if you want an object of that kind, you can close your eyes and feel its presence and the same situation will be summoned from within. You will burst forth through your nervous system, in your mind, and you will feel the same sensations as you felt apparently by the perception of the physical object, externally.

Later on, even the *thought* of the object will not be necessary. There is a higher kind of concentration, namely, that the substantiality of that object is inseparable from the substantiality of oneself. The happiness that you feel in the presence of a beloved object is due to the *atman* manifesting itself thereby. We are confused in our mind when we feel that an object of sense is giving us satisfaction. What is actually happening is that when you are desiring an object, the mind goes out of the Self. You are out of yourself at the time of your love for anything outside. You have transferred yourself into the object. As you are out of yourself, you are unhappy: you have lost yourself. The identity of yourself has been broken by the separation of your so-called self in transferring it to the object outside. Then you are not in you; you are somewhere else, in that object. You can be even in London, though physically you are sitting in India, by the transference of mind to that object which is there.

The unhappiness of the mind is caused by the separation of the object from the *atman*. When you obtain the object, when the object comes near, the desire diminishes due to the prospect of having it. When it is nearer and nearer, the joy goes on increasing further and

further—"Oh I am getting it!" When it is actually under one's possession, physically, it is immense joy. The mind ceases to go outside itself at that time. It settles in its own root. You plant yourself in yourself due to the feeling of the mind that it need not any more think of the object and it need not go out of itself. That is why you are feeling happiness when the object seems to be under your possession. The happiness has not come from the object, it has come from yourself only!

So, be careful in the choice of your object. This object of your meditation should be satisfying to you in every way, not merely as a titillating medium as a sense object, but as a total blessing that is going to be poured upon you.

Don't you think that you are meditating on the object because it is representing God Himself? Do you consider God as a sense object? He is the All. Everywhere He is legs and feet, everywhere eyes, everywhere *vishvarupa,* the Universal. How will you consider Him as a sense object? That great Being, the cosmic inclusiveness, was concentrated in one person called Krishna, which the *gopis* were chasing. Why were they after this one person? He was capable of manifesting himself as all persons because the concentrated whole was charged with the force of the whole, which attracted their attention. When anybody loves you, they feel for the time being that you are all things; otherwise, nobody can really love. If you are only 'something', the love also will be 'something' only. It cannot be the all-consuming thing that it really is.

When you choose the object of your meditation, be sure that you can persuade yourself to pour your affection on it. Don't be under the impression that you are only concocting

some feeling which is not genuine. You can summon anything if your mind is really concentrated on it. Jnaneshvar Maharaj concentrated on a wall; he just touched it and it started moving. The great Bharadvaja Rishi, who gave a grand reception to Bharata when he went to the forest in search of Rama, summoned the gods in heaven by uttering *mantras* in his *yajnashala* and the divinities started raining down on earth.

Your feeling, your love, your longing for God in the form of the object that you have chosen is not an imagination of your mind. It is a truth that has been manifested before you in the form of this little 'occasion' of the cosmic power. Your heart is meditating, not merely your brain or sense organs. The meditating consciousness is the soul of yourself. If you want the soul of the object to speak to you and delight you, then your soul has to rise up to the occasion and concentrate itself on the soul of the thing looking like an object.

Who is meditating? Your soul is meditating on the soul of the object. When I love you, I love your soul, the greatness, grandeur, beauty of your depth of personality, and not your physical feature. And when I love you, it is not my body that loves you, nor my mind. My whole being, the root itself, is poured forth on your centrality. The deepest root of mine is loving the deepest root in you. Soul loves soul. "Nobody loves anything except the soul," says Yajnavalkya in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

The soul of the meditator is pouring itself forth upon the soul of the object, so that it may become united with the All-Soul of the universe. Such is the background which you

need in your mind before you take to Yoga practice in the form of meditation.

Chapter IV

THE OBJECT OF MEDITATION IS NOT OUTSIDE

We have been designating the point of concentration in our Yoga practices as the 'object' of meditation. Actually, the word 'object' is not a suitable description of what we are aiming at finally, because what we regard as an object stands outside us. A thing that is entirely external to us cannot become our possession, it cannot benefit us because the characteristic of what is called an object is to distance itself from that of which it is an object. Our self, which is the meditating principle, stands at a distance from that on which the meditation is being carried on and it is this distance that makes us feel that it is an object like other things in the world.

We have to remember that we shall receive no benefit from anything in the world if it is totally outside us. The outside-ness characterising the object would prevent it from giving us any blessing. Even the diet that we consume, the meal that we take every day, should not stand 'outside' in the stomach. The food has to be absorbed into the organic substance of our personality in order that it may sustain us and benefit us. If the food that we take and pour into the stomach stands isolated from the linings of the stomach, it will be thrown out as if it is a foreign matter. Nothing in this world can satisfy or benefit us if it is totally outside us. So is the case with this so-called object on which we are meditating, if it happens to be something entirely external.

In the earlier days, we considered that our satisfaction and joy increases as our object of affection comes nearer to us. The more distant is the object of our consideration, the less is the satisfaction that we can derive from the contemplation on it. It has to be very near us, under our grip and control. It should not elude our grasp; it should not go out of the jurisdiction of our own selves, but even that is not satisfying. Even if an object of affection is inside your fist, held firmly in the hand, it stands outside you because that which is here grasped has not entered the hand. If one is holding the most valuable object in the world tightly in the hand, it is still an outside object because it can alienate itself from the hold when it drops from the hand. It has not become 'mine', though it appears to be mine on account of the appearance that it is under my control.

Nothing can be under anyone's control finally unless it is inseparable from the holder. That object of love and affection alone can satisfy if it will not leave the lover and cause any anxiety of self-alienation at any time. Even the richest person in the world remains unhappy at the prospect of losing that wealth he has acquired. The possibility of losing what one has is an agony in the heart. The possession of large estates, gold and silver (naturally standing outside oneself), will be a sorrow inwardly, subconsciously gnawing into the vitals of the rich magnate. The fear of losing what one has possessed will contaminate the so-called joy of having it at all; therefore, there is no such thing as real joy in the world. Even the kingdom of the earth can be lost in the split of a second. No emperor in the world can be happy. "Sceptre and crown shall tumble

down." Beggar and king will go to dust and sleep on the same ground as lifeless corpses. Such a pitiable condition is not what we are expecting in our endeavour to meditate on something which we regard as the object of our meditation.

The satisfying object, the all-consuming ideal before us which we have chosen as the proper thing on which we can pour ourselves, should not stand outside us entirely. We have to place it in ourselves; the object has to become the subject. You have to become me in order that I may really love you, and I have to become you, not merely see you, but be you in order that we may be lifelong friends without the possibility of bereavement at any time. If there is going to be a bereavement between me and the object of my meditation, how can it bestow upon me immortality? The relationship is mortal, capable of destruction and separation and hence no immortal existence is to be expected from a mortal relationship with a separated object.

The System of Nyasa

In certain forms of ritualistic worship performed in temples, the person performing the worship makes certain gestures called *nyasa*. There are varieties of *nyasas* called *anganyasa*, *karanyasa,* etc. Only religious priests or a person expert in performance of ritualistic worship will know what *nyasa* actually means. It is a Sanskrit word which means 'placing oneself', or 'the placement of anything', in a particular location, in a given manner.

This system of 'placing' is followed in ritualistic worship of a deity in a temple by touching different parts of one's body and concentrating in the mind at the same time the corresponding part of the object, the deity, or divinity

concerned. We must remember that ritualistic worship also is a kind of meditation. Worship is not a mechanical action. The mind is actively operating there; otherwise, it would become lifeless and would not bring the desired result.

In this placement of the process of *nyasa* the parts of the shape, contour or bodily structure of the divinity adored are correspondingly placed in the respective parts of the body or the personality of the worshipper. When I touch my forehead, or a part of my head, I utter a prayer, a word, a *mantra* signifying that the forehead or the head of the divinity has entered my head and is my head. So, I am not seeing the head or the forehead of the divinity with my eyes as something looking at me; rather it looks through me, through my eyes, and is 'me'. A little bit of strong imagination and feeling is necessary here, in this practice.

Suppose, instead of the idol or the *murti* of the divinity worshipped, we consider a person in front. You have to make that person one with you. There is a great philosophy behind this technique. It is highly beneficial and also dangerous, if the mind is not pure while attempting the technique.

I am looking at you, and when I look at you I am seeing your eyes; they are outside me. But that is not the proper way of looking at you. You have to look through my eyes and I have to look through your eyes, so that instead of myself and yourself being face to face, we stand in collaboration parallelly—one 'enters' the other. The two eyes have become one eye; the two heads have become one head and they come to a state of coalescence. Who is seeing? This question will not arise at that time. Are you seeing the object or the object is seeing you? You may say it

is either way. It may be that you are seeing through the eye of the object or the object is seeing through your eyes. If this practice of *nyasa* in the process of worship becomes successful, divinity will enter the worshipper.

The great god, the incarnation, whoever be your ideal you are worshipping, is seeing through your eyes and you are seeing through its eyes so that it 'is' you and you 'are' it. I hope you are able to appreciate what this means. Its hands are your hands and your hands are its hands. Your heart is its heart; its heart is your heart. Your feet are its, and vice versa. Every part of your body is correspondingly the part of the body of that divinity you are adoring in meditation.

Then what happens? You have absolute control over that object in the same way as you have complete control over the limbs of your own body. I can tell my hand to lift, and it lifts; I can tell my legs to walk and they walk. But if I tell the legs of somebody else to walk, they need not, because they are not identified with my consciousness. The legs of another person have not become one with my legs; therefore, I cannot tell them to walk. They will not move. But if my legs have become another's legs, and if I tell them to move, they will move.

The whole building will move if your consciousness has identified itself with it, part by part, little by little, bit by bit, in every little detail, and you become the whole building itself. This is the secret behind the *nyasa* technique of worship in the ritual of daily performance in temples, or even in one's own altar at home. Such a process has to be adopted in our meditation on the object, whatever be that object which we have chosen for the purpose.

There is an interesting aphorism of sage Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras which refers to this kind of process: The identification of yourself with the object of meditation is somewhat like the identity seen when a coloured object is brought near a clear crystal, so that the colour has entered the crystal; the crystal becomes red if a red flower is brought near it. The objective and subjective sides enter into each other and the one is indistinguishable from the other.

The crystal may be compared to the meditating consciousness. The object of meditation may be regarded as something similar to that which is brought near the crystal. In the process of the entry of the structure of the object into the structure of the crystal, and the very substantiality of the crystal itself, the two get identified into a single mass of being, so that one will see that the object itself has become the crystal or the crystal has become the object.

The object 'flows' into the subject; the subject 'flows' into the object. Or to cite another illustration, imagine that there are two tanks filled with water up to the brim and they are on equal level (not one high and one below). There is a passage between one tank and the other tank so that water flows slowly through that passage from one tank to the other tank, and from the other tank to this tank. One will not know the water of which tank is flowing to which tank. There is a mutual commingling of the waters of two tanks. The water in between, in that passage, may be considered as the water of this tank or that tank.

In this consciousness of the identification through the placement of *nyasa* mentioned, the object becomes united with the consciousness of the meditator in such a way that,

at that time, in that experience, one will not know whether the object is within oneself or oneself is within the object. Who is in whom? Is the object meditating upon you, or are you meditating upon the object? If the great God is in front of you, is He contemplating you when He gazes at you, or are you contemplating on Him? Either way the answer is correct.

The Interconnectedness of All Things

In meditation, what are you supposed to do? Do not commit the mistake of thinking that the object is outside you. Nobody in this world is really outside another. Some stupidity that has entered our mind goes on insisting that things are outside us as if we have no connection with anything in the world (we stand independently ourselves, with our flimflam egoism making us stand physically isolated). This is not a fact. All things in the world are flowing into us every moment of time and we are also flowing into everything in the world every moment. The whole world is entering us just now. If that entering of the world into us were not to take place, we would not be alive in this world even for a day.

We are sustained, and we feel that we are alive, strong, and healthy because the world of power and sustenance is entering into our personality perpetually, either through the breathing process, the food that we take, the energy that is coming from the sun, and many other influences impinging upon us from the total atmosphere of what we may call ecological environment. The very forest around us enters us with its balming influence.

People say that it is good for you to sit under a green tree when the sun is shining in the clear sky because the green leaves of a vastly spread-out tree, when they receive sunlight during the daytime, undergo a process called photosynthesis, by which action they manufacture oxygen. Therefore, it is good to sit under a green-leaf tree during the daytime when the sun is shining. But we should not sit under the tree at night because, then, it produces carbon dioxide and not oxygen. Sometimes old grandmothers tell children, "Don't go near the tree at night. A demon is sitting on it."

The whole world is trying to enter into us and sustain us but we repel the entry of these beneficent forces by our egoism. When friendly forces of the world tell, "We shall come and enter you and protect you," we say, "Oh! Don't come near me. I am sufficient by myself. I am more important than you." Does not any person feel that he is more important than anything in the world? Secretly one feels like that, but is it true? You cannot live for a minute here if the beneficent air from the cosmic setup does not enter your nostrils to sustain your lungs and protect your heart. How can you be bragging with your egoism that you are an independent person in this world? You cannot live for three minutes if the fresh air does not enter your bodily functions. From where does the air come?

All these peculiarities connected with the world outside to which we pay scant respect in our daily life are our sustaining forces. The unknown things, the discarded things, the rejected world, is sustaining us. We have rejected God Himself and many people feel that they can get on without Him also, that they are self-sufficient. But

the compassionate God, the beneficent Nature, the loving world outside is blessing us in spite of our disregard for it, like a good parent who bears all the torment and the naughty behaviour of children and still loves them though the children reject the parents through egoism and haughtiness. This is a psychology applicable to every kind of relationship between us and the world outside—applicable also between us and the object of meditation. This chosen object is a representation of the whole cosmos. So, when you love that object, you are loving all things connected with that object. The ray of the sun is all the sun; the incarnation is all the gods. The Absolute Itself is concentrated here.

Blindly, mechanically, imagining that you are doing some meditation, somehow, because it is mentioned in the twenty instructions of Gurudev, and somehow attempting to trudge through that process with effort and pain in the body and the knees, is not real spiritual practice. There will be no pain in the joints, no backache, no fatigue if the object in front of you is excessively delighting. If you are in a state of rapture in the presence of your love, then you will not say that your back is aching. Nobody will talk like that because here is the enrapturing thing in front of you.

This object of your meditation, to repeat what we have been telling for the last two days, is a representative of the omnipresence of Cosmic Power. What can be more delighting to you? When you concentrate on it, you are concentrating on the total creation itself. "Myself is the cosmos—entire creation." So did Krishna tell Arjuna, "Look at me!" and the whole universe was presented then.

The object will tell you the same thing; the subject will speak in the same language.

In three days of continuous meditation, correctly and carefully conducted in this manner, you will feel a difference. You will feel perpetually happy inside; you will be smiling at all times. You will not have any kind of distress in your heart. You will not grieve or make complaints or say that something is wretched, bad, stupid. There is no such thing in the world. The stupidity or wretchedness and darkness that you see in certain persons and things in the world is due to your wrong perception of the thing by placing it in the wrong context, dissociating it from its universal 'ingressive' interrelatedness.

Cow dung in the agricultural field is a beautiful thing, but it has to be in the proper place. On your dining table dung is not beautiful. The ink that is flowing from your pen when you write a message is a beautiful thing; but the very same thing when it has fallen on your clean linen shirt is an ugly thing.

Beauty is the characteristic of that object which is placed in the proper context of the visualising consciousness. Ugliness is the characteristic of that object which is wrenched out of context. Thus, what makes a thing beautiful or enrapturing or ugly or wretched is the context in which it is beheld, or appreciated. So is the case with yourself and everybody.

Hence, place this object of meditation in the proper context and don't put it somewhere here, in the temple, in the *puja* room, etc. It is not anywhere of that kind. It is just here, with you, in you, around you, everywhere.

When you are in a mood of meditation you will find that you are with it and in it and through it and everything in respect of it at all times, even when you are walking on the road. It will protect you not merely in the *puja* room but even when you are travelling outside. It can protect you even when you are on death bed. It is your real friend. "Peace will come to you," says Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the Gita, "if you know that I am your real friend. When you are in trouble, I shall be there to help you and bring succour to you."

The Object is the Soul's Beloved

This great object of your meditation is not a dot on the wall. It is not a symbol, it is a representation of all the powers (omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence), which you have placed in one object for the purpose of practical concentration. It is your soul that is actually meditating on the soul of the object. It is not 'your' body, not even 'your' surface consciousness or conscious mind that is just 'thinking' the object placed outside in meditation. It is not the phenomenal part of our personality that is contemplating the phenomenality of the object. There is a noumenal essence in the meditating principle and similarly there is a noumenal principle in the object. The two commingle.

The thing that you are in essence, the 'thing-in-itself' as they say philosophically, is not the thing that is there before your eyes. The thing that is before your eyes is the phenomenality foisted upon the thing as it is, which is the soul of that particular object.

Your personality that I am seeing in my presence now is the phenomenality of your root which is not visible to the physical eyes; nor can you see me in a similar manner. Unless the soul rises into action, you will not feel happy under any condition. Even when you take a beautiful meal, the soul has to be satisfied. When the soul rises into action, the whole personality also rises into action. Then it is that you feel strength in your personality.

People who have lost the gearing of their minds (who are incapable of consciously thinking as normally people do) are called madmen. But they exhibit greater physical strength than normal men. A madman can kick a door with such force that can break it in a few minutes, which a normal man cannot do, because that so-called madman is not confining his mind to the conscious level only. He has become something other than the conscious (though it is a negativity into which he has entered), while the normal man is on the conscious level only, disconnected from the subconscious and the unconscious levels. Therefore, the so-called normal man is physically weaker than the madman, as people say. The reason is that the mad mental condition has delved deeper from the conscious level to the lower levels, though in a regressive negative abnormality. It looks sometimes that he is behaving in an unconscious manner—he is not in his senses. May be so, but one is not in one's senses in deep sleep also. One becomes the total person in sleep. One is fifty percent, twenty-five percent, or so, when awake, so that the energy and happiness in sleep is greater there in comparison with the lesser percentage of strength and joy in the waking condition.

This analogy is to illustrate the fact that the 'soul' in you has to rise up into action and enter into the 'soul' of the object. You should not see the structure, pattern, the outer shape of that object, nor are you to consider yourself as a son, daughter of somebody. That idea also must be shed. The spirit beholds the spirit in meditation.

The very same description corresponding to this fact in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali tells us that you should divest yourself, and also the object, of associations which are not true to you and to its real nature. Only then what the Yoga Sastra calls *samapatti,* or *samadhi,* will ensue. My total union with yourself or your total union with me is *samadhi*. I am you, and you are me. This cannot happen as long as I am one person and you are another person, and the meditating consciousness is in one body with the object remaining totally outside.

The description of the great master Patanjali in his Yoga Sutra is that all associations foisted upon an object should be removed gradually and we should try to behold the object freed from the *notions* that we have of it. When I am seeing a person in front of me, what do I think of that person? Many ideas arise: This person has come from Calcutta, the son or daughter of so-and-so, working in that office, with so much education. This person's name and form is like this. What else can I think about the person? But none of these descriptions really 'mean' that person. A person need not be in Calcutta; he can be anywhere else also. He may not be doing that particular work always; he may be doing some other work. Why do you associate that person with that work? Remove that idea. Don't say that he

is doing this work or is from that place, having that form, and so on.

Now, the form of the object is a very complicated feature that appears before us. From our discussions the other day, you would have gathered that even the form of our body is an effect of pressures exerted by *karmic* forces generated in our previous lives, and also the possibilities of the future.

You should not forget this characteristic of the present personality. The body is not suddenly manufactured, abruptly, from some source, and we are here like a fruit dropping from a tree. None of us has come abruptly, like a solid body jetting forth from the mother's womb. Millions of forces arising right from the heavenly world onwards have contributed their little share in shaping this personality, due to the interconnection that the forces of *prarabdha* have with all the relationship of previous lives and the future formations also.

Cosmic substances are responsible for the manufacture of this little body. Everything is here in this body saying "I am here, I am here." It is as if you have borrowed money from ten thousand people and your very existence is conditioned by the existence of those people. You are not any more a human being singly existing, because you are eating the food which is bought by the money that you borrowed from ten thousand persons; ten thousand people's *karma* is inside you when you eat such a meal.

Indeed, this body is not your body; it is borrowed from varieties of sources in the large universe. As there is no house minus bricks, cement and steel rods, there is no body

minus the five elements and the composite forces that have entered into it through the *prarabdha* potencies.

Thus we bring into our memory the nature of the focussing of attention that we have to carry on in meditation. The soul in us rises into action. Only if my soul speaks to you, you will respond from your soul. Otherwise, if I speak through my tongue, you will also speak through the tongue, and the words will be only above the throat; they will not rise from the heart. If your words do not rise from your soul, they will not exert any influence. Sometimes people say that what someone said deeply entered their hearts. It can enter your heart either negatively or positively, as the case may be, by receptivity or resentment.

Anything grand, glorious, majestic, beautiful, systematic, artistic, aesthetic, touches your heart; that is the soul of the object. The beauty, grandeur and majesty that you behold in anything is what you call its soul. The soul of art is the beauty of presentation. That is why the soul is in a state of rapture on seeing a beautiful painting or hearing wonderful music.

The object of your meditation is beautiful, like an artistic painting or a blossomed lotus. It can sing a beautiful song to you. It can delight your stomach with a dish, it can speak to you like a beloved friend, and it can guide you like a mentor. It can protect you like a policeman; nay, it can bestow on you immortality. Why? Because this beloved object stands here as an ambassador of the Government of the universe, through which medium we can contact the Justice of the cosmos, His Supreme Majesty, His Highness, God Almighty.

Chapter V

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MEDITATION

The usual habit of the mind to think only in one particular way persists continuously throughout one's life. A total transformation of the process of thinking in an entirely different manner is next to an impossibility for any human mind. Hence, the method that is to be adopted should be in terms of a graduated progress in the visualisation of the object of meditation.

Whatever be the maturity of our thoughts or the extent of our education, the mind will still go on telling us again and again that there is something in front of us which is our divinity, our god, our object of meditation. Some people struggle to avoid this concept of something being in front by imagining that it is present somewhere in one part of the body only, such as the middle of the eyebrows, the heart, etc. Even then, in spite of the attempt to place it in one's own personality, it will remain a kind of external object. It will never get identified with oneself. One may feel in the centre of the eyebrows something standing, sitting, or placed in some posture, but not united with oneself entirely.

In order that the mind may not be forced to think in an unusual way, it is better to give it a long rope; start with the very same concept which it is accustomed to and gradually raise this vision of the object in the direction required. There is a well-known illustration known as: *shakha-chandra nyaya,* which means the way in which one can locate a star in the sky, in the midst of many others. There is a star in the sky called *mrigasirsha,* for instance, and I

want to show you where exactly it is above. Thousands of stars in the sky can be seen on a clear night. Now, which one is the *mrigasirsha?* If I say, "Look at this," and point my finger to that particular star, my finger is not touching the star, and you will not know where the star actually is. Then, the method I adopt is: Do you see this tree in front of me? Do you see one branch shooting off in an eastern direction? Do you see a little twig rising from the particular branch, rising vertically up? Just above that vertical shooting twig, do you see a star there? To the right side of it do you see something twinkling? That is the star *mrigasirsha*. Now you can see and know where it is.

So much time had to be taken in order that the distant star could be located for the purpose of correct perception. In a similar manner you have to adopt certain techniques when you go for meditation. The mind will always have to say something contrary to your ideas, that the object is far away, and is in one place only. Let it be so. Let the object be in one place. What is your object?

Bringing back to our memories what we have considered earlier, that object is something which is very desirable, but it is in one place only. There are other things external to it, outside it, many things in the world which are other than this one desirable object. The mind will say that there are many other things, also. When the mind wanders like this in the thought of other things than the particular chosen object, open your eyes. Generally, where the eyes are, there the mind also is. When you look at a thing with open eyes, the mind also goes with this visual perception. Keep an image in front of you; what that image may be is left to your choice. It may be a painting, photograph, idol,

symbol, diagram, anything that will satisfy your feelings. Open the eyes and look at it for as long a time as possible so that the mind feels delighted that it is there: "My desirable thing is just in front of me. I am very happy to look at it! Come, come!"

After a few minutes the mind will again jump into something else. It will not agree to go on thinking continuously even the most desirable object because this open-eyed concentration by the mind is actually the conscious level of the mind operating. The human psyche is not merely the operation of the conscious mind. Even when you are looking at a thing and consciously thinking it, your whole being is not comfortable on account of the other subliminal layers of the personality getting disturbed by a subtle subterfuge of feeling of an indescribable nature.

Even the most desirable object can disturb our personality inwardly for certain reasons which the conscious mind cannot know at that time. We cannot be comfortable in the presence of anything for a long continuous period because mostly our thoughts are on the surface of consciousness. We have never an idea that we have also subconscious levels, and deeper still an unconscious sea of potential urges.

When a presentable object is placed before the conscious level of the mind, tentatively it appears to be satisfied. Inasmuch as the satisfaction is tentative, the lower subliminal layers do not interfere, just as a mother will allow the little baby to crawl to some extent in any direction while keeping an eye that it does not go too far. A little freedom is given to the crawling child, but when it goes too near the steps where it is likely to slip and fall, the mother

will run and pull it back. Likewise, the subconscious which is our real mother, as it were, which is what we really are basically, will not suddenly interfere with our conscious level's operations. We may go on gallivanting anywhere with our conscious mind, looking at things and enjoying them, but if we persist in concentrating only on one thing and are likely to forget the possibilities of other things also in the world, the subconscious will say, "thus far and no further." Immediately it will move in some other direction. What is the direction towards which it will jump? It will go towards those things which are ignored in our conscious visualisation of the object.

Remember the same analogy I mentioned to you last time that your personality is not in one place only. It is an admixture of forces joining together and coming from various levels of the personality, from many previous births through which we have passed and the several possibilities of our future births, also. Thus, the past and the future will not allow you to be continuously conscious of one thing alone in the present. You will be pulled and pushed from two different directions. This is why the scriptures in Yoga tell us that we have to be a little bit cautious in knowing ourselves well before we embark upon the Yoga of meditation wholeheartedly. We have to bring to the level of our conscious thinking whatever is buried deep inside, also. You should not keep something secret within and then appear to be well off on the surface level. If you have something troubling in the deepest level of your mind, that has to be brought to the surface of consciousness, to the daylight of proper understanding. You have to look at it together with your looking at the object of meditation.

If you start visualising the object which is the target of meditation with only the power of your will, minus an adequate understanding going with it, your heart will rumble inside like troubled waters. Even for a month you may not know that anything is happening to you at all. Go on with your meditations for three months, six months, with earnestness and intensity of concentration, carried on at fixed hours of the day, every day. Then the whole personality which has been ignored earlier will rise up to action. A neglected individual can do anything; an ignored disease can erupt in any form, and a neglected creditor can give any kind of trouble. Anything rejected totally, as if it is not there, while it is really there, can cause such troubles that we cannot foresee.

You are your own danger, and you are inviting that trouble by ignoring some part of yourself and imagining that you are only some side or aspect. You may believe that you have no desires because you are in a holy place, thinking holy things. It may look true, but it is not wholly true. When you leave the holy place, go to the railway station, the bus stand and the market, that which you have not taken into account at this present moment will come up and engage your attention adequately. It is better that you guard yourself about it now itself before you prepare yourself for meditation. We should not be having secrecies about our own selves. Are you going to hide something in yourself? You may not declare yourself to other people for certain reasons, but will you not declare yourself to yourself? Tell your own self honestly what you are. Will your heart say that you are a God-man, a spiritual seeker? If you are honest, you will realise that you are a dustbin filled

with umpteen cravings, submerged longings, and disturbed emotions. If you are dishonest to yourself, you will not progress even by one inch.

Most people have the capacity to know what is inside them. While you are in a temple or a *satsanga*, in the company of great souls, what you really are in the subconscious or unconscious may not come to the surface of your mind. If you want to know what you really are, what you are basically at the root of your being (other than what you are appearing to be in public), you have to leave your home for some time, because your home atmosphere conditions you into thinking in one way only. Go a long distance, some 500 kilometres away from your house. It may be a holy shrine, it may be Uttarkashi, Gangotri, Rameshwaram, Varanasi. Never write any letter to your family when you are staying there. Make a decision that for one month you shall not leave that place. You should not have any correspondence with your family. Do not send letters, because other people will then start writing to you; do not write anything. Go to a place where people do not recognise you, so that they may not come and chat with you. Let the atmosphere be strange. If you go to a large city, people may not know who you are. You are just one pilgrim among thousands. Live in a place where you are literally alone. For a few days you will feel like fish out of water. You have lost your peace of mind with nobody to talk to; you are lonely.

The social part of your personality will revolt against the individual life that you are forcing into yourself. Most of us are in a social atmosphere and if you are wrenched out of that social condition, literally placing yourself alone, you

feel miserable at that time. Being literally alone is very difficult to conceive but it is necessary to pass that test, also. Can you live alone?

Stay for a while, for a month at least, in a place where you are unknown to people and you have no connection with anybody. You have plenty of time for yourself; nobody will disturb you. When you have your little breakfast or lunch, etc., sit and cogitate about what is happening with your mind. The first thought will be that you have lost something. You may have pain in the body or feel that you are not fit for this, that your desires are not being satisfied, something looks odd, not quite all right.

All the desires submerged will slowly creep out. Do you know how many desires you have? They look like several things, like the many branches of a tree, but they are all capable of being boiled down to certain units, just as medical science tells us that all illness is threefold, known as *vata, pitta,* and *kapha*—windy, bilious, and phlegmatic. These are the three humours in the body. When these are maintaining a state of balance, we feel healthy. But if any one of them is out of balance, it will rise up and indicate an illness. Though diseases appear to be manifold, they arise from a threefold disturbance in the body.

The Nature of Basic Desires

Desires also are not so many in number. They are squeezed down to only three, according to an analysis made by the great masters of the Upanishads. They put on various colours and shapes and make it appear that they are too many. These three desires are called *eshanas* in the language of the Upanishads—basic longings which are

psycho-biological. They are psychical and also connected with the biological makeup of the body.

The impulse of self-respect and reputation goes with egoism or the affirmation of individuality—you think you are such and such a thing, and you would not like anyone to think about you in any other manner. Suppose someone calls you a fool. Although you know that you are not a fool, still the word disturbs the concept that you have about yourself. It is an attack on your notion about what you are.

If I say that you are a tree, you will not be agitated so much. But, suppose I say you are an ass. You are disturbed beyond imagination. Why are you not disturbed when I say that you are a tree? You know very well that you cannot be a tree, so what I talk is utter nonsense; but if I say you are an ass, you have a suspicion that perhaps you may be a little bit that also. That is why you want immediately to retort, "No, I am not!"

This suspicious character that is in us also will be a trouble one day or the other. People hang themselves, drown themselves, to maintain their self-respect. There is nothing more important than self-love, but you cannot describe what it means. It is a flimsy indescribable notion, an idea, an appreciation in the mind. You will die for the sake of it. You have an idea about yourself and you would want to die to maintain that particular idea. Such a strength this egoism of human psyche has!

Wherever you go, even if you are a beggar on the street, you would not like to be insulted by anyone. The beggar has a personality which he respects even when he is in the most wretched condition. Even a dying man would not like to be ridiculed. This self-affirmation aspect is a bane. It is the

Ravana inside us; it is the Kumbhakarna, which everyone is basically.

Which of these three desires will come first, you cannot say; it depends upon the circumstance. When you are intensely hungry and have not eaten for several days, you will not be thinking other aspects of your desires because of the pressure of the appetite and the hunger of the stomach. You will want only food at that time; the other desires, though they are present, will withdraw themselves for the time being due to the exigency of the time and the condition.

The desire to maintain oneself physically appears as hunger and thirst. If hunger and thirst are not attended to properly, the physical existence itself will be threatened. The psychological existence also is important, together with physical existence. You have to be something physically, and you have to be something in your mind also. So, you must maintain the ego psychologically as a way of internal self-affirmation and maintain the physical body as a kind of external self-affirmation. This is the whole picture.

Self-affirmation of a twofold character (physical and psychological) is one kind of desire which is inseparable from our existence itself. It is not a desire emanating like a shoot from a plant; it is identical with what we are. It is a desire for security of existence.

The second desire is the urge to possess appurtenances of life in as large a measure as possible. It is not merely enough if you exist as an individual physically and psychologically. You have to expand the dimension of your personality by adding to yourself whatever is possible from

the outside world. This is the desire for property, wealth, belonging, gold, silver, land, house, money.

As the individual personality is characterised by two types of self-affirmation (physical and psychological) the desire for expanding one's personality also is of a twofold character. You want a twofold wealth from this world outside—physical property as well as psychological property (intellectual property, as people sometimes call it). You would like people to recognise you as much as possible. Everybody should praise you. If you do not receive enough recognition from people around, you create means and circumstances of contacting as large a number of people as possible so that you may be recognised by them. You go about and tell people what you are and speak to them, and advertise yourself. If the world pours on you encomiums, your intellectual property gets expanded. You have become larger in your conception of what you are.

Who likes finitude? The little tiny tot that you are, though you are secure, what is the good of it, the security as a finite individual? Would you like to live like a little animal, like an ant or a plant? This is not the way in which we wish to have security. It has to be enhanced properly.

There is a third one, which is the desire to perpetuate oneself. The secret person inside tells us that one day we are going to die. You may have a lot of wealth and everybody is praising you as the greatest man in the world, but for three minutes only. After the three minutes you are going to perish. This is indeed shocking. You want to *be, always.* You desire to be in possession of all the wealth that you have acquired and to be also in possession of all the name that you have gained in this world. What is the use of

having it for three minutes? The fear of abolition in time and in space gnaws into the vitals, but you know very well you cannot perpetuate yourself in any way.

A distorted thought arises in the mind that you can perpetuate yourself by producing a child; the child is you in replica. That is why the urge to have a child is so strong in people. It is not a desire for the child, actually. It is a desire to perpetuate yourself in the time process. You would like to see your grandchild, also. If the grandchild is not born, you are unhappy. Your great grand-children also you would like to see with your eyes. You have, as you believe, perpetuated yourself in the process of time. The mind may say that you will perish, but you do not want to perish so easily as that. An idiotic idea arises in the mind that the production of children and increasing the number of members in the family is a great achievement.

The nature which is around us, which is intent on producing species of different kinds, exerts the pressure of the species so that a human being would like to have children of a human type only. You would not like to have frogs and scorpions as your children.

You would like to marry. Whom do you want to marry? Do you want to wed a bull, or a cow, or a cock, or hen? You want to marry your species. Do you know why it is that you want to cling to your own species only and not any other thing that also is there in nature? The individuality is a slave to the pressure of nature, though you may think that you are an independent, isolated person. Nature's species impulse pressurises you, so everybody goes to multiply the species concerned. Else, it would look that life is a hopeless wretchedness. It is worth nothing.

These are the three *eshanas,* longings, which do not always come to the surface of consciousness. Thieves do not come in front of you because if they so come, they cannot do their work. The greatest thieves in the world are these three desires. They want to rob you of everything and make you a pauper until you die a miserable nobody. All people in the world who are subject to these desires die wretchedly, though they might have thought that they have achieved a lot.

One Should Always Remain Guarded

When you enter the portals of meditation, as a seeker trying to rise in God-consciousness, these natural impulses will come and tell you that they are not going to permit you to do anything against their wishes. What do you do at that time? Remember what Kaikeyi told King Dasaratha. When you try to live a secluded life, for a long time, these impulses will take different shapes and tell you that they are also there. They will all itch and scratch your body from different sides. You will feel miserable and leave that place and go back home, but at least you will know that these things are inside; otherwise, when you are in a comfortable atmosphere in your house, you think that you have no desires and that everything is well. But be alone to yourself somewhere, and see what your heart says.

When you are drowning in water and you know that in a few minutes your breath is to cease, death is at the elbow, what do you think at that time? That thought will not be available just now because you are not drowning now and you think death also is not at the elbow—it is a little far away on the distant mountain. The possibility is not there,

so thoughts that may arise at that time will not occur now. When you have lost everything and the very ground under the feet is cut off, what do you think? You cannot imagine that condition now because it has not actually taken place, but it can take place one day. You must be prepared to envisage such a circumstance, also. If nobody wants you in this world, what will you do at that time?

As an intelligent person, you must appreciate even now that nobody really wants you in this world. None is your friend here. Why should you physically expect a situation in the future where you will know that nobody wants you? You can use your mind and see the future of a possibility where a condition may arise when nobody is there for you. You introduce into your mind a situation where none will want you and nothing is with you. Then you are face to face with that which will come to your aid at that moment.

When everything goes, God comes; when something is there, He is a little far away. There is a little story of how God comes and how God does not come. Sri Krishna was in Dwaraka. He was having his midday meal; Rukmini was serving him lunch. In the middle of the process of eating, Sri Krishna got up and caught hold of a stick that was in a corner of the room. Rukmini asked, "What is happening to you? Whom are you going to attack at this moment, with a stick in your hand, in the middle of the meal?" He did not utter a word. He kept the stick there and came back and started taking his food. "What is the matter?" Rukmini asked. Sri Krishna said, "What is happening is this: Somewhere far off in the middle of the (Rajasthan) desert (away from Dwaraka), a pilgrim is passing. Some dacoits attacked him. I thought I would protect him. But, when I

was going to do something, that pilgrim took his stick and started beating the dacoits. I decided to let him manage himself by himself. Why should I interfere?"

If you have your own security, of your glory, in this world, well, let it be. Why should you worry about God? Let Him mind His business. If you can live without Him, you are free to be happy with yourself. But, beware!

The object of meditation is the God you have invoked into your consciousness, and you are not going to listen to the voice of the desires inside, which say that they are also there ready to give you what you want. What are you going to do with these desires? They peep through the apertures of the mind again and again and try to jump on you from ambush. When you are unprepared, they may come and catch hold of you. What can you do at that time? You have to know very well that they may come at any moment. You should not say that they have not come as yet. They can come without giving you notice. If they come, what do you do?

There are various ways of handling desires. One is a crude way; another is a subtle, rarefied manner. The crude way is to be physically away, as much as possible, from that atmosphere where there are things which tempt you. Go far away from them. You should not go on looking at a thing which is disturbing your mind. The other way is psychological, which is done by another technique called substitution. This is the way by which you give to the mind something else instead, not the thing which it is asking for, but something equivalent to it in some way. What that substitute is, is left to each individual to suggest to oneself under the circumstances prevailing.

"When some particular impulse is rising from within, think of its opposite," says one Sutra of Patanjali. Think of the condition which is totally different from that particular situation arising in the mind: the strength of Bhishma, the power of Hanuman, the glory of Bhagavan Sri Rama or Krishna, or some such sublime, exalting feeling. When you feel miserable or weak due to the onslaught of a desire, invoke Hanuman's strength and valour. When you think of him you will feel yourself also a little bit strengthened.

Sita was weeping like a weakling, helpless, with nobody to protect or console her. At that time Hanuman was sitting on a tree and singing the glory of Rama. Slowly he got down and placed himself before her and then introduced himself as a messenger of Rama. "Mother, this is the message: Rama will come and take you. But if you so wish, I can take you now itself from this place. Just now I can lift you and take you to Rama." Hanuman had reduced himself then. He was looking like a small monkey. Sita said, "What kind of person are you? I am a large body and you are like a little kid, a monkey. You are telling me that you can carry me?" Hanuman felt within himself, "The Mother Divine does not know who I am. I will show myself." And he immediately grew to immensity, like a mountain. "Mother, I can carry not only you, but the whole of Lanka together with Ravana. That strength this body has by the grace of Rama."

When you feel helpless, think of the indomitable Bhishma. All the Pandava forces together could not face that one man, as all the Kauravas could not face one individual, Sri Krishna.

All this is a description of what may be called the spiritual crisis of a seeker. "At every juncture, or crisis, I shall manifest myself," says the Lord in the Gita. The spiritual crisis arising out of turbulent desires from within will summon that power transcendent and see that you are freed from your agonies. When God takes up cudgels, none can stand before Him. With that confidence, resort to Him alone.

Chapter VI

THE DIFFICULTIES ON THE PATH TO PERFECTION

Prolonged meditation carried on for several months may present certain difficulties which are usually known as the obstacles. The difficulties are varied in their nature. Any one of them can present itself at any time but usually what one feels after the lengthened period of concentration is some kind of discomfort in the body.

People who live in distant places like Uttarkashi, Gangotri or some remote corner of the world dissociated from human contact can feel a sort of distress, which they would like to suppress and ignore as if it is not there. The form which this distress will take at the outset may be a kind of physical illness. You will not feel quite fit after one year of meditation. Appetite will come down; you would not like to eat. Sometimes there will be sleeplessness, apart from pain in certain parts of the body. Principally, the trouble may come in the form of a stomach upset. You will not be able to digest any food; nothing will be attractive to your digestive system. You have to take some carminative mixture to absorb even a little diet. Although you were quite all right one year back, now you need help to digest even a piece of bread or a cup of milk. What is the reason? Why does physical illness come in when you go for deep meditation? The body feels that it is in an insecure situation. Somebody is interfering with it.

There are two kinds of security in the world: security due to entire dependence on certain forces which are supposed to protect the person, and security born out of

one's own intrinsic strength. Our health, our sense of security, and feeling of comfort in the world is mostly dependent on external factors, conditioned by so many things in the world. If any of these factors is interfered with or removed from the field of action, you feel that you have lost something, indeed. The sense of losing a value is a distress in the mind, which will have an impact upon the body in such a manner that it will feel physical discomfort and illness of some kind. Even the *pranas,* the vital forces, will not cooperate properly, because they were secure earlier by depending on external factors. Now you want that you should be secure intrinsically by not depending on any external media.

Everyone resists change. If you introduce some change in the programme of life, it is resisted immediately. Everybody is against any kind of reformation, change, or instruction for something different from what is taking place now. If you start instructing the personality that what you are now is not all right (you will have to be something different), it resists the instruction, and then it presents a condition which is a type of illness.

Soldiers can fall sick a day before war takes place. Malingering is one of the features that we may have to face. The *pranas* are associated with the physical body in one way. When you concentrate the mind in meditation, the pressure you exert on the mind tells upon the *prana* also. This pressure which the *prana* feels is communicated to the entire physiological system. Any kind of pressure is an interference of some sort. The digestive system, muscles and nerves, all feel the ache. Even if you go for a massage for your well being, you will feel pain one or two days after

the commencement of this treatment, though the pain is supposed to go by the treatment. You will start feeling more pain when the massage starts. It is an introductory feeling which cannot be avoided.

Maintain Moderation

Therefore, to avoid this kind of difficulty of being sick physically, certain precautions have to be taken. You should not start abruptly any intense type of concentration without taking into consideration the consequences. For instance, in the sixth chapter of the Gita some warning is given to us: "Yoga is not for one who eats in excess; not also is Yoga for one who does not eat at all, who sleeps always or does not sleep at all. The Yoga, destroying sorrow, comes to him who is moderate in eating, recreation, activity, sleep and wakefulness."

Sometimes, in our enthusiasm for Yoga, we go to extremes. We start fasting, we observe *mauna*, we do not sleep, we stop the usual activities of life, and keep quiet somewhere, doing nothing. If a person who has been busy doing work in an office or an establishment for many years suddenly ceases from doing work totally and places himself somewhere far off in a temple or a forest or a retreat, the agitation that will follow from this kind of sudden and abrupt change of activity is something obvious.

Nothing should be cut off completely. Everything should be diminished slowly, gradually, stage by stage so that you will not know that any change is taking place at all. Even if an organisation wants to introduce some managemental change, they should not make a proclamation that from the next day onwards a change will

follow. All will rise up in protestation. That is an unwise way of handling situations.

Everything should be done in such a way that it should not appear that you are doing it at all. It is said that the best governmental system is that whose existence is not felt by the people. You do not even know that there is a government; it is so beautifully running that you do not feel its presence. When you start feeling the pressure of a governmental system, it means it is like a disharmonious system impinging on your life. You resist it and are conscious of it always, as if hounds are around you, barking and threatening. When you are perfectly healthy, you will not know that there is a body. So buoyant, so light, so happy will you feel when the body is healthy. Perfectly healthy people do not feel that they have a body. When you begin to feel that there is a body, you may be sure that there is something wrong with its functioning.

A little work, a little performance of duty, some occupation, is good as a healthy measure to maintain the health of the body. Work is not an undesirable thing as many people imagine. Total disconnection from every kind of work is also a sort of unhealthy complaint. The Gita urges that without doing something, without some activity, one cannot exist even for a moment. If you do not do 'this' work, you will do 'another' kind of work. If God does not speak, the devil will start speaking. An idle brain is the devil's workshop. Do not imagine that when you are doing nothing, divinity is working through you. The other thing also may be at work, equally.

You cannot say by an enactment (as if from a Parliament) that 'these' are necessary things and 'others' are

unnecessary things. There is no tabulation of these categories possible because at any moment of time something may look necessary and at another time it may look unnecessary. From moment to moment the necessities and non-necessities will present themselves in different proportions and intensities. Actually, Yoga practice is a moment-to-moment progressive move onward as a long journey that we undertake to a distant destination.

The complications of a physical nature like illness, etc., can be avoided by a proportionate conducting of oneself in activity, behaviour, diet, sleep, as well as social contact. Complete dissociation from society also will disturb the mind, because man is a social being. It is good to be independent of social contact but it is also dangerous to be dissociated from it in a morbid way. Wise precautions may be taken by a careful student.

Another reason that may bring about illness of the body and cause disturbance of the mind is suppression of desires. We had an in-depth analysis of these desires already, what kind of desires there are, how we can handle them, why they arise, what their nature is, etc. One can substitute a desire with something better, or sublimate it by God-thought, *satsanga*, etc., as one would deem proper. Physical illness should be avoided. Nothing can be worse than falling sick, having a headache, fever and lying down on the bed all day. Though nobody can be one hundred percent cautious always, some mistake may be there inadvertently some time, yet, as far as possible, by a trial-and-error method, you may guard yourself well. Some element of hygiene, cleanliness and neatness in dress, diet, occupation, etc., are to be taken notice of.

The Negative Reactions and Whispers

There is another difficulty sometimes that will present itself. You may feel dull and lethargic. You were enthusiastic in the beginning: "In this life itself I shall realise God!" With such determination you come and gird up your loins. For several months you go on doing meditation with great feeling in the mind. After one year's practice you may feel as if you are dozing, with tiredness, exhaustion, and the feeling of a need to postpone the programme for a future date.

In one of the sermons of Buddha, he says that there are many excuses for not doing anything: This is the rainy season, very damp, very sultry; we cannot go out when it is pouring. No proper place is there; everywhere it is wet. Let these rains stop. Then I shall sit and do meditation. And you are free from this boredom called meditation for another two months because it is the rainy season. Then afterwards, winter starts. It starts biting you: Oh, I thought winter is better; it does not matter. Winter is not so comfortable. When the cold winds are blowing I cannot take even a bath properly. This is not good. I made a mistake. When summer starts, I shall certainly sit and start renewed effort.

When summer dawns, it is again horrible. You cannot sit anywhere. It is all hot. Again you think you made a mistake and that when the rains commence again it will cool down and you can meditate then. This is what you are going on saying, like a debtor telling a creditor to come tomorrow, then tomorrow tell him to come after two days, after two days you would like to have another three days. There is no end to all this.

Why does lethargy arise in the mind? It is a trick played by the mind itself. It knows how to put a stop to your activities. If one method does not succeed, it will employ another method. There are other methods also which we shall see now.

"Are you not tired? Don't you want rest? How long will you go on sitting like this? Don't fall sick. Get up!" You hear this voice and do not know what to do. The remedy for this is not to listen to the voice as it comes, but understand that it is an undesirable message that is coming to hinder the progress on the path.

If you are really sick, that is a different matter. You have to take care of yourself by proper means. But if it is only a negative attitude of *tamas* that is operating inside and causing false fatigue and fake exhaustion, one should be vigilant. When you are doing no work, what kind of fatigue can be there? People do not do anything for days together, and then say they shall take rest. What kind of rest are you taking when you have done nothing? It is a kind of technology adopted by the mind to see that you should not progress spiritually. When tired, do not sit and meditate. Stand up for a while and move about in the verandah. Just stroll from this end to that end. When you are walking like that, the lethargy will pass away. Wash your face with a little cold water. Take a cup of tea if you like. Satisfy yourself, move about. When you are feeling better, sit and start meditation. You should never allow idleness to enter your mind.

Then a third technique can be employed by the mind. It may say, "The method that you are adopting for meditation is wrong. Do you know that it is an erroneous exercise that

you are practising? Who initiated you?" "I took initiation from that *guru* but he has not told me everything. I have some difficulties." Varieties of doubts can arise: "After all, is it possible for me to realise God in this birth? Who has seen God? Can you see one person in the world who can say that he has seen God or realised God? If that is the case, what is my fate? I am losing everything that I have in the world to pursue some will-o'-the-wisp, a phantasmagoria. I may have it or I may not have it; from the conditions prevailing in my mind, it looks like 'it is not for me'. It does not look that it is possible.

"All the joys of life I have cut off, and now nobody wants to talk to me; family members are annoyed with me. They do not like me and nothing comes from them. I have lost my job. One scripture says one thing and another scripture says another thing. 'Read the Bible,' some may say. 'Read the Gita, Upanishads,' say others. Which scripture am I going to follow? Even in the Gita one *sloka* says something and another *sloka* says another thing. 'Love me, do hard work, fight the battle of life,' it says. What is it actually that I am supposed to do? There is confusion everywhere. One verse of the Gita is contradicting another verse. You do not know what the Gita is saying finally. Let anyone say, after having read seven hundred verses of the Gita, what is the quintessence? You cannot understand! It is too much, and everything is a big jumble of instructions."

Vigilance is the Watchword

With doubt in the mind, how will there be concentration? You oscillate here and there, go to different teachers and ask a hundred questions and finally no answer

is satisfying. Then the previous difficulties will start once again. Physical illness may again creep in and dullness of spirit also will show its head. They will take possession of you because this is the proper moment to catch you—when you are unguarded and you are in a dubious situation.

What do you do at this time? Never make the mistake of changing your instructor or *guru*. Do not have doubts. There are a hundred guides in this country and you need not go to each one separately to ask different questions because the concentration gets diluted by diverting it in different directions and listening to hundred types of advice. This must be avoided. Be clear in your mind.

"Everything is clear to me—inwardly, outwardly, socially, everywhere. Everything is perspicacious, like a mirror. All things are shining before me. I have no problems." Until this clarity arises, it is no use taking further steps ahead. Else, you may retrace the steps already taken.

Then another difficulty arises: heedlessness, carelessness. "Tomorrow I shall do it." If you take diet every day, the body will grow and become healthy. If you eat once in three days only, the body will resent the process of eating. Even if you eat a little every day, it must be continuous, like the intake of medicines, which have to be taken at the proper time and in the proper quantity. The meditational process should be carried on every day. If you miss it for one day, the thread may be broken. Now you are a very busy person and have no time: "I am a travelling train inspector; the whole night I am moving in the carriage. How will I do meditation in the night?" You are not travelling all the twenty-four hours of the day. Some

respite you have, of course. Even if you are working in the office, you have some time of rest. There is something you can slice off even in the midst of busy duties.

It is to be remembered that the value of meditation does not so much depend on the length of time that you take in sitting for it, but in the quality or the intensity of feeling operating at that moment. Quantity alone is not important enough. Though lengthened period has some effect, quality is more vital. If you have time enough, sit for a long time.

But if you are not provided with the facility of sitting for a long time, ardently feel it, like a *gopi* who was not allowed to move towards Sri Krishna because her husband locked the door of the house. The others were running, but that one who was closed inside and could not go out reached the Almighty even before the others reached Krishna in the forest. These others took perhaps an hour to reach Krishna somewhere away, but before that time, that seeker who was inside the house had attained the Lord already. Quality, and not quantity is what is to be taken care of always.

When you are drowning, dying—what do you do at that time? Will you keep a timepiece and count the number of days and hours? The entire soul then will rise up into a total action. Quality is that which you feel when you are sure you will perish this moment, and you have then to think only one thought, the only thought possible, the all-consuming total thought.

"Heedlessness is death," said sage Sanatkumara to Dhritarashtra. You should not be careless about that which is your blessedness. Are you going to be callous about your own welfare? Who can afford that? So, be cautious, keeping this in mind always as a treasure trove that you are holding

in your mind. None can afford to be heedless and careless about spiritual practice. Never feel lethargic, despondent or melancholy.

After some time of meditation, another difficulty will arise. These terrible things called sense organs who appeared as your friends will now begin to act as enemies. Neglected friends are worse than open foes. One should be cautious about motivated friends. As long as you are behaving with them in the manner required, they are perfectly all right, very good indeed; but ignore them, and see what happens then. They can be more dangerous than those who paid you scant regard.

Are the sense organs your friends? "How beautiful!" says the eye. "How melodious!" says the ear. "How tasty!" says the tongue. "How soft!" says the touch. "How fragrant!" says the nose. You have been getting on with them as your lifelong friends. Now you say that you will not listen to them, you do not want to see, hear, touch, taste. If you behave like that, see what they do to you. They will rise up in a consensus and present illusions of satisfaction before your eyes. These impulsions can come in any form. Attraction is one form; repulsion is another.

Some of these presentations before the mind, created by the over-activity of the sense organs (positively on the one hand and negatively on the other hand), are briefly described in the sixth chapter of a poem called the 'Light of Asia' of Edwin Arnold, describing how Buddha had to face certain grand presentations—majestic, attractive, impossible to avoid seeing, deliciousness of every kind connected with every sense organ. When all the senses offer

you what you want, jointly, in all abundance, what do you do?

Previously, one sense organ was acting at one time and you were caught by that particular sense only. Now, like the members in a divided family, each one is fighting with the other. One Brahmani sultan would not like another sultan, but they were all joined together in attacking the Vijayanagara empire as they wanted to uproot it completely. This is a piece from the medieval history of India.

Yudhishthira says somewhere, "Between ourselves, they are a hundred and we are five. But against others, we are one hundred and five." The senses say that in normal times they will not do any harm to you. The eye will take care of you and tell you that beautiful things are there; the ear will stay away somewhere. But you have now abandoned befriending the senses and so they all will join and attack you concentratedly and every blessed thing will be there in front of you to pull you away. All the music, beauty, taste, delicacy, all the softness, all the aesthetic presentation will be in front of you. The whole world will dance with the music of celestials. Nobody on earth can resist all that. The meditation will go to dogs in a second when beauty of every sort begins to rain in torrents from all sides.

Such an intense form of presentation may not be the circumstance of a seeker who goes slowly; but if you are bent upon doing something and go with great earnestness, this kind of consequential reaction should be expected. The world of beauty will be in front of you sometimes. But if you are strong enough to resist it, there is another kind of activity to which the sense organs can resort. Death. They

will finish you today itself. "You are going to die," they will pronounce. "Do not be under the impression that you are safe. We will end you." When temptation fails, threat follows as thunder.

This kind of thing will be experienced after a long period of protracted meditation. You will not see all these things in the beginning or even for a few years, because mostly the meditation is mild, diluted, not strong enough. You cannot expect all these experiences at once. Intense meditation alone can evoke intensely strong presentations, milder attempts produce relatively subdued response.

There are other difficulties. You will begin to feel that you have the vision of God. But it may be mirage water (you are seeing something shining and you mistake it for water in a desert). Something agitating, disturbing, some colours, sounds, shapes, may be mistaken for a divinity seen in front. The shape can as well be the shape of your own desires and it may present itself as your most worthwhile aim in life. At that time you cannot make a choice. You are not going to be a judge at that time. Immediately you must then run to your master and speak out your experience. Was it God whom you saw, or was there a disturbance caused by sensory turmoil and mental anguish?

Your master who is competent enough to solve your problems will tell you what is actually happening to you because a *guru*, a teacher, is supposed to know every detail of the mental operations of a disciple. Any unusual occurrence of a psychological nature will be known to him when it erupts in the mind of a student. You cannot solve the problem yourself. You cannot be your own doctor at that time. You must listen to sagely advice. When a vision is

seen, you do not know what actually is there. The pressure exerted upon the *pranas,* sometimes, will present colours. You may even hear sounds due to the operation of the *pranic* forces inside. Go to the *guru* at that time.

There are other difficulties of a similar nature like missing the point of concentration. You have been concentrating on some particular ideal, on some location; you miss it. However much you may go on striking at that point, you will not get at it. Often we find that we cannot pass a thread through the needle's eye; however much we try, it will slip outside. Finally, with great difficulty, you succeed, but not suddenly, abruptly. You cannot even drive a nail on the wall without striking in different places.

You miss the point of concentration and struggle again and again. You will find that you cannot remember a familiar face. "What did I think yesterday? What was the point of concentration? What was I meditating upon?" You go on thinking it again and again and you find that you have missed the point completely. Another picture will present itself afterwards, not the one with which you started.

Then something more is there, yet: oscillation of the mind. Even if you get at the point, like a mercury ball it will not remain in one place. It will move like a pendulum, and will not fix itself at one focussed point. These are some of the mentioned kinds of problems that may arise in the process of meditation, all worth keeping in mind.

There is nothing equal to a guide. Do not be under the impression that you are intellectual and rationalistic enough to understand all the difficulties that may be ahead of you. No one can know all the future. Even after travelling

one mile you will not know what is there ahead of you. Only a good guide will know where you are, how far you have proceeded and what is ahead.

Daily *svadhyaya* (sacred study), daily *japa sadhana* (recitation of the divine name), chanting the name of God, or the formula of the *mantra* which you have chosen, resorting daily to the *guru*, attending *satsanga* (holy company) of saints and sages, being with them, listening to their discourses—all these will produce a cumulative effect of strength and security in your mind so that the problems mentioned will gradually diminish in their intensity and fade out completely later on. Sometimes everything may look dark in front of you. Two or three hours before sunrise, it is pitch-dark. It will be so dark at about half past three or four in the morning that it will look darker than it was at midnight. But the day is to break shortly.

Great sorrow sometimes befalls a person a few hours before illumination. "This is the last day of mine. All that I have done is a waste. I am croaking and perishing. I have achieved nothing, after all. This is all that I have gained after so much effort for years of sitting and brooding. I go with this grief in my heart!" Such was the feeling a little before the bursting of the light of illumination, even in the case of Buddha, as is the feeling of darkness a little before sunrise.

All great things happen like miracles. Very good things, and very bad things do not happen with previous notice. Suddenly you are on velvet, or suddenly you are inside a pit.

Today you are an emperor, tomorrow you are a beggar. Suddenly you are anointed with coronation, costumes, as a

king of the land. Tomorrow you are thrown into the dust as an unwanted waste, for reasons history knows. Spiritual tragedy and spiritual blessedness also are such extremes.

God (in some way at least) is an extreme form of reality and, therefore, the presentation of God before the seeker also may take place in extremely unthought-of and unexpected ways. You will not know that it has come because you never expected that it should come in that way. God need not come necessarily in the way you expect Him to come. He may come in the way that is necessary for Him to present Himself for your welfare. The occasion decides the nature of the manifestation.

Yoga practice itself is a miracle. The affection that yoga has for you, they say, is equal to hundred mothers' love. You love yoga but yoga also loves you. You may wonder what is the meaning of yoga loving you: yoga is a kind of practice; does practice love me?

Yoga does not mean only practice. It is something different also. It is the energy of the whole cosmos wanting to befriend you, come to you, take care of you, possess you, unite itself with you, inundate you and 'be' you. That is the Great Yoga. The world loves you more than you love it, and God loves you more than you love Him. You may move slowly towards the Goal, but it comes often with a great force. When the ocean rushes into the river, it will come with a greater energy and push than the force with which the river enters the ocean.

All these are interesting things, beautiful things to hear, like an epic story which will delight your heart, that you are on the right path. You are going to be blessed because you are honest and sincere and true to yourself. The great

saying of a poet is: “To Thine own Self be True.” Then you will be true to everything else, also.

Chapter VII

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

The chapters of the Bhagavad Gita may be said to indicate the progressive march of the spiritual seeker by graduated steps towards the achievement of the goal. What one sees in the beginning while looking at things with open eyes is a field of turmoil—a historical conflict and a difference between one thing and everything else.

We see the world in this manner. Everything is at sixes and sevens, everyone distrusts everyone else, everyone wishes to use and utilise everyone else, everyone is suspect about everything outside. Everyone has to guard oneself from every other person, though it is true that one cannot completely ignore the presence of this multitude of the variety of persons and things in the world. This is the picture of the field of battle.

Every moment of time we are facing such a situation. It is an inward battle, manifesting itself as an outward conflict; an irreconcilability within reveals itself as a physical irreconcilability and a practical difficulty. This is what is happening to us every day from morning to night, from moment to moment. We have to be cautious and look around in all directions, noticing what is happening, how we can adjust and adapt ourselves to the movement of conditions around, which are not uniform always, but vary from day to day and sometimes several times even in a single day. We have to face this world of irreconcilability. Why should we face it? Because we are in it. We have entered the field willy-nilly and while we are in the field, we

cannot absolve ourselves from the necessity to handle the situation in a requisite manner.

This is what they call the need to perform one's duty. Duty is what we are expected to do under a given condition; therefore, the colour and the contour and structure of duty also changes according to place, time and circumstance. What is duty in this place may not be duty in another place. What is duty at this time may not be duty at another time. What is duty under these prevailing conditions may not be duty under different conditions. *Desha*, *kala*, *paristhiti* (place, time and condition) decide the nature of what we are expected to do, so that we cannot have a textbook of the nature of duty anywhere in the world. We have to use our common sense, our feeling, and our understanding. *Understanding* is the word that will be underlined when we move forward through the chapters of the Bhagavad Gita. The word *buddhi,* reason, is emphasised always.

We find that this world is often too much for us. The large army of people, the entire humanity, seems to be facing us, staring at us, and telling us that we should be cautious: Beware! Sometimes we look much smaller than the world, which is larger, like the Kaurava army which is larger than the Pandava group. The world which is objective in its nature occupies a larger area in space and time than our individuality, our personality. We seem to be singly facing the world, which is like a vast ocean in front of us.

While it is emphasised that we have to face the world, we will also feel that it is not an easy affair. How will one person that I am be able to confront the sea of humanity, this vast world of space and time? Yet we are told again and

again to get up and gird up our loins for doing what is necessary. What is necessary? This requires not only a personal understanding within, but also guidance of a specific nature.

We may, in a mood of inadequate understanding of the circumstances prevailing, imagine that we can do something. There are people in the world who feel that they can conquer the whole of nature, face humanity, rule the world, become kings and emperors, dictators. Such feelings some may have, but these are only types of initial enthusiasm.

The world has not come under the control of any dictator finally. It has thrown them all out by producing historical circumstances, political conditions, and social catastrophes. In this situation, where one is not sure of whether it is possible to do anything at all in this world, one can throw down one's arms: "I shall not take up my weapon of effort in any way when now I realise that I am not up to the mark in my relationship with this power of humanity, the world of nature. This is not for me." So goes the defeatist attitude, which overpowers a person after a while, though there was initially a feeling that one could do many things.

Spiritual seekers, who have in the beginning felt a spurt of aspiration, begin to feel now that they can renounce the world and work vigorously for attaining God in this birth itself. This is what Arjuna felt: "Let the Kauravas know who I am."

We can see in the discourses given by Arjuna on the Pandavas' side, described to us in the Udyoga Parva of the Mahabharata, prior to the commencement of the war:

"What do they think they are? They do not know the power of my Gandiva. Let me twang my bow and see that their hearts quail." All this was told in the preparatory discussions in an audience, but, when, actually, the confrontation was on hand with the magnitude of the forces in front, the assumed confidence and valour flew like mist before the sun and a totally different mood overpowered the very same person who said he will twang the bow and break the hearts of the enemies.

The field of confrontation judges us. We will know ourselves only when we are faced by the opposite party. When nobody is opposing us, we cannot know what we are. Even the power of God Himself cannot be seen unless we oppose God. There are people who opposed Vishnu, Narayana. Then only He manifested Himself as a ferocious man-lion, Narasimha, or as a Rama or Krishna.

When we are confronting the world, it shows its strength, and we also will show our strength only when we are confronted. When we are losing everything, we will put forth all our energy to save ourselves.

The Divine and the Undivine Forces

There are two powers working in us—*daiva* and *asura,* as the Bhagavad Gita mentions. The weakness which tells us that it is not possible for us to face the world of objects arises on account of the undivine forces *(asura)* also operating in us, which tell us that we are puny little individuals, that we are nowhere before this large world. The astronomical universe terrifies us. We are one speck, atomic in size, like a particle on this small planet called earth, which is floating unrecognised in space in the midst

of large galaxies, unthinkable in vast space and time complex. We are flabbergasted at the might of this universe. We feel defeated, humiliated by the very size of the world.

But another thing, the divine nature *(daiva)* in us, tells us that we can overcome the whole universe; we can reach the stars and make them our own. We can probe into the mysteries of nature, conquer it and harness it, utilise it for our purposes. The *daiva*, the divinity in us, tells us: "You are not a weakling. Get up and show your strength! Don't be a coward." The other one says, "You are a coward, a weakling, you cannot do anything."

The facing of the world, confronting the Kaurava forces, meeting the requirements of the large humanity, calls for a development of our personality in a new direction altogether. We require a strengthening inwardly, gradually, in the needed measure to face the world, and it is necessary to face the world. We cannot run away from it. We are in it, steeped in it. What is the use of making complaints?

As threads are involved in the fabric of a cloth and one thread cannot say that it will run away from the cloth, none of us can say that he will run away from the world. Even Arjuna's complaint that he can flee and eat a beggar's meal in the forest is an unintelligent foolish person's attitude. Such a thing is not practicable in a world where we are inextricably involved in all things.

The duty, therefore, is not to run away from what we are confronting, but to develop enough energy in us to confront it. If we have to face the ocean, we have also to become an ocean. One ocean can meet another ocean, but the drop that we are cannot do that. We may feel that we

are a drop in the midst of the sea of Kaurava forces, but we are also an ocean inside, of which the drop is a vital part. Towards that realisation, move forward. Act now! Bring forth to the surface of your awareness the power that is in you called understanding.

We are not outside the world and the world is not outside us. The Kaurava and the Pandava forces are two sides of the same coin. They come from the same Vyasa Bhagavan. They are descendants of one person only. They are like two arms of a single individual. They are cousin brothers, belonging to one family. The Pandavas also are called Kurus sometimes, and the Kauravas also are called by the same name. Remember that they are descendants of Vyasa, who is the original progenitor of both sides. So also is there an origin of this world and also of our own selves, who look like individuals. We have a common parentage and a uniform heritage. This, on the one hand, is the light that will emanate from us by exercising our understanding, that the stuff of the world is also the stuff of our personality.

The World as an Integral Whole

When we behold the world, a part of the world in us is beholding itself as if it is located outside in space and time. A part of the total makeup of the whole creation, call it the world or the universe, segregates itself in a perceptional process as the individual perceiver on the one hand and the world of perception on the other hand.

The qualities of nature operate on both sides: the world objectively is constituted of certain forces which are the constituents of the perceiving individual also. When a

perception takes place through the sense organs, nature collides with nature. Matter comes in contact with matter; *prakriti* meets itself, embraces itself as if it is divided into two parts in a similar manner as my two hands can clap together and feel a sensation of unity between them, notwithstanding the fact that the two hands are emanations of a single makeup of my personality physically and mentally.

Here is the little specific recipe for us, given to us in the Gita itself. The qualities of nature operate upon the qualities of nature. Sense organs which are constituted of the properties of *prakriti* come in contact with the objects which are also constituted of the very same properties of *prakriti*, which are known as *sattva, rajas* and *tamas,* meaning harmony, distraction and inertia, respectively. We need not go into the meaning of all these words at present as I am only bringing this point as a kind of illustration that spiritual progress is something like the advance of the chapters of the Bhagavad Gita.

The advice given by Bhagavan Sri Krishna to the despondent individual Arjuna is to rise up to the occasion. In a military operation everyone has to rise up to the occasion and see that they succeed. Strength has to be infused into ourselves. We have to build up our personality. Energy should be infused into ourselves. We have to be morally, intellectually and physically strong. This is the teaching that we have in the second and third chapters. "Apply your intelligence. Resort to the Yoga of understanding."

How much understanding have we? We have a contorted understanding. We always see things in a topsy-

turvy manner. Right understanding is *buddhi yoga,* the understanding that properties of nature operate both inwardly and outwardly so that we are not seeing the world; rather the world is seeing itself. We are not confronting anybody else; the world is confronting itself for a total evolution to take place in an onward ascending march towards a recognition of itself.

The universe marches upward in an ascending spiral movement to find itself in itself, to know itself as itself, which is called the Self-realisation of the cosmos. We may call it God-realisation.

Yet we can feel a diffidence: "I understand what you are saying but the weakness of the heart does not leave me. Is it humanly possible on this earth to develop such a strength in me to face the whole world? I know what you are telling me. I have the potentiality to develop my strength enough to face the whole world. In spite of this advice to me, the understanding that I have generated in me still questions whether it is possible, or not."

There are higher powers which will be ready to bless us always. Nature is twofold, lower as well as higher, which will be told to us in several other chapters of the Gita. The lower nature makes us feel that we are weak and incapable. The higher nature sometimes gets submerged due to the clamouring sound made by the lower nature through the sense organs. Often many boisterous types of people shouting at the top of their voice can drown a wise word uttered by a good individual. Such things happen in our spiritual life. The soul will give us good advice but the clamour of the sense organs sometimes takes the upper hand and drowns the little voice of the soul. We feel

disconcerted; we do not know whether we are capable of doing anything at all. Even the head of the family can sometimes get disgusted due to the noise that the members of the family make. This may happen to us as spiritual seekers.

The Incarnation of God

Now, there is a guiding hand always; there is a leading angel sitting on our very shoulders. Every person is carrying within himself or herself a guiding power, a divinity. There is a divinity that is aware of what is happening. With millions of eyes it looks at us and sees us and notices what is happening to us. Our hairs are counted. The number of our breaths is known and whatever we think, feel and do is reverberating through the cosmos. There is one who knows the most secret deeds of our private personality and the whispers that we do in the ears of people in the remotest corner of the world. The little whisper that we make in the remotest corner of the world reaches the heavens like a thunder. Therefore, do not be under the impression that you are unguarded.

"Why are you afraid? I am here with you. When you are in danger, I shall come." The guiding hand of the Almighty is perpetually operating, not after some time, not tomorrow; it is just at this moment operating, whether we feel it or not. As it is well said, a sparrow cannot fall on your head without the will of the central power.

The fourth chapter of the Gita describes the operation of an *avatara*, the incarnation of God, in an assurance given to us, a promise made by God Himself: "I shall not desert you. My devotee cannot perish." Our hearts should jump

with joy by listening to such a promise. "My devotee cannot perish." Are you a devotee? Then you will not perish; you will never be let down at any moment of time. But be sure that you are a devotee. God has never deserted His devotees. "Proclaim, my dear friend, to everybody, through the newspapers, the radio and television that I shall not desert my devotees. I am there, ready at hand to protect them. I shall save them from the ocean of *samsara."*

When this assurance enters our heart, together with the understanding that we have developed as has been given to us in the previous chapters, we rise to some extent above the turmoil of life which was presented in the first chapter, and we have now developed a positive type of the spirit of renunciation, which is what we feel and find enunciated in the fifth chapter. Already we have renounced many things, even when we have taken to spiritual life, but that is an unintelligent type of renunciation. Just because we are away from our house for a long time, it does not necessarily mean that we have renounced our connection with the world.

On Renunciation

Even if you have renounced the world, the taste for the world will not leave you easily. The world has been abandoned but the taste for the world has not gone. Though you have not eaten *halva* and drunk *kheer* for three months, you know its taste. Can you say the taste also has gone? It will not go. The beauty of life, the fragrance of things, the velvet-like comforts of life may not be there when you are living like a *sannyasin*, but does the *sannyasin* know that such things exist in the world? Even the

knowledge that such palatable things exist is a negative deficit entry in the balance sheet of the spirit of renunciation.

There is no use saying that we have nothing. In some places, teachers of Yoga tell us that withdrawal of the sense organs from the objects does not mean closing the sense organs and plugging the holes of the apertures of perception. Really speaking, withdrawal of the sense organs means 'not being even aware that the objects exist at all as outside things'. That is real withdrawal. Being aware of something, and then shutting the eyes to it, is quite different from not being conscious of the externality of existences.

The earlier type of renunciation is immature. It is of a type of working knowledge that you have, not a qualified knowledge. The real renunciation is spiritual and not social, material or physical. You are not socially segregating yourself from anything materially or physically, which is actually what everyone does when one says he has renounced family circumstances, and the like.

Now, the instructions in the fifth chapter tell us that we are required to have another type of the spirit of renunciation which is purely spiritual in the sense that we have not even a taste for anything. "The pinnacle of *vairagya,* or renunciation, is reached," says a great master, "when you consider that even the joy of *brahmaloka* is like the taste of a dry straw." And what to speak of the joys of this world? These truths are all beyond our heads at present, but by intense practice and a hammering of these ideas again and again into the mind we will find that it is not only possible, it is an essential.

When this detachment of a wholly spiritual character takes possession of us, we become fit for direct confrontation of the reality of life. This is the preparation of the personality for the Yoga of meditation, as it is portrayed beautifully in the sixth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. What is this yoga that we have in this crucial phase?

The Great Spiritual Conquest

Uddharedatmanatmanam natmanamavasadayet;
atmaiva hyatmano bandhuratmaiva ripuratmanah.
bandhuratma'tmanastasya yenatmaivatmana jitah;
anatmanastu satrutve vartetatmaiva satruvat.

"One should exalt the self by the Self. One should not deprecate the Self, for the Self alone is the friend of the self, and the Self alone is also the enemy of the self. The Self is the friend of him whose self has been conquered by the Self. Where the self remains unrestrained, the Self would behave as its enemy, as an external foe."

The whole of the sixth chapter is here in these two verses. The Yoga of meditation is the art of the higher Self pulling up with tremendous force all that our lower self is. The self has to be raised by the Self. We have to raise our self by our Self. What does this mean?

The archetypal Self, the original Self, the heavenly Self, the divine Self, the Absolute Self that also we are, raises the puny self, the individual self, the physical self, the Mr. self or Mrs. self, the political self, etc. You may make a list of all the kinds of selves that you are—all transitional types of self, which is a conglomeration of what is known as the individual personal self. This has to be melted down, like a lump of ice, before the blazing sun of the knowledge of the

higher Self. But where is the higher Self? How many kilometres away?

How much distance is there between waking and dream—how many miles, light years of distance between waking and dream? A tremendous distance indeed! From one world we have gone to another world. There must be some distance, certainly. Yet, you will find that the distance is logically measurable but not physically calculable.

There is no physical distance between the higher Self and the lower self, between God and man. They are touching each other, not as two fingers meeting each other, but as the higher thought includes the lower thought, the higher knowledge transcends the lower knowledge, the higher education engulfs the lower education, the greater wisdom absorbs the lower wisdom. These are not physically or mathematically measurable in space; they are only measurements in understanding.

This higher Self, this God-driven Self which is our own Self, is our true friend, from which we can draw sustenance at any moment of time. It exudes veritable honey. But when the lower egoistic self asserts its independence and behaves not as a lower degree of the higher dimension of its own self, it will become its own enemy and thwart all its efforts. It is always well said, "To Thine own Self be True."

Says the Taittiriya Upanishad, "If space itself were not the field of great joy, who would breathe?" If breath itself is not a joy, who would be wanting to live? The breath would burn your nostrils. The *akasa,* space around us is also a field of joy only. That is why we want to enjoy it by looking at it and inhaling the breath emanating from it. Existence, accommodation, is itself the highest freedom and bliss.

Sometimes we say that man proposes while God disposes. This, because the self is opposed to the higher Self, it looks as if the higher Self is disposing of everything which one is proposing, but it will not behave thus if one is friendly with it. Who is the person of whom the higher Self is a friend? What kind of person can regard himself as the friend of the higher Self?

A particular kind of person that you *are,* alone, can regard yourself as the friend of the higher Self. Every kind of personality that you are is not capable of being a friend of the Self. You cannot shake hands with a highly placed dignitary unless you are also placed on an equal pedestal in some way. You want to shake hands with the higher Self; for that, you have to develop certain qualities which are required for that purpose. What are those qualities? The conquering of the self: *atma jaya*.

This question arose sometime in the context of the Udyoga Parva of the Mahabharata, where Dhritarashtra raises a question before Sanjaya: "Can I see that great messenger of the Pandavas who seems to be coming to meet us in our assembly? Can I have a vision of him?"

Sanjaya, the wise minister of Dhritarashtra, says, "You are asking me a question: whether you can see him. The *akritatman* cannot behold the *kritatman* that is Sri Krishna." The *kritatman* is one who has totally subdued the self. The *akritatman* is one who is a slave of the lower self. The person who is a slave of desires, befuddled in the midst of sensory attractions, cannot behold the great Being that is Krishna, who is a complete master of the self. The Eternal is irradiated through his Person.

The restraint of the sense organs is the means of subduing the self. Actually, the self that is to be subdued is nothing but the self of the sense longings. The sensory self is the self that is to be transmuted. We are now living in a world of sensations and the self that we are is ridden over by the potentialities of sense contacts, sense perceptions, sense desires. They have to be melted down into a liquefied menstruum of the power of the higher Self. "You must know that the One that is coming is All-in-all, and all your children, and all the henchmen behind them are nowhere behind this one Person," said Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra.

Many are the beauties and the powers and the joys of this world but the higher Self is standing singly by Itself. That one Being is greater than all the many things that are in this world. Therefore, Duryodhana made a mistake in choosing the army of Krishna, while Arjuna was wise enough to choose only one thing, who was Krishna. That One was greater than the multifold apparently strong soldiers of the army.

In the Mundakopanishad there is a similar analogy. Two birds are perching on a single tree, sitting on the same branch. There is a bird which is looking at the beautiful delicious fruits, but never eats them. The other one is very much engrossed in eating the delicious fruits—so much engaged in eating that it is not even aware that there is a friend sitting nearby. When the eating subsides, when the bird that is enjoying the delicious yield of this tree of life gets fed up with it and turns its gaze on the one who is silently witnessing only and not eating anything, its liberation takes place.

As long as Arjuna was looking at the army only, he was frightened. When he turned his eye to Krishna, energy entered him. Very active and virulent were the people whom he was facing in the front, known and unknown, kinsmen and enemies, put together. When seeing them, there was agitation in the heart and a valorous attitude manifested itself to fight the forces and attack them. But then he looked at the charming blue Man sitting, doing nothing. And that Nothing indeed was doing everything. Man does many things; God does nothing. That One who does nothing actually does more things than the many things apparently done by people in this world.

All our activities throughout history fade into a valueless nothingness before the tremendous activity of God. Who can say that the sun in the sky does nothing at all? He does not speak or proclaim himself. He minds his business silently locating himself in the blue sky. That silent existence itself is sufficient to make everything alive in this world. We run about, but the sun does not run about in that manner, while causing everything to run.

This higher Self is single; it is we, ourselves, in one lower position of ourselves, who feel we are multifold. We have many kinds of business, many things to do, many relationships. We have all sorts of engagements in the level of our lower selves, but in the higher one, there is nothing for us to do. We have only *to be*. When you just feel satisfied merely by your existence in the form of the higher Self, you have done everything; all the so-called needs for doing cease.

Conclusion

From the seventh to the eleventh chapter of the Gita is an ascending order of the rise of the consciousness of reality gradually revealing itself by stages. In the beginning one feels like a distant thing, away from God; afterwards we appear to come closer, then inseparable, then identical. God becomes our own Self, as in the *vishvarupa-darshana,* the Cosmic Form extolled in the eleventh chapter.

Then, the following chapters tell us how this knowledge is to be applied in our daily life, in our day-to-day practical affairs, so that the Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita is seen as a masterpiece of superb techniques by which one can blend together God and creation, the *here* and the *hereafter*. This life that we are living here is the very life that we are going to live transfigured in eternity. Here is before us the solacing message of the Bhagavad Gita, which everyone has to study with an in-depth understanding of its teaching. "Where the Absolute and the relative melt into each other, death becomes life, all is seen in the All, and there is ever prosperity, victory, happiness, and established polity."