MAN'S SEPARATION FROM GOD

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PUBLISHERS’ NOTE

The 25th of April 2022 marks the auspicious occasion of the Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Sivananda Ashram, Headquarters of The Divine Life Society, has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising the illuminating discourses of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj.

Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj arrived in Rishikeh in the summer of 1944, and remained here until attaining Mahasamadhi in November 2001. Swami Krishnanandaji was a master of practically every system of Indian thought and Western philosophy. “Many Sankaras are rolled into one Krishnananda,” said Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

Over the years Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj gave many profound and insightful discourses during Sunday night satsanga, and on holy occasions such as Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj’s birthday, Sri Krishna Janmashtami, Maha
Sivaratri, etc., and also during Sadhana Week and to the students of the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji always spoke extempore, spontaneously, without any preparation, and every discourse was fresh, unique, and divinely inspired. The audience was bathed in that stupendous unfathomable energy that radiated from Swamiji Maharaj during these discourses.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj’s discourses in booklet form as our worshipful offering at Swamiji’s holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet, ‘Man’s Separation from God’, consists of a discourse given at the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society
MAN’S SEPARATION FROM GOD

The stages of Yoga, as a practice, are actually in direct correspondence with the stages marked by the descent of the soul from God, which now become, in the reverse direction, the stages of the ascent of the soul to God or the Supreme Reality. This is the reason why we should have a philosophical background of the structure of the universe, and the nature of this descent and ascent, before we actually take to a serious study of the practical techniques of Yoga.

The Triad of Adhyatma, Adhibhuta and Adhidaiva

The whole of our experience in this universe is made up of two aspects, namely, purusha and prakriti, consciousness and matter, the seer and what is seen. The Yoga texts tell us that our experience, as constituted of the seer and the seen, is what can be called in Sanskrit vyavaharika satta. It means empirical experience. It is empirical, vyavaharik or of practical utility, because, though it is workable and seems to be the only reality available to us, it is
not the whole of reality. The aspect of the seer and the aspect of the seen, the consciousness aspect and the object aspect, the *purusha* aspect and the *prakriti* aspect, are often designated in the ancient texts as the *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta*. The *adhyatma* is the inward perceiving, seeing consciousness, lodged with the individuality of the seer. The *adhibhuta* is the universe of objects, or what appears as the material expanse before us. The classical Samkhya, as propounded by the sage Kapila, confines itself to these two categories, *purusha* and *prakriti*, and does not feel the necessity for anything else. But the Yoga texts are not all based entirely on the Samkhya as propounded by Kapila. There is a modification, an improvement rather, of the concept of Samkhya in other texts such as the Manu Smriti, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. A deeper analysis of this circumstance of there being the *purusha* and the *prakriti* as the only possible realities in experience leads the Upanishads particularly, and also the Bhagavad Gita, to proclaim by way of implication, the necessity to accept a third principle which may be called the *adhidaiva*, or the superintending Divinity, transcending the subject and the object, *purusha* and *prakriti*, because the connection between the seer
and the seen cannot be explained merely by the seer and the seen. The subject relates itself to the object and vice versa, in the awareness of the object. This relationship is inexplicable on the assumption that there are two isolated realities, the seer and the seen. Two demarcated principles cannot come in contact with each other and cannot know each other. The possibility of the perception or awareness of something as an object outside by the consciousness within can be accounted for only by the presence of something that is there as a connecting link between the subject and the object. This is invisible to the limited eyes. But, logical deduction requires or demands the presence of such a principle, without which it is not possible to explain how we are aware of the existence of the world at all.

How can anyone know that there is something outside, something that is totally cut off from the one that beholds that thing? That things are not entirely severed from the seer of the things implies again that there is a link between the seer and the seen, which is something transcending both the seer and the seen. So, beyond the adhyatma and the adhibhuta, there is the adhidaiva. The one infinite Being or the adhidaiva appears as the two, namely, purusha and prakriti, or the adhyatma and
the *adhibhuta*, the subject and the object. But it remains yet as a unity. God does not become the world as milk becomes curd, because once the milk becomes curd, it cannot become milk again. There is no internal transformation of the Supreme Being into the world. If that had taken place really, there would be no possibility of the world returning to God, in the same way as there is no chance of curd returning to milk. Such a transformation has not taken place in God, and it cannot take place, inasmuch as the Supreme Being is indivisible, and indivisibility cannot undergo transformation of any kind. Thus, the unitary aspect of the Supreme Being is maintained in spite of its apparent division into the seer and the seen, the subject and the object. Thus, behind the diversity of experience, there is the unity of a transcendental principle which persists in spite of the multiplicity and the duality of existence. So, there is a tripartite creation, we may say, over and above the dual concept of creation which we considered earlier. On the one side we have the universe which is the *adhibhuta*, on the other side there is the *adhyatma*, the viewer, the beholder of the whole universe, and above these two, we have the connecting link, the transcendental. We may call it the Divinity, we may call it the Devata, we
may call it God, we may call it the Angel or the Spirit of the Cosmos. Plato, for instance, speaks about there being a superintending archetype, as he calls it, transcending the world of opinion, sensory perception and mental cognition. Two things cannot relate to each other unless a third thing is there. This third thing was called by Plato as metaphysics. And, in Indian philosophical parlance, we generally designate this third principle as the Devata or the Divinity.

Generally, people think that in the religions of India there are many gods, resulting in a sort of polytheism. This is a thorough misconception of the philosophical foundation of India. There are not many gods. The many gods are the manifold levels through which the one Supreme Being manifests Itself by different densities of descent, becoming grosser and grosser, coming further and further down, for the purpose of maintaining the relationship between the subject and the object. As there are several levels of descent, it appears as if there are many gods, but they all are but different levels of the one supreme connecting Principle. Several levels of manifestation of one and the same thing cannot be regarded as many things; so, there are not many gods. This wrong idea of many gods
should be brushed aside from the mind. There is only one God and this superintending Principle is the Adhi Devata, the very, very essential Reality without which no experience can be accounted for.

**Tanmatras—The Basic Building Bricks of Creation**

The Yoga philosophy tells us that the objective side is to be visualised as constituted of five subtle forces. These forces are termed *tanmatras*. ‘*tanmatra*’ is a Sanskrit word meaning the basic essential building brick of any substance in this world. As electric energy is supposed to be the foundational reality of all physical objects according to modern science, *tanmatras* are regarded as the basic foundational essences of all objects. Perhaps, they can be equated with what we call today the electrical continuum of the cosmos. Now, again, we have to remember that this fivefold classification of the foundational force does not imply that there are five different forces. Even as the many superintending divine principles do not mean that there are many gods, and the manifoldness is only an appearance of the levels of descent, likewise, this appearance of five forces constituting all things is because of the five senses that we have, the five senses by which we perceive objects. Corresponding to the faculty or
sensation of hearing, we have a tanmatra of sabda, or sound. Sound is the object of the sense of hearing. Unless this object is present, hearing is not possible. We have only five senses of cognition or knowledge, and so, we have to conceive the object also in a fivefold manner. Perhaps, if we had one thousand senses, we would have imagined that there were one thousand foundational principles. Corresponding to the sensation of touch or tangibility, there is the tanmatra of what in Sanskrit goes by the name of sparsa. Sparsa is tangibility. There is a corresponding outside principle, called sparsa, which causes this sensation of touch. Corresponding to the sensation of sight there is the objective principle of rupa, or colour. Similarly corresponding to the sensation of taste, there is the liquid form of things, called rasa, or things that contain this liquid essence in some percentage or proportion. Then, finally, is the sensation of smell which requires a solid substance from which the smell can emanate. This solid substance, or principle, is called the tanmatra of gandha. So, the five senses of cognition correspond to the five basic objective elements known as the tanmatras—sabda, sparsa, rupa, rasa and gandha.

The objects that we see with our eyes, namely, those which are hard, substantial and solid are
constituted of a further intensified density or formation of these five basic elements obtained by mixing them in certain proportions by permutation and combination. This mixture of the basic principles—*sabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa*, *rasa* and *gandha*—is supposed to be the reason behind the formation of the five gross elements known as ether, air, fire, water and earth. These are known in Sanskrit as *akasa*, *vayu*, *agni*, *jal* or *aap*, and *prithvi*. We have only these things in the world. We may cast our eyes all around and we will see only these things and nothing else. The variety we see in this world is only the variety of the formation of individualities basically constituted of these five elements, which again are the outer manifestations of the basic principles of *sabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa*, *rasa* and *gandha*. Thus we come down to the lowest material level, called the earth.

**A Flaw in the Western Theory of Evolution**

Let us now consider what is called the doctrine of evolution as propounded by the West especially. The Western outlook of life does not consider the aspects of reality which we have analysed up to the level of the earth. The Western theory of evolution starts from the lowest material level, from which there is
a rise into larger and larger organisms manifesting life, mind and intellect, which can be seen in plants, animals and human beings respectively. Now, the Western education which has been imparted to us may make us think that we are advancing from a lower level to a higher level. We are always told that there is an ascent, and therefore an improvement, from matter to life, from life to mind, and from mind to intellect. Man is always supposed to be the pinnacle or summit of creation. We are superior to animals in every way, animals are superior to plants, and plants are superior to inorganic matter. This is the way we generally think. Rather, this is the way we are made to think, as we are repeatedly told about it by our educational syllabi. But, this is not true wholly. It does not mean that we are moving towards Reality if we are rising from matter to life, life to mind, and mind to intellect or the reason of man. Why it is not really an improvement can be known only to the subtle thinking to which a little hint is given in an Upanishad known as the Aitareya Upanishad. The subtlety of this idea is almost unparalleled and cannot be easily found in other systems of thought.

This can be illustrated by an example. Number two is more than number one; three is more than
two; four is more than three; five is more than four. If we have two dollars, naturally we are richer than the one who has only one dollar, and so on. So, if we have five dollars, we will feel that we are richer than the one who has four, three, two or one, merely because five is the larger number. But, minus two is not larger than plus one. Minus two is less than plus one, though two is larger than one, ordinarily speaking. Mere quantitative measurement is not the only criterion in our judgement here, in this process of analysis. There is a kind of reflection, as it were. And there is this characteristic about a reflection that it removes the reality from its base into an opposite direction, and so, the more we go away in the direction of the reflection, the more also may be said to be the distance that we maintain from the original reality.

An important point is made out by certain thinkers in the West, like Henri Bergson, for instance. Bergson is very sure that animals are nearer to Reality than man, for important reasons which may not occur to the minds of people ordinarily. The instincts of the animals are nearer to truth than the reasons of man, because the reasons of man are laboured, are mathematically calculated with tremendous effort, whereas animals have sudden
responses, albeit those responses may be blurred and not clarified. This instinct of the animals, however dim, is supposed to be nearer to Reality than the clarity of the so-called intellect of man. There is this instinctive sensation in the lower creatures which is not available to man. Even dogs and cats have a peculiar sense of contact with Reality, which sense is not accessible to us. There are, it is said, very minute insects, like the snails, living some three or four kilometres below the level of the ocean waters, a depth which moonlight may not reach and sunlight may not touch. These insects there, crawling at the base of the ocean, might not have seen even the light of day. Such insects are now discovered to be guided by the waxing and the waning moon, moving in the sky, two hundred thousand miles away from the surface of the earth. We are very dull in our brains, compared to all these sensations which the snails feel and the ants feel and the honey bees feel. Even when the rainy season is one month away, the ants know that the rains are to come; whereas, we cannot know even if it is to rain tomorrow, unless we go to the meteorological department. Even there, something goes wrong oftentimes. Even the plants know what vibrations are around them. The great discoveries of Sir J.C. Bose are a standing refutation
of our old belief that plants do not feel, do not think, and know nothing.

The Deeper Implications of Man’s Fall from Heaven

The Aitareya Upanishad tells us that there has taken place a kind of catastrophe when individuality asserted itself. This, in my opinion, is the same as the fall mentioned in the Genesis of the Bible. The fall is nothing but a catastrophic isolation from the Supreme brought about by an affirmation of egoism. The isolation is bad enough. But, something worse seems to have taken place, by which we cannot even know the fact of the isolation. The point that is made out in the doctrine of the isolation of the individual from the whole may make us feel oftentimes that the part is at least qualitatively the same as the whole. One grain of sugar is qualitatively the same as the mountain of sugar. One drop of the Ganges river is the same as the whole river qualitatively. A little bit of the ocean is the same as the whole ocean qualitatively. So, are we qualitatively the same as the Supreme Being, though we are a little jot or a fraction thereof? This is not so. While it is true that we are isolated parts or cut-off parts from the Universal Being, it is not true that we are qualitatively the same as That. We are not little gods thinking here.
It is not so. We do not have that godly or divine thinking in our minds even in the smallest fraction, notwithstanding the enunciation of the scriptures that we are isolated parts of the whole. A sudden reversal of perception has taken place, which is the unfortunate thing that has happened to everyone. The reversal is difficult to understand. We have been exiled from the Garden of Eden, thrown out from the realm of Godhood, banished totally from the angelic status which we were occupying in Brahma-Loka. We have been ousted out completely from our original status. We are now away from our home.

Now, normally, when a member of a family is away from home, he does not cease to be a human being. He is still the same, though he is not in the family. But, here, we have ceased to be, in quality, the thing that we were originally. Otherwise, we would be thinking like God in our little fractional bodies. It has not been possible for us. This situation is very enigmatically and very picturesquely and very rapidly mentioned in the Aitareya Upanishad. Hunger and thirst possessed the individual the moment his isolation from the Supreme took place, says the Upanishad. This hunger and thirst, at first of a philosophical nature, condensed itself into the well-known hunger and thirst, the gross hunger and
thirst we are acquainted with in our daily life. There was an agony, an anguish, indescribable in human language. The loss of all the property that we have in the world may not be such an agonising experience to us as the loss of our contact with the Supreme Being. The latter agony is indescribable; our heart will be rent asunder even by the thought of it if we were to know what it is. We are in the most wretched of conditions considering this description that is available to us in the Upanishad. We are the most miserable of individuals.

God has punished us in two ways. It is said in the Bible that a flaming sword is kept so that Adam and Eve may not enter the Garden of Eden. The flaming sword is there, no doubt, so that we cannot think of God at all. This inability on our part to think of the Whole, of which we are a part, is called *avarana*, the complete veil that has been cast over us. The veil is bad enough. That we cannot think of what the Truth is, is bad enough. But the worse misfortune is that we are thinking what is not there. It is like a person who has gone mad, and at the same time, is possessed by a devil! Madness is bad enough, and on top of it, a devil also has possessed the person afflicted with madness. So, on the one hand, there is a total forgetfulness of our relationship to the
Whole. This is *avarana*. On the other hand, there is what is called *vikshepa*, or the distractedness of consciousness, which projects itself vehemently outward in space and time, and sees Reality as if it is outside consciousness. The wholeness, or the integrality of the cosmic structure, is made to appear as an object external to the sense-organs of the individuals. One commentator on a passage of this Upanishad tells us that this reversal can be described as something similar to the reversal that we see in the reflection of our own body in a mirror. There, our right appears as the left, and our left appears as the right. Similarly, because of the reversal that has taken place on our separation from the Supreme, what is inside appears as being outside. The universe, the world, is not outside us; it is impossible that the nature of things can be external to consciousness. But, what is it that we see with our eyes except externals? Only externality, and nothing but that.

**The Anatomy of Human Desire**

This isolation of the part from the whole is the beginning of the individuality of things. It may be plant, it may be animal, it may be man, and it may be even the so-called angels in heaven. Any consciousness of one’s being separate from what
Man’s separation from God

One sees is called the individual sense or *asmita* or self-sense. Grossly put, it is what we know as *ahamkara* or egoism. The sense of one’s own existence as apart from other things is called egoism, basically, philosophically, or in the language of Yoga and Samkhya. The isolation from the Supreme is accompanied simultaneously with the reversal of perception, which means to say, that the universe appears as an outside object; and the universe appears as an object which is material, that is, bereft of consciousness. The wall does not seem to have any consciousness, and everything that is external is divested of intelligence, because intelligence cannot see intelligence. It can only be inferred as existing. What we see outside is only an appearance of the body or a movement of it, but the actual seeing principle cannot be seen. Because, the seer cannot be seen. The presence of the seer in me can only be inferred by the manifestations of it. The objective world appears as an external something, and therefore, there is a necessity felt inside in one’s own consciousness to regain that unity which has been lost. Because truth always triumphs, reality asserts itself. And the reality is that the world is not outside us. The truth is that the world is not outside us. This circumstance of the universe being outside us, or our
being outside the universe, is a false situation. So, we want to rectify this mistake by coming in contact with everything, grabbing all things, and making them our own! The desire to possess property, and to grab things to the largest extent possible, is basically a desire to get united with the Almighty. The desire to possess is a desire to unite. But, because of the reversal that has taken place, this union is not possible. The reflection cannot unite itself with the original, because the two are basically, qualitatively, different. So, despite all our desires to come in contact with things, we do not really come in contact with them. So, every desire is frustrated in the end. We go on sorrowing in spite of our efforts to possess things. Desires are condemned because of this error involved in the attempt to fulfil a desire, though there is a basic piety behind the manifestation of every desire. Every desire is holy in the sense that it is fundamentally a wish to unite oneself with all things. But, there is also the devilish aspect behind it, namely, that it is trying to come physically in contact with the object for its satisfaction, in space and in time, which is an impossibility.

The reflection cannot be decorated in order to beautify the original. This is an image that occurs in a great passage of Acharya Sankara in one of his
works. If a person wants to decorate himself and put on a necklace, or put a mark on his forehead, he looks at his face in a mirror. But he does not put the necklace on the image in the mirror; he puts it on himself. The moment his original self is decorated, the image is automatically decorated. He has no need to decorate the image or beautify it again, in addition to the effort on his part to beautify himself. Now, all our desires are attempts at beautifying, decorating or possessing the reflections, ignoring the original. Because, the original is not an externality, and our desires ordinarily are desires for those objects which are external to ourselves. Here lies the basic mistake in our attempts at the fulfilment of desires. So, while there is some sort of a significance in the manifestation of every desire which is worthwhile, while there is a divinity aspect in every desire, the opposite of it also is simultaneously present, which makes it very difficult to understand the justification or otherwise for the fulfilment of any desire. It requires great caution to understand where we are moving, and what is the basic reason behind our movements. Thus, in the isolation of the individual from the cosmic forces, there is an automatic reversal of perspective, a reversal in the process of the part perceiving the whole. The part
does not see the whole properly. The object does not retain its originality when it is beheld by the subject in space and in time. There is a distortion that automatically takes place, and a misguided representation of the objects happens, when the isolated individuals begin to judge things outside. So, we cannot judge anything correctly from an individual standpoint, because this judgement of any individual in respect of the objects outside is based on the reversal process that has already taken place. And unless the individual places himself in the position of the original Supreme Being, his judgements may not be correct always.

**The Apparatus of Perception: The Three States and the Five Sheaths**

The descent has not ended here. We have to become worse still. The more we consider our predicament in the world, the more will we start crying and weeping. We have not merely been banished from the great realm of the Brahma-Loka, the Garden of Eden; we have not merely been twisted in our brains by the reversal process of perception. Something worse still has taken place. We are going down and down into farther and farther extensions, away from the Ultimate Reality.
What has happened? The movement outside in space and in time is a mistake in our evaluation of things. Today, people think that going to the moon or Mars is a great achievement. It is not. Very, very sorry is the state of affairs. While the moon is good enough and Mars is quite all right, the desire to move outwardly for the purpose of knowing what the moon is or Mars is, is a mistake on our part. We cannot know anything by moving like this outwardly. Because, outwardness is not the real nature of things. Externality or objectivity is not their true nature. So, to move towards an object, the moon or whatever it is, externally through space, is a misdirected attitude of our consciousness. Yoga tells us that to know a thing, one has to be the thing, and not merely look at the thing. And one cannot be the moon, as we all know very well. And what is the use of running to it? It does not make us wiser in any manner. The ancient wisdom moves in a direction, perhaps quite the opposite of the way in which modern mind works in these days. Yoga is not a contact physically with anything. It is a union of being with Being.

So, this isolation, attended with a reversal of perception, causes certain difficulties in us, just as one disease, if neglected and not cured promptly,
makes room for another disease. First it is a little constipation, and then a little headache, then temperature, and then more complications one after another! The result is that one becomes a chronic case, because a little difficulty was neglected in the beginning. In the same way, first it is an isolation of man from the Supreme; then there is a reversal of perception by which the universe appears as an external object. Now, this perception of the universe as an external object requires a certain apparatus of perception. So, the individual manufactures certain instruments. These are the sense-organs and the psychological structures within us—the mind, the reason, the ego, the subconscious, the unconscious and so on. Also, as a person who has received a tremendous blow on his head may lose his sensation for the time being, and not know what has happened to him, the individual is given a terrific blow the moment there is a severance of himself from the Whole. And so, there is a sudden unconsciousness. He falls, as it were, not knowing what has happened. This is the first catastrophe, a swoon into which we fall by the blow struck on us by the very act of separation. Then, this sleeping gradually turns into a swoonish perception, which is like a dream observation of things. The man who is
in swoon slowly wakes up and sees things hazily, but not clearly. And later on, he begins to see clearly, but wrongly. The waking state starts.

The three states—sleep, dream and waking—are the three houses, the three citadels, of the isolated consciousness, says the Aitareya Upanishad. These are the three cities of the three demons mentioned in the Puranas as the Tripuras—one made of gold, one made of silver, and one made of iron. We go round and round as if we are seated in a merry-go-round. We rotate through these three experiences of sleeping, dreaming and waking. No other experience is possible. These three states are the modified conditions of the individual consciousness. They are capable of a further division into what are usually known as the sheaths, or the *koshas*, in the language of the Vedanta. The dark, causal, sleepy condition is known as the *anandamaya kosha*. Then, the externalised faculty of intelligence manifest out of it as a tendril growing out of the seed, is called the intellect. Simultaneously manifest with it is egoism, the mind that thinks, the *prana* that operates, and the body that is seen. So, the causal condition is called the *anandamaya kosha*; the intellect is the *vijnanamaya kosha*; the mind is the *manomaya kosha*; the vital body inside is the *pranamaya kosha*; and
the physical body is the *annamaya kosha*, the food sheath as we call it.

**The Urge to Regain the Lost Kingdom and the Way It Manifests**

This is the descent that has taken place. We have come to the body. We look at the body as a very hard and solid substance. We have dropped from the skies; and we have come down lower and lower; firstly separating ourselves, then looking outside, then manufacturing the three states of consciousness, then the five sheaths. Even that does not seem to be enough for us; we are not satisfied. We go down further still. What we call organisational life, the social life, is a further movement. An individual cannot be resting himself in the individuality merely. He feels the urge to connect himself with the other individuals. It is not enough if one has merely entered into this body. It does not mean that everything is over. Because, the finitude of individual existence is totally sorrow-striking, the encasement of consciousness within the walls of the body is so very intolerable that the finite being, in his intense restlessness caused by this lodgement in the body, struggles to get out of this finitude. The prisoner wishes to get out of the prison at the
earliest opportunity, by any means available, by all means available. And what are the means available to us when we are in this body? To this finitude, the individual tries to expand this finitude itself through adding many finitudes together and increasing the quantity of the finitude, giving it an appearance of a larger dimension. The finite being expands himself, as it were; he delimits himself, as it were, by adding on to his own finitude other finitudes. One is not sufficient; we add one more, and it becomes two. Two is not adequate, another one to make three, and so on. We go on adding finitudes under the impression that many finitudes in an aggregate make a sort of infinite. But, the infinite is not an aggregate of finitudes. So, here again, we are a failure. That is why the rich man is not happy. The person who exercises authority in society, socially or politically, is not happy either. No one becomes happy by making a collection of aggregates of finitudes, physically or psychologically. Because, the finite being remains finite in spite of the multiplication of the units of finitude. The relationship of one finite being with another finite being is called social relation. It may be with another human being or with any other thing in the world. Any kind of external relation is a society formation. And we find that we cannot exist
without this. Thus we have come rolling, down and down, to this level of a social consciousness, which has precipitated further into what is called political consciousness, the last level into which we have fallen, the most artificial of organisations that we can think of.

Now, the whole purpose of Yoga practice is to regain the lost kingdom. First of all, we have to know where our kingdom is. We have been thrown further and further, down and down, away from the centre of our being. The system of Patanjali, particularly, is very scientific and very logical. And the great teacher takes his stand on the lowest of realities because educational psychology requires that a teacher or a student should take the lowest standpoint first, and not go to the higher ones when the lower ones have not been properly investigated into, studied and transcended. Yoga is a gradual transcendence, and not an abnegation of realities. Yoga does not require one to renounce realities, but to transcend lower realities for the purpose of gaining the higher. So many a time we think that Yoga means sannyasa, and we equate sannyasa with a throwing out of physical particulars, a renouncing of homesteads and chattel, father and mother and job, and sitting somewhere. This is not Yoga, because
Yoga is not a giving up of things, but a giving up of wrong notions about things, and about the world as a whole. The essence of renunciation or *sannyasa*, monkhood or nunhood is not a renunciation of objects, but the renunciation of the objectness or the externality of the objects. It is the renunciation of the idea that the objects are outside us. That is *sannyasa*. Merely to move from one place to another and think that we have renounced something is a mistake because even if we move geographically, physically, from one place to another, the object of our supposed renunciation still remains outside our perception; we still think of it as an external thing, we still have a judgement or an opinion over it, and the renunciation of it has not taken place.

Yoga requires of us a renunciation, no doubt. Patanjali says that *vairagya* and *abhyasa* should go together. The Bhagavad Gita also says the same thing. *Vairagya* means renunciation, abnegation, *tyaga* or relinquishment. *Abhyasa* is positive practice. But, relinquishment or abandonment or abnegation or renunciation of what? That has to be made clear first. The great gospel of the Bhagavad Gita is a standing message to all seekers of Yoga, wherein is hammered into our minds the necessity to understand what renunciation is, what *asakti* is.
It is attachment to things that is to be renounced, and not the things as such, though there are various physical methods and social needs that may have to be abided by for the purpose of achieving this true renunciation. But, basically, it is an absence of taste for things which is called renunciation, and not an absence of the physical proximity of objects. If taste remains, true renunciation has not taken place, even if the objects are left physically far behind. Here, the problem is a problem of consciousness. The whole of Yoga or philosophy is a study of consciousness ultimately.
The stages of Yoga, as a practice, are actually in direct correspondence with the stages marked by the descent of the soul from God, which now become, in the reverse direction, the stages of the ascent of the soul to God or the Supreme Reality. This is the reason why we should have a philosophical background of the structure of the universe, and the nature of this descent and ascent, before we actually take to a serious study of the practical techniques of Yoga.

—Swami Krishnananda