

THE BRAHMA SUTRA ON THE FINAL SALVATION OF THE SOUL



SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

The Divine Life Society Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India
Website: www.swami-krishnananda.org

Publishers' Note

Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj gave this series of discourses on the Brahma Sutras to the students of the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy of The Divine Life Society, Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India during May and June 1997. It is an addition to the series of discourses on the Brahma Sutras that Sri Swamiji Maharaj gave in March 1997 to the previous batch of Academy students.

Table of Contents

Publisher's Note

Inauguration

Chapter 1: An Overview of the Brahma Sutra

Chapter 2: The Intention to be Born as an Individual

Chapter 3: The Cosmic Role of Karma in the Rebirth of Individuality

Chapter 4: The Cosmic Introversion of Consciousness

Chapter 5: The Stages of the Ascent of Consciousness

Chapter 6: Concentration and Meditation: Part 1

Chapter 7: Concentration and Meditation: Part 2

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Inauguration

LEARNING THE ART OF BEING ALWAYS HAPPY

This Academy, founded by the great saint Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, is avowed to cater to the all-round needs of a human being, and point out the ways and methods of overcoming the limitations that we feel in our own lives. Everywhere there is a sense of lacuna in the life of a person. No one feels complete in one's own self. Either we are financially not well off, or our health is not on par, or socially we have got some problems, or there is tension in the office, or some other difficulty is in the family. So many things are there that it becomes difficult to adjust oneself with the pressures exerted in this manner, from different corners and aspects of human involvement.

What are we going to teach you? We are not going to instruct you on any kind of abstract academic subject, of which many of you are perhaps already aware, and in which you must be already trained very well, being highly educated persons. What is required is the learning of an art of being always happy in yourself.

Health and happiness go together, and health does not necessarily mean a sturdy body, a muscular person, and so on. It is a sense of buoyancy that one feels in oneself, an alertness in intelligence, and self-sufficiency in one's own being. The self-sufficiency is incapable of attainment on account of a perpetual pressure from the inner needs of the psyche, which goes on telling you that there are many other things in the world which are greater than you, and you are a little small fry when compared to all these people.

It is necessary for you to know that you are a complete person. If you feel that you are not complete, it is up to you to learn the art of making yourself feel complete in yourself. The physical completeness is there already. Your physical body is complete in itself; it lacks nothing. But is the mind also complete in itself? Are your thoughts integrated? Is the way of your thinking in a state of harmony? Many thoughts arise in the mind on account of the existence of varieties of things in the world with which the mind is connected, whether deliberately or inadvertently. Are you able to put these thoughts together into a focus of harmony, so that even if the thoughts are many, you are sure that the mind is one only? If the mind is one, and not manifold, the variety of the processes of thinking should not affect you seriously, if you are a good psychologist of your own mind.

The objects of perception may be many, but you are one integral whole. You do not become many when you perceive many things. This is a psychological secret. When you are conscious of many things, you may sometimes, due to lack of proper attention to the situation, feel that you also have become many things. You feel a sense of being torn into shreds of isolated aspects of personality. Either you go on thinking that you are a student, or you think that you are a professor, or a boss, or an engineer, or a husband or a wife, or a brother or a sister. Always these thoughts impinge upon the mind and will not permit you to think that you are something else in addition to this participation of your nature in the varieties

of engagements. You do not become many things merely because you think many things but, very unfortunately, it looks as if you become many things, which causes distraction, despondency and inability to be cohesive in your thoughts. You cannot stand integrated in your own self.

The art of being is greater than the art of living somehow in the world in a getting-on way of existence. Somehow you can get on in life, but your being should not be shaken up. There are many kinds of doings in which you are engaged, but your being cannot be manifold. You are one being only, and a very strong being. The strength of your being arises on account of your capacity to absorb the varieties of perceptions in your total individuality, the whole that your mind is. In modern terms, they say it is a holistic way of thinking. The mind operates in a holistic manner, not in fractions.

Even if there are umpteen thoughts in the mind, they are coordinated to the central operative factory of the mind, and each one is conscious that these thoughts are my thoughts: "I have a hundred varieties of thoughts in my mind, but these thoughts are in my mind; that is to say, I stand single, integrated, wholesome, in spite of the apparent ramifications of the thought process." This is the fruit of psychology and, to some extent, philosophy also.

Towards this end, it has been proposed in this Academy to impart a new type of education, which will cater to the different aspects of your personality. Your intellectual and rational being should be satisfied. There should not be any kind of intellectual doubt in the mind. Everything should be cleared, threadbare.

There is also emotion in your mind. You have a feeling. Oftentimes, you feel something which is not necessarily what you are trying to understand through the intellect. The reason may argue out a conclusion which is perfectly valid systematically, but the feelings will say, "After all, I am something different."

Feelings are the motive force in your personality. The emotion is the engine which pumps energy into the whole system, and even the intellect sometimes becomes subservient to the operation of the feeling. Whatever be your intellectual conclusion, professorial scholarship and degree that you hold, if the emotions revolt, you are immediately torn into a non-rational person.

There is a third aspect of the performance of the mind, which is called volition, or determining power. The power of the will is one of the aspects of the operation of the mind. Understanding, feeling and will are the three primary aspects of psychological functioning.

But there are deeper layers of our personality, all which we have inherited through the various incarnations we have experienced in our life. We have not suddenly dropped into this world from nowhere. A very complicated and comprehensive evolutionary process determines everything that is taking place in creation, and we are involved in this evolutionary process. It is not enough merely to participate in the integrating necessity in a family life; we have also to be integrated with society outside, with all the situations arising in the world. Finally, we have to be in harmony with the demands of nature, and ultimately with the requirements of the law of God Himself.

This personality, this human being, this 'I' or 'me', whatever it is, is not sitting outside the world. It is a great participant in the history of the cosmos. This is very important. It is not easily given to us during our usual syllabus or curricula in the colleges and universities. There, we have only compartmentalised teachings; it may be mathematics, physics, biology or law, and there is no connection of one with the other.

A person who is a master of physics met me one day. I mentioned to him casually in talking that there was a king called Ashoka in India. He asked, "What is Ashoka?"

"You have not read history?"

"But I am a physicist," he said.

This is very strange. We may be a physicists, but we should have studied some history also. How do we suddenly jump into physics and know nothing about Indian history? We do not know world history, we do not know cosmology, we do not know anything about astronomy, the stars in the heavens, and so on.

This kind of education, where we are compartmentalised completely like in a barbershop, is no good. Humorously they say that a barber was telling, "I only know how to put soap on your head, but shaving I cannot do. You go to another man for shaving." So the poor man with soap on his head had to go to someone else. This kind of education is no good. We must be complete and happy in our own being, even if it is on a moderate scale. I do not mean that one should be omniscient, but moderately one is a complete, educated person. One should not be an ignoramus.

Toward this end we have taken the help of various learned people here. We have some professors from universities, who have now retired. Each one is a master of one subject, but they are all devotees of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, so they will be able to handle the subject in such a way that the teachings stand in unison with the ideals of the great founder of this institution. These ideals are spiritual uplift, enhancement of the spirit, and the recognition of the Atman, knowing your own Self. Know yourself, and then you will be free.

Most people say, "I know myself. What is wrong with me?" This kind of self is no good. This is the physical self which you are speaking of; and even if it is a psychological self, it is inadequate. There is a social self with which you are connected, and there is an emotional self, which arises on account of your likes and dislikes in respect of things in the world. There is a political self, as a citizen of a country. Many layers of self are there. Now, when you say, "I am studying the Self, the Atman," what kind of self is it?

There are three kinds of self, at least, mentioned in philosophical circles. One is the false self, which is the physical self. This physical self is not the true self. It is temporary, vanishing, evanescent, fluctuating, perishable, and it has a beginning and an end. Then there is the social self. You always identify yourself with a community, a nation, a language, a culture, etc. Then there is the emotional self, as I mentioned. When the mind is tied to something, positively or negatively, liking or not liking, you create another self, a secondary self of emotional attachment.

Whatever you are thinking in your mind, that becomes your self. The mind will not move towards anything unless your self also has alienated itself to some extent in that direction. You can take no interest in anything unless the self has transferred itself from your physical location to that particular object. Whether you like it or you do not like it, either way, there is a self-alienation taking place, and all sense perception thus becomes a travesty of affairs, an arena of muddled activity, so that no one knows what one is doing from morning to evening.

To free a person from these difficulties arising out of a maladjustment of personality with one's own self with society, with nature and with God Himself, an integrated system of teaching has to be conceived, which was in the mind of the great founder, Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. I am not going into details of all this just now; I am only expressing my happiness that I am in the presence of very interesting, very able, highly learned students.

Chapter 1

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BRAHMA SUTRA

What we consider as a school of philosophy is a system of investigation into the ultimate cause and meaning of any thing or event. The essential feature of philosophical investigation is that it goes to the root of the matter—what are the causative factors behind the occurrence of an event or the appearance of any form, sentient or insentient. There are various attempts in this direction, carried on both in the East and in the West.

We have in India the famous six systems of philosophy known as Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta. We may say that these six represent a kind of gradational advance in the vision of things, and one is not supposed to contradict the other. The higher vision may supplant and supersede the vision that is a little lower, but the lower is not rejected by the higher. Therefore, it would be an erroneous approach on the part of any deep thinker to imagine that schools of thought, which vary, are self-contradictory. They are facets of perception, and there can be any number of facets and phases in the perception of anything whatsoever.

Just as we have the well-known six systems of philosophy in India, we may note that in the West also, six great thinkers arose, among many others. But these six systems in the West cannot be regarded as a gradational ascent, as it is in the case of the schools in India. They are independent philosophical schools, standing by themselves, though as a student of the history of philosophy, we may see a kind of sequential advance that is made in some way or the other.

For instance, in ancient times, Plato and Aristotle form one group of thinkers; in the medieval period, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas go together; and in the modern period of Western thought, we have Kant and Hegel. I was reminded of this wonderful similarity in comparison with the schools of thought in India.

All these systems—Nyaya, Vaisheshika, etc.—were originally written down in very short, pithy notes, called sutras. In those days when these systems were initiated, there were no large textbooks. Everything had to be memorised, and in order to keep in memory the essential foundational features of any particular school of thought, the originators put them in brief, knotty sayings, called sutras.

Nyaya Sutra and Vaisheshika Sutra confined themselves to the ancient system of physics and logical induction and deduction. The Nyaya is primarily concerned with syllogism, including inductive processes and deductive processes. The Vaisheshika is pure physics, enumerating the categories of ultimate realities, considering that there is a multitude of realities, or manifold realities. We can note how the thought advances. There is logical argumentation to establish the principle of the multitude of realities, as a sense of perception would reveal, and intellectual arguments would confirm.

The Samkhya is of a different nature. There are not many realities for Samkhya. It also has its own logic. Every school of thought has its own logical system to establish the validity of its proposition. While many realities are

posited by the Nyaya and the Vaisheshika, only two are recognised in the Samkhya. The entire experience, cosmic or individual, is explicable through the interaction of two realities: consciousness and matter. There is nothing anywhere except these two things. There is a knowing individual, a consciousness that is aware, and an object of which consciousness is aware. The Samkhya has its own terminology. The object of perception, which is inert in its nature, is by Samkhya designated as prakriti, the matrix of all things. The knowing principle, consciousness proper, is called purusha. Purusha does not mean 'man'. It is only a way of putting things for the purpose of explanation. It means the primary intelligence which observes, interprets, and comes in contact with the matter of the universe.

I am briefly introducing you to the methodology adopted by the six schools of thought. The Samkhya considers that matter is ubiquitous. Everywhere there is matter. Matter is immeasurable and permanent, and it cannot be destroyed. Its constituents change and modify themselves in the process of evolution and involution, but matter is not destroyed. It stands as it is, and as it shall always be.

The peculiarity of the Samkhya that consciousness is manifold in its nature is contrary to expectations. That is to say, the observers of the object are many in number. They have made a mistake here in confusing psychological consciousness with metaphysical awareness. However that be, we are not here to argue for or against Samkhya. It is only a statement of the position made by the Samkhya. There are multiple perceiving centres of consciousness, called *purushas*, and there is one inert matter, called *prakriti*.

Hence, there are the twins Nyaya and Vaisheshika on the one hand, and Samkhya and Yoga on the other hand. Yoga adds one more principle to the existing or accepted two principles of Samkhya. For Samkhya, only two things are sufficient. There is no need for any other principle. Consciousness and matter, and their interactions, explain everything, every situation, in any condition. By 'Yoga' here I do not mean the actual practical side of it—*asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana* and *samadhi*. This is not what we mean when we think of the Yoga school of thought. The school proper is a logical foundation. The Yoga considers that the two principles of the perceiver and the perceived cannot explain matter.

For instance, there is action and reaction in every experience, and every action produces a result which pounces upon the experience, even if it be a thought, speech or deed. These reactions are to be properly dealt with. That is to say, there should be a dispenser of justice. If an individual has done good deeds, those deeds have to be rewarded. Otherwise, if the action has gone in a wrong way, it has to be rectified by necessary recompense, by punishment. Now, a person who commits the deed cannot reward or punish himself or herself. There must be a judiciary for that. A third principle is essential. This was noted by the Yoga metaphysicians. An all-knowing Ishvara, or creative principle, was posited by the Yoga System. Here we must note that the Ishvara of Yoga is quite different from our idea of God. For us, God is the creator of the world. But the Ishvara of Yoga is not the creator of anything. He is a witness of the operations of *purusha*

and *prakriti*; and, according to the nature of the deeds of the *purusha*, rewards and punishment will be meted out by the ordinance of Ishvara.

Now we come to a very difficult twin school of philosophy, known as Mimamsa and Vedanta. The Mimamsa and the Vedanta schools are founded, basically, on the Vedas and the Upanishads. Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya and Yoga have nothing to do with the Vedas or the Upanishads. They are purely intellectual schools. Their basis is pure rationality, argumentation, and syllogism. Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa are the two schools of Mimamsa, also known as Karma Mimamsa and Brahma Mimamsa. Mimamsa means investigation.

What is the investigation carried on by the Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa? In the case of the Purva Mimamsa, the investigation is pure ritual, as enumerated in the ritualistic sections of the Vedas, known as the Brahmanas. Here, the word brahmana does not mean the Brahmin caste. It is a series of textbooks. There are four Vedas: Rik, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva. Each of the Vedas has four sections, known as Samhita, Brahmana, Aranyaka and Upanishad. Samhita is a prayer book. The Purusha Sukta, Rudradhyaya, etc., that is recited in temples comes under the Samhitas, which is a collection of prayers. These are the most prominent part of the Vedas. When people say they are studying the Vedas, generally they mean they are studying the Samhita or the prayer, the hymn, aspect of the Vedas.

The next section of the Vedas is called the Brahmana, which is a descriptive catalogue in prose of all the methods to be employed in using these mantras, or hymns, of the Vedas in sacrificial or ritualistic performances. The Purva Mimamsa mainly concerns itself with ritual, how a particular mantra or a hymn of the Veda is to be utilised to invoke a particular God. “Indraya svaha, Varunaya svaha,” etc., we say. There is a very complicated and mathematical process of the Purva Mimamsa, which gives great details of the method of performance of these sacrifices for the satisfaction of the gods in heaven. Every mantra of the Samhita portion of the Veda is an invocation of a divinity. It is a prayer to a particular god, and it is believed that the form of the deity is hidden in the structural pattern of the mantra itself. We may say that the mantra is a geometrical pattern which explains the nature of the deity—so much so, that when we recite the mantra properly, the deity immediately manifests itself. The deity is summoned, provided our recitation has the correct intonation and pronunciation, which is to be very exact, very precise. If we make a change in the intonation of the mantra, it will produce adverse effects.

In this connection, there is a story of an event which took place in heaven. There was a battle between the gods and the *asuras*, and someone who was against Indra wanted the celestial priests, the rishis, to perform a sacrifice by which a deadly foe of Indra would rise from the fire and destroy him. But the rishis did not want such a sacrifice to be performed. Why should they participate in a sinister sacrifice which attacks Indra, who is the god of the heavens? But they agreed to perform the sacrifice. What they did was, they uttered the mantra, which literally meant ‘enemy of Indra, rise from the fire’—*indra shatru*,

vivardhasva. But 'enemy of Indra, rise' can have a dual meaning. What is the meaning of 'enemy of Indra'? It may be an enemy to be devastated by Indra, or it may be something which will devastate Indra. It is like the Oracle of Delphi. People used to ask the Oracle of Delphi whether the Greeks would win or the Romans would win, and the oracle would say, "The Greeks the Romans shall conquer." What do we make from this statement? Who will conquer whom? It can be either way. Likewise, in an equivocation the rishis changed the tone of this invocation. Though according to the literal pronounciational aspect of the chant it looked as if a destroyer of Indra would be produced, due to a change in the intonation, what happened was the reverse. Something was produced which was to be destroyed by Indra. This is the greatness of the Veda mantra.

These investigations are carried on by the Purva Mimamsa, though our subject is something different. All that I have told you is only a kind of preliminary introduction to the main theme—namely, the Brahma Mimamsa, investigation into the nature of the Supreme Being. It is called the Brahma Sutras. As I mentioned, the sutras are pithy statements; and especially the Brahma Sutra is very difficult. If we read just the sutra, we will make no sense out of it because it is only two or three letters. Without the help of a commentary, the sutra on Brahman cannot be understood. While the Purva Mimamsa, or Karma Mimamsa, is concerned with the mantras, the Samhitas and the Brahmana portion of the Vedas, the Brahma Sutra is concerned only with Upanishads, which deal with the nature of the Ultimate Reality, or the Absolute.

The Brahma Sutras have four chapters, and the total number of sutras is five hundred and fifty-five. What does the First Chapter of the Brahma Sutras deal with? There are many statements in the Upanishads whose meaning is difficult to make out. They can mean one thing or another thing. The specification of the true meaning of a particular statement in the Upanishad is necessary so that we may not mistake its import. The First Chapter of the Brahma Sutra engages itself entirely in interpreting the true import and meaning of certain knotty passages in the ten major Upanishads. There are minor Upanishads also, totalling one hundred and eight or so, but the Brahma Sutra is concerned only with ten: Isa Upanishad, Katha Upanishad, Prasna Upanishad, Mundaka Upanishad, Mandukya Upanishad, Aitareya Upanishad, Taittiriya Upanishad, Chhandogya Upanishad, and Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. These are the principle foundations of philosophical metaphysics in India. It is a very difficult subject. Many people do not go into the Chhangogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads, and confine themselves only to the lesser Upanishads. But the Brahma Sutra goes into the depths of these knotty passages occurring in the Upanishads. The First Chapter is not a commentary on the Upanishads. It is only the Interpretation and explanation of the true meaning of certain unintelligible portions, statements, in the Upanishads.

The Second Chapter of the Brahma Sutra is entirely devoted to the refutation of contrary doctrines. There are schools of thought which do not believe in God, and such schools are refuted by proper argument. The logic of Nyaya, the physics of Vaisheshika, the dualism of Samkhya, the ritualism of Purva Mimamsa, and

even the atomism of Jainism and the schools of Buddhism are dealt with elaborately, and every theme that is propounded by these godless schools is set aside as not in conformity with the ultimate nature of things. Generally, only the Second Chapter of the Brahma Sutra is prescribed in colleges and universities because it is intricate, highly argumentative, and intellectual in its nature. We shall not go into these things, as our purpose is mainly spiritual edification. We shall confine ourselves to the subject of the building up of our true self, the various efforts that we have to make in freeing ourselves from the bondage of *samsara*, and finding out ways and means of the salvation of the soul.

The Third Chapter deals with a very interesting aspect of the subject, namely, which passages of the Upanishads can be combined for the purpose of meditation. The Third Chapter deals with meditational processes according to the Upanishads. Every statement in the Upanishads is a prescription for meditation. In all the ten Upanishads, several such statements are made, and many of them of a similar nature and import can be brought together for the purpose of meditation. Which point of the Upanishad can be combined with which other point for the purpose of meditation is the subject of the Third Chapter.

The Fourth Chapter is the most important for us, as it deals with the cause of bondage and the release from bondage.

Thus, the Brahma Sutra is a pinnacle of Indian philosophic thought, which deals with and tackles every existent school of thought in India. It points out their inadequacies, rejects them wholesale, and substitutes for all these thoughts a more comprehensive vision of life, integrated in its nature, complete in every aspect, and wholesome in every means. The question is about our own selves. The Brahma Mimamsa, or Uttara Mimamsa, is also sometimes called Sharika Mimamsa. A sharika is a being who has embodied physicality. Whoever has a body is a sharika. Inasmuch as it studies the nature of the embodied soul, it also is called Sharika Mimamsa. As it is concerned with the establishment of the Supreme Absolute, it is called Brahma Mimamsa because it is posterior to the Karma Mimamsa. Mimamsa which is Purva is called Uttara Mimamsa. Varieties of names are given to this wonderful, spiritual, metaphysical textbook called the Brahma Sutra.

“How are we here in the world?” is a question raised by the Brahma Sutra. From where have we come? We have poor, childish answers to this question, such as: I have come from my father; I have come from my mother; I have come from this country, that country; I belong to this nationality, that nationality. But the text tells us that we are not such simple things as we appear to be. Every individual is a highly complicated texture of cosmic events and universal operations. For the birth of a single child, the whole universe has to be active. People think that a father and mother are sufficient for the coming of a child. They do not know that it is a cosmic event.

We are ignorant of the involvements of our own selves in the whole structure of the phenomenon of nature. We are not educated properly. Our education is only job oriented, money oriented, success oriented; empirical concerns are the

primary issues of our education. We think, "If I get a job, I am wonderful." The job is not the cause. What is the use of a job? How long are we going to live in the world with a job? Nobody bothers about that.

Everything is interconnected with everything else. To understand the universe, we have to have a little insight into the nature of our own physical individuality. In the body that we are donning, there is a very intimate, organic relation of the parts thereof. The parts of the human body are not like the parts of a robot or a machine. They are not mechanically dovetailed, but organically involved. There is a difference between mechanical unity and organic unity.

We find heaps of stones on the roadside. A well-arranged heap may look like a whole by itself. There is a whole heap of stones, but one stone does not feel the presence of another stone. If one stone is lifted and thrown away, the other stones are not affected in any manner. Their connection is purely mechanical in its nature, and one stone has no connection with another stone. Though they may look intensely connected with one another because they form a heap, if one stone is removed, the other parts of the heap remain unaffected. But we cannot remove a limb from the body without the whole body being affected. If a limb is severed from the body, it affects the entire organism. This is the meaning of organic relation. By organic relation we mean a vital, substantial, intelligent, cooperative system. The parts work together, not merely as different individuals but as substantial, vital, and inseparable from the other parts. This is how we have to see our own body.

Since this body is a part of the universal phenomenon, it follows that the universe is made in a similar manner. We cannot stand outside the universe. The very substance of our body is the substance of the Universal. The physical aspect of our body is purely material in its nature. There is an earth element which makes it look solid. There is the water element in our body; otherwise, we will get dehydrated. There is the heat in the body from the fire element. There is the air element which we breathe. There is also space inside the body. The length and the breadth in our body, the so-called size, is due to the space that is inside it. Modern scientists say that if the body is squeezed and all the space is pumped out, the whole body will be only one cubic centimetre in size.

The organic interconnectedness of the parts of the individual body are a miniature explanation of the structural pattern of the whole cosmos. If that is the case, we cannot be born into this world without communicating this fact to every other thing that is happening in the world. Any event is everywhere, just as any occurrence in any part of the body is an occurrence that affects the total body. For instance, we chew our food, and then it passes through the oesophagus and enters the stomach and intestines. The food is converted into essential fluids and absorbed into the whole system. When it enters the bloodstream, it is charged with oxygen that is pumped inside by the breathing process. The heart cooperates. What a wonderful cooperative family we have inside our own selves! Nothing can happen in the body unless the whole body cooperates.

So is the case with every event in the universe, considering the interconnectedness and organic relation of the whole of creation. It is a simple

matter to understand that we seem to be interconnected with the whole universe. Even rain is a very intricate process. The heat of the sun draws moisture from the sea. Moisture is blown through the wind; it condenses into water particles, and there is the cooperation of the gravitational forces of the Earth which does not allow the clouds to rise too high. A requisite distance is maintained between the surface of the Earth and the clouds. Such a mysterious activity is taking place even in rainfall.

Similar is the mystery involved in the birth of an individual. We all belong to all things. Just as every point of the body belongs to the whole body, there is no such thing as an independent, isolated individual anywhere. Again, I am bringing to your notice the example of the body structure where every part of the body is all the body. The finger is the body. The nose is the body. The eyes are the body. The legs are the body. Everything is the body. In a similar manner, our involvement in the cosmical setup is such that for us to descend into the Earth plane by birth, all of the elements of the cosmos have to cooperate. A stir takes place in the heavens. We first are born in the heavens before we come to the Earth. It is said, humorously, that marriages and wars take place in the heavens first, and then they descend into the world. Even disease is not a sudden occurrence on the surface of the body. It is an internal maturity of a dislocation taking place in the deepest recesses of the body's structure. We fall sick inside first; only then do we know that we are sick outside.

In a similar manner, a vibration is set up at the apex of the cosmic process. Modern science tells us the creation of the universe was originally a process of vibratory activity. There was only a non-spatial and non-temporal point. In the Tantra Shastra of Indian philosophy, it is called a bindu. It was an atom. Once upon a time, the whole universe was an atom, but it was not a physical atom, which has a slight dimension. It was a dimensionless, spaceless and timeless atom, inconceivable by human thought. It exploded. This is what is called the Big Bang in scientific language.

The very same thing is mentioned in the Manu Smriti. Even before physicists developed the Big Bang theory, the Manu Smriti had already mentioned it. The Cosmic Egg split into two parts. There was a bang, but there was no person to hear that sound, because no one had been born yet. There was an impersonal brahmānda, or a cosmic egg-like existence which split into two parts, one part pulling the other. The attraction and repulsion that we feel in life is due to this event that took place. The two points do not stand apart, because they belong to a single whole. That is the reason why every one of us feels a pull toward something in the world. And, at the same time, we are repelled by the very same thing. We like a thing and also dislike it, simultaneously, for various reasons.

In this process of the division of the subjective and objective sides, the first parents could be envisaged. The first father and the first mother are the two aspects of this cosmic split that took place. They are not human in nature. We cannot even call them superhuman. Inexplicable principles operated, positively and negatively, we may say, explaining everything that has taken place and is taking place afterwards.

In the Purusha Sukta of the Veda, we are told God performed a sacrifice by alienating Himself into two parts for the sake of the manifestation of plurality in the universe. He began to behold Himself as the object. The 'I am' is the subjective side; the universe is the objective side. So, when a statement such as 'I am the universe' is made, the subjective side and the objective side, which are apparently dichotomised, are brought together into a comprehensive and unitary experience.

Do we not feel that we are the body? But the body is not us; the 'I' is not the physical frame. We say, "I am coming." When we make a statement like this, it does not mean that the body is coming; otherwise, we would say: "The body is coming." "The body is going for a walk." We say, "I am going for a walk." We know very well this 'I am' is different from the body. Yet, for all practical purposes we say, "Here is the 'me'." "I am."

Such a situation is said to be the beginning of all things. Then, there is a slow condensation of the process. There are miniatures of the very same bipolar existence. In the Tantra Shastras it is called Siva and Shakti. We may also say that it is something like the electrical positive and negative. Therefore, we are also a blend of positive and negative. In every man and every woman there is both a male aspect and a female aspect. No one is entirely one thing. This is the reason why there is attraction and repulsion, and a sense of inadequacy and dissatisfaction with every kind of experience.

The cosmic vibration which originated in the manner explained is to be regarded as the highly complex origin of our birth into this world. We are born from the universe by universal parents, and not some so-and-so, in this country or that country, which is a poor understanding of what is actually happening. The high heavens are conscious that we are here because they gave birth to us, so that in this little frame of our body that is seated here, the whole universal stuff is operating. When we move, we are moving like the universe. Birth has taken place. Well, what is the consequence of this birth?

Because of the division that has taken place, and a descending order of inadequacy implied in this coming down into the formation of a body, the finite consciousness became more and more pronounced, and now we feel like nobodies in this world. The world is segregated from us. The universe is cut off from our perception. It looks as if the universe is an object of our perception. We are only a subjective side, and the world defies us in every way. This is the misery of birth and *samsara*. This is to speak briefly about the modus operandi of the birth of a person into this world. We shall continue this subject later on.

Chapter 2

THE INTENTION TO BE BORN AS AN INDIVIDUAL

In our study of the Brahma Sutra we had occasion to go deep into the question of the involvement of every individual person in a cosmic process, so that every individual when studied properly may look like a world individual, not belonging to any particular community, village, house, nationality, and so on.

The very formation of this body is the dexterous activity of the stuff of the universe. The material of the universe, in certain proportions, blends itself to form the structure of this body, just as the same material used in building construction can be used for erecting different types of buildings. We bring bricks, mortar, cement, steel, and whatnot. With the same material, we can build a temple, a prison, residential quarters or a bathroom. We can build anything, notwithstanding the fact that the substance of these buildings is identical. Just because the substance is identical, we do not go to a police station to offer prayers; rather, we go to the temple. Why do we make this difference, when the building material is the same?

There is something in the individual other than the building bricks, which is the reason for the different categorisations of individuality, and the reason behind why one person does not look like another person. Not only one does not look like another, but one does not even think like another person. Even the mindset differs.

The study taken up in the Brahma Sutras in this context is based on a great scriptural section in the Chhandogya Upanishad which goes by the name of Panchagni Vidya, the knowledge of the five cosmic fires. Five cosmic fire principles, as it were, join hand in hand in some way to prepare for the birth of an individual in this world.

In the beginning, there is a need for the constitution itself providing for the birth of an individual. No activity is possible or justifiable if the central constitution does not provide for it, accept it, and regard it as justifiable. Then, when the centre ordains the possibility, the necessity and the justifiability of the occurring of an event or the embarking upon a particular activity, the work is taken up in gradual stages of descent.

The framer of the constitution does not build a house. It comes down gradually through the order of the state governments, the district authorities, the executives and the engineers; finally, it comes to the masons and the labourers. Thus is somewhat the methodology of the coming of an individual into this world.

The central ordinance is a vibration at the apex of the cosmos. It is difficult to understand what all this means. Our present state of existence here is conditioned by that state of being which was there prior to the occurrence of the Big Bang. You will be wondering what this means. Millions and millions of years have passed since the Big Bang occurred. Do we exist in the present condition?

Due to the nature of that which existed prior to this occurrence, we are not as we appear to our own eyes. We are living in a process of time here; therefore, when it is said that we are made of the same stuff as that which existed prior to the Big Bang, we are astounded how this is possible, because we are time-bound in our process of thinking. But this particular thing, which was prior to the occurrence of the Big Bang, is timeless. There was no time at that time. Therefore, there is a timelessness in our existence here. We are in time, but yet we have a timeless core in our being, because of which, we wish to defy the time process. We would like to overcome death itself by some means or the other. Death is the consequence of the involvement of people in the time process, and our dislike to even hear the word 'death' and the desire to overcome it in some way or the other arises from the timeless element simultaneously operating in ourselves. We are, at the same time, I may say, both in eternity and in time. We are both alive and dead simultaneously, surprising though all this may look.

The Panchagni Vidya I mentioned—the process of the five fires described in the Chhandogya Upanishad—cannot be understood easily by reading the words of the text in Sanskrit because they are like code words. The code has an implied suggestiveness, like algebraic equations. By themselves, the meaning is not clear in the equation, but they can suggest a tremendous upheaval in the cosmos. What does the Panchagni Vidya say? It says that the descent of an individual into the earth plane is occasioned by several factors. Firstly, the material for the formation of individuality is necessary. This material is plenty, so to say, because matter is the substance of the universe, and our body is also material in that sense. But, as I mentioned a few minutes before, the individuality, peculiarity, independence, isolatedness—the specifications of particular individuals, one not looking like the other in any manner whatsoever—requires an explanation, apart from the fact that there is the same common matter forming the stuff of the body.

This separateness of the individual, one from the other—no person is like another person in any way—this difference arises on account of an intention to be born, in the case of every individual. Unless we intend to be born, we cannot be born. So, this again requires an explanation: What is this intention?

The intention to be born arises on account of the original segregation of a particular stress in the cosmos from the total substance of the cosmos. Indescribable are all these things to a common mind. It is as if a bubble in the ocean segregates itself, isolates itself like a renegade, from its own mother, which is the vast ocean. Though physically such an isolation is not possible and the bubble in the ocean cannot physically isolate itself from the ocean, if we grant a mind to the bubble, it can conceptually isolate itself. Thus, the isolation of the individual from the Ultimate Being is not actual. If it is actual, we will never reach that ultimate state again. It is a conceptual difference. The thought decides to be separate, like a member in a parliament defecting and not belonging to a party, though originally he was to be there. The member of the parliament who isolates himself or herself does not physically do anything, but conceptually there is an isolation; this is what they call a defection: "I do not belong to you. "Now, physically, nothing is happening, but mentally, a great thing is happening.

A son is born to a father, and a great relationship is there between the son and the father. As it happens in modern times of distorted education, one day the son may assert himself and tell the father, "I do not belong to you anymore. I mind my business; you keep quiet. "This is conceptual isolation, though really, biologically, the isolation has not taken place. Because the genes and the very blood of the father are flowing through the veins of the son, he cannot say that he does not belong to the father; but, conceptually, he has isolated himself.

In a similar manner, this wondrous occurrence beyond any conception or understanding of the human being makes out that a particular stress or a point of pressure in cosmic ubiquity conceptually, in a cosmic manner, isolated itself and asserted its individuality. This is what they call the fall of human beings.

In the bible we have a similar story. Lucifer asserted independence and told God, "I have nothing to do with you. I am what I am, independently. "Headlong, Lucifer fell. The fall is headlong; it is an upside-down falling. It is not a straight coming, but a topsy-turvy descent. When this isolation takes place, a very tragic experience also follows from it. What is the tragic fall? The consciousness of the isolation of the part from the whole engenders intense fear in the individual. There is sudden insecurity yawning from all sides. Death is everywhere, which never showed its head as long as the part was organically related to the whole.

Fear—what is the fear? "I am alone; I have nothing around to guard me and protect me. I am finite, and there are many other finites around me. "Suddenly, there is an appetitive eagerness to sustain this individuality by intense hunger for grabbing food to eat through the different sense organs. The eyes crave to see colours and shapes, the ears crave to hear sounds, the nose craves to smell fragrance, the tongue craves to taste deliciousness, and the skin, the tactile sense, craves to touch soft objects.

These cravings arise on account of a desperate attempt on the part of the fallen individual to survive somehow or the other—to rule in hell rather than serve in heaven, as the poet tells us. We want to survive here somehow or other, by any method whatsoever. Let it be hell, but let us be rulers in hell, not servants in heaven. This is what has happened to us.

The intention to which I made reference is the desire to assert oneself as an independent entity on account of the erstwhile segregation of oneself from the whole universe, the Cosmic Being. Since an individual isolated from the sustaining original whole cannot even exist, cannot survive, there is scrambling on the part of the individual to create circumstances artificially, and prepare a kingdom for itself where it can be a ruler, and have everything that it can have. This scrambling takes place in the form of desires of the mind and the sense organs; as one has lost everything, now one has a desire to get and absorb everything into oneself.

But this 'everything' does not mean the whole from which one has been isolated. It is a desire to grab what the sense organs can cognise. The whole to which the individual belonged is out of sight now, and it cannot even be thought by the mind. No individual can conceive the whole because the individuality precludes such an attempt. But unless a kind of artificial wholeness is created in

our life, we cannot exist for three minutes in this world. So, we create an artificial wholeness and satisfaction, a kingdom of our own, by trying to sensorially grasp objects, which include persons and also things of different natures.

Now, here is a great mistake that the sense organs commit. We cannot grab another finite and make it our own, because as this particular finite, which is in a sorrowful condition, wishes to maintain its identity of finitude, other finitudes also assert themselves in a similar manner. You cannot become my servant under any circumstances, even if I try to do whatever is possible to convert you into my slave. No individual will be ready to do that because whatever is the intention of a particular finite is also the intention of other finites. So there is no such thing as ruling the world. There is no king anywhere. The king is a foolish individual. He is foolish because he thinks that others are under his control. They cannot come under his control because they are totally independent.

Every individual is a finite centre of isolated egoism and self-complacency, which defies interference from any other finitude. Thus, the birth takes place. It passes through different stages of coming. The central operation of the cosmic intention to isolate oneself from the whole enters space, then it enters air, then it enters fire, then it enters the water principle, and then the physical earth. The tragedy of birth as a human individual is now complete, with all its accessories of dissipated combination of particulars, contributed by the five elements. Now we are here, as this person, this man, this woman, this individual, this child, this so-and-so. You can understand why we are perpetually unhappy, always anxious.

We are born. The intention, to which I made reference, is the force behind the nature of the life that we are going to live in this world. The intention of individuality is to be born in a particular way, live a particular kind of life, enjoy particular experiences, possess certain things only, and not other things. Every desire differs from every other desire. What you want is not the same as what another person wants. Due to this reason, the length of life of people differs. All people do not live the same length of life, all people do not pass through the same kind of experiences in life, and all people are not born in the same place. The location of one's birth, the circumstances under which one is born, the conditions deciding the experiences, and also the length of life—all these are decided by the nature of the intention of this pressure point of individuality, prior to the very beginning of this constitutional ordinance.

This pressure, this force, this intention, this desire to live a particular form of life makes us what we are. But since no desire can be eternal, its pressure also cannot be perpetual; it exhausts itself. One day this pressure, this intention, this desire to be born in a particular circumstance gets exhausted. This is what they call the end of karma. Karma is a psychological need felt to experience certain things, and to manifest itself in action through the sense organs. When the force or the momentum of desire exhausts itself, the intention withdraws itself from the body, and death takes place.

But the intention to be an individual is a very tricky inexplicable mystery, not easily explainable. It does not mean that the intention is satisfied merely by being born into one particular body, and is over by the extinction of the momentum of

that desire and the death of the body. It is not so. Let the body go, but the desire continues.

This particular body, this embodiment, did give some satisfaction for the sake of the fulfilment of certain aspects of desire behind this intention, but there are other desires connected with the intention. They cannot be fulfilled by this body, so the body is cast off, and this intention persists, and then it takes rebirth. What is rebirth? It is the materialisation of the very same individuality in another shape for the purpose of continuing the experience in some other realm of being.

As long as our desire to exist as an individual continues, birth and death cannot stop. Millions of years may pass, but there will be no satisfaction because satisfaction is only in the whole to which everyone belongs, but the whole has been cut off and only the part remains. A paralytic stroke, as it were, has occurred in the cosmical operation, and an individual is hanging lifelessly, like a lifeless hand hanging due to a stroke.

Individuals are partly like dead bodies, and there is no real life in the individual's insistence on existing like that. The joys of life are forms of misery only. They look like joys because we want to pass through the experiences. Even a misery may look like a joy under certain conditions, when it is our intention to pass through that misery.

Suppose you have won a lottery. Suddenly a telegram comes: Today evening you must come to Haridwar; there, the amount will be paid to you. But it so happens there is a strike of all vehicles. You cannot go. In the hot sun you will walk from this place to Haridwar. Who will walk in the hot sun? You will get sunstroke. It is a misery, but the misery becomes a joy because there is another tag behind it, which is well known to you. "Even if I pass through the experience of sunstroke in the heat of walking from Rishikesh to Haridwar, finally I will get something which is wonderful. "So misery gets converted into joy, due to a foolish admixture of conditions. This is the case with every experience in life.

A short life is permitted because of the shortness of the pressure of the intention to be born. Nobody can live for eternity; thus, birth and death go on taking place. At the time of the passing, when death takes place, the physical body is separated, but the subtle body of intention, which is called the *sukshma sarira*, continues. The psychological intention cannot die; only the physical body is shed. That intention condenses itself into a new form in a given circumstance, and merges into embodiment through another set of parents, who alone can be responsible to bring about this kind of body under the given circumstance.

Once the birth takes place the second time, nobody will know what is the reason behind it. None of us can know why we are born to certain parents, and not to somebody else. We do not bother about it; somehow we are born—why worry? This has happened umpteen times. When the death of the individual takes place, when the body is shed, the subtle body requires material to manifest itself as a gross body for further experience. So, what does it do? Like a magnet pulling iron filings, the subtle body, acting like a magnet, pulls subtle particles of matter known as *tanmatras*—the earth, water, fire and air particles and the space necessary for it—and embodies itself in a new form. The five elements persist

and they will not leave us wherever we go, like creditors. Even if we go to Timbuktu, the creditor is behind us: "Where is my belonging? Pay it."

We are slaves of the five elements. They formed the individuality; then the individuality was kicked out because of the inadequacy of that form. Now, once again, we have to beg the cooperation of the very same individuals, like a person who is perpetually in debt. He borrows, and with great difficulty pays it back. Afterwards, in utter penury, once again, shamelessly, he goes to the very same creditor: "Give me more." There are people who live in debt forever. No peace of mind is possible. It is only a life of borrowing. Such a thing also is possible. This is our condition.

So, perpetually, this series of incarnations takes place, whereby the elements segregate themselves, dismantle their structure, like the breaking down of a house, and with the same material, build another house. This is rebirth.

The five elements are always with us. They will never leave us; they cling to us like glue, or much more than that, because we ourselves are the elements. The only thing is that we do not feel what is happening to us. This is *samsara*; this is the bondage of the soul. Do you want freedom, or do you want to be a perpetual servant of the five elements and have creditors for ever and ever? Are you going to be a beggar eternally, and have no self-respect? Such a kind of life, who would like to have? We require salvation, finally.

The salvation of the individual is the subject of that portion of the Brahma Sutras which we are studying. From this malady of involved tragedy is our birth in this world. It is not merely birth that is painful. Life also is painful; because the cause is painful, the effect also is painful, and the end result also is painful. The entire thing is pain. For any person who has proper sharp understanding, there will not be an iota of joy anywhere.

But because of misconception, not seeing things properly, one tries to lie down in the cool shade, and even if that cool shade comes from the hood of a cobra, it does not matter. Let the cobra be there; the shade is cool. Is it a great wisdom to lie under the cool shade of a hooded cobra, which can teach you a good lesson? The world is not your friend, because you are not its friend. You are a renegade; you have kicked it out and it is now trying to kick you out, tit for tat.

A cosmic upheaval, a kind of revolutionary process, may have to take place in order to refurbish ourselves and prepare us for this arduous struggle to make ourselves ready for reuniting with the whole, which we have lost. We have to go back like the prodigal son, and the good Father will receive us. You have wasted your life, disobeyed your Father, misused all the benefits given to you, led a reckless life, suffered a lot. Grieving, repenting, you go back to the Father, and He will embrace you. The Father—the Great Being Whom you have forgotten—is very kind. Kicking It out, you have asserted your independence; yet, you may be sure, It is not angry with you, because the Whole can never get angry with the part. The part is a fool; therefore, it can pass through any kind of psychological upheaval. But there is no such thing as upheaval in the cosmos. It is a stable equilibrium of perfection. Perfection never gets angry with anybody. It is ready to receive anybody. Whatever be the tantrums that you have manifested in your life,

even the most abominable behaviour, it will be accepted by the Father in heaven, provided you repent, turn your tables round, and instead of working with head down and legs up in a topsy-turvy manner, stand straight and look at things properly, as they are, and then concentrate your whole being on those conditions necessary to make you united with the whole.

This is what is called yoga practice. This is called meditation, devotion, worship, by whatever name. But it is an arduous process. A person who has been accustomed to thinking wrongly, right from the beginning of life, will find it difficult to think correctly, though instructed properly. A good mentor, a corrective agent, a very experienced teacher—kind-hearted, tolerant, and highly experienced—is necessary to tolerate all the pranks of the distorted individuality and set that person right.

In this method, in the beginning of the vertical ascent of the soul towards the salvation in the Absolute Supreme Being, many conditions are laid down. We have to pass through a disciplinary process of gradual discipline which is, first of all, the conserving of the energy that is depleted daily by sense activity, and centring this energy, which otherwise goes out in the direction of objects, in the source thereof. Our energy should be in us; it should not be elsewhere.

When we cling to an object of desire, the energy moves in the direction of that object, and to the extent of the intensity of the desire for that particular object, to that extent, in that quantum, the energy moves from this person, and the individual becomes weaker. We are not merely losing some energy in an ordinary sense; a part of our existence itself goes out. We become less in the percentage of our being. Whoever loves an object outside is a loser of one's own self. We cannot love a thing unless we lose ourselves first. Loss of self is the precondition of love of objects. Who would like to lose oneself?

"Give me yourself; I shall give you all the kingdom. "This is what someone told Dr. Faust in the great drama of Goethe, which is interesting to read: "All the glory of this earth and heaven is laid down before you. I shall give you such a wonderful, astounding presentation of the glory of earth and heaven before you. Give me something in return."

Dr. Faust thought, "What shall I give you?"

"You have got something in yourself. Give me yourself. Such a small thing, can you not do that? You are a small thing. I will give you a big thing."

Dr. Faust thought over it. "Very good. What is there in this little thing? Let it go. Such a large empire of glory is before me."

The tempting one said, "Take it, and give me yourself. Take it!"

Immediately a thunder broke out, as it were. The earth cracked. Dr. Faust felt that he shattered into pieces, and he was not existing anymore. It was all chaos and a thunderstorm. Nobody can explain what it would be to shatter one's own self, piecemeal, and to reduce oneself to a vacuous nothing. This has happened. This is the fate of every individual.

This is not a story for the sake of entertainment. Whoever is after this world of joys, whoever clings to objects of sense, broods over them in the form of money, authority, anything, loses oneself every day, and goes back old, haggard,

and will leave this world like a nobody: “Nobody wants me; I am going.” Why do you want to go in that condition?

Hence, preparation for the ultimate salvation of oneself depends largely upon the discipline that we have to practise in the form of sense control. Sense control does not mean closing the eyes, plugging the ears, not eating food and not sleeping. These kinds of external rituals are not going to give us much benefit. The mind has to accept this process. The mind should feel convinced: “It is not necessary for me to engage myself in sensory activity. By the very act of deep concentration, I can obtain everything that I want. Thought can contact Reality.”

With this conviction, with this determination, like a Buddha who sat under a tree, you sit for meditation every day, and you will find all your sins will be destroyed. Even if there is a huge mountain of sins committed through various lives, to destroy it will take one minute only. The deep darkness of the night, which looks so long and impenetrable, can be dispelled in one second when the sun rises. Mountains of straw can be reduced to ashes by one matchstick. *Jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi bhasma-sāt kurute tathā* (B.G. 4.37): This wisdom of one’s identity with the Absolute is like a fire that can burn heaps of sins in one second. With this joy of the possibility of a great attainment, engage yourself in sadhana, practice, the details of which will be touched upon little by little by these Brahma Sutras which we are going to study.

Chapter 3

THE COSMIC ROLE OF KARMA IN THE REBIRTH OF INDIVIDUALITY

Waking experiences constitute a censored expression of the total personality of an individual. Whatever experiences one has during waking life, those experiences cannot be said to exhaust the potentialities of the individual, because there are other experiences one passes through in another state, which we call dream, and a third type of experience in the state of deep sleep.

When one state supervenes, the other states will not act. When we are fast asleep there is no dream, and there is not the conglomeration of waking experience. When we dream there is no deep sleep, and no experience whatsoever characteristic of waking life. When we are awake there is nothing of the dream life, and no inkling even of the potential that is lying buried in the state of deep sleep.

These three states never act simultaneously; they act one by one. But there are certain emergency situations when all the three will act simultaneously. Normally, when a country is in peace, we do not know what the army is doing, or what the navy or air force is doing. Suppose there is a danger, and a threat to national security. The army, navy and air force will join together and combat the situation. Normally, the three will not join together.

Now, when are these three potentialities of experience expected to join together and act simultaneously? It is only when there is an emergency. What can be a greater emergency than being born into this world or departing from this world? The whole cosmos congeals into a concentrated activity in order to produce a little baby. The cosmic substance becomes the parent of this little crawling child, the baby in the womb, which we mistakenly consider as one among the many.

Similar is the case at the time of passing away. As the cosmic substance vigorously concentrates itself to push the child into the realm of physical experience, the same cosmic substance actively operates in order to draw the subtle body of the individual away from the physical body, and to cast aside the physical sheath.

Ordinarily, in the middle, when we do not remember anything about being born and do not bother about leaving this world, we actually seem to be living in what may be called a fool's paradise. Everything seems to be going on well, but on the two sides there is a devil and a deep sea: birth and death. Who bothers about it? In the middle everything is fine.

But our study is of the Brahma Sutra portion connected with the final salvation of the soul. What is salvation? It is freedom from the limitations imposed by the restrictive activity of the five elements of the cosmos, and the compelling of everyone to be limited only to a location in some place, and permitting that individual to live only for a certain period of time. We have no option to be born anywhere we like. It is already determined that we must be born here, and we have no option about the length of our life. It is also fixed.

The birth, the tenure of life, the experiences that are the heritage of an individual, and the manner of departure—all these are centrally hidden, even in a single cell of the body. If a scientific examination of even one cell is carefully conducted, the entire history of the individual can be seen there. Just as the individual is a miniature cosmos, the cell is a miniature individual. Whatever the individual is in relation to the cosmos, that the cell is in relation to this body. It is not difficult to understand.

Salvation is the freedom ultimate, which the soul attains by not being pressurised into any particular locality of existence or compelled to live only for a certain period of time, and forced to have only certain experiences and not others, which is bondage to the core.

I mentioned last time that there is an intention operating behind the nature of the incarnation in the form of a little child. There is a desire to be born in a particular manner. It is not a haphazard, chaotic activity that is taking place under the whimsical order of a dictator. The universe is not any such thing. It is a highly intelligent, computer-like, scientific operation which never goes wrong at any time.

The intention to be born is the desire to be a particular person and not something else. The desire to be a particular individual of a specialised characteristic is for the sake of fulfilling that desire, which I called the intention, through the instrumentality of the limbs of the body into which the soul is born.

Whatever we want we can get in this world, but through a specific instrument. If we want to travel, we can use any vehicle we like, or we can walk on the road. If we want to eat, it is up to us to choose what diet we want. In a similar manner, the soul which emerges into creative activity prior to the actual birth of individuality decides for itself what it wants.

To fulfil that particular longing, a certain apparatus is necessary. The soul wants to grab certain things, so immediately hands are projected. It wants to see what it wants to grab, so eyes are projected. It wants to hear what is happening, so ears are projected. It wants to taste the delicacy of a particular thing which it wants to eat, so a tongue is projected. It wants to touch soft things, so the skin is projected. Thus, the nature of our personality, this physical individuality, together with the mind that is superintending over the body, is the result of a person's wanting to be like that. Why does a person want in a particular manner? This takes us to the cyclic nature of creative activity in the cosmos.

We were always in this world. Our life in this world has no beginning, and it cannot have any end, also. That is the meaning of 'cyclic action'. It is like a wheel moving. If a fly is sitting on the periphery of a moving wheel, sometimes it will be at the apex, sometimes at the bottom, sometimes at the right, sometimes at the left, and where it starts and where it ends, nobody can say. We consider the cause-and-effect relationship to be a linear movement; if something happens here, something else happens there, in a linear, straight-line fashion. But, the world does not operate like a straight-line action. Time does not move like a straight beaten track. It is a circular movement. So, we were always there in a potential condition prior to the creation of the universe. I am repeating now for

your memory that we were existing even before the Big Bang took place. Shocking, indeed, or astounding is this information.

I will add to your surprise by saying that even now we are living in the same place where we were before the Big Bang took place. You will say, "No, how is it possible? Ages have passed, and such a long distance is there between that location and this earth."

There is no distance at all. It is an illusion created by the banging activity of that supernal centre. There is no space, also. The idea of spatial extension and temporal movement is a total illusion created by the incapacity of the mind to think in a cosmic manner. So we are perpetually in the same place. We never move anywhere. Even at birth we are in that one place, and at death also, we are in that same place; only the consciousness changes. When we lie down on the cot we can be awake, we can be dreaming or we can be sleeping, and in dream we can move hundreds of miles, but during the hundreds of miles of travel in dream we were just lying on the cot and we have not moved one inch.

We are eternally located in a timeless existence, even now. If that had not been the case, we would never attain eternal life. A non-existent thing cannot come to us, and a thing that does not belong to us also cannot come to us. The eternal experience that we are aspiring for is not something to come afterwards, because eternity is not in time; therefore, there is no afterwards, tomorrow, next moment, and so on. Eternity has neither a beginning nor an end. It does not move either in space or in time.

Actually, eternity is a name that we give to the abolition of the concept of space and time. If that is the case, where are we? We cannot be born in a new world; we cannot die and pass into another world also, except in this phantasmagorical experience of movement in space and time. We are in a dreamland, even now, but it is a cosmic dream. But the dream is so intense that we consider it as very real. People can get frightened and cry out if a tiger in dream jumps upon them. A person can fall from a tree and break his leg, and when he wakes up, he will start massaging that leg. A person might have been an emperor in dream, and in waking life he may be a beggar, but when the experience of being an emperor is made available in dream, one rejoices like a king.

A humorous Chinese philosopher said, "If a beggar is to dream every night for twelve hours that he is a king, and if a king every night dreams for twelve hours that he is a beggar, who is the beggar and who is the king?" Here is a mystery. For twelve hours they are the king, and for twelve hours they are a beggar. Now, which of them is the real king, and which of them is the real beggar? By contrast of experience we make a difference between the experience in waking and in dream, but all the three conditions will get abolished when the mind is centralised in eternal life.

This is an arduous process, because human attachment is so inveterate that it cannot leave us, just as the skin will not depart from our body. In the context of the liberation of the soul, which is our subject, the Brahma Sutras go into great

detail of the experiences that one has to pass through when the body is shed completely.

Where does a person go after the departure of the body? Nobody bothers about it, because the mind is compelled to shut its mouth and not speak of such things. Yama, the great teacher, told Nachiketas not to talk of eternity, and to keep quiet. The mystery of death tells us, "Don't talk. Speak not about what will happen to you afterwards." It is like being dragged into a concentration camp by an administration that is pitiless, and would not even tell where we are going and what is going to happen to us. In birth, we do not know what is happening to us. In death also, we do not know what is going to happen.

But something will happen. We have been born into this world. Does anyone remember what you were in the previous life? Who was your father? Who was your mother? You were born to a father; you know it very well. That father must have been having a father, and that grandfather has got a father. So it goes on rising from father to father, father to father. Where does the first father arise? Who is the first father whose son's son's son you have become?

It was said, perhaps by Buddha, that if you can remember five hundred parents through whose connection you have been born into this world, simultaneously you will find that there is not a single person in this world who is not your relative. You are related to everybody. In one life you are related to a hundred, in another life to a thousand, and in a third life to some other people, so that if you remember all the lives, the whole world family will look like your own relations. You will never say, "They are mine, and they are not mine." Such is the panorama that is awaiting us.

When the body is shed, that intention which compelled us to be born into a particular body again operates. What does it do at that time? The intention is a desire to be something, to experience something, enjoy something, possess something, etc., but the desire is so vast, wanting umpteen things, that any amount of satisfaction will not put an end to the longing of a human individual. It is like a reservoir of infinite content; however much is given to you, you will find that something is left out.

So this intention, which is the desire to be born in a particular condition, temporarily gets satisfied through the instrumentality of one kind of body, by means of which alone certain sets of desires can be fulfilled. It does not mean that we are satisfied by the experiences we have in this world. When the body is cast off, another set comes in, just as there is a retail shop with a godown from which things are brought out to the retail shop, but the godown is filled always. It cannot be exhausted; and what is in the godown, nobody knows. Varieties of things are there, and whatever is necessary is brought out for sale.

In a similar manner, endless being the potentiality of human longing or desire, no particular formation of the body can be satisfying, so it has to take various forms of bodily existence in order that corresponding experiences can be made available. And nobody can know what their deep-seated desires are. One's own person just now cannot know what the desires are. They will come up to the surface of experience only when the time comes, when circumstances demand it.

What you are thinking just now is not your desire because you are censored by the conditions prevailing; therefore, only certain sets of experiences are permitted. When the censors are lifted, another ravaging set of desires will come, like a gale, like a tornado, and they will say, "Your dues are here."

Mostly it is believed that a person who dies will be reborn into this world. It may be so, if the desires that are still remaining to be fulfilled are of such a nature that they can be had only in this world. But if we have desires of a different type, there is no compulsion to be born on this earth. There are many planes of existence. Infinite are the worlds and the realms of being in this cosmic creative activity. We can be transported to any place for the purpose of experience.

The Yoga Vasishtha, a great mystical text, tells us, "Endless are the worlds, inconceivable in number." In some worlds, there are no human beings at all; there is only the hard surface of the Earth. In some worlds, Sage Vasishtha says, it is all copper. It is not mud. The whole Earth—we should not call it Earth, actually, because it is another global experience, which is constituted of copper. Some worlds are gold only. In some, it is only a forest of trees; in some, only animals; in some, only snakes; in some, only mosquitoes. In some, it is gods and angels. Anything can be there anywhere, in some world, and we can be transported to that place if our desire is to experience those conditions of being. Rebirth is unavoidable as long as the desire to exist as a body continues. If you are fed up with being an individual, and you want to abolish and melt down individuality in a wider experience, then you may be said to be on the spiritual path; otherwise, you are having only a mortal experience.

When the body is shed, the subtle body, which is constituted of the potentials of the five elements, releases itself from the clutch of the physical body and, rocket-like, rushes in the direction of that place, that condition, that circumstance where alone the remaining desires can be fulfilled. We will be born to those parents, in that place, and only under those conditions by which we can have all the things that we want.

In the Bhagavadgita the same question is raised and answered by Bhagavan Sri Krishna. We can be born in the family of well-to-do parents, or we may be born in a poverty-stricken family. We may be born as the son of a great sage like Vasishtha or Vyasa. It is difficult to have a birth as the son of a great sage like Vasishtha or Vyasa. It is not easy because even if we desire a thing, we must also deserve it, and these great sages are the specimens and examples of impersonal life, whereas we are all attached to personal life.

We can be born into this world or any other world, as the case may be. People who have done good deeds will be rocketed up to the realm of experience where they will be duly rewarded. Action and reaction are the law of nature. Whatever you have done and given will come back to you. Any charity, philanthropic activity, and any service honestly rendered to people will be recompensed either in this world itself if it is possible, or if not, it will be in another world.

Many of you are comfortable people. Maybe you are financially almost satisfied. You have got a healthy body; you are happy. This comfort, whatever be its nature, that you are enjoying in this life is not an undeserved gift that has been

given to you. You deserve it because you have done something in the previous life which demands that a proper compensation must be given to you. Whatever good you have done will be paid back by experiences of immense goodness. If you have been a very loving person, very kind-hearted, very sweet speaking, very serviceful, in the next birth you will find all people will be so kind to you everywhere. You will not know why people are loving you so much. You have done that good, so they are giving it back to you.

If you have been very greedy, miserly, having a lot of wealth and would not part with one penny, if you have hoarded things and departed without giving anything to anyone, then in the next birth, nobody will give you anything. You will be born as a poor beggar's son, and then you have to suffer the agony of poverty, which you could have avoided. Whatever you have done will be given back to you. Give, and it shall be given back to you, whatever it is.

The Brahma Sutras tell us on the basis of the Upanishadic declarations that those who are philanthropic in nature, serviceful in their life, will be carried to lunar regions, which are incomprehensible to us, where they enjoy the bliss and joy of release from every kind of tension and penury. But it is a short-lived experience. The compensation is commensurate with the work that is done to deserve it. We may be given a large gift as a reward for some great service that we have rendered, but the nature of that gift, and its quantum, will be decided by the service that we have rendered, in any capacity whatsoever.

There is no such thing as an undeserved gift; such a thing is not possible. So when the deserving potential for which the compensation of happiness in the lunar regions is over, the soul will revert back to this condition, and it will be born once again.

How will it be born? There are two types of action, sometimes mixed together, in the case of a person. People are not always a hundred percent good, nor are they a hundred percent bad. There is an admixture of some percentage of goodness and a percentage of non-goodness. The good aspect will take the person to the lunar regions of experience, but the non-good will bring him back, for which he has to repent and pay in another birth, into which he will be hurled.

Therefore, the persons who have gone to the region of the lunar kingdom of joy will not be there always, because it is like enjoying a bank balance which we have in plenty; but when it is exhausted we are once again thrown back to the old condition only, and that thing which we are not able to consider as serviceful to anybody will react upon us in a negative manner. This is some strange thing that is told to us in the Upanishads. It does not mean that a person who goes to the lunar regions stays there permanently. Nobody can have a permanent job. The job has a tenure for some years, and for that time we can rule and rejoice. When the tenure is over we retire, and we are once again the same old person that we were earlier.

This is about the persons who do a lot of good, but there also may be people who are vicious in their nature. They never do any good, due to some oppressive impulsions in their mind caused again by the previous pressures of a cyclic life, the reason for which is not easily explainable.

It appears that when Shirdi Sai Baba was walking somewhere, he found a snake catching hold of a frog. As human beings in their previous births, the snake and the frog were enemies. The frog had been a human being, the snake also had been a human being, and both were so vicious in their nature. They attacked each other and died, and one was born as a snake and another as a frog. It appears that Sai Baba told them, "Very stupid! Still you are continuing your maliciousness even now. How long will this go on?" He called the snake by its original name, and the frog also by its original name. He was a *siddha-purusha*, so he could see anything, what was at the back. The snake was a human being previously, and the frog also, but their viciousness converted them into this animosity, even in their next birth.

It is said that one can go to hell, also. It is specially mentioned in the Brahma Sutras. You will be wondering what kind of thing is this hell, and where it is. There are some people who think this world itself is a hell, so why do we want another hell? Is this suffering not sufficient for us? We are suffering enough.

No, it is not like that. The world's suffering is not adequate because there are joys, also. We can breathe fresh air; we can eat food. Nobody is denied that. We can have a good, healthy body. We can live comfortably in some way, though we may have some other difficulties. But hell is an unadulterated suffering, caused by unadulterated vicious actions of people.

Many years back the newspapers reported that two children were going to school, and two vicious dacoit murderers gave them a lift and butchered them. It is an unadulterated evil tendency which cannot be explained. Without reason, they cause harm to people. There are some people who cause harm with some reason; they get annoyed at something that has happened, and they retaliate. Here, it is an unadulterated, unprovoked evil action. What will be the experience of these people in the next birth?

In the Brahmana portion of the Vedas, there is a story. A sage went to another world. There he found vultures pecking the flesh of somebody, and jackals were tearing his body, and hens and cocks with steel-like beaks were striking that man. Then, the sage asked them why they were doing this. They said, "Because he did this to us. He ate us; now, we shall eat him." They pecked at him with steel beaks; they tore him apart. This story comes in the Brahmana portion of the Vedas. Nobody can escape the reaction of a deed, whatever be the nature of that deed. It is a perfectly scientific operation, like the gravitational force of the Earth.

But if you are fortunate enough not to be merely satisfied by charitable activity and a good life—of course, you never expect to be evil—and you are a contemplator of the Creator of the universe, then you are blessed. If the great Supreme Being is the object of your devotion, and you leave this world with that deep devotion to the Supreme Creator, what happens to you at that time? This is a long story that we have in the Upanishads, and it is enunciated in further detail in the Brahma Sutras.

The realms of being will receive you as if they are your hosts. All things in the world will wake up into consciousness and tell you, "Come! We shall receive you." The very earth will summon you, "Please come! Tell me what you want." The very

trees and the leaves will start smiling, “Here we are to serve you.” All the denizens of the various realms of being will come.

In the Kaushitaki Upanishad the details go into dramatic beauty. Celestials rush to receive this person, with golden plates of offerings, singing celestial music and saying, “Brahma the Creator is wanting you; please come.” And there are many hurdles on the way—rivers that cannot be crossed easily, and many other things. But by the very thought of it being possible to cross them, the person crosses. There is no dead matter anywhere. Everyone is conscious. The electromagnetic forces are a sea of awareness. They will receive you. “You are a blessed one, and we are here to receive you to the abode of the blessed one. Come on!” At one stage the individual—or the individual consciousness of this noble person who is received in such a manner—sheds the individual consciousness, and then impersonality supervenes, and one cannot know where one is. The idea of ‘my being somewhere’ is dropped completely, because I am no more ‘me’. At that time, a divine angel from the Creator Himself comes and takes him by the hand. Automatically, he is taken up. There is one stage where help comes automatically, without your asking for it. The whole world lifts you up. This wonderful thing we are told in the Kaushitaki Upanishad. You will be flabbergasted at this experience.

Then, as a further explanation of this ascent, it is told that the solar orb itself receives you. You depart from this world and reach the abode of the sun through the rays of the sun. The rays are not dead, electromagnetic waves. There is no dead thing in the universe. The rays start speaking in a celestial voice, and they become vehicles for you to ascend to the higher regions. The pure soul, which is without a body, without the weight of individual components, rises up through the vehicle of these rays of the sun and reaches the abode of the sun.

To be able to enter the abode of the sun, which is so resplendent, the one who goes there should also be equally resplendent. Light enters light. The soul becomes pure light at that time, pure radiance, ready to expand itself into the vast sea of cosmic experience. And further on, from the realm of the sun, the soul is taken up through the realm of space and time. Space and time do not exist at that time; they merge into a sea of experience. At that time, it will not be space; it will not be time. It will be an ocean of joy, an ocean of consciousness, omniscience, inexplicable in its nature. To that realm, he is taken; and finally he reaches, in a manner which the human mind cannot understand and words cannot explain, the abode of the Supreme Creator.

This kind of ascent of the soul gradually, step by step, is called *krama mukti*, or gradual progressive salvation—as an official may get promoted, stage by stage, and finally becomes the apex of his office. This is *krama mukti*, gradual liberation. There are others who are more blessed than this. They need not have to pass through these stages. They merge into God in one instant. How this is attained, we shall see another time.

Chapter 4

THE COSMIC INTROVERSION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

There has been always a contradiction between the individual personalistic affirmation and the nature of the world, which is regarded as an external principle. But the world is sticking to us; this is a point that must have been made clear by our earlier analysis. Not only is it sticking to us like an external medium, but it is inseparable from the very substance of our own individual makeup. This has been dilated upon earlier in our discussions.

The elements which constitute the world substance are the very elements that constitute the individual substance. The building bricks of the cosmos are also the building bricks of the individual personality, such that no sensible demarcation can be observed between the world and the individual. Philosophic thought, right from the earliest of times till the present day, has been an arduous struggle to enunciate the basic and true meaning of this relation between the world and the individual.

A peculiar trait in the consciousness of individuality wishes to repel the interference of the world in any manner whatsoever with individual self-affirmation. We would not like the world to interfere with us. This is our basic trait. If the world interferes with us, we seem to be losing our prerogative of freedom of choice and self-respect.

This controversy is actually the meaning behind the great epic stories of *Deva-asura-sangama*, the fight between the gods and the demons, as we call it. Now, in this case of the epic of the struggle between the world and the individual, it is up to you to decide who is the *deva* and who is the *asura*. That which opposes a true state of affairs is the *asura*; that which inveterately and unreasonably clings to a position, though it is not justifiable, that is the *asura*. When this conflict precipitates itself into a real struggle for the survival of the world as a whole on one side, and the individual on the other side, a reaction from the world takes place, because the inclusiveness of the individual in the world is the fact. This fact will react upon the falsely assumed individuality of any person. That reaction is what is called karma in our Sanskrit language.

Karma is not necessarily the thing that we are doing. Any work is karma: "I am doing my karma. I am enjoying my karma." People glibly talk about karma without much knowing what it means. It is the nemesis or a judicial reaction discharged by the cosmos against the foolish and unjustifiable affirmation of individuality by any person. It is a kind of punishment that is meted out to the individual. But in what form does this punishment come before us? It comes as an impossibility to continue in this body for an indefinite period.

Why is it necessary that we should die at a particular time? Why not live for any number of years? That is not possible because of the defect of our own thinking. I have mentioned earlier that before the birth of the individual, an intention is there behind it which regulates the nature of the experiences in this individual life, and also the tenure of the continuance, and everything connected

with the individual. The intention is very feeble; it is not strong enough. It is a big thing asking for a small thing. We go to an emperor who can give us anything, and ask him to give us one penny as a charity. Even in asking, a person is so poor. This is what is happening to the individual intention. It wants to assert its individuality. The same is the story of the biblical fall of man, the Lucifer asserting a position totally opposed to God's almighty nature. All religions tell the same story. The Aitareya Upanishad tells us the same thing which the bible says in its Genesis.

Now, this situation of an apparent conflict between the worldly fact and the individual affirmation of falsehood creates this force of rebirth. I mentioned why we should be reborn. Why can we not live long? That is not possible, because our intention to be born as a particular individual is limited by its gravity and potentiality. There is no desire to live eternally in this body; even that desire we do not have, though we think that is a practicable and desirable thing. It is not possible, because our desires are foolish in their nature, basically. We want certain things. These "certain things" should be underlined. If this intention or the desire was for all things, without any exclusion, then there would have been no problem for us because we have included within the campus of our desire everything that is conceivable in the whole cosmos. So, the cosmos cannot react upon us, because we have taken everything into ourselves. Or, we do not want anything; we become a void altogether. But that also is not possible.

The reaction is set up because of a mistake that we are making. We want certain things and, in this act of wanting certain things, we necessarily avoid certain other things. These other things that are avoided are the cause of our trouble. They immediately assert themselves because these so-called "other things" that we are not including in our fulfilment of desire are also part of the organism of creation. They cannot tolerate exclusion like that, so they kick up a row. That is the karma that we are suffering.

So we have made a mistake even in wanting to continue living in this body. It is said that ignorance is the cause of our birth, the cause of our suffering, and also the cause of our repeated transmigration. It is said that when we are in another world after departing from this world, something clings to us. Karma potential clings to us. *Bhuta-sukshma*, the *tanmatras* of the elements themselves, cling to us. This is what the Brahma Sutras told us in detail.

Actually, what is it that is clinging to us? The anger of that which we have excluded from our campus of desire is the karma potential. That is the material force; it is an energy that is impinging upon us, telling us, "You cannot escape from me. And if you have ignored me, I shall pursue you in another incarnation." And the nature of the body that we enter in the next birth, and the conditions prevailing in the new life, will depend upon what are the things in our previous lives that we have avoided and excluded from the entire organism of the cosmos. We go on avoiding things every time we are born, because nobody can conceive how vast the world is. Therefore, even if we ask for everything, still we will eliminate something else. That will create the trouble. This is the karma potential causing birth.

Our point is that we want salvation of the soul. Unless a person is integrated totally in one's consciousness, any kind of spiritual practice is not possible. There is a great discipline that is called for before we embark upon the great science and the art of the liberation of the spirit. It is not just going to fall into our mouth like an apple from the tree. That is not possible. A tremendous introversion of consciousness, in a cosmical sense, is called for in our meditations, in our affirmation of the condition necessary for the liberation of the soul.

I have deliberately used the words "the cosmical introversion of consciousness". It is not the psychological introversion which psychoanalysts speak of; that kind of psychological introversion will lead to what is called narcissism. It is a kind of malady in the consciousness. Introversion opposed to extroversion is not what we are speaking of here. It is a universal introversion of consciousness. This is the metaphysical side of it, not merely the psychological side. The whole consciousness that is extroverted through the sense organs in the direction of objects of sense gets bundled up, as it were, and turned back into the source of its origin, which is as large as the universe itself.

We have to understand what we are actually made of. We should have no hurry, no unnecessary enthusiasm; doing something hurriedly without actually analysing our situation, not knowing our position in this world, and embarking upon anything without any knowledge will not bring much fruit.

What is your relationship to things outside? You must answer this question. How are you connected to this world? When you look at the world, what do you think about it? Maintain a diary. We have the system of a spiritual diary. You can have your own diary, according to your need. Every day you are seeing things. You are seeing the world of nature—of trees, the sun and moon and stars, heat and cold, wind and rain. What do you think about these things? Are you just ignoring their existence, or do you have something to say about it? If you have something to say, write down your feelings about these seasonal changes, the winds of the cosmos, the heat and the cold, the thorns, and all sorts of things.

You see so many people around you. What is your opinion about these people? Are they some wretched interferences, or are they something meaningful? Have you any relationship with them, or would you simply allow them to go to the dogs? What do you think about the people around you? Write it down. Whether it is justifiable or not, be honest to yourself. Do not deceive yourself by writing something wrong. When you look at the world of people, you see a marketplace, bus drivers, and everywhere so many things moving about. What is your feeling about them? Are you insensitive to their existence? Are you totally dead to the perception of these things outside, or are you conscious of them? If you are conscious of them, what is the nature of that consciousness about people around? What is the nature of consciousness about the nature of the whole world itself? Finally, what do you think about your own self? Do you think that you are a wonderful person? Do you feel you lack nothing? Or do you feel that you are very useless, a miserable person: "I wanted this and nothing comes of it. People are very bad. They will not give me what I want."

You may be a big official, but when you are disrobed of all the authority of official performance and alone in your own little room, are you feeling that you are a very mighty person, wanting nothing? Or do you feel, "No. This so-called importance that is foisted upon me is a false accretion that has grown over me by political and social conditions; by myself I am nobody." Are you feeling like that?

If you are a poor nothing, you will never get anything. You have already reduced yourself to a beggarly condition, and you want to become the emperor of the world. No. Unless you deserve a thing, you should not desire a thing. Now you are desiring salvation, a transcendence of cosmic bondage. You want to scale the heights of space and time. You must have power for that: "Such energy have I." Or, if you say, "Oh no, this is not for me," all right. Then, it will not be for you.

Do not condemn yourself. Do not deprecate yourself. Do not make yourself miserable. Do not be melancholy. Do not say you are unfit. You are totally fit. Your thought about yourself will make you what you are. You are just that which you think about yourself. If you think you are a useless nobody, then you will become that only. Education, especially in the spiritual field, is a new thing altogether, in comparison with the other types of education with which you are acquainted. You are all educated people, very learned persons, but what have you learned? You have learned something, gathered information about what is happening in the world, in physics, chemistry, mathematics and geography, but what have you studied about your own self? You have studied the objects of the world, but you are also one of the objects of the world. Why have you ignored studying yourself? How will you study other things, ignoring your own basic existence? Self-knowledge is the primary knowledge. If you know yourself in depth, you will know the world also in depth.

First and foremost, I repeat, you are not poor, helpless people. Nobody in the world is so poor as not to be able to reach the highest pinnacle of perfection, just as nobody is so poor as not to be able to do a little charity to anybody. You will say, "I am just a poor man; what charity can I do?" You have got something, in spite of your being poor. That gesture of goodwill and compassion, and the feeling of cooperation in any manner whatsoever evinced through your mind, is itself charity. Your thought is charity, and not the penny that you are giving to people.

In spiritual life, you have to be confident, and very strong everywhere. Really you must be strong. Even just now, you can reformulate yourself in a few minutes, if you are confident: "Things are not so bad as I thought. All the elements of the world are with me, if I only adjust them in the proper way." It is like tuning a radio: if you wrongly tune it, it will make jarring noise, but if you accurately do it, the whole cosmos will sing. You are the receiving set of the cosmic music, and if you tune it properly, the world will immediately speak. The world is not eyeless and mindless, in the same way as you are not eyeless and mindless. You are the child of the Immortal, says the Upanishad: You are the progeny of the Immortal Being, so you cannot be a miserable person when you are born to the Immortal Being. These confidences, these affirmations, this positive feeling of health and welfare, joy and freedom, and happiness within

yourself, will make you fit to take the first step in spiritual life. That first step is called *nitya-anitya vastu viveka*: the capacity to distinguish between what is true and what is not true. This whole world of involvement is presented before us; there is a shell which covers it, and there is a kernel that is inside it. We have to know the art of removing the shell to see the core of it inside.

The form and the name and the fluxation of everything in the world is the false shadow that is cast over an essence inside by space and time, which is called “existence-as-such”. Everything is existing. The nature of a thing, basically, is immortal existence. Existence cannot perish, because even the perishable nature is a form of existence only. Nobody can destroy existence. It is pure *sat*.

The existence of a thing is also the object of a consciousness of the existence of a thing. You are existing now, but you are conscious that you are existing. Now, your consciousness of existence and your existence are not two different things. Your consciousness of existence is identical with your existence. By knowing that you are conscious that you are existing, you are feeling happy. This is the meaning of saying that you are *sat-chit-ananda*—existence-consciousness-happiness. The only thing is, you are thinking yourself to be a small existence, a small consciousness, with a small joy. Existence is all-pervading. It cannot be demarcated into parts. It is not a finite thing. You switch on this tiny so-called existence of yourself to the ocean of the all-pervading sea; then, you will see a flood entering into you.

Then, you will not pursue things which are ephemeral in this world. We have no confidence in our own selves; therefore, we run after the marketplace and all sorts of things, and purchase, and eat, and so on. You will get what you want. If you ask anything from the bottom of your heart, it shall be given to you. The Person who gives to you is sitting here. He is not sitting far away. Ask, and it shall be given; but your heart should ask, not only the mouth or throat. If your deepest feeling says “I want this”, it shall come to you. It is the law of nature. Whatever you may want, it will come to you. The resources of the world are so large that they can never be used up, and they cannot be denied. This discrimination is the essence of *nitya-anitya vastu viveka*, the differentiating between what is false and what is true.

The forms and the names and the fluxations and the impermanences of things are the false aspect of existent things, but the eternal aspect is pure existence—the confidence that we have got in our own selves that we are existing. We are not doubting that we are existing. A doubtless certainty of our own existence is persisting because of the eternity that is masquerading in our own selves. If the eternity had not been within us, speaking in a voice that is timeless in its nature, you would not be struggling to survive and exist in this world. Even if one is going to die tomorrow, nobody will believe that. The eternity says, “You cannot believe that you will die tomorrow.” The perishable side, the phenomenal side, the space-time side, which is conditioning this body, will warn you that you may pass away tomorrow; but the eternity says, “You will survive.”

Nobody feels that they will die tomorrow, even if that may be a possibility. The reason is the conflict between eternity and time. The time process, the

phenomenal process in which we are involved, tells, "Be cautious. Anytime will be the last time." And eternity says, "No. You will live another fifty or sixty years." Is this contradiction not seen in everybody? There is a conflict between eternity and time. That is the reason why we feel two things at the same time: "*Hari baba!* Anytime I will go!" Or, you will say, "No! I will not go immediately. Many years I will live." Both things you are saying simultaneously because there is eternity, and there is also time. The distinction between the two is the *nitya-anitya vastu viveka*. Acharya Sankara insisted that unless you are able to distinguish between the temporal and the eternal, you will never be able to catch what is actually there.

Then, *vairagya* automatically dawns. Who will ask for tinsels on the roadside when a diamond is in your hand? So, *vairagya*, a distaste for things that have no value, will automatically arise inside. *Vairagya* is not distaste for things which have value. That distaste cannot arise. If you feel in your mind that there is something here which you want to give up but it has a value, then you cannot give it up. You must realise that it has no value; then it is real renunciation. Else, the inner voice will say, "You are a foolish man. It has great value. You have thrown it aside. No! Go!" Then you will be thinking, "I made a mistake."

That aspect of life which has really no value from the point of view of eternity has to be renounced. It is not the world that you have to renounce. Nobody can renounce it, because you are sitting on it. It is the wrong notion of the world being outside you that has to be renounced. Therefore, actually *vairagya*, or renunciation, is the renunciation of a false notion in your head. It is not the renunciation of a thing. A thing cannot be renounced. Things were existing even before you were born. How will you renounce the world? But you have a wrong notion about them: "This is mine; this is not mine."

The fact is, nothing is yours and, also, nothing can be called not yours. The idea of possession and non-possession is called attachment. That has to be renounced. So *vairagya*, renunciation, is a psychological abandonment of the false notion of things being outside, while they are integrally involved in our own selves. This is spiritual *vairagya*, eternity speaking through you, which is quite different from the ordinary abandonment: "I left everything." This kind of glib talk has no meaning. You cannot give up everything like that; it will pursue you even in Timbuktu. It will not leave you.

So, a very subtle thing it is. *Nitya-anitya vastu viveka* will automatically engender a *vairagya* of a positive nature, where when you abandon a thing, you will not feel that you have lost something, but that you have gained something. Here, abandonment of a falsity of the externality of the world will fill you with a positivity of its involvement in yourself. Otherwise, you will feel, "What is *vairagya*? I have left everything. It is all gone—land, property, money, everything. My pension is committed. I am a poor fellow. I will go to Sivananda Ashram." This is not *vairagya*. You will become a wretched man afterwards. It is no good.

You must be happy inside: "I am filled with things. The world has entered into me now, by my renunciation of the false idea that it is outside me. This is *nitya-anitya vastu viveka*. Then, other things are mentioned, very important disciplines:

sama, dama, uparati, etc. And lastly, it is said, there is wanting it: *mumukshutva*. *Mumukshutva* is wanting. This is the highest qualification.

I have already mentioned that if you ask for a thing, it should come. If you want a thing, it must come. It is so because timeless eternity is already inside you, so when timeless eternity asks for a thing, it should be given by the timeless eternity. When God asks for a thing, God has to give it. The eternity within us asking is nothing but God Himself asking. And what is He asking? He is asking for Himself. The eternity in you is asking for its own self.

See how happy you can be? Without moving a finger, you can be happy here. But you should have no doubts. Doubts are our traitors. If traitors there are in the world, they are doubts. You doubt: "Oh, this may not be possible. I might have gone wrong. I have heard so many things, so many discourses on the Upanishads, but I think this may not be fitting for me. It is not for me. No, it will not come." Then, it will not come. *Chanchala buddhi*, the fickle mind, cannot practise anything. You must have will power and confidence: "I have the power to get what I want. I shall be released from this bondage in this birth. I do not want another birth. Why not?" You tell yourself: "What is my defect? I have no defects. I have cleared all my debts. I am attached to nothing, and I am very clear about my relationship with the Eternal Being. God is inside me, and God is outside me. He is with me. He is all things for me. I am perfectly all right. My sins have been destroyed. I have no sins at all. No karma is there. I have cleaned myself completely. I am not going to be reborn again."

Tell yourself, like Buddha: "Till the bones crack and the flesh melts, I shall not get up from this place." This is the determination of Buddha, and likewise you can make a determination: "I will not be born again into this world of phenomena. I am perfectly fit for liberation. There is no defect in me. I have no attachment to anything. I have understood the point properly. God is speaking inside me. I am perfectly okay." Go on saying like this, not merely uttering through words, but feeling deeply that your greatest discipline is this. This is the discipline that you have to practise, in its essential nature.

Chapter 5

THE STAGES OF THE ASCENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The Brahma Sutra is a guide to the salvation of the soul. It is not a book which will entertain you, tickle your imagination, or give you a temporary touch of satisfaction of an empirical type. What I speak is of a different touch altogether.

In our study of the Brahma Sutra, we have encountered various propositions, which we have to face openly and solve completely. The Brahma Sutra is a large guidebook, like an encyclopaedia. It brings forward various difficulties which we may have to face on the path of the ascent of the spirit from the lower stages to the higher stages.

The problems mainly will take the shape of doubts in the mind. These doubts also are mentioned in the Brahma Sutra—what the types of doubt are that we may have to face. There were people who felt that the universe itself is God and there is no necessity for a God outside the universe. On the grounds that a God who is outside the universe will not have any vital connection with the universe, people who live in the universe cannot reach God because it is already established by this doctrine that God is above, outside the universe.

But there were others who felt that God has to be above the universe. He cannot be merged in the universe, because the universe is a created stuff. The creator cannot be inside the object that he created. The creator is always independent of the created object, because anything that is created is subject to modification. Created objects are composite structures; they are not indivisible existences.

If there is no creator above the universe, and we consider that the world, the universe itself, is self-sufficient and self-existent, we will not be able to explain the evolutionary process that is going on in the universe, the tendency of fluxation of the parts of the universe, the perishability of things, the destructibility of everything in the world, and the passing away of everything that is created. Therefore, there must be some point towards which the evolutionary process is moving, and that point has necessarily to be transcendent. The evolution cannot move in the direction of itself; it always moves in the direction of a transcendent ideal beyond itself. Therefore, God has to be transcendent. He must be above the world. But if He is totally above the world, there will be no connection between the world and God; therefore, He has to be also immanent. God is within the world, and yet not within the world.

I mentioned last time how this situation is to be understood by citing the instance of dream and waking. All that we perceive in the dream world is a manifestation of the contents of the waking mind, but the waking mind remains transcendent during the dream experience and does not involve itself in the processes of dream perception. That is to say, when we are dreaming, we will never know that there is such a thing called waking. The transcendent is apparently cut off from the immanent, which is the dream world. This is the reason why people like us, who are involved in the immanence of the created

world, cannot conceive of something that is above the world. It just does not exist for us, notwithstanding the fact that without the presence of that transcendent reality, the immanence of experience in the dream world would not be possible. All the inner components of the waking mind are externalised, spatialised, temporalised, and thus experienced in the dream world. That which was in the waking mind as an integrated self-identical experience alienates itself, as it were, into a false concept or imagination of a world of space and time and objects with causation attached. The whole world, so vast like infinite expanse in the dream world, is contained in the waking mind.

But for the immanence of the substance of the waking mind in the dream world, the dream world would not have been practicable. It is an entry of the substance of the waking mind into the substance of the dream world that makes dream possible; yet, it transcends the dream world. This is the reason why when we wake up from dream to the waking condition, we feel that we are in a different world altogether, and the loss of all the world of possession in the dream world while we are awake does not affect us anymore.

You might have been a king with a vast kingdom as your possession in the dream world. When you wake up, you may find that you are a beggar. Do you not feel that this beggar consciousness in waking is better than the king consciousness in dream? The quantitatively considered valuation of the dream world would make it superior to the beggar experience of the waking mind. Why should you wake up and be a beggar on the streets? Why should you not be dreaming and be an emperor always?

Strangely, for some reason that you yourself understand, you would not like to continue dreaming as an emperor. You would like to be a beggar in the waking condition, because quality surpasses quantity. The quantity of the expanse of the kingdom of dream is surpassed by the quality of the waking consciousness. That is why even if we are poor people in the waking condition, we feel it is better to be awake, rather than be in the dream world of an emperor.

Such is the analogy that we can have before us to understand the relationship between the world of creation and the transcendent creator—by an analysis of which, the doubt that is in your mind regarding what will happen to you when you attain God will be removed automatically. What will happen to you when you reach God? Will you really lose all the wealth of the world? You will finally, perhaps subtly, feel: “Yes, it is true. All the glory, all the value, all the richness, all the beauty and grandeur and magnificence of this world is wiped out in one second, and I will reach God as a non-entity.”

Now, are you justified in thinking like this? Then, you will also be justified in concluding that it is better to be dreaming as a king rather than to wake up as a beggar. The value of consciousness is to be appreciated. The value of anything does not depend upon the quantity or the externalised form that it assumes. The externality of an object diminishes its value, and its union with the perceiving consciousness increases its value, such that when the objects of the world are involved in the very perceiving consciousness, they become universal existences. This is a little hard to conceive. An object of sense perception, which is totally

outside you, will become a universal inclusiveness, if the object enters into the very perceiving consciousness, so that there would be no perceiver in the world. It would be a self-identical experience of the object. When the object enters into the experiencing consciousness, there is an enhancement of the dimension of consciousness, because what you considered as a desirable thing in the form of an object outside has entered into you automatically.

So, the desirable thing is not only in you, it is you. If this transformation is possible in regard to the entire created universe, the whole world of objectivity entering into the consciousness of experience will be tantamount to a sudden burst of universal integration, which means the awareness of this situation is identical with the awareness of a totality of existence. You will never want anything afterwards, because there will be no 'you' at that time. The person who wants will not be there, nor the thing which is wanted. They coalesce and become one mass of experience. The Brahma Sutra takes up all these questions.

In the light of these difficulties even in understanding what is going to happen to you in the future, the Brahma Sutra has chalked out for your easy understanding the various stages of the ascent of consciousness. When a person passes away, the body is shed. What happens to that person? The person does not dissolve into the Universal, because death of the body does not mean death of individuality. Death of the body is not death of the desire to continue to be anything you want. The desire to be an isolated person does not cease merely because the body is shed. The affirmation of self-being is not an act of the body. The body does not think. The self-affirmation of one's own individuality is not an act of the physical body; though it may appear that the body is inseparable from your way of thinking, they are two different things.

The self-affirmative principle continues to exist even after the shedding of the physical body. What gets transmigrated into a new realm of experience after the shedding of the body is the self-affirming principle, the "I-am-ness" of the individual. It is the desire to be "me", this particular so-called individual of this nature, this capacity, with these bundles of desires, that takes another shape by drawing into itself potentials of the physical elements earth, water, fire, air and ether, in their subtlety known as *tanmatras*. Fine electromagnetic forces, as it were, are these subtle potentials of the five elements earth, water, fire, air and ether. They are drawn into oneself, as a magnet pulls iron filings.

So when a particular body, which was the instrument of the satisfaction of the sense organs for a period of time, is shed because of its non-utility, a new body is assumed. A person can be reborn. Where that person is reborn will depend upon what he has been thinking in his life. If you have a desire to come back to this world and live in the same house where you passed away, you may be reborn in the very same family as a little child of the remaining members of the family, with no one knowing what has actually happened. Such attachments can bring about birth in the very same family.

But if the desires are not of that nature, they are general desires just to enjoy life, then this self-identical individual principle will gravitate towards that area of existence where it is possible to manifest its desires and experience them. It will

be born in some other realm, under some other circumstance, with a different set of parents, all quite different from the earlier ones. The subsequent experience will completely wipe out the earlier experience, so that today we do not know what we were in the previous birth. We think that we have suddenly dropped into the world, but it is not so. We have not suddenly come into the world from nowhere. There is a long, long chain of developmental process after the coming down of the individual, as I have mentioned previously. In a similar manner, there is a long developmental process after the passing of this body.

It is possible to take birth on the earth plane, if the desire is such, but if you have performed good deeds, charitable acts, and you have been a philanthropic, good-natured, charitable person, these *karma-phala*, the reactions set up by the good deeds that you performed, will mature and congeal into an experience of great satisfaction in a realm where you will receive what you have given. You may receive more than what you have given.

All the joys, satisfactions and comforts that you are enjoying in this world now should be considered as a reward that you are receiving for the good deeds that you performed in the previous life. Unnecessarily, nobody can enjoy; unnecessarily, nobody can suffer. There is some background for both, though you cannot remember the background of these experiences. There is perfect justice operating in the cosmos. It is precise, mathematically complete, and no mistake is committed anywhere. You get what you want; that is all. It is, therefore, first of all necessary to decide in our own selves what it is that we want.

The Brahma Sutra—I am repeating something which you might have forgotten now—tells us that good deeds take a person to the higher regions of joy, called the lunar regions in the Brahma Sutra, and when the potentiality of the good deeds that you performed gets exhausted, you come back to this world, and you are once again to experience the earthly life because the rewards have been already enjoyed in some other realm, and now you have reverted to the earlier condition because of the momentum of the good deeds getting exhausted by experience.

This is also part of *samsara*. This is also a bondage. Having a good life, a prosperous life, does not mean that you are free from *samsara*, because this is also a reaction to karma. Both good deeds and bad deeds bind you, in different ways. You can be bound by an iron chain or a diamond chain but it makes no difference because still you are bound.

But—I am repeating now what I told you last time—if your mind is not hankering after the externalised objects of the world, but is intent upon meditation of a cosmic total, called the Creator of the universe, God, and you do upasana on that Being, wonderful things are told about you in that condition. The entire world assumes life at that time. The entire creation wakes up to consciousness and receives you. The directions open up their treasure before you. The quarters of heaven open their eyes and see you. Now you feel that they are all dead to you. What does it matter what happens to the horizon? The horizon will wake up. The rays of the sun will start looking at you and invite you.

The Brahma Sutra, in this context, tells us that such a person who has been continuously meditating on the Cosmic Being will be received by the rays of the sun, which will act as vehicles for the ascent of the soul. You can imagine how subtle the soul has to be in order to ascend to the solar orb through the rays of the sun. You have to become as light as light itself. The physical embodiment goes; even the individual affirmation of personality is shed completely. You become very ethereal—so rarefied, so light, so buoyant that the rays of the sun will lift you up.

In the picturesque description of the Upanishads, which is very delightful even to read, we hear that the representative of the Creator, which is the solar orb in front of us, will receive you, purify you, burnish you, make you as brilliant as himself, and push you up to the higher realms.

Fourteen stages of ascent are mentioned. I will not repeat them once again now, because I mentioned them earlier. This kind of ascent to the Ultimate Being through various stages of progress is called *karma mukti*, or gradual salvation. It will take a lot of time to reach that stage because there is still space and time consciousness, and the world does exist, and the transcendent concept of God continues, which is the reason why the idea of ascent arises in the mind. But if the transcendent is also immanent, as I mentioned, the question of ascent does not arise because that which is above, towards which you have to move, is also in the very spot where you are sitting, so there is no ascent.

How would you contact a thing which is everywhere? How would you move towards a thing which is in all places? You can move towards anything which is a little away from you, in some direction. It may be God; it may be anything. That thing which I am aiming at is in this direction, so I am moving. But this thing here, which you are aiming at, is all-encompassing. How would you contact a thing which is all-encompassing? In which direction are you going to move? There is no direction at that time, because directions are swallowed up by the everywhere-ness of this mighty Being.

There is another interesting thing here. You yourself will have no place to exist. If that which you are aiming at is everywhere, it is also everything. It is not merely everywhere-ness; it is everything. If it is everything, it is yourself also, so you cannot be there to experience that universality. Now here is a shock to the philosopher, and even to the mystic: "Oh, I am not going to be there." This is the last bullet that the traitor, called doubt, will shoot at you. The last shock will be this only: "Am I not going to be there at all? All this effort of mine is ending after all in that experience which is no experience at all. I will be wiped out completely."

"I will give you salvation by making you non-existent." If anybody says that, how will you swallow it? This is a negative interpretation of what is actually going to take place. You are not going to be non-existent.

The abolition of your constricted finitude does not amount to self-destruction. It is the elimination of the restricting factors of your being that is going to be swallowed up by the universality of the ideal. The eternal that is in you will rise up to experience; the temporal in you will vanish. The temporal is that which is

confining you to the finitude of your individuality, due to the interference of space and time. That finitude consciousness will be eliminated. You will experience—you cannot use the word ‘you’ there. Language is very poor. There is no ‘you’, no ‘I’, no ‘it’, no ‘this’, no ‘that’. Language is very poor. No word is suitable for that purpose. Who attains what?

I mentioned to you last time that great purification of mind is necessary. You should not jump into this experience or want it immediately unless you are prepared for it; otherwise, you will get a shock. That shock can be dangerous sometimes, because an unprepared mind which is not fit to receive this great treasure of the universe should not seek it.

I have given you some indication as to what these preparations are: purification of the mind, self-restraint, self-contentment, abandonment of hatred, desire, prejudice, etc., and feeling happy when you are alone to yourself, not wanting any company outside. The very idea of ‘outside’ will be abominable to you. You are fully satisfied in yourself. ‘Yourself’ means not this ‘Mr.’ and ‘Mrs.’. It is not this kind of ‘yourself’. It is the potential of eternity that is masquerading through the temporality of your being. It is difficult to understand. If this takes place, there will be no ascent of the soul. You will simply dissolve into the Absolute.

How much time does it take? The idea of time vanishes there. There is no time and space; therefore, you should not ask how much time it takes. It does not take time. Because there is no movement in the direction of space, there is no time, also. It is an indescribable experience of eternity. Such kind of salvation is called *sadyo mukti*, immediate salvation, a thing that comes to you not tomorrow, not even today, but just now, minus the time element involved in the concept of now.

How would you make yourself fit for this experience? Your mind has to think in terms of that which you are aspiring for. You have to be a friend of that which you are wanting. Can you become a friend of God? Just imagine. You are getting a shiver in your personality when such things are told to you: A friend of God? Who can be? This is because we are so very poor, in such a degraded condition of self-conscious finitude, that even the very thought of God is frightening. Nobody is pleased by hearing His name. We never can fully accept that God is beauty, love, and a parent. In religious parlance, we generally consider God as a judge, a judicial supremacy, Who can reprimand us and pass a sentence for or against us. God is not just a judiciary, though He is that, also. He is a grand, magnificent, beautiful experience. All the beauties of the world are little drops of that beauty. All the honey that you taste in this world are drops of that honey. All the great authority, power, and joy that you can conceive in this world are drops of that great, wonderful Being. “It is the joys of all the whole world put together,” says Sage Yajnavalkya in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Just imagine how much joy is there in the whole universe. Collect it all together, millions and millions and millions of drops of joy. Bring them all together. If they are all joined together and become one amalgam, that will be one tiny drop of that wonderful bliss. It is not even a spoonful of it. It is below that.

This enthusiasm that such a thing is possible will purify your mind. Your wanting it is your qualification, but when you want it, you must know what exactly it is that you want. Do not ask for tinsels. Here you are warned once again to be always under the protection and guidance of a competent teacher. Do not tread the path of a razor by yourself. It is a wonderful thing, but a difficult thing.

The path to the Absolute is like the path of the razor's edge. It can cut you this way or that way. It is so subtle. This path is sometimes compared to the track of birds in the sky. You cannot see the track. The track is invisible, but the birds have their own tracks. Or, the track of fish in water—you cannot know where the track is. So is the nature of the track of this great soul that is aspiring for unity with God. Moksha is not your attaining anything; it is God being conscious of Himself.

We were just now mentioning that we must learn meditation. Only God can meditate, and nobody else can. The contemplation of God on Himself is this universe. The whole world is His beautiful meditation. For that purpose, the mind has to be purified in the direction of that kind of thought which is thought thinking itself—not thought thinking an object outside. When you reach that state, there will be no coming back to mortal existence afterwards.

Mortality and immortality are contradictions. The immortal can never become the mortal. Here is the difference between the comparison that we had in connection with waking and dream. A person who has woken up from dream can once again dream, but here it is not like that. You will never dream a second time. The Bhagavad Gita says, "Having reached it, you will not come back to this mortal experience."

Here is another doubt. We are full of doubts; as if we have no other work, we go on creating doubts: "If I have come once, why should I not come a second time?" The whole point is that you have not come even once. This is another difficulty for you: "Is it so that I have not come at all, because creation has not taken place?" If creation has really taken place, and it is there as a hard object in front of you, it will never allow you to go to God. It is an obstacle permanently. If today you can reach God, you have to melt down the whole universe in one second. This cannot be done if the universe really exists. It is a phantasmagoria that is presented before you, a fact that you have to understand by proper analysis.

You cannot cut through a thing which is already there as a hard object. If the world has been really created, the Creator will go on continuing creation, and you will never be able to cross the creation, because you are involved in the creation. A person who is involved in the creative process cannot reach that which is above the creation, so moksha is not possible. But if it is possible, then you must find out why this obstacle seems to be in front of you. The obstacle is mental. It is purely conceptual. It is a difficulty of the mind to conceive, as there is a quandary presented by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. There is a thing called noumenon; whether it is there or it is not there, you cannot say anything about it. If it is not there, then why do you talk about it? If it is there, you must be able to contact it. Here was also a quandary of the same type. All this arises on account of

not having served a master, or a teacher. Go and prostrate yourself before great beings. Who are the great beings? Perhaps you think that you will never find them in this world.

Whoever has inspired you, among the thousands of people whom you have contacted, if one person has inspired you as better than anyone else, for the time being you can consider that person as your guide, until you find a better one. Here you have to rise gradually. There are people who know things more than you. It is not that the world is empty of such people. You require a guide; otherwise, you will come a cropper. In the middle you will find a difficulty, and not only a difficulty; you will have troubles of a psychological nature—pain in the body, pain in the head, pain in the neck, and so on.

Self-purification is the first thing that you have to attend to. Purge yourself of all the dross of longings which are of a perishable nature. Cling not to anything, and trust in that which you are really aiming at. Half-hearted longing for that will not do any real good. If you half-heartedly want salvation, there is no question of its manifesting itself before you. If your whole-hearted longing arises as *mumukshutva*, like *dharma-megha samadhi* mentioned in the sutra of Patanjali, you will find there a shower, a rain of virtue falling on you, and a resplendent world opening up before you when the mind is prepared for it.

Therefore, be a good person. First of all, try to be a good person—a really good person. There are varieties of people in the world, varieties of human beings. Even a cannibal is a human being, but it is not a perfected human being. Beyond the cannibal, there is a better human being who is intensely selfish, minding his own business and not caring for anybody else. That person is not a cannibal; he will not eat you, but he is so much self-centred that he will not bother about anybody else. Higher than that is a person who is not so much self-centred, but considers the existence of other people also to the extent the existence of other people is contributory to the welfare of one's own self. That is a give-and-take, commercial attitude of people with others. Then comes the really good person: "Under any circumstance, I shall not harm anybody." Beyond the good person is the saintly person. Beyond the saintly person is the godly person. Beyond the godly person is God Himself.

So, where are we? Each one should assess one's own level in this process of evolution. Are we cannibals, greedy people, tit for tat, violent, or what kind of persons are we? When we are rubbed the wrong way, we will know what we are; but we always are careful to see that such a thing does not take place. We have to assume the possibility that any kind of difficulty may arise in our path. Difficult is this path, but if we persist in it for a protracted period, it will mature.

In the Bhagavad Gita there is a very consoling passage: "Even a modicum of effort that you put forth in the direction of this achievement will free you from great sorrow of life." Personally, I like this proclamation of the Gita. Even a tiny dot, a modicum, an insignificant little bit of effort that you put forth in the direction of this great achievement will free you from great sorrow of life. What a great proclamation! Thus, a little consideration, a little step that you have taken, a

little inkling of your wanting it, will redound upon you, like a flood coming upon you, as a saving factor.

Chapter 6

CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION—PART 1

When the whole attention of the mind is directed to anything whatsoever, that state of mind is called concentration. No action of the mind can be called concentration if the whole of it is not centralized in the chosen objective. For instance, if you are to solve a very intricate mathematical problem—it may be algebra, geometry or arithmetic—the whole mind is concentrated on that because you are expecting such a question to arise in the exam. Sometimes people sit the whole night to solve an equation. You won't think anything else at that time. The necessity to think anything else does not arise because of the absolute value of that on which the concentration is fixed. That on which you want to concentrate your mind should have absolute value, entire value, whole value, so that it is not some partial reality on which you are concentrating your mind.

Usually, the whole of a person can never get concentrated on anything, because of the fact there is practically nothing in the world which can evoke such an interest in the mind of a person. We cannot say that anything in the world is wholly desirable. It may be tentatively desirable, conditionally desirable and partially desirable, but unconditionally desirable objects cannot be seen in this world. The reason why nothing can be unconditionally desirable is because there are things in the world which are other than and different from the objective that is chosen by the mind. It is not possible for you to bring together at one stroke the total objectivity of creation to your attention. You cannot concentrate on the whole world at the same time. As the whole world cannot evoke the attention of the mind, some part of it will be excluded and some other part will draw the attention. That which draws the attention may be considered as valuable and very necessary under certain conditions; but that aspect of reality, that segment of the world which has necessarily been excluded from the point of concentration will set up a subtle reaction. That reaction is called distraction of mind.

The mind wanders here and there and does not permit itself or persuade itself to get concentrated on anything. Since everything is finite, it cannot evoke an infinite attention on the part of any person. Then the attention will also be finite—a finite mind will be thinking of a finite object. Then the result also would be finite and it will be tentative, temporal and evanescent. The excluded part of the world is oftentimes not considered even as existing at all because of a tentative, temporal attraction that the mind feels for one particular object.

Do we know that there are deeper layers of our own mind within us, and they are very powerful media which condition the way of thinking in the waking condition also? There are subtle potentials and vibrations of the psyche in the subliminal level; psychologists call these levels as subconscious, unconsciousness, etc. They actively operate, determining the manner in which the waking mind works, such that the waking mind will be wrongly assuming the role of a self-competent medium of thought, with freedom of choice which it can

absolutely exercise. It is necessary to study deep psychology, not for the purpose of becoming a professor of it, but to understand one's own nature. You must know what you are made of. When you think something, you must know why you are thinking in that manner. "I don't know. I happen to think like that." You should not say that. That is an unintelligent reaction to a phenomenon taking place in one's own mind. Every bit of psychological action should be understood and should be subjected to careful, rational study. One cannot afford to be unintelligent about one's own self—that will serve no purpose.

If in our own selves there are deeper layers of the psyche which condition waking thoughts, and for the time being we accept that all concentration of mind that we are thinking of is an activity of the waking mind, we can conclude at the same time that this activity of the so-called concentration of mind in the waking condition is not adequate, because it is conditioned by the impulses that are deep within one's own self. The freedom of choice that we are trying to exercise in the waking condition is supposed to be a will-of-the-wisp and an illusion cast by the propensities of the lower layers of the mind, which defeat the so-called purpose of the activity of the waking mind. In every movement of the waking mind we seem to be engaged in a self-defeating exercise, which predicament is not to be allowed if we are careful about our own selves.

There is no use being too much interested in the sun and the moon and the stars and the Mars and the skies and all that without knowing one's own self, because all the knowledge you have got of the higher space and astronomical universe is again conditioned by the structure of your own capacity to know. Philosophers tell us the study of the structure of knowledge is a primary study before anything else is taken up. They call it epistemological studies. You must first of all know how you are knowing anything at all. Otherwise, that which you are supposed to be knowing may be really not a knowledge at all. Even our choice made by our own selves personally of an object of concentration or meditation may be determined by a temporary impulse of the notion of value imposed upon that object. It is accepted that every object has a value, but as I mentioned, no object has absolute value. That is the reason why unconditional concentration on any object in the world is not possible. If the concentration is not unconditional, you cannot really call it concentration at all. This is a very important background of study in which we have to engage ourselves before we take to spiritual life, especially a God-seeking life.

What do you mean by seeking God? It is the search for that which is complete in itself. It is the whole in every sense of the term. A partial attempt on the part of a finite mind cannot contain within itself the idea of a whole, whether you call it a universe or the God Himself. Has anyone attempted to think of a complete situation or a wholeness of anything, excluding every facet of things which are external to it?

Spiritual meditation, therefore, is the reaction of the whole person in respect of the whole of reality. It is not like the attention that you pay during a mathematical problem solution. It is not the accountant's concentration when he totals figures or subtracts figures, though that also is a concentration of some

kind. When people walk on a wire in a circus they have concentration on what they are doing, otherwise they will slip down and fall. When you walk on a precipitous edge of a deep ravine, you are very careful. If there is a ropeway bridge across the Ganga with only two ropes which swing this way, that way, and on those ropes you have to walk, you know how careful you will be, lest you fall down. These are all concentrations, no doubt, but the whole mind does not work even here, because walking on the ropeway bridge is not a whole necessity—it is a tentative necessity. Every other action that we are performing is a tentative need that we feel, but it is not a total need. A total need is that without which you cannot even exist. It is not that you want something for a satisfaction—you want it for your being itself. Your existence itself will be nullified if that particular thing is not attended to properly.

An apparently intelligible example of this kind of concentration is the need that you feel to take your breath every day. Do you know how important breathing is? Fortunately, God in His infinite compassion has not compelled us to be aware constantly of the process of breathing. Some automatic, computerized action, as it were, is taking place through the heart and the lungs, and it is not forcing you to attend on the process of breathing; otherwise, day in and day out you will be thinking only of breath. Merciful God, merciful nature has freed you from this torture of feeling that you have to breathe always. When you take your meal, the food goes inside; after that nobody bothers as to what happens to it. Suppose you go on thinking it passes through this gut, then it converts itself into something else, it goes to the stomach, it goes to the intestines; suppose you go on thinking like that, will it be a happy mood?

So there are certain automatic actions taking place which free us from the need to concentrate excessively even on important issues like breathing, digestion of food, sleep, etc. We don't even know how we sleep—it takes place. If you have to pay a price for getting into sleep, then what will happen to you? Without paying any price, spontaneously, freely you are given the choice of going into sleep and becoming very happy, wholesome and vigorous when you wake up.

These are little, visible examples of a totality of action taking place in some way or the other, but meditation on God, which is the principle motive of spiritual living, is a deliberate, wholesome activity of the total individual in the direction of the total reality of the universe. What is religion? It is the reaction of the whole man, whole person, to the whole of creation. Religion does not mean Hinduism, Christianity or any kind of 'ism' or fundamental, denominational section. Religion is not what you do, but what you are. You cannot be something different within yourself and start doing something which is religious in its nature. Religion is your encounter with God, not encounter with a temple or a church or a textbook or a scripture. That which is permanently real is the object of concentration in spiritual living. That which is permanently real can evoke attention only if that which is permanently real within our own selves starts concentrating. That which is permanently real in our own selves is that which concentrates itself on that which is permanently real in the cosmos. It is the real

that is concentrating on the real. If you take this logic to its finale, you may come to the conclusion that meditation on God is nothing but God thinking Himself. I think it was Aristotle who mentioned somewhere when thought thinks another thing, it is called a human being—when thought thinks itself, it is called God.

But no thought can think itself. The very procedure adopted by human thought is to externalize itself in the direction of things which are externally placed in space and time. The mind is conditioned by the pressure exerted upon it by the actions of space and time. The space and time complex has only one function to perform—to externalize everything, and nothing that can be considered as whole and integrated in itself can be conditioned by space and time. This is why we say God is not in space and time—it transcends space and time. It is another way of saying God is not an external object, it is a total being. God is not an object of any kind so that you can open your eyes and look at it. You cannot even conceive it in the manner that you are conceiving objects in the world. The habit of the mind to think in terms of externality—space, time and cause—is to be transcended.

Great philosophers right from Plato onwards—Sankaracharya and Upanishads—have told us that the causal nexus of something proceeding from something else, motivated by the pressure exerted by space and time, has to be overcome. The mind that is completely engrossed in the operations of space and time externally will not be able to wholly attend upon that which is complete in itself. Nothing that is external in space and time can be complete in itself. It is not complete because it is external. Why is it not complete? Because the external excludes the internal—therefore it is not complete. The internal also is not complete because it excludes the external. Can you conceive of a situation, psychologically, where you can bring a blend between the internal and the external? If that would be possible, you will be thinking transcendently and not empirically. Meditation is a kind of transcendental thinking, if at all you are permitted to use that word ‘thought’. Meditation is not thinking—it is a state of the emergence of Being in one of its degrees. God is being—we call God Supreme Being. We do not say God is supreme object, nor do we say God is supreme becoming. God is not a process, God is not even a creative activity; God is not a work, it is not a procedure, and therefore to be in tune with that fundamental nature of the finally real thing, we have to set ourselves en rapport with that nature.

The characteristics of our center of aspiration should be in tune with the characteristics of that on which the concentration is directed. Likes attract like; dissimilar things cannot attract each other. If the substantiality of your being is dissimilar to the substance of God, there will be a repulsion from the side of God, and you will see that you feel great discomfort even in meditation. Why should there be discomfort in meditation? You should be engulfed in joy, rather. That which is going to bless you with infinite completeness requires from you nothing except your own self. God does not want any kind of gifts from you, like objects that we offer in temples of worship, etc. God does not want incense, flowers, sandalwood, fruit or delicious dishes. You have no right to offer this to Him

because you have not manufactured these objects. You cannot offer to God that which is not your property.

Then what is it that God wants? He wants you only. This is a moot point in spiritual life. If anyone says "I want you" what will you make out from this statement? You want me? What is the meaning of this statement? We have this subject discussed in the great poetic drama of the German poet Goethe when he wrote the beautiful epic called *Dr. Faustus*. Dr. Faustus was in a state of embarrassment when Mephistopheles, the opposite of spiritual welfare, offered him all the wealth of the whole world for a small price. "Would you offer a small price, Dr. Faustus?" "Oh, if it is a small price, why should I not part with it? But what is it that you are going to give me?" "The whole world of glory with all the magnificence of creation—here it is, it is laid out before you. But give me a small thing." "What is that small thing?" "Give yourself to me." "Oh," Dr. Faustus thought over. "Oh, I see, you want me. And in return for that you will give me the whole universe of pleasure." Dr. Faustus forgot that when he is not there, because he has already given it to someone, he will not be there to enjoy this cosmos. This idiocy caught hold of him. "Take it," said Dr. Faustus. A thunder, as it were, broke everywhere. Dr. Faustus felt he was shattered to pieces. He broke into little, tiny particles. When you are broken into tiny particles of subatomic elements, torn apart in shreds, unthinkably destroyed completely, you are no more there—such shattered condition befell this wonderful Dr. Faustus who sold himself for the sake of the wealth of the whole world.

This is not a story. This was also mentioned in connection with Jesus Christ. The whispering one came and told, "Why are you sitting on this top of the mountain famishing your body? You have already attained what you want. Here it is. Look, everywhere gold, everywhere silver, everywhere shining crystal. Take. Why are you torturing yourself? Go. Here it is." But Christ was made of a different stuff. "Get thee behind, Satan. Tempt me not." These are the stories that apply to everybody. We should not think that we are better than Dr. Faustus or Jesus Christ—nothing of the kind. Every human being has to pass through the same experience and in the same layer of ascent. If it is not today, it will come tomorrow. There is no such thing as waiving of a condition or a double promotion—nothing of the kind. Every step of ascent has to be passed through by everyone; if it is not today, it'll be done tomorrow.

Most people get frightened of the thought of surrendering themselves to God, because it is a negation of one's dear self. Nothing can be more frightening than the possibility of losing your own self. This fright will also be a good indicator of how far we have progressed in spiritual life. You are frightened by God Himself. Is it possible to imagine such a situation? When God says, "I shall give you all things and I take you entirely into Myself," well, when He says "I shall give you all things," you are pleased. When He says I shall take you into Myself—God forbid. If I am annihilated from the existence which I am enjoying now, I shall not persist anymore and there shall be nothing called 'me' even to enjoy the bliss of God. This is the whisper of Mephistopheles, or the opposite of Christ, which will not permit you to think that there is a glory beyond your own selves. "I am

everything, what I am is perfectly ok. I am perfect, there is nothing wrong with me; there is nothing higher than what I am." It is impossible to conceive that which is beyond yourself.

This is perhaps the reason why the great German thinker Immanuel Kant said you cannot think the noumenon, the thing that is really there. You cannot think that which is above yourself; you can think only that which is within your capacity, within the phenomenal range of your mental perception. Beyond that you should not touch—don't go beyond the limit. There is a limit for logic, there is a limit for reasoning, and reason fails and then religion starts.

Spiritual meditation is not a kind of physiological exercise. It is not a mere attempt to see if something can come or not. It is a dedication, and a dedication for the whole of life. When I say it is a dedication for the whole of life, it means there is nothing else to be done—this includes all things. And even the other things that you are apparently interested in and engrossed in, they are also brought together into this granary of comprehensiveness of God-consciousness. Many people cannot reconcile themselves between the world of activity and the being of God. "After all, I have got duties, I have got a family, and I've got to do work." Who told you not to take care of family? Who told you not to work in a factory, in an office? But your wisdom consists not in making a dichotomous distinction between God and the creation, but to see a blending factor between the two.

A little bit of conversation we had yesterday with some visitor, and a question was raised before me: "After all, we have to get on in this world of matter." I said, "I do not know if there is a world of matter, because that would imply that God has created matter also." There are two aspects in this question. If matter exists, it opposes spirit; that is the Sankhya duality of Prakriti and Purusha. If spirit and matter are opposed to each other, there will be nobody to know that matter exists. Matter cannot know itself because it is not spirit, and spirit cannot know matter because it is established that the two are totally different. So who is it that is conscious of the world? You will not know that even the world exists at all because you are a center of perception, knowledge, spirit, opposed to the object of the world which is considered as material. If you are totally segregated as a center of the spirit that you are inside yourself, the objective world will not be an object of perception. Nobody can know that the world exists if spirit and matter are two different things. This particular situation defeats the argument that spirit and matter are two different things.

Second thing is when you say that God has created the world. Every religion says that God created the world. What did He create? Did He create the world out of some pre-existent material? If you say God existed, of course, but there was a substance also out of which He fashioned this world, then there would be a permanent opposition to God, and the other assertion that God alone is will be futile. Some religions are unable to get over this problem, and accept that there are two facets of reality—Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, as the Zarathustrian philosophy will tell you. There is a permanent opposition to God. Ahura Mazda is God, Ahriman is the opposite of it—a spirit and matter opposition. In India we

have got theological doctrines of *deva-asura sangrama*—a war between the gods and the demons. From where did the demons come at all? Who created them? No one wants to put questions of that kind—they are all taken for granted.

So, just as nobody can know that the world exists if the perceiving consciousness is totally isolated from the world of matter, as you think, so also you cannot know who created this world. The assertion in all religions that God alone is, or was, or shall be, precludes any possibility of God handling some pre-existent matter for the purpose of creation; because if there is a pre-existent matter, call it Prakriti or whatever it is, then God is not All-in-All. If God is not All-in-All, He's a finite being, He cannot be immortal, He cannot be infinite. There is a muddle in thinking.

This difficulty arises because the mind is impure to the very core. The mind is unfit even to think such great things. But, as I mentioned to you the other day, take at least the initial step in the direction of understanding this truth. It may not be a complete understanding at 100% marks—you have got only 1%. Ok, God is pleased with that also. You will not be declared a failure because your mark is only 1%; you don't have to certify 40%—not necessary. God is a very good examiner—1% is sufficient. What a beautiful statement in the Bhagavadgita. Even the least attempt that you make in the direction of knowing this reality will free you from great fear, because even the least effort, even a millimeter distance that you cover in the direction of this ultimate reality, evokes a flood of response from that Great Being, and prevents the agonies of people.

When you think, when you exercise your mind in meditation, mostly what happens is you are simultaneously conscious of excluding certain thoughts. "I should think only Bhagavan Sri Krishna, and I should not think any other nonsense in this world." You shut out the thoughts which are external to that particular thought which you have chosen as that which is your ideal. But you must remember, psychology is a very interesting subject. You cannot shut off or shut out the thought of something without being conscious that such a thing exists. Even when you are not wanting a thing, you are conscious that such a thing exists.

So there is a dual activity of the mind—a struggle, as it were, going on within itself—the thought that it is wanting to concentrate itself on one thing, and the thought it does not want to concentrate itself on another thing. This not wanting to concentrate itself on another thing also is, unfortunately, a thought. So you should not imagine, just because you excluded the thought of something which should not intrude into your meditation, you have got over it. It will be there staring at you, "What have you made out of me?" And I mentioned some time ago that even the awareness that there is a thought of something other than the thought of that what you have chosen is not possible unless there is a linkage between the two thoughts. How would you know that something is irrelevant and something is relevant unless there is some operation going on in the mind itself which links the two aspects of reality?

This is something like our famous Hegel's philosophy of position, opposition and synthesis—thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Thesis is that the mind should

concentrate on one thing. The antithesis is it should not think of something else. The synthesis is that thought which brings about a union between these two thoughts of the position and the opposition of it. So there is a third element, like a triangle—you can have a picture of it drawn, geometrically. The base of the triangle consists of two points which you may call the position and the opposition—the thesis and the antithesis—and the apex of the triangle is the blending factor which is the synthesis of the apparently two different points of the thesis and the antithesis. This is only an illustration I am giving you.

But the world is so big that merely bringing about a reconciliation between two thoughts will not suffice, because this synthesizing thought operating as a transcendental medium between the position and the opposition will itself, to put it in the language of Hegel, will be in the position of a thesis, a position which will be opposed by another thing which is the antithesis of it. The world is so big that there will be no end for this situation or the encounter of the thesis by the opposition or the antithesis, the seeking of a blending of them two together in a transcendental unity which series goes on one above the other, one above the other, until, staggeringly as it were, it reaches the absolute synthesis where the thesis of God and the antithesis of the world are brought together by a synthesis of the Absolute. Well, I'm not talking on Hegel now, or Kant or anything, I'm just mentioning these Western thinkers are also very penetrating. There is something we have to learn from them. You should not think that Indian thought only is wonderful, and there is nothing there. It is not like that. Very great thoughts are there—Plato and others—people have to teach you very much.

Now, we're coming to the point—I am not able to complete this subject today because I went in such detail—it has taken already 45 minutes. May I conclude today and take up another time? Ok? Hari Om!

Chapter 7

CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION—PART 2

In the middle of our elaborate discussion on the way of salvation according to the Brahma Sutras, we entered into the subject of concentration and meditation because I was told that you would like to listen to that aspect of the study also. What I mentioned to you last time in this connection is that mostly ordinary people will not find it easy to concentrate the mind on anything because of a basic lack of knowledge of one's own mind. You don't even know whether you are keeping the mind inside you, or you yourself are the mind—even that question cannot easily be answered. When we speak of "my mind", "your mind", etc., you falsely make a distinction between yourself and the mind which you seem to be possessing as a kind of object. Why do you use the word "my mind"? What is the significance of this statement? Are you yourself the mind, or you can exist independent of the mind? This is a very interesting point. When you say, "my mind is like this" you imply thereby you are not the mind. Are you sure that you are different from the mind? Don't make statements which are incorrect. If you imply thereby that the mind is not you, then what are you? Here is the basic confusion in thinking itself. Without knowing anything about what is happening inside, we go on saying something glibly, by rote, hearing something from somewhere, reading something from some book, etc.

You must understand the mind is yourself only; you are not holding the mind inside because you do not exist minus the mind. Though in a transcendental manner you may say you may be existing independently of the mind, to which subject we need not divert just now, for all practical purposes mind is the person. As you think, so you are. All your joys and sorrows are the operations of the mind. I am happy, I am unhappy, which means the mind is happy and the mind is unhappy. That means you have identified yourself with the mind; you are a psychological existence, though that is not the ultimate reality of yourself.

Now, coming to the point of concentration and meditation. I mentioned last time that when you direct your attention towards something that you consider as your ideal, you simultaneously try to set aside the thought of any other thing which you do not consider as your ideal. You think that everything is fine now, because you have shut off the entry of a thought which concerns things which are totally irrelevant to the effort of the mind to concentrate on a chosen ideal. But it is not like that—you are still in the doldrums. It is not possible to have a single thought directed at a chosen ideal without simultaneously being aware that there is another thought connected with that which you do not want to bring in to the field of your concentration. That you want something implies that you do not want something else. It is not possible to have only wants, without no wants.

Then how would you entirely concentrate the mind on a chosen ideal? The word 'entirely' is to be underlined. The mind operates in a holistic manner. You cannot cut the mind into pieces, half for the desired objective, and half for the undesirable—that cannot be done. The mind is an organismic completeness, in

the same way as your personality as a whole is a total organism. You cannot cut yourself into two parts—the wanted part and the unwanted part. Even so is the mind, because you are the mind. Thus, you have to go a little deep into your own self.

The difficulty in meditation is the hardship you feel in reconciling between two kinds of thought at the same time, though you may think that there is only one thought. You may be imagining that you have only one thought of the chosen ideal, but there is another thought which is slowly whispering into your ears, “I am also here, don’t ignore me.” That second thought is concerning something which you do not regard as your chosen ideal. If that thing which is the other side is not your chosen ideal, it has no connection with you. If it has no connection with you, why does it whisper that I am also here, you cannot ignore me? That is because you have segmented the mind into two fractions—the ideal and the non-ideal.

The mind operates as a whole, as a gestalt, as they call it in modern terms. You cannot isolate a section of the mind from another section. When you take your meal, the whole personality is operating. You cannot tell the stomach, “You mind your business. You take the food but I’ll be thinking something else in the mind, doing something else with the hand, and with leg I’ll walk.” This kind of thing will not be permitted. The whole being has to eat the food—only then it can be digested, and it can be assimilated, and it will energize you. You walk on the road with a plate of food in your hand, thinking some mathematical solution and then eat—see what happens to you. This is not the way of eating food—it is an insult to the holy act of eating.

Like that is this act of meditation. That the mind is universal in its nature is the thing that you have to principally admit. When I say mind is holistic, it is incapable of segmentation from any part of the universe. In the mind, everywhere, in every point of space, in every particle of sand, from the galaxies onwards to the lowest cells and atoms—that is the real whole of mind, which is the reason why you cannot concentrate one part of the mind on one part of the universe.

When you say “I concentrate my mind on a chosen ideal,” you have cut the universe also into two parts—that which you consider as your ideal, and that which you are not considering as your ideal. You have created a war between the *devas* and the *asuras* in this meditation. The *deva* is as you consider the object of meditation; the *asura* is the other one. But, as the great Lord in the Bhagavadgita speaks to you, *devas* and *asuras* both manifested themselves as the right hand and left hand, as it were, of one creative activity. In that universal karma or action of emanation of the whole universe from the creative principle, the so-called segmented aspects of *deva* and *asura*, the positive and the negative, rolled themselves into a single flow of an oceanic flood, as it were, from the universal whole, and then, being entangled in the two obstructing principles of space and time, they separated themselves.

These two separated things have to be brought together. When you think something, you think another thing at the same time. The idea that there is

another thing cannot arise in your mind unless there is a third mind, a third aspect of the mind, which connects the two thoughts. This was the theme that I took up at the end of my speech last time.

The necessary and the unnecessary aspects of thought cannot even be known to exist and be operative unless there is a third synthesizing mind which transcends both the necessary and the unnecessary. Just as the subject and the object in a particular sentence is harmonized by a principle called the verb and without the verb sentence cannot be there, so you cannot know that there are two things unless you are there between the two things. So a third transcendent aspect of the mind operates, knowingly or unknowingly, when you are busily engaged in isolating an aspect of the mind as a desirable one, and another aspect as an undesirable one. This is the reason why the mind cannot concentrate on anything, because it has an opposition from the other side which it has ignored.

I mentioned to you last time that there is always a continuous activity going on of position, opposition and synthesis. This state of affairs continues endlessly, endlessly, until, if I remember well, I told you that you reach a state of ultimate position and opposition, God and the world, in a synthesis which is the Absolute, towards which the mind rises. You must be a little bit of a philosopher also, apart from a psychologist. I don't want to go deep into this subject now because time is short, and we have not too many days here to discuss these things.

You are all devotees of some principle of divinity; you believe in God, that's what I have to take for granted. Your concept of God, whatever it is, should be the object of your meditation. In the beginning, what you should do—I am speaking to you as if you are small children and not knowing anything about things. I take it that you don't know anything about meditation. In the beginning what you should do is, the desired divinity should be in front of you. The divinity cannot be in front of you because it is not in this world; so you prepare a portrait of this divinity—a picture you keep. That picture may be actually a conceptual form presented by an artist as the Creative Almighty, as Jesus Christ, as Rama or Krishna, or Devi, or whatever is your concept of God. That portrait, whatever be the divinity that you are thinking in your mind, should be in front of you. When you look at a thing, the mind also concentrates on that thing. When you close your eyes, it will just run about in other directions. Now when I open my eyes and see one of you, I am thinking of you. I am not thinking of other persons at that time. This is the advantage of opening the eyes and seeing things.

You open the eyes and look at this divinity. This is the mighty divine that is in front of me. From that divinity, forces are rising and touching me. I am feeling that I am energized by the balming emanation of divine forces. Now it is only in the form of a portrait. It may be a diagram, it may be a mandala, as they call it, it may be a symbol, it may be an idol, it may be a lingam; it may be any blessed thing which will remind you of the Supreme Being. It may be even a *japa mala*, it may be a mini Bhagavadgita, or Bible, or whatever be the scripture, or Dhammapada, or whatever it is which will remind you. The divinity on which you are concentrating with open eyes is symbolic of what you are actually aspiring

for in your mind. The divine itself cannot be seen or conceived, but symbols will take you to that true reality.

The next stage would be to feel that this form that is presented through the portrait is not only in one place. It is to my right, it is to my left, it is behind, it is in front, it is on the top, it is below. When you turn your eyes like this, you find that everywhere. Everywhere it is—everywhere; this form is everywhere I am seeing. When you gaze at the sun for a long time and then close your eyes, you will see sun everywhere. Everywhere the orb will be visible because of the impact of the sun on your eyes by gazing like that. That on which you have been concentrating with open eyes will produce such an impact upon your mind that afterwards you cannot see anything else anywhere. Wherever you cast your eyes, you will see only that. But, still, that would be a multitude of the forms that you are seeing. Everywhere I am seeing that thing in a multiplicity of manifestation. It is like seeing one person everywhere; the same person is here, here—everywhere the same person. Like seeing a tree—everywhere you see the same tree. This is the third stage, where that which you beheld with your open eyes became an all-pervading individual filling the whole space, and nothing is there except that. It is planted in every tree and every bush and every mountain and every river and the sun and the moon and the stars—everywhere you find the whole world is peopled by this form. This is the third stage.

In the fourth stage, bring these forms into one form. Let all these forms melt into one form—a mighty cosmic form. This is practically the idea of God that we have in our minds. The person that is the God, the Supreme Person who we speak of in all the religions, God Almighty, Father in heaven—this is all divinity commingled, merging into one being, beyond every manifestation, every form, in every direction. So what are you looking at now? You are not actually looking at a visible, conceptual picture, but a meditative form, a mighty submerging ideal—you may call it God Almighty. You will feel a tremor in your body at that time; you have to concentrate deeply in order to feel that tremor. Your whole being should be immersed in that concept of the total, integrated, Supreme Person which religions call God Almighty. You will shudder by the very thought of such a being. Visvarupa is the name that we give to this form. In the scriptures, especially in India, we have various descriptions of Visvarupa. One such instance is the elaborate details we have in this connection in the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavadgita, “Everywhere, everywhere, everywhere, everywhere.”

So this concept of Almighty Being as inclusive being—the whole universe is inside this great being. That would be another stage of meditation, but still you are there outside it in spite of your having raised your consciousness to the level of concentrating your whole consciousness on that total identity of cosmic personality—you will be feeling simultaneously that you are beholding it. So it is still a cosmic object, and you are an individual subject. This is the penultimate stage in meditation, where you see God everywhere but you are outside it. According to the descriptions we have in Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, this is equal to *savikalpa samadhi*, a merger into the being of God with a simultaneous feeling of independence maintained by oneself. That kind of independence cannot be

permitted finally, because the same position, opposition and synthesis principles will come in and tell you that this will not work because if you have beheld the Almighty as a mighty, creative person and yet you are outside it and looking at it, there must be something that causes this perception. You are on one side, that which you behold is on the other side—the two have to be connected in order that perception is possible. No perception of an object is possible unless there is a link between the perceiver and the perceived.

Here, taking for granted that the mighty Supreme Being is your object of meditation, and you are the beholder and the perceiver of this form, you cannot achieve this concentration in that manner unless there is an element which connects both together. The impossibility of perceiving anything as an external object without the intervention of a third principle in between—that principle operates here also, in God perception. So the externality of God is obviated completely by the necessity of there being a connecting link between yourself as the beholding principle, and God Almighty as the beheld. You transcend even that personality concept. You enter into it—God beholds Himself. When you have reached that stage, you have attained the pinnacle of meditation.

Brahma Sutra, which was our real subject with which we began and with which we should conclude, is the book of salvation. You are bound by your own inadequate, segmented operations of the mental makeup. That is called individuality or *jiva*. Your individuality, your existence as a personality is actually the existence of an isolated mentality, falsely distinguishable from the cosmic mind. When you are entangled in this individuality forced upon you for whatever reason, you perform actions. Actions are performed for the sake of ridding oneself of the sorrows of life which are consequent upon the very concept of individuality, and no one can be free from sorrow as long as one is conscious of one's isolated individuality. Anything that is finite is a source of sorrow; and if every person is finite, then every person is a bed of sorrow only. Because of it being impossible to be always in a state of grievous, sorrow and agony, the individual manifests potentials of externality called sense organs, and then grabs things of the world by way of an activity which sets up reactions of its own nature—that reaction is called karma, or the fruit of karma. That determines the experiences in life; not only experiences in life, it also determines the length of life for which you will be permitted to live in this world. When the force of karma exhausts itself by experience through this particular body, the body is cast out, because that force of cumulative energy called karma phala does not want this body anymore as a suitable instrument. When the instrument is useless, you throw it out. If the fountain pen has a nib which is broken, you throw the fountain pen and have a new fountain pen. This is like a fountain pen used by the karma forces—it has broken completely, and it is of no use.

Then what happens? These forces of remnant karmas condense themselves, congeal into a form which is suitable for the enjoyment and suffering of remnant karmas, and takes another birth of a new kind altogether. Inasmuch as a portion of the karma that we had in our previous birth is totally different in nature from the kind of karma which has given birth to this particular body, nobody can

remember the previous birth, and you cannot also know what kind of birth you will take in the future. The attachment to a particular individuality is so strong that it precludes memory of the past and any kind of idea of the future. So we live in this world as if we are in a fool's paradise, everything looks all right, but we do not know that we are totally conditioned by the pressure of the past and the anticipations of the future. We are pulled in two directions. That we are stable and existing as if we are not a moving flux of non-identical powers, that idea arises because of the tension that is equally exerted by the past and the future and we are sitting on a fence, as it were—we can fall this way or that way.

Basically speaking, individuality does not exist. It is only a floating bubble made to appear as an existent something due to the push of the past and the pull of the future. There is no such thing called the present—it is only an enigmatic concept which passes the moment you start thinking about it. Here is the philosophy of Buddha before us—nothing is, everything moves, everything flows; there is flying everywhere without anything that really flies. The individuality is a conceptual bubble—it is not a solid existence. That it appears to be existing for a moment is an illusion created by the equally forceful pressures exerted from two sides, from the past and the future. These are all difficult things to understand.

However, the point is that we take rebirth. What will happen to you when you take rebirth? Whatever you have thought in your mind in this world, whatever you have done, will gather themselves into a force which jet-like moves in the direction of that which you have to enjoy or that which you have to suffer. Nobody punishes you and nobody rewards you. You reward yourself and you punish yourself. That is because from the beginning itself there is a wrong movement of the so-called isolated individual, the ego principle, the fallen man, as you call it, in theological terms. There is a topsy-turvy thinking because of the fall. The fall from God is a topsy-turvy running down to the earth-plane; something like the thing that happens when the head is down and the legs are up, and we see everything topsy-turvy. The world that was there even before you were born looks like an object of your perception, and yourself which came much later in the process of evolution look like a very mighty person with all prerogatives. You are the perceiver, the knower of the world that is outside. You assume a role of importance as a perceiver, knower of that which was existing even before you were born. This is a topsy-turvy perception. Really the subject is the world; you are the object—you came later on. It is the world that is observing you and not you that is observing the world. This is completely contrary to what is taking place, and then, because of this contrary perception, many other sorrows come in—endlessly, endlessly, endlessly they come like that. You may go to heaven, you may go to hell or any region, or you may come back to this earth, as the case may be, according to your desires.

To some extent we can know what you will be in the next birth. You should not say, "I do not know anything, I am helpless." Do you know what you've been thinking since morning today, let alone the things that you thought right from your birth—forget all that. Right from the morning today up to this time—what were you thinking in your mind? This will tell you what kind of person you are

and what you will get in your future birth. Great confusion. You will realize to your horror that there was a great confusion in your mind today itself, right from the morning onwards. You cannot remember just now what you were thinking—a muddle, a heap of chaos, that's all that was there in the mind. How would you expect pleasure and satisfaction in a new birth? Unless you are integrated today, you will not be integrated in the next birth. Unless you are strong now, you will not be strong in the next birth. Unless you are unselfish today, you cannot be unselfish in the next birth. If you have grabbed things but given nothing; you have possessed a lot but not given in charity—nothing—you can imagine what you will get in the next birth. You will get nothing. That which you gave will come back to you. That which you have enjoyed wrongfully will flee from you. The more you give, the more also you will receive. Nobody should think that this world is all-in-all and nothing will happen afterwards. Whatever you think and feel and act, that will be your future.

Don't say God will protect me; there is no God protecting you. You have done a mistake in the beginning itself, and God is a judiciary sometimes. He will give you what you deserve. There is no he or she or anything, this also is a kind of anthropomorphic conception in our mind. The law of the universe operates almost like an automatic computer system, and nobody is there to punish you and nobody is there to reward you also. You punish yourself, you reward yourself; you go to a hot and forceful magnetic field and touch it and you know what will happen—it will give you a kick. If you are far away, it will not do anything. A magnetic field is not responsible for whatever has happened to you—you have approached it wrongly, that's all. If you are a good person, if you have given something, you will say, "What can I give, I am a poor man myself?" There is no one in the world so poor as not to be able to give something to somebody else. Such poverty is unthinkable. You may not have material possessions, but you have a mind. Are you poor in mind also? Are you poor in words? You may not give anything materially to anybody because you do not possess anything, but your mind will go for things, and you will utter kind words, soothing words. Charity is a disposition of the mind rather than a material act of parting with objects which are sensible in nature.

Whatever you want, the world is giving you, but you have also to give in return to the world whatever it has given to you. There is a cooperative activity going on between yourself and the world. There is no taking without giving. The universe maintains a balance of give and take. It is not possible to have an overwhelming majority on one side and nothing on the other side. If that happens, if there is a tendency to some such thing going on—immediately an earthquake will take place. Nature will create a cataclysm and a big bombshell; anything the world can do in order to bring the two points together.

So be harmonious with yourself, be aligned in your mind, don't have torn emotions and grievous thoughts, and be calm and quiet within yourself. Be a contented person with alignment of personality; don't be non-aligned in your psychological individuality. Then aligned also you should also be with nature, with society. There are four things with which you have to align yourself. Firstly,

with your own self—this is personal alignment, psychological alignment of the layers of personality. Then you have to align yourself with the society of people and all the creation, whatever you can think of. Then you have to align yourself with natural forces. You cannot oppose nature's activities; then you will fall sick and die.

Then finally, there must be an alignment with God Himself. You have to try to think as God thinks. God created the world—all right, let it be—but before creation God alone was. You may say God is thinking of the whole universe because He created it, but what was He thinking before He created the universe? Now, take your mind to that principle. What was God conscious of before the world came into being? He was conscious of Himself as All-in-All. That is the ultimate reality. Can you think as God thinks, as All-in-All? Don't say, "I am thinking of the whole creation." There was no creation before He created the world. The Pure Being is God Almighty—God is Pure Being, not a human being, a person, or anything observable through the sense organs. The pure substance of equitable existence present in all things, a common denominator which connects everything as the Being of all beings—Pure Being, Supreme Being of which you are a part being—on that, if you can concentrate, you will be rid of all the sins of the world. To be rid of sins it takes one minute. You will say, "I have committed so many blunders." It doesn't matter. But this fire of the power of concentration on this magnificent attainable Pure Being will set fire to the mountains of straw which are like the sins that you think of. In God's kingdom there are no sins; they started afterwards when you fell down. Pure Being is sinless, it is perspicacious; it is resplendent, there is no night there, there is only day; there is no time there, it is all eternity; there is no death there, it is all life; there is no sorrow there, it is all bliss. Impossible to describe is that transcendental state.

If this aspiration is in your mind, as I mentioned last time, your soul will be taken through the rays of the sun to the orb of the sun, as the Upanishads tell us—by stages of gradual ascending you will reach the creative principle of God Himself. Whatever you want, you will get, and if your want is only of that Mighty Being who created this universe, you will be taken there. *Krama mukti* they call it, a graduated system of ascending from the lower stages to the higher stages, stage by stage, from material existence to biological existence, from biological existence to psychological existence, from psychological existence to rational existence, from rational existence to spiritual existence, and beyond that something which we cannot describe in language—Being as Such. You'll be taken to that level. This is a graduated movement, systematic action, taking place automatically because of your absorption in the concept of God—true God, not the false God that you have created by the segmentation of your individuality from That. Whole being is concentrating itself on whole being of the universe. The whole of your being is immersed in the thought of that whole being of the whole cosmos. The whole is meditating on the whole, not a part meditating on something outside it, because anything that is outside the part will also be a part only. A finite thinking something else is like the finite thinking another finite, but here is something different. The whole thing is concentrating on the whole in

which two wholes merge—*Purnamadah purnamidam purnat purnamudachyate, purnasya purnamadaya purnamevavasishyate*. The whole has manifested itself as the whole universe, and the whole universe is before you as the whole which you yourself are. The individual is a whole, the universe is a whole, God is a whole—so several wholes are rolling themselves one over the other—*Purnamidam purnat purnamudachyate, purnasya purnamadaya purnamevavasishyate*. The whole has come from God and the whole is going back to God. Fractions are not coming from God, and fractions are not going to God, and fractions don't exist also even now. Even now, as this moment, fractions do not exist—there are only wholes rolling one over the other. If this meditation is possible, you will be sure that you will never be reborn into this world of sorrow. This is *krama mukti*, gradual salvation, stage by stage, arising from the lower material condition, biological, psychological, etc. until you reach utter perfection of spiritual existence.

But the scriptures, Brahma Sutras, tells us that there is also known what is *sadyo mukti*—immediate salvation. It means salvation is immediate; it is not by stages, slowly moving like an ant. That can take place if your being is bursting with God just now—I can only use that word. Your whole being is bursting because of the entry of God. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa *Deva* used to give an illustration—God entering man is something like a mad elephant entering a thatched hut. It will simply break the hut into pieces, pound it and destroy it into pieces and go. If God enters an unprepared individual, you will have a shock from the core of your heart; you may fall sick and you may perish at that moment. But you need not perish if you have been a built-up, strong personality with disciplined practice right from the beginning. The whole of God enters you at one stroke—what will happen to you? That is called *sadyo mukti*. You are not entering God—God is entering you; that is the difference between *krama mukti* and *sadyo mukti*. When you want to reach God stage by stage, it is called graduated, gradual salvation. When God wants to enter you, it is like the ocean wanting to enter the rivers and not the rivers entering the ocean. Can you imagine God wanting you? Is it possible? If you want God you are a blessed person, but if God wants you, what is that condition? If you can imagine what it is, you are freed just now. Hari Om Tat Sat. God bless you.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

Here is the concluding of this particular course of teaching in the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy, a two month course. You must have realised during this period that the intention of the academy is not to furnish you with textual knowledge or information, but to provide you with some insight into the way of living itself. What we have to learn is not history or geography, mathematics or any art or science, but the art of life: how we are to live in this world.

The art of living, it appears to me, is the way in which you have to adjust yourself with what you consider as other than yourself. There are only two things in this world: yourself, and what is not yourself. There are not many things in the world. This 'not yourself' is a mysterious something whose location you must be able to discover with your power of perception. What is the distance between yourself and that which is not yourself? How many kilometres away is that from you?

Even space outside is something which is not you. Since everything is conditioned by space and time, and space is veritably touching your very skin, you may logically conclude that the thing which you consider as not yourself is also touching your skin. Since two similar things cannot come in contact with each other, nothing can touch your skin meaningfully if there is no connection between yourself and what you consider as absolutely not yourself. The outside thing cannot touch you if it is totally relegated to some form of existence that is irreconcilable with yourself. The world cannot touch you if it is unconnected with you.

You have to be careful in this matter, since it is something related to your very existence itself. You can neither praise anything nor condemn anything, all which you do by haste and an irrational attitude to things. The inseparability, basically speaking, between what you seem to be yourself and that which you consider as not yourself is a moot point for consideration. You cannot say that there is a distance between you and the world. If there is no such distance, there is no distance between what you are and what you are not as you consider in your mind. If that is the case, there is no such thing as what you are not, so all things become what you are. Be careful in coming to this conclusion.

This is why great thinkers have been mentioning again and again that when you know yourself, you know the whole world because the world cannot stand outside you and you cannot stand outside the world. It is not that you touch the world and the world touches you. There is no such contact possible if the world and yourself are two different things. But don't we always say that they are two different things? It is not like that. We think that something is happening somewhere. Something is not happening somewhere; it is happening on your skin only. There is no 'somewhere' in this world because if you say something is happening somewhere, you are asserting a distance between yourself and that which you consider as not yourself. Careful analysis shows that such a distance

does not exist. That anything happens anywhere happens in you also. If thunder strikes somewhere, it is striking inside. This will awaken you to a spirit of appreciation which is astounding, stirring, stimulating, revolutionising your thoughts and making you at once, in an instant, something different from what you thought you have been up to this time. To bring about this kind of revolutionising of your attitude to things, to bring about this change in your perception, it takes one second, because you yourself are living in a world which is beyond the processional fluxation of time.

A few words in this connection will suffice for you to think deeply about yourself. Our life is not a joke, it is not a pastime, it is not a picnicking. "Somehow I shall drag on." What is the meaning of dragging on? You have to live. Life is not dragging on. It is not getting on, but it is living. You have to know what is living. How will you live in the teeth of opposition from what you have been always considering as totally alien to you? You detest the world so that the world also may detest you, but you have no logical reason to say anything about the world because to make any remark about the world will be tantamount to making a remark about yourself only. This is so because there cannot be a real distance between yourself and what is not yourself. Psychologically, by a cleavage in the perceptual process, by a deep metaphysical blunder, as you may call it, you are suffering right from your childhood, and you shall go in that condition when you leave this world also.

Generally, the human attitude has been somehow to push through the muddle of the tribulations of life in any manner whatsoever and get on, as is usually said, till your last breath. It finally ends in no meaning whatsoever. Meaninglessly you came into this world, meaninglessly you leave this world, and you want to conclude that you have also been living meaninglessly. But the illusion created by error of perception can make you wrongly feel that there is milk and honey flowing everywhere in the world. Everything is sweet and nice; you have got every means of comfort in this world. But you do not realise that the means of comfort physically, psychologically, socially, whatever be the nature of it, is based on the fundamental bungling in the very process of viewing things, even your so-called comforts.

You cannot say how the comforts have come to you. Who has provided you with comforts? Has someone poured charity upon you so that you are well off? There is no such person in the world who will give you charity. Nature is a system of legal operation. It has no charitable nature. It does not give gifts. Though we think that there are things called gifts, it is an impersonal operation where your situation, your structural existence, should be analysed and studied in such a way that you do not stand outside your own self. When you say there are things which are outside you, you forget that you are making a statement against your own self because thereby you have stood against your own self. Every complaint is a complaint against one's own self in some way. Man is the maker of his destiny; he is also the maker of his sorrow.

I am mentioning all these things because it was not the intention of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj to pour texts on your brain. Those you can study

anywhere, in any college, any university. People earn degrees; they come out of the world of learning in universities and they feel that the world is staring at them as a concrete reality which was waiting to pounce upon them the moment they graduate. During the course of study and learning in the classroom you never believed that there is a world outside, and the world was not willing to interfere with your attitude that your classroom is the whole world. Okay, complete your education and come out; then the world says, "I shall see what I can do for you." You seem to be totally different from what you have studied. You will be repenting that you have studied nothing. Some dirt and dust has gone into your brain. The world says, "I am not what you have been thinking about me. Now I challenge you to meet me and deal with me."

This kind of dealing and challenge is the encounter of life. There is no use merely saying, "I have got a good job, I have got family, I have got everything that is necessary for my physical and social comfort." But as I mentioned to you a few minutes before, this conclusion is also based on an illusion. These comforts vanish into thin air in one second with the blow of forces which are not nurtured in your mind, which you have totally ignored. Illusions also can bring comforts. Actually, our comforts are total illusions, the delirious operations of a misconceived relationship of mind with matter, life with non-life, yourself with others.

Deep is this subject; wonderful is the depth of this insight. If you have totally absorbed the implications of what I have told you just now, I think you would have become a different person. You will feel there is something very important in this world, and that important thing you carry with you. Psychologically, educationally, socially, you are still connected with this Academy, with this Ashram. Every time we conclude a particular course, we tell the trainees, the students, that when you go home, you are not severing the connection with the atmosphere of learning and education and spiritual goodwill, but you are continuing it as a stream, as a flow of relationship with your alma mater, which is this institution. Be happy, and be always happy.