

Swami Krishnananda in Conversation

Compiled by
S Bhagyalakshmi

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At the Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

In its involvement with the radical experiment of Sanyasa—transcendence through total surrender of self—this land has produced several unusual men and women from ancient times to the contemporary age of anxiety. Swami Krishnananda of the Sivananda Ashram is one such personage in whom there is a perfect balance of true spiritual knowledge and great compassion, underlying which is a creed of love that has been wrought from his life of self-sacrifice.

Compiled here are some recordings of the Swami's darshan sessions with devotees and visitors. These informal conversations offer—amidst much laughter and light—innumerable tips to sane living. The Swami moves, in the course of these, from the mundane to the deeper, more universal and perennial issues of life.

S. Bhagyalakshmi (b. 1910) graduated in science from the Madras University in 1931, to be one of those earliest women to receive modern education while being firmly rooted in India's cultural tradition.

Initially she wrote in Tamil, for children. She also taught children for several years and had been unfailingly active in women's associations.

She was a fulfilled householder and mother when she met Swami Sivananda, who graced her with an initiation into spirituality. She was involved in Sivananda's teachings from 1956 until her death.

Smt. Bhagyalakshmi lived in the Sivananda Ashram at Rishikesh. She contributed to the Ashram journal and compiled another volume, *Facets of Spirituality: Dialogues with Swami Krishnananda, the Man, Mentor and Philosopher*.

The conversations in this book took place during 1978-79. The book is not being uploaded in its entirety. For Swamiji's website, only the philosophical conversations will appear—of which most of the book consists. Also, the names of people have been changed to Ashramite, Visitor, etc.

www.swami-krishnananda.org

PREFACE

Vedantin, sage, sanyasin, friend and guru—Swami Krishnananda Is a many-splendored personality. This personality is what is described by the Vedic term *hamsa*, the Swan. The *hamsa* abides on the surface of the waters of the phenomenal world and in the ocean of cosmic consciousness—in the Absolute. And yet he takes Interest in our mundane problems and issues and clarifies them for us. All problems disappear in his presence.

Sri Swami Krishnananda's maiden attempt at writing was his commentary on Swami Sivananda's *Moksha Gita*. Swamiji was very young, hardly twenty-three, when he wrote it. Yet the commentary reads as coming from a mature mind of a full blown *jnani*. Even earlier Sri Gurudev had conferred on him the title of "Vedanta Kesari". This first work of Swamiji at once earned the admiration of Sri Gurudev:

"How many Sankaras have been rolled into this young Sanyasin. He is a great *tapaswin*, he is a great *jnani*. Beyond that I should not say in his presence. When a man performs *tapas*, he is a well that will never dry up thereafter. Swami Krishnananda is our Dakshinamurti; and Dakshinamurti was young too."

Since then Sri Swami Krishnananda has written many books, among which are two philosophical works of outstanding worth: *Realisation of the Absolute* and *The Philosophy of Life*. He has also written minor works like *Bhagavad Gita Explained* and *A Short History of Religion and Philosophical Thought in India*. In the words of Sri Chidananda Swami Maharaj:

"Inestimable indeed are the services that he has been rendering ever since his advent in the Ashram, to Gurudev's spiritual institution and to Gurudev's great mission of the dissemination of spiritual knowledge. In fact, he is the institution. The Divine Life Society and the Divine Life Mission live in Swami Krishnanandaji."

This book attempts to present him informally and is in a sense a diary of the morning darshan-hours or satsangas with Swami Krishnananda. When I had felt the urge to collect and record Swamiji's conversations through which spiritual knowledge and subtle truths got passed from the speaker to the listener, I asked him for a message of blessing. He wrote, "The aim of life is God-realisation

and every other duty is only contributory to this supreme duty.” And this message is in fact what emerges from the compassionate words collected here. Areas like metaphysics, meditation and yoga are rendered intelligible through these responses to a variety of doubts raised by the advanced yogi, the aspirant, down to the curious, casual tourist or visitor.

It is not as if Swami Krishnananda did nothing all these years but write and give discourses. A karmayogi that he is, he has rendered exemplary service to the sick in the Sivananda Hospital.

Multifarious were the activities the young Swami was called upon to do. From sweeping the floor and arranging in detail for the night satsanga to the polemical level as the professor of Vedanta lecturing in the Brahmamuhurta classes of the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy under Gurudev’s auspices in the different categories or subjects, he has gone through the whole gamut of the activities of the Ashram from its very initial stages to the present day.

Swami Sivananda Maharaj, my most honoured Guru, has made this mandate that we give and share everything we have; thus purifying ourselves as a means to God-realisation. It is of such a sharing that Gurudev speaks of in his autobiography when he mentions that his writings were a source of joy to the seeker as these sought to communicate spiritual truths otherwise beyond ordinary comprehension. Swami Krishnananda’s words also represent the same spirit of sharing—they are a gift from him to the people. Thus in compiling this volume I feel convinced that I am fulfilling Swami Sivananda Maharaj’s mandate.

I am grateful to all who have helped me in various ways in preparing and finalising the volume

S. BHAGYALAKSHMI

KRISHNANANDA: THE PUREST CRYSTAL

Gurudev Swami Sivananda used to call it battlefield *pratyahara*. It is the ability to live right in the middle of the intense, multifarious and fiercest activity and yet be able to direct one's attention to the desired objective. He himself used to sit in a crowded office, surrounded by clattering typewriters, chattering children, contemplative *sadhaks* and chanting pilgrims and carry on his conversations and communicate his instructions as calmly as if he were alone with just the other person in a cave.

Almost the same is the case with his illustrious disciple, Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj. The Ashram has grown enormously since 1963, and so have the duties and responsibilities of the General Secretary. However, these have not diminished the spiritual radiance of Swami Krishnanandaji or his readiness to make himself available to spiritual seekers.

Seated in the courtyard outside his *kutir*, under a tree with a few seekers in front of him, he reminds one of Dakshinamurti (though the seekers at his feet may not all be aged sages). Interruptions are countless and unpredictable. They may be routine cheques to be signed, bills approved, leave granted and so on; or they may be bothersome problems relating to Ashram administration, personality clashes or complaints and quarrels. Suddenly his discourse on a transcendental mystery is interrupted. For the next ten minutes another universe arises around this mysterious being. That which arises soon ceases; Swamiji returns to his original discourse and continues as if nothing had happened. The interruption, too, had been satisfactorily dealt with.

Each one approaching Swamiji gets the appropriate treatment! One day a young Japanese lady approached Swamiji with some problem. Swamiji curtly silenced her, apparently indifferent to her problem which he was unwilling to listen to. A few minutes after she had left, a young man asked: "Swamiji, why were you not sympathetic to her?" Swamiji quickly answered: "She is all right." Of course, she was. Later she came and prostrated herself before Swamiji and confessed: "You have saved me. I am perfectly all right." No one returns without receiving his or her deserts. Even if one is not immediately "satisfied" one is sure to discover that that

was precisely what was *needed* then. Swamiji alone knows it; he alone can administer the right remedy who sees the malady without the least distortion.

People who come to him are not only seekers and Ashram officials. One day a few missionaries had come; their mission was mysterious, perhaps known only to themselves! They were plying Swamiji with questions provoking him to pronounce unfavourable judgements on religious or spiritual leaders they did not approve of. The way Swamiji handled them was classic. It is said of Lord Krishna that “He was a friend of the cats, who at the same time was guarding the milk pots.” Swamiji would not pronounce any judgement and he did not annoy the missionaries either! He had indicated the truth which is beyond all these polemics and conflicts

Swami Krishnanandaji is the purest crystal which reflects whatever is placed near it. He has placed this crystal close to God, Brahman or the Self: therefore this crystal is ever in communion with the Supreme which is reflected in his very personality. In his vision there is no division, in his thoughts there is no vagueness and in his words there is no ambiguity.

Spend a few minutes at his feet. He will make you crystal clear to yourself!

Some of the scintillating features of the morning *satsang* with Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj have been captured by his devoted disciple, Srimati Bhagyalakshmi Ammal and presented in the following pages. They may make you thirsty to drink at the source!

SWAMI VENKATESANANDA

GURUDEV'S DURBAR

At Swami Krishnananda's morning darshan hours, when he sits with his devotees, one gets a flashback of Swami Sivananda's morning Satsang. Whereas the durbar of Gurudev was held in the Diamond Jubilee Hall the devotees, visitors, seekers or ashramites or anyone that drops in at that time, sits around Swami Krishnananda in the closed verandah of the Kutir or in the terrace outside. So let me recall for you Gurudev's "Durbar". Around 10 in the morning Siva used to take his seat in the armchair or easy-chair when his health was too poor for him to sit upright. He would start the Satsang with *Jaya Ganesa*, together with all those sitting around the chair crammed into the small space where the three or four typists also are working. The devotional singing ends with a Namavali on the deity of the day. [Lord Suryanarayana is believed to be the lord of Sunday. Monday is attributed to Siva, and Saturday to Vishnu, and so on.] Maybe a particular devotee was also asked to give a Namavali for about another five minutes

Soon after this the typewriters, half a dozen in number, start to clatter away once more. Siva paid his respects to all and then enquired of each individually his or her welfare, problems, the purpose of his or her visit in a manner that convinced each person that Siva had been longingly awaiting meeting that person in particular. "Devanand, come, give us the prasad, 'morning glory'," which was his code-word for cashewnuts.

Or, sometimes: "Kutia Krishna, where are the dosais and chutney? O! You are a great man; see! he has prepared dosai with chutney. Give, give half a Dosai to everyone—O! not enough? All right, one-fourth to each but put chutney on every bit." He would turn to a housewife and ask, "Taste it and tell me what the ingredients are! No, No, it is not prepared with rice flour—can't find out? It is prepared exactly as the usual dosai—with *rava* [Sujii.e. rollon]. Ah! Badrinath! Give us a short lecture on your pilgrimage to Badri." The young boy of about fifteen squares his shoulders and speaks

Piles of parcels of books safely packed and addressed to different people are brought in. Each of about twenty parcels with one or more books is individually shown to Siva, who scans the address and such relevant details. A short tap with the forefinger on the parcel meant

that it is O.K. and may be posted. A few parcels are disposed of thus.

Badri who had been speaking suddenly has stage-fright and fumbles to get to a finish! Siva looks up: “Wonderful! Thank you! Thank you! Sit down and take rest. How did you learn to speak so well?” Thus Siva saves Badri from embarrassment. “Hm... O!... Mataji, give us a song on Lord Shanmuga. You are His devotee.” Or, it was: “...Mataji, you recite Trisati so that all can be blessed by Devi.” Siva continues to check parcels. The song or Trisati is over and the parcels have been checked and the despatch person takes them away. “Wonderful!” smiles Siva at Mataji. Another visitor in the meanwhile says: “Swamiji, please ask her to sing another song.” ...Mataji: “My throat is not all right due to the bath in the Ganga.” Siva, speaking to one of the Brahmacharis at the typewriter: “O; Ji! A good song on Shanmuganathan is wanted.”

The young “novice”, a Brahmachari at the typewriter, stops typing and gives a beautiful Tamil hymn in a melodious voice while the other typists continue their typing slightly slowing down so that the noise from the typewriters is subdued.

“Hm... O! Ji! Yes, what happened to the article to be printed?” The Press personnel is sent for, comes in, gives the report and returns to his work. By now the song is over.

A purohit has to perform a Yajna and says with a Dandavat Pranam: “Swamiji’s blessing and... help only can enable me to carry out my Sankalpa...” The ritual details of the yajna are discussed with him and thereby he finds out the truth and strength of the vow. “Hm... Give him ten Pandavas.” From one of the four bags [One bag contained “prasada”—biscuits, fruits, etc. The second, money—in cash. The third had books for free distribution. The fourth contained pens, pencils, papers, pads, etc.] the attending Sannyasi or Brahmachari has with him ten X five (fifty) rupees are given to the purohit. Pandavas were five in number! So this was Gurudev’s code word for five rupees. Only the donor and the receiver knew the total amount; the others did not. Santosh Mataji has come from the hospital. “At least three hundred rupees are needed immediately while we may wait for further supply whenever God chooses to give us. I have requested...Mataji to donate this sum of money to us...” “Is that so?” asks Siva of the would-be donor. “Yes, Swamiji,

whatever Swamiji says.” A cheque is given to Siva. Siva touches it to his head and then turns to the donor: “God will bless you thrice for this great help you are giving to the poor who cannot afford to buy medicines. God will give you ten times in reward.”

A new visitor came in. “O! Welcome, welcome! How are you? O! Ji! Put a chair for the honourable visitor.”

A chit is handed to Siva: “I am invited for lunch, a feast by... And I am to bring as many guests as I want. You, you... please have lunch with me. Not the Ashram food.”

Another day perhaps it was when a visitor with dreary looks and dismal expression comes in. Even as he enters, Siva as an aside remarks, “Now, this man will come and cry. He repeats the same thing and the same cry no matter how much you have advised him as to what to do and be happy... Yes, Namaskar! How are you? O! Ji! You should not cry in public and laugh in private. The other way round, laugh in public and cry in private. Do not make others unhappy by crying in public... O! Devanand, has Swami...been sent fruits and milk? He is not well.” “Yes, Swamiji.” “O! Ji! Come here, go to ... and find out if fruit and milk were sent to the sick Swamiji last night. Ask Kutia Krishnan to prepare tasty kichadi and send it to him.”

Smt. S.B.S. enters with a *panchang* [ephemeris]. “Swami Sadanandaji has fixed the Muhurtam for the thread ceremony for next month, in July.” Siva: “O Good! He is a very good astrologer.” Starts *Jaya Ganesa, Jaya Ganesa...* This invocatory prayer is sung for about two to three minutes for the success of the auspicious function.

Here comes another mother carrying a child of about three or four with all the signs of being blessed and whose *mundane* [ritual first shaving of a child’s head] ceremony had been conducted with havan earlier that morning up on the hill at the Vishwanatha Mandir. The father of the child brings *prasad*, offering it to Gurudev with garlands, and the family prostrate before Siva. They are duly blessed and the *prasad* distributed.

The manuscripts of Siva have been typed and are brought in to be seen by Siva. The young Swami had typed all night and towards the early hours of the morning he had probably got a little slack and

the last few pages were finished rather indifferently thinking that Siva will not have time to go right through to the end. The typed sheets were placed before Siva who at once pulled out a few sheets from the bottom of the pile, noted the indifferent turnout; looked at the Swami but said nothing. This devoted disciple did not need any chiding, only a gentle pointer, that Siva knew everything, every trick. Now it is lunch hour. “The meal is getting cold,” comes the reminder from the guest kitchen. The *Shantipath* is being chanted: *Om poornamadah*.

As Siva comes out of the Diamond Jubilee Hall, “Swami Satchidanand! Are you writing a diary of all the morning *satsangs*? Yes, yes. Keep it very carefully. Note down everything and all present.”

Such was Gurudev’s durbar, the morning *satsang*. A relevant fact may be noted here—the young Sanyasi Swami Krishnananda was hardly ever present at any of these morning *satsangs* of Siva. Yet Swami Krishnananda’s darshan hours recreate the very atmosphere of these *satsangs*. This is because Swami Krishnananda is a *Guru-amsa*. Over a period of four years very many of the morning darshan hours which are from about 9.30-11.30 A.M. when the *Guru-amsa* is available for every type of person, problem and request have been recorded for the benefit of those who are interested in philosophy, yoga, meditation, etc., whether they be his revered Self’s devotees, admirers, visitors or passing tourists or the like, have sought and seek guidance on spiritual matters like the context of Isvara in Sankara’s Advaita philosophy. It has been practical to include only a third of these recordings in this volume.

—S.B.

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25th April, 1972

Adorable Self,

Loving prostrations.

The river of life flows
towards the ocean of perfection.
Here life finds its repose. Things
have a predisposition to slip
down at every step and drop into
some condition previously not
known. This process continues,
until the Great Ocean, the
Absolute, is reached, wherein is
the promise of unending peace.
Towards this, drive forward.

is

Thine,

Swami Krishnananda

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
Salutations and Prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Satchidananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute).
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient;
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,
Equal vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, anger, greed, hatred and jealousy.

Fill our hearts with divine virtues.
Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms,
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy Glories.
Let Thy Name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

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1. INFORMAL DARSHAN HOURS

This morning, to begin with, there were barely two or three gathered around Swamiji. So Swami Krishnananda asked Smt. Bhagyalakshmi to read her notes on the study of the Chhandogya Upanishad. Gradually the audience increased and soon the usual 15 to 20 were present. More kept joining in. In the course of the reading, Swami Krishnananda pointed out, rather discussed, how a theme must be presented or what the teacher must know to be a good, successful teacher. Mainly (1) the speaker should have the confidence that he has something, definite and new to say, (2) he should get the confidence of the audience, (3) the explanation should be in simple language and it must be spoken clearly. Having good matter and knowing the matter is not enough, (4) he must be sure that he is being understood and is taking the listener along with him as he progresses in his presentation, (5) he should have no doubt about any point he speaks on. His ideas should be clear-cut in his own mind.

An ashramite: What is revolution Swamiji?

Swamiji: When evolution takes place rapidly it is revolution, when revolution takes place very slowly you call it devolution (Laughs. So does the gathering).

Another ashramite: Is present-day education revolution or evolution?

Swamiji: When a change takes place rapidly and you cannot catch up with its speed, you call it revolution. But if it goes on very slowly, you can understand every bit of the change and that is evolution and that takes place gradually.

Ashramite: What is psychological pressure, Swamiji?

Swamiji: Psychological conflict. Evolution is a change that goes on very slowly, so gradually, that you don't notice the change at all. You were only 2 feet tall and now you are 5' 6". You have grown so gradually that you never felt that you are growing so tall. This is evolution. But if you suddenly grow from 2' to 5' 6", then it is revolution. This change is so remarkably different, a revolutionary effect has taken place. It looks unpleasant if you can't catch up with

speed. When your mind is able to adjust itself slowly and gradually you call it an evolutionary process.

Ashramite: If you change so completely that you are different, it is not revolution? You throw yourself completely, so totally into the new way that it is all different; it too must be revolution?

Swamiji: That point is very different. Are you doing that all at once or slowly, so that each stage of change is understood? When each stage is understood and appreciated, you can't feel the movement at all. When you are thrust into it by surprise you suddenly see the effect and you can't appreciate it and your mind can't cope with it. You call it revolution.

Ashramite: Rebellion is the beginning of revolution?

Swamiji: Same thing. (Papers arrive for his attention. Dealing with and disposing of them Swamiji continues as if there was no break.) When you are normal and do not have temperature you do not feel the change taking place in your system though every minute there is change in every cell of your body. And that is ordinary, gradual and so the effect of the change is not felt by the body. But if you have 104 degrees temperature? The whole body is changing so intensely and forcefully in every cell, that you feel the effect of the change.

When the enemy's attack is very severe only then you feel his presence, otherwise you ignore it. The defence system which is working in the body is working every day. Your system is throwing out unwanted things every minute and replacing dead matter, yet nobody is noticeably changed by the work of the mechanism. You do not notice it because it is a gradual evolutionary process. But if the body acts in such a way that it wants to throw out the unwanted things in the hectic haste, there is then a revolutionary activity. Something strong has got into the system and a strong reaction is set up, as you see.

Ashramite: That is only a "reaction", not a revolution.

Swamiji: That is still a revolutionary reaction. If it is pleasant you don't call it a reaction. The dictionary meaning of reaction would suggest that it is an unpleasant thing. You always regard reaction as an unpleasant thing but it is not necessarily so.

Ashramite: When?

Swamiji: You see, when you take food, certain juices in the stomach are secreted. It is a reaction set up by the body, but it is not unpleasant. It is a very pleasant thing. The same secretion can be unpleasant also as in high temperature or vomiting, purging, etc. So every reaction need not necessarily be only unpleasant.

Ashramite: It is not Karmaphala going to him?

Swamiji: Karmaphala does no 'go' to anybody. It is a system of law by which balance is maintained by nature. Any reaction in respect of action is a law operating to maintain the balance which has been disturbed by the action. Every action is the disturbance of the balance that is to be maintained by the reaction that is set up. You are interfering with the thing by your action, whatever you do, and nature can't brook that kind of interference. So it sets up reaction in the direction of that force from where the action has proceeded and then you feel its impact. Every action is a kick that you give to the balance of nature and it gives you another kick back—with equal force. It is thus that it maintains the balance. You don't like the kick coming back, so you call it Prarabdha or Fate and God's unkindness and all that. (Even while speaking, some business is attended to and disposed of.) You can't interfere with nature. The very act of 'doing' implies that you are outside the area (of the law of nature), where you are performing the action. That is why Sankaracharya took up cudgels and ruled out the practicability of action producing a result called Moksha. This is not possible. Moksha is the realisation of your identity with the whole of the atmosphere, and action is the opposite of it. You are denying that identity in every action you are performing. So how can contradictory factors meet and agree with each other?

Ashramite: What does it all mean?

Swamiji: In every action, you are positing your independence of nature, whereas in Moksha you annul the so-called independence and become one with it. That is why Sankara said that action cannot bring this result called Moksha. This is why also Shri Krishna said in the XIth Chapter: "Nothing that man does can enable him to see the

Cosmic Form. Everything you do is opposed to that law of becoming one with Nature. No charity, no study, no *tapas*, no philanthropy, nothing that a person does is effective enough to enable a person to even visualise the Cosmic Being.” ‘Being’ is different from ‘becoming’. And every action is a becoming process whereas God is Being, the Supreme Being you call Him. So, unless you become a part of Being, you cannot know what ‘Being’ is. Knowing is the same as doing. ‘Sat’ is ‘Chit’, and action is opposed to it, unless it ceases to be action and becomes Karma Yoga—when your action becomes a cosmic movement or activity as defined in the Bhagavadgita

An action ceases to be activity and does not set up reaction, provided it is of the nature of this cosmic movement! But if you are doing it as persons X, Y or Z, then it is action. It will rebound upon you like a boomerang. When you do an action, do you feel that God is doing it? That the abstract is moving in yourself? Or, do you think I am an individual living in Rishikesh doing something? That would be the test. But you cannot feel that it is the abstract that is working. No one can feel like that. You can’t imagine it also. It requires a great attunement of consciousness in the atmosphere. That also is meditation; which means that you must be perpetually in a state of meditation in order to be able to perform Karma Yoga or that non-reactionary action. Well, one cannot be in a state of meditation all the time. You see people as objects external to you and you can never for a moment imagine or accept that they are organically connected with you. And until that acceptance comes, action will produce reaction. Verbally asserting “I am one with all” will not cut ice. Your feelings are not in conformity with your verbal assertion.

Ashramite: What does Swamiji mean by atmosphere? What is being in harmony with the atmosphere?

Swamiji: Atmosphere is that which is around you and you understand what is around you. The whole universe is around you. The Milky Way and the stars and beyond that too; they are all around you.

Ashramite: It is not in the sense of climatic condition or...

Swamiji: Everything around you—you may call it anything. You wish to tell me that it is only the climatic condition?

Ashramite: I mean, it is not restricted to only that?

Swamiji: Why should it be restricted to that? The whole cosmos is around you, including Brahma-loka, the seventh heaven and what not. Even God is outside you according to your concept of things.

Ashramite: Yes.

Swamij: So he also sets up reactions in the form of reincarnation of yourself, a rebirth which he inflicts upon you. He won't let you off easily like that. Everything is suffering. Schopenhauer is right in one sense. The most wretched experiences are an infliction on man. What Schopenhauer says in the whole of his three volumes is a curse upon the world. Nothing but that. He is not a foolish man. He has told a great truth, though it does not appeal to our sense of complacency and pleasure. A man who is happy is an idiot and because he is an idiot he is happy. He does not understand the situation he is in (laughter all around). If you actually understand the situation you are in, you will never smile a second time. You don't know that you are going to the butcher's shop; you don't know that! You are very happy (laughs).

Ashramite: There is a saying ...

Swamiji: There are sayings and sayings, maxims and maxims. Each one has to be taken with a pinch of salt (laughs, as also others). Hear all but take to no one. Or you take it with the tongue in the cheek. You cannot accept it fully. You say the world is a wretched thing. This is also not a cent per cent correct statement. The world is heavy is another statement.

So you have to take a little bit of it also by Jahad Ajahad Lakshna as Nilakanthanandaji will tell you. Jahad Ajahad Lakshna. You have not heard his lecture and what he has been trying to tell you for years together, you are unnecessarily sitting merely in a corner, wool-gathering, not hearing what he says. Now listen. When you say 'this' is 'that' man, how do you reconcile the two? 'This' and 'that' are not identical. They are opposed to each other. Even grammatically 'this' can't be 'that', and if they are identical you won't use the words saying 'this' is 'that' man. What do you mean then? You have implied something in that statement, "This is that Devadatta."

Yes, this that Devadatta, the person whom I saw in Bombay one year back is this person who I see today in Rishikesh. So, when you say 'this' is 'that' you have eliminated Bombay as a special context and one year as a time context also. You eliminated those things and eliminated this contradictory aspect of Rishikesh being opposed to Bombay. They are not identical and 'last year' is not this moment. So you eliminate all this and take only the 'person'. The 'person' is identical. So likewise, you say some statement which is partially correct and partially wrong, according to the context in which it is involved; you remove the context and take it as it is from one angle of vision. Take the statement 50% only of the nature of reality. The statement is only 50% correct. In another statement also, you take another 50% only, and that also is 50% correct which ignores the other 50%. For instance, take the statement: "The whole universe is a manifestation of God and God alone is shining here in the names and forms of the universe. It is perfection and glorious." This is the import of what Hegel says. And he is right. Leibnitz says the same and so is he right. But you have forgotten the other aspect of it, that the world is a manifestation. Notwithstanding the reality of the universe, the fact is that it is a manifestation of God. No one ever feels like that, that the world is God-manifested. You always feel it is just the opposite. Schopenhauer is correct too when he says that the universe is an estrangement from Reality, a prison house where you cry every moment for a little solace which you cannot get under the conditions prevailing. This statement is not hundred per cent true either. The Universe is perfection in its essential core. The Universe, as it is, is perfect, but things as they appear are imperfect, and inasmuch as we are part of the appearance, we are involved in the appearance. We cannot see the perfection in things. We see only imperfection, but if you do not stick to your standpoint and rise to the level of what it really is you will never see imperfection. (Looking at a lady in front) You see, you have got long hair. You never feel it is an ugly, dirty thing on you. You keep it very tidy; but if you take one hair out, you see it as a thing unbearable and it is a thing of ugliness; you can't bear the sight of it.

The whole body is full of hair, so well kept that you never feel the ugliness of it. You never say it is a wretched thing sticking to

your body. But you remove it, and it is a dirty thing in one second and you can't bear even the sight of it. You throw it far off like this (acts the meaning of the statement). Cut the nail, and you can't bear to keep it in your hand. But on the finger even if it grows long, it is perfectly all right. You can even go into the temple with a long nail; but you cut a piece of the nail and take it to the temple—and see what happens! What is the difference? The same thing sticking to your body is sacred; removed from the body, it is unholy. What does it mean? How do you see your concepts of sacredness and unsacredness? If you take a hair and put it on Lord Krishna, the priest will curse you. But you carry so much hair on your head and take it all into the temple when you walk into it—nobody bothers about it.

Ashramite: We put it all on Him when we bow down at His feet.

Swamiji: Yes, in prostration the whole thing falls also. But you don't bother about it. It is very sacred. You advise that it is but a part of us. Ah! Yes! So, when there is organic connectedness, there is perfection. Where there is disconnectedness, there is imperfection. You have a thing as part of you, then it is beautiful and pleasant. Why is it so? It is psychologically part of my being, you say. So, anything that is part of you is good. Anything that is not connected psychologically as part of you is ugly. The world is not part of you, so you curse it as the devil's creation but when you realise that it is part of you, it is a majestic manifestation of God's glory. So I am telling you Schoepenhauer is right too. Dr. Hegel is wrong and so is Schoepenhauer wrong too (Quotes): "A man and no man took an axe and no axe and cut a tree and no tree, on which a bird and no bird was sitting and not sitting." This is what a mystical Master is said to have written somewhere: What is the meaning of that sentence? "This is the world," he says. You don't know what it means. (Laughs heartily). You have said something. You can't make sense out of it. Likewise, it is with the world. It looks as if it is there but you can't understand what it is. You can't deal with it. (Laughs).

A Guru had been discoursing on the omnipresence of God, and that He alone is the substance of all creation: "Everything is Narayana". A few days later one of the disciples of the Guru was walking along the road. Just then an elephant was being driven along

the road and the mahout was shouting a warning: “Keep away from the road.” But that disciple did not heed the warning because he had the discourse in his mind. The elephant caught him with its trunk and threw him down with great violence. The poor disciple was all but broken to pieces. The matter came to the ears of the Guru. “Why did you not move out of its way? The mahout was shouting the warning all the way,” said the Guru. Answered the disciple, “Guru Maharaj said that everything in creation was only Narayana—therefore the elephant was also Narayana, like I was Narayana too. How could Narayana hurt Narayana?” “The Mahout was also Narayana. Why did you not listen to that Narayana?” (Turning to a Tamil devotee who knows only Tamil and speaking in Tamil): What have you understood?

Devotee: Something general

Swamiji: You see I am a man with no work. So I just go on rattling off something, just chatting away. Neither I nor these people have any work. (Addressing a messenger who awaits attention) Yes, come.

Devotee: Why, Swamiji? You are talking on good subjects.

Swamiji: (Translates this Tamil conversation into English for the benefit of the gathering). We are talking of things about which neither I nor you know anything; we are only chatting.

First ashramite: If activity is non-productive of liberation, why are there so many activities in the form of temple worship, festivities and such like? What is the object of these activities?

Swamiji: Unless these activities are there, the religious life becomes dead. Religion can't even be felt as existence unless it manifests itself as outward activity. So religion is activity for us. That is why it creates also suffering for us, if it is only activity as such. Hence, Sankaracharya refuted the whole thing. If you identify religion with that i.e. mere activity, you can imagine what little religion can do for us. Even today, people have to understand why Sankara refuted activity. It is a very strange thing. Why does he say this? The whole universe runs on activity. Every atom is active and Bhagwan Sri Krishna says 'act'! Sankara says the opposite of it! Now why is

it that he says so? Is he out of his mind? What has happened to him? Sankara says action can't give you Moksha. Bhagwan Shri Krishna says that only activity leads to Moksha. They are saying two different things, opposed to each other. Arjuna said, "I will not do any action." Krishna said, "You are a foolish man. You must act." Sankara says, "If you act, you will be caught." You can get nothing out of either of these people's statements. It is not easy to understand either Krishna's or Sankara's mind. They are two enigmatic persons (laughs).

Ashramite: It will all depend on the feelings with which you act.

Swamiji: What action Krishna had in his mind nobody knows. He meant such an action as he himself was doing, not my action, your action. Cooking food in the kitchen or going to the shop for purchases that is not what is meant, though this is also included in it. What action did Krishna do? Tell me, what was the motive behind his action? If that is the motive behind your action also, that is liberation. And what good did Krishna get by his activity? He took part in the Mahabharata War and this and that battle, a variety of activities. Why should he have done all that? He got nothing out of it. He was a perfect man, very well placed. He did nothing to get anything from the people he helped in their hour of need. But he was as busy as a bee, running about. For what purpose? We can't understand this, and unless you understand this, you can't understand the Bhagavad Gita.

Devotee: What was it Swamiji?

Swamiji: Why does the sun rise from the East? What does it gain by that? Why does the wind keep blowing? It can keep quiet. Unnecessarily does it blow, buzzing (acts the wind blowing, producing the noises of wind in the open) What is the point? (Gathering enjoys Swamiji's acting.)

A voice: Cleansing process

Swamiji: Eh? (Voice repeats) It is much more than that. It is not interested in cleansing the house. You think the wind is thinking, "I will clean this poor man's house"? Is that the intention of it? It is not so. It is not cleaning your house. Incidentally it may clean it by

chance. Its intention is different.

Voice: It has been disturbed.

Swamiji: Why should it blow? It can also keep quiet. Sometimes it blows, sometimes it does not blow. It does not always blow (laughter). It is following a law, without any intention or purpose behind it. When you touch a live wire, it gives you a kick. Its intention is not to punish you. It does not say “You idiot! I will punish you.” Nor does it say, “I have great love for you. I will burn in your stove and cool your refrigerator.” It has no love for you nor does it hate you. It follows a law, and so long as you are obedient to that law, follow its way of working, it is your friend. If you collaborate with its working, it is your friend. But if you don’t obey its orders or cooperate with its law, it is your enemy. It is a law, neighbour a friend nor an enemy to you. If you know how it works and collaborate with it, it is your friend. But if you don’t collaborate with it, it will give you a kick like the electric wire, and you suffer. Krishna was the incarnation of the principle of existence itself. It is a law that is operating. It has no motive behind it. He is telling you that you should not act with a motive behind it. The motive should not be there at all. It is just an impersonal law. The Sun is shining. What for? It has no special love for you. It does not say, “Poor man is feeling cold; let me warm him.” It is not doing it for your sake. It is a cosmic principle that is operating for some cosmic purpose in the process of which incidentally it warms you also. It is not a great friend of yours nor is it your enemy. It is just like the judge in the Supreme Court. Is he a friend or an enemy? What do you call him, the Chief Judge of the Supreme Court? Your good friend or a bad man? He is not either. God is like that. He is neither this nor that. Yet both. He is a very helpful man and a very bad man also. It depends upon what is your attitude towards him. So is the feeling that the Sun is a very good man. You cannot go near him nor can he do you any harm. Action then is spontaneity. It is a consciousness of attunement with all creation. That is Karma of the Bhagawad Gita, and nobody usually can act like that. Nobody can do Karmayoga! What we do is not Karmayoga. It is ordinary Karma. Action is consciousness of duality, separation. The ideas of good and bad etc. are transcended in the ideal of Karmayoga. It is cosmic activity. If

God sends a cyclone and destroys millions of people you can't say he is a bad man. But if you do it you are a bad person. You can't blast the wind on somebody's head and kill him. Why, what is the difference? Let alone such mysterious things. If the Judge executes a man, he has done justice but if you kill a man you have committed a murder. Then what? Both have done the same action. In his case you call it dispensation of justice and in your case it is crime. How is it? The same action is interpreted in two ways.

A voice: A judge is obeying the law.

Swamiji: I am coming to that. You must understand the law. (The Press Section has brought Swamiji's article under print for some instructions and it is discussed and disposed of by Swamiji).

(Turning to the gathering asked a devotee) Have you read the previous articles on Comparative Philosophy, which have been appearing in the D.L.S. monthlies?

Devotee: Yes, Swamiji.

Swamiji: Now, some philosopher says that this is the worst type of world imaginable. There can be nothing worse than this. Yet, other philosophers say there is nothing wrong with it. Everything is O.K. Who is right?

Devotee: Both of them are wrong Swamiji. They have not seen the other world.

Swamiji: Schopenhauer says that even imagination cannot reach a thing worse than what has been created in the world. If there is anything of 100% wretchedness, it is what is called this world. And the other man says nothing can be so grand and beautiful and perfect as this world. This is another man's mind.

Devotee: Schopenhauer is the one who wrote 'The World as Will'?

Swamiji: Whatever it is, he is the man who says the world is wretchedness, utter evil, and Leibnitz says that it is most perfect thing that God could ever have imagined.

Devotee: The beauty lies in the beholder's eyes. A judge is obeying a law and it is impersonal and we are trying to get protection from the law which also is impersonal. There is no contradiction in the

two viewpoints of the action in the judge convicting the murderer.

Swamiji: But you are not understanding it fully. You are only trying to get protection but are not getting it. Because only if you know the law, if you understand it, will you be able to collaborate with it. Then it protects you. God is a Cosmic Being. His vision is cosmic. It does not get involved with the particular, the empirical. Whenever there is an imbalance in the Cosmos, He corrects the imbalance. Such corrections invariably bring about a counter-effect in the cosmos. God has no motive with reference to an individual personality of the empirical world. (Messengers and papers. These are attended to and disposed of. And Swamiji continues to talk as if there is no interruption.) You see in some countries they have a law that you should not spit on the road. A man who does not know that such a law exists spits on the road. The policeman catches him and the man is given punishment as per the law. The policeman is not your enemy nor the law. You did not understand and collaborate with the law, and so got punished. Now for this who is responsible? Only you. It is just a law operating. Of course, you can say that the Government that made the law is responsible for your punishment, but the Government again is an impersonal thing.

This morning all the while there has been a lot of traffic noise coming from the road: the piercing sound of a variety of motor horns has been a din all the while. It is the Badrinath gate time, between 10 to 11 A.M. There is always so much noise from this traffic. Every driver wants to get ahead of the other. There is also a necessity to warn the people on the road, of course. These drivers drive so fast.

Devotee: In other countries, there are laws to regulate the speed and severe punishment for transgressing them. Use of horns is also forbidden except to avert an accident.

Ashramite: But the Government also provides facilities to help the drivers by way of good roads and such laws....

Devotee: Why doesn't this Government also make these laws?

Swamiji: God didn't give them the brains to make it (laughs). Anyhow, for everything He alone is to be blamed. Is it not? (Laughs. Addressing a young Italian couple): Any difficulties in your mind

Visitor: None for the moment.

A voice: There are no barriers in their meditation. Is that what they mean?

Swamiji: You can't easily meditate like that without any barrier, as you put it. First there is the ego which will not give up its duality. Then your health becomes an obstacle. Patanjali has recounted them all in his Sutras. But once you get over them, you feel the whole cosmos is yours. For God has no barriers. When you pass a needle through a pack of rose petals, you feel it has not taken any time to pierce through them and this fast pace of the needle makes you think that a revolution has taken place; but it is only evolution that was there, and yet the needle has pierced through every single petal. It is like that in meditation also. Even if you are not conscious of the barriers being overcome, there are barriers and you have to pass through every level of experience; not a sudden revolutionary leap, but a steady progress from stage to stage. In the case of adepts of meditation, it looks as if they reach straight to Samadhi. But there is no short-cut to meditation, however quickly it might be reached. It is the unfoldment, progressively of the layers of your personality towards the centre of Reality - the Atman. You may call it the stepping over or transcending the layers of your personality, one by one without missing a single step, however small and however fast the progress is.

Namaskar, thank you for giving me darshan. Hari Om!

2. THE GITA RAHASYA

In the New Year Swami Krishnananda sat in his chair, in the open terrace in front of his Kutir, Guru Kripa, the usual assembly of ashramites, seekers, visitors and tourists, greeting and being greeted for the New Year. The morning winter sun was kind and spread its warmth around. About nine or ten persons were present at first. Later in the morning the number rose to almost twenty. The visitors coming in or taking leave, the office and reception messengers carrying papers and messages to and fro, all lent an informality and freshness to the atmosphere, a constant change in the mood and topics discussed. It all appeared like various scenes in a continuing drama. There were special offerings of gifts by visitors, particularly foreign ashramites, to whom New Year meant so much.

Swami Krishnananda: (to an ashramite) So you are reading the Bhagavad Gita? Which edition?

Ashramite: Annie Besant's translation and commentary.

Swamiji: Oh, that is a small book with translation and very little commentary. The Bhagavad Gita cannot be read by just reciting the verses. It cannot be read merely in its outer form. There's a connection sometimes between one verse and another. There is a connection between one chapter and another... and between the first six chapters, the next six chapters and the last six chapters. A formal reading does not give this connection. Each verse looks independent and appears as if it has no connection at all with other verses. It appears as if it is giving an independent thought in each verse. But that is not true. And the most difficult thing is to find out what the Lord tells us to do. You'll understand every verse, the grammar is clear, the language is clear, the meaning is clear. You read the whole Gita and understand what each verse says. Yet finally you are in doubt as to what it is that you are supposed to do. For instance, the Lord says: "You must work hard. Fight the battle of life, etc., etc. Don't go wool-gathering. Don't be a coward. And don't be lethargic. Work hard. Work, work, work." This seems to be the idea that is drilled into our mind. And at other places He says: "No, no. He who ever works, he is best only if he is devoted to Me." This is a very

important condition. Whatever work you do, whichever battle of life you fight, it has no meaning if it lacks devotion to Him

Now, He says, what is devotion to Me, you must understand Me correctly: “*Yo mam janami tattwatah*”—You must know Me as I am Myself. Not know Me as you see Me or as I am appearing to you.” So this is another big condition. Devotion to Him is very important if you are to succeed in your work. While work is important, it has no meaning if it is not coupled with devotion to Him. But ‘Him’ means what? That has to be understood properly. And that is knowledge. Then He says you must attain this knowledge by a practice which is called yoga. What is that practice? He has told so many things about it that nothing is left out.

So you have to integrate these thoughts. That devoted you must be, and you must know the object of your devotion correctly, in its proper context, as it is in itself and not as it appears to the human mind. And, you must know the technique of attaining it. So there are the four yogas: Kriya Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. But He has put all together in one lump and made it appear as one single art, rather than four yogas, as they make it out to be.

Why I am saying this is to indicate that Annie Besant has not made out all these points, nor can anyone. No translation can bring out this meaning.

Even some statements in the New Testament appear very simple, “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.” Very clear. No difficulty as far as the language or grammar is concerned. But, what is the ‘Kingdom of God’? And His righteousness—what Is His righteousness? He is supposed to transcend *all* ethical values. So to attach righteousness to him is anomalous. And everything shall be added unto you—what are those things that shall be added unto you? And what is your status when everything will come to you? Will you still be this individual? The whole world will be following you. You will not be this individual. You’ll be someone else.

These things are not implied in the mere surface meaning; there is a great hidden mystical meaning though outwardly it looks very simple. I am giving you another example: “Before Abraham was, I am”. As it is, this is a silly sentence grammatically: Before you were,

I am. What is this? It is not good grammar. But it has tremendous meaning—eternal and mystical meaning. And there so many other sentences which are...

Another ashramite: What is the mystical meaning Swamiji?

Swamiji: Whatever the meaning is, it is transcendental. It is not capable of being grasped by a human mind which thinks in terms of empirical ideas. So you'll find such statements in every scripture. You'll find that the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the New Testament and the Zen scriptures—every blessed thing of this type is an enigma. There is a translation of the Gita which is purely linguistic, which Annie Besant or anybody else gives, and we seem to understand the meaning very clearly because we know the English language or the Sanskrit language. But there is meaning of a different type which is connected with the different aspects of life. It has a subjective meaning, it has an objective meaning, it has a social meaning. It has a political meaning, a psychological meaning and a mystical, absolute meaning.

So also with the Vedas. They say the meaning of the Vedas it infinite, infinite in the sense that it is the knowledge of the Infinite. Therefore, its contents must be infinite, it can be interpreted from various aspects of life.

The Bhagavad Gita is an universal scripture and not a Hindu scripture. It is not a religious scripture. It is a scripture of yoga as such, in the sense of the attunement of your being with the Reality. So that is why I said read the Gita with a commentary which gives you these aspects. There is an old verse which says: "Sri Krishna alone knew its real meaning and nobody else, and Vyasa who wrote it also knew. And Suka, the great sage and son of Vyasa, knew. Arjuna knew something, not the entirety of it. And other people merely hear of it, and appear to understand it." (*Laughs.*) The Greeks, the Romans shall conquer: thus spoke the oracle of Delphi. You must have heard of this. When there was a war—there was always a war between the Romans and the Greeks—so both the Greeks and the Romans go to the Oracle of Delphi to get the future predicted: "Who will win? The Greeks or the Romans?" And the Delphic Oracle says, "The Greeks the Romans shall conquer." The Greeks think that they will win and the Romans think that they will conquer (*laughs*). It is

an enigmatic statement.

Ashramite: They both overcome one another.

Swamiji: Yes. It does not say the Greeks shall conquer the Romans or that the Romans shall conquer the Greeks. Likewise, the Bhagavad Gita says things from a literal reading of which we do not know what the Lord means.

Swamiji address another ashramite: The more you share the joy, the more it expands. You see, whenever you are happy, you want to share it with others. The more you share it, the more you happiness expands. When you are in sorrow, that also you want to share with others, and with this your sorrow diminishes. Joy shared increases, sorrow shared decreases.

Ashramite: Why do you want to tell everyone of your sorrow?

Swamiji: That is because you cannot bear the weight of it, it is too much for you. “Ah,” you cry, “I’ve lost everything.” Everybody sympathises, and your sorrow diminishes. But the joy increases. That is why you tell everyone: “I’ve got first class.” “I have become President of India. How happy I am.” Your happiness increases.

Ashramite: If sorrow decreases, isn’t it because the mind by repeated expression gets a bit tired and gets over it gradually?

Swamiji: No, no. Sorrow is extended to a larger dimension, in a larger field, and so it thins out

Another ashramite: Can’t other vices also be got rid of—thinned out?

Swamiji: Yes, yes. If you go about telling everyone that you have this or that vice, you will not commit that vice. Mahatma Gandhi had that technique. Some people called him a fool. But he wanted to share his thoughts. He would write in the *Harijan* whatever he thought; even ugly thoughts of himself.

As Swamiji is attending to correspondence, he keeps up conversation with others in the gathering: “Yes, what do you want to tell me?” He addresses a devotee of long standing from South Africa.

Devotee: All my questions have been answered, Swamiji...

Swamiji: Without your asking questions, I've answered them?
(laughs)

3. APPEARANCE AND REALITY

A visitor: Is space-time absolute? That is, is space absolute? Is time absolute?

Swamiji: Space-time categories are not absolute.

Visitor: Newton, in his *Philosophy of Mathematics*, says that time-space is absolute. And his theories were based on such a concept.

Swamiji: These theories have been refuted by Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Space-time is not Absolute. There is no extra-cosmic existence of the Absolute. But the Absolute is both immanent and transcendent. Have you read Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*?

Visitor: Yes, Swamiji. This was my text for my M.A. in Philosophy.

Swamiji: Have you read Sankaracharya's commentary translated into English?

Visitor: No. Max Mueller's translation of Sankara's commentary on Vedanta is not one of the books I have studied, but I have studied Sankara's commentaries translated by others. Is morality an attribute of the mind determined by a 'social necessity' or is it an inherent aspect of spirituality? Is higher reason identical with the Self?

Swamiji: The higher reason is nothing but a reflection of the Universality which you are aspiring for. It is quite obvious that you are aspiring for the Universal. That is why you want large things, you are not satisfied with small things

Visitor: But Swamiji, the Westerner when he says that higher reason...

Swamiji: No, he does not understand properly what he is saying.

Visitor: But can it be identified with what he calls the Self

Swamiji: No, you cannot identify it with Self. It is the reflection of the Selfhood of things. Nobody can be conscious of the Self. When you become conscious of the Self, you cease to be a human being anymore. That is what samadhi is. What you call the Self is the object of your Realisation in Samadhi. Nobody can be conscious of it because it is Realisation in samadhi. Nobody can be conscious

of it because it is not an object. When you say you are ‘conscious’ of something, you mean something should be the content of consciousness. And the Self is not a content. It is consciousness itself. It is the Self that knows everything—who is-to know it? “*Vijnyatara mapare tena vijaniyat*”: Who can know the knower? If there is to be a knower of the knower, it is a contradiction. The knower cannot be known because the moment you say the knower is an object, he ceases to be a subject. So it is a self-revealing intuition and not a perception through the senses or even through understanding. This is what will take us to Patanjali and the various levels of samadhi that he mentions. We have to read Patanjali to get out of this maze.

Visitor: Is creativity an attribute of the mind or that of the soul?

Swamiji: Creativity of the mind is an attribute of the mind. It takes for granted that something comes from something. Here, we come to Kant. You have a habit of thinking in casual terms. Something must come from something. But why should that be so? Who told you this? That is the habit of the mind; you believe that the world must come from something and you believe that there must be a God outside the world. And then you start finding fault with God—the God whom we ourselves manufactured from out of our brain. So the habit of casual thinking is the reason behind positing God who is extracosmic. It is not the higher reason speaking, it is the lower mind only.

An ashramite: What! God is extra-cosmic also!

Swamiji: Your mind is saying that. But it is not the truth.

Another ashramite: What is procession, Swamiji?

Swamiji: Procession is something coming from something: effect following from cause. But this is not true. Modern physics has refuted this concept of causality. As everything proceeds from everything, you cannot know which is the cause and which is the effect. Everything is pushing something else. So which is the cause and which is the effect? How can you find that out? It is not moving in a linear fashion, to put it in classical language. There is interconnection of things. When everything is connected to everything, how can you know which is the cause and which is the

effect? So we are not thinking in a proper way when we think in a linear time process which has past, present and future. But time is not a linear movement, it is a universal movement. Sir Arthur Eddington has made a distinction between causality and causation. According to him, causation is what you are thinking of as a habit of your mind, that something comes from something. But causality is the capacity of everything to produce anything at any time. Anything can produce anything at any time. Then there is the dissertation of Alfred North Whitehead, whose theme is similar. Everything is connected to everything. It is like one wave in the ocean pushing another wave and becoming the mother of another wave. And that pushes this. “*Tasmat virada jayata virajo adipurushah*”. The Purusha Sukta says Virat created the Purusha and Purusha created the Virat. The mother created the son and the son created the mother. This is the causality of Eddington or relativity where the effect can produce the cause. How can the effect produce the cause? Because there is no such thing as effect, there is no such thing as cause. Anything can be anything. This is a transcendental causal concept which goes beyond the empirical idea of one thing following another. It is taken for granted. What authority have you to grant that? Your mind is not working properly, it means. Why should you say that it is granted that one thing follows from another. You have taken for granted that this is east. But is it true? You say that the sun is rising in the east. That concept is also wrong. For it is not ‘rising’ or ‘falling’. When the sun is ‘rising’ here, it is ‘setting’ somewhere else! Then why do you believe your mind? There is no such thing as east and west, it is only in your head, nor is the sun ‘rising’. Again, the earth looks flat—it does not look round. Will you believe your mind on this statement that the earth is flat

Visitor: I understand. Now, two people placed in a particular place see one thing with different aspects of the mind. Is it due to the unreality of the thing?

Swamiji: No, no, no. It is not because of unreality of the thing, but because their minds are in different stages of evolution. Two persons cannot think identically because no two persons can be at the same evolutionary stage. And if both are in the same evolutionary stage they will merge into one another and become one person. The very

fact that they exist as two persons shows that they cannot be at the same level. Therefore, they cannot see things in the same way. The structural pattern of the mind of one person differs from that of another on account of the difference in the level of evolution itself. The dream perception is different from the waking perception because dream is one level and waking is another level. In dream you see things, and here in waking perception you also see things. But you see different things in different ways altogether. That is one example to show that mind differs in dimensions of consciousness.

But why go even so far? You were thinking in one way twenty years back, and today you think in a different fashion; you have evolved further. Here is an example of the evolution of the mind. As a small boy in kindergarten, were you thinking in the same way as now. See? The mind has evolved. You think differently now because you have a different comprehension of things. The higher reason is our ultimate resort. We should not depend upon the senses. You cannot depend upon the lower mind also. It simply agrees with whatever the senses say. The fingers say that this chair is hard. The mind also says it is hard; "I agree with it" says the mind. But modern scientists tell us that there is no such thing as hardness. What you call hardness is only an electrical repulsion produced by atoms constituting the thing that you call chair and the substance that you call fingers. There is an electric repulsion of forces, and it looks as if there is hardness. There is no such thing as hardness.

If you have had an electric shock you will feel as if some heavy weight is hanging on your hand, as if a whole mountain weight is pulling your hand. But there is no weight. Nothing is tied to your hand. That feeling is due to the tremendous electric particles when there is contact of one category of structure with another category of structure, and that gives us a sensation of hardness. Another structure gives the idea that there is colour, another structure that there is sound, yet another that there is taste.

Well, really speaking there is neither smell, nor taste, nor hardness, nor light. The whole thing is an illusion; and you will be surprised to come to this conclusion, finally, even ignoring all our scriptural statements and depending only on experimental physics and modern science. You will be horrified to realise that we are in

a fool's paradise. Nothing that you see is correct. And also your judgements are wrong. This will immediately awaken you into a new sense of values. And I think anyone with any sense of these values will not get attached to anything. With this awakening, you will not believe your senses. If you can't believe your senses, how can you have attachment? And when there is no attachment, your yoga begins. Yoga is nothing but practical detachment, in different degrees.

Ashramite: All this sounds so heartless, Swamiji.

Swamiji: There is no heart. How can there be heartlessness? The heart is also an imagination of your mind. And so you...

Ashramite: (*pointing to the heart*) It is there.

Swamiji: It is there because your mind says so. And as long as you believe that what you say is correct, you are caught in the web of samsara. You have great belief in your own feelings and logic. That is what we are trying to refute. There is a logic of the universal which is different from human logic of the lower mind. It is simple logic that your child is the most beautiful and more valuable than others. Is it not good logic? (*laughs.*)

Visitor: Swamiji, ideas also have an existence...

Swamiji: Ideas? There is nothing that exists except the soul—your Self. And idea is only a rarefied spatio-temporal expression of this Self that is in you. What you call an idea is spatio-temporal, it is an idea of something. Now we are going to argue that there is no such thing as a content of an idea external to it, because the idea of externality arises, again, due to involvement in space and time. If you give up the idea of space-time, the idea of containing a content as something outside an idea ceases to be. So before saying whether an idea exists or not, you must define what an idea is. If it is a concept of something it cannot exist, really speaking. But if it is only the Self that you are identifying with it, then yes.

Visitor: Not the Self, Swamiji. Plato...

Swamiji: Plato's ideas are different from what we are now talking. Plato's ideas are the archetypes or the originals of things. And they

are what you call the substances behind qualities. Behind attributes or things you have solid existence. That existence is what Plato calls 'Ideas'. By 'Idea' he does not mean a concept of something. The 'thing-in-itself' of Kant, that is what Plato calls 'Ideas'. It is not an idea in the sense of an idea of a 'pot' occurring in the mind, of something which is outside. Plato was three hundred years before Christ. So his ideas are different from what we think today. He has used the word, unfortunately, because he lived in the period before Christ. It is not a mere wave of psychological pattern that is occurring in the mind. It is an appellation that he has given to the 'substance' of things or the originality of things. The horseness behind the horse, as he used to state... man-ness behind man, thing-ness behind things. What is horseness? There is a generality of the universal behind particulars. Philosophy will make you mad. Don't go near it (*laughs*).

Ashramite: We love philosophers for all that.

Swamiji: The Srimad Bhagavatam says: *kidhyat parangats traveto sukme dete madhyat candra gocara*. A person who knows everything is very happy. But the man who stands between these two is suffering. He doesn't say "I know nothing", and he cannot say "I know everything". We are such people, we seem to know something—but not all things, yet we cannot believe we know nothing.

Visitor: What is consciousness, Swamiji?

Swamiji: Consciousness proves the existence of all selfs. And inasmuch as consciousness cannot be conscious of a boundary, consciousness alone can be and nothing else can be. That means one thing alone can be and nothing else can be. You just drive this idea into the mind and nothing else. This is called yoga. Says the Bhagavad Gita, once you have established yourself in this thought of the universality of the Self which alone is and nothing else can be, you are in yoga.

Swamiji: All of you now go for your lunch. Namaskar. God bless.

4. THE ATMAN-UNIVERSAL

Between the two spreading trees with festoons of a creeper in flower on one tree forming almost a stage backdrop under the chequered shade, the devotees and visitors await for the exciting morning darshan to start. Some choose to be in the sun and others the shade. A visitor asks about the path the Lord indicates for the evolution of man.

Swamiji: He tells you both: Nature drags you in the direction of objects, nobody can restrain the impulse of nature. But He also says that He takes man across the ocean of *maya*.

Those who turn to Him for succour, they alone can conquer *maya*. *Prakriti*, *maya*, desire, they all mean the same thing. If you turn to the original substratum of all things, then the pull of *maya* or *prakriti* gets mitigated gradually. Normally you cannot conquer nature, you cannot resist its impulses. According to the Bhagavad Gita, Chapter Three, there is a way to draw the senses into the mind, the mind into the intellect and the intellect into the Atman. The Lord says it is impossible to conquer desire and anger. *Kama eshah krodha eshah rajo guna samudbhavah*. When He says that, it looks as if there is no hope at all! But immediately after, He gives the remedy. There is a method; the senses have to be sublimated in the mind, the mind in the intellect, and the intellect in the Atman, the Atman in the Universal. *Evam buddhe param budhva...*

Desire ceases when you behold the Atman, and this beholding the Atman is called meditation. You have got both the impulses in you: the externalising as well as the internalising, the centrifugal and the centripetal. By *abhyasa* you can overcome externalising impulses. You are not impelled only by *prakriti*, you are also impelled by the Atman. So why do you not turn to the Atman? As no one can resist the urges of *prakriti*, in the very same way no one can resist the urges of the Atman. That also is there! And perhaps the Atman is more powerful than *prakriti*, eh?

According to the Bhagavad Gita, ordinarily it is not possible to swim against the current. But it is not totally impossible; under certain circumstances it is quite possible. Everything has a time factor. When the time comes, it becomes possible. You did not

come to this place for so many years. Today you have come. What brought you here? Not your effort. If that were so, you could have come earlier also. There is something more than human effort in everything that happens. You came in 1950... why not in 1940?

Visitor: I came in 1953.

Swamiji: How is it that you come at certain times, and go only to certain places? These are all mysteries. It is not your effort. You did not come to this world by your wish, nor will you go from here by your wish. And you are not living by your wish. Something is controlling it all. There is something that gives you succour and power.

Visitor: Swamiji, what is it that the philosophers call “chance and necessity”?

Swamiji: There is no such thing. It does not exist. It is in the imagination of the croquet in the philosopher’s mind. It is not chance and necessity. Everything is integral in the structure of the cosmos. Nothing happens by chance, by a freak or circumstance. There is no such thing as a miracle, it does not happen; everything is systematised. If the sun rises in the east you cannot call it a miracle taking place every day. It is a scientific phenomenon. Because you do not understand the causal factors controlling things, you think it is a miracle.

For example, would you call the flying of an aeroplane a miracle? A *siddhi* moving in the air! When you understand the scientific background of it, you know that there is no great miracle about it. It is based on the laws of nature. The law of nature has various levels of manifestation, and when you are at a lower level of manifestation and try to envisage or visualise a higher one, it looks to you a miracle. But when you reach that state it is no more a miracle, it is just a simple fact. It is surprising how a bicycle moves on just two wheels... it does not fall down.

Now, the cow must be wondering how we are walking with only two legs, “These people walk like sticks, without falling down.” It must be a miracle to the cow. So the cow should be convinced that we are great yogis on two legs! And you cannot walk like the cow with four legs. (*Swamiji acts like a man walking on all fours while*

seated in the chair. There is laughter in which Swamiji joins.) So miracle is only the name for what you cannot understand. When you understand the secret of it, it becomes a normal thing, there is no miracle about it.

Visitor: What is the nature of freedom?

Swamiji: Freedom is an approximation of Reality. The more you approximate to the nature of the Self or the nature of the Ultimate Reality, the more free you are. Some people say self-determination is freedom. But then the question arises, what is self-determination? What do you mean by self-determination? When you go to the kitchen for your lunch, you are determined by your own self, nobody pushes you to go there. Now you can say “I am doing a free act.” But you are impelled by certain physiological urges and your psychological structure. You are urged by hunger and a desire to exist. The struggle for existence or the desire to exist is connected with the desire to appease hunger. If you do not appease hunger, you will not exist. You are motivated by a desire, and to subject oneself to desire cannot be called freedom. Just as you subject yourself to somebody’s mandate, you subject yourself to some urge from inside. Even going to the kitchen for lunch is not a free act. You act under the urge of somebody.

So when we talk of self-determination, we are touching a very difficult subject. It is not the bodily self, nor the psychological self, nor the emotional self that we are speaking of—we are speaking of the Ultimate Self. When we are motivated by that Self, or rather when we are urged by God’s presence itself, the impulsion is from God. In other words, the impulsion is from the Universal Self, which is not separate from yourself. Now we are acting in real freedom. The less we are bound by individuality, the greater is our freedom. Finitude is our bondage, and any tendency to outgrow finitude is a harbinger of freedom.

The question is: Is morality, our attitude of mind, determined by a social necessity or does it arise as an inherent aspect of spirituality? You have a feeling from within, apart from the awareness of the social convention, as to what is proper and what is not proper. You may live in a jungle, or in a far-off place among strangers. Yet you spontaneously assume a stance in a given situation. This is because

of a prompting from within, the prompting of conscience. And if conscience is the voice of God, it is also the voice of spirituality. But the normal morality, as you practise it, is social, it is traditional, it is a kind of protocol—all conditioned by external circumstances.

There is a story in the *Yoga Vasishtha*. There was a king who was not born, and he had five children who were in the womb of the wife who also was not born, and he went hunting in the forest in the skies. He enjoyed the beautiful flowers that grew in space... Like that the story goes on and on. It builds up very interestingly. But actually there is nothing—no substance—on which it is built. Hollow like a balloon, a big bloated thing with nothing inside it. The world also is no different.

It is a long and absorbing story, but absolutely meaningless. There is no king who was not born and he cannot go hunting in the skies. But all the time it is like your listening to the exploits of the unborn king who himself is not there.

An ashramite: But we are waiting for a denouement which doesn't come.

Swamiji: It is a parable, a parable of creation. You say God created the world once upon a time and this came from that, and afterwards the other came from that and so on. Nothing has happened—nothing has come from anywhere. Everything is as it is. But the child wants to hear a story, so the mother tells a story, and here it is. At the end she says, "My dear child, this was a beautiful story. Now go to bed." And the child goes to bed after hearing the story which is no story (*laughs*). It is called a Barmicide feast, to which all people were invited. They uncover the plates and nothing is found inside. A grand feast on empty plates! This is a joke that God is playing with us, if you can call it a joke (*laughs*).

Ashramite: What a serious joke!

Swamiji: Making you feel that something serious is taking place, when nothing is happening. (*Laughs again.*)

Another ashramite: Why don't we know that we are sleeping when we are sleeping, but know it only afterwards?

Swamiji: When you know that you are sleeping then it is called

samadhi. It is like the sun shining outside a dark cave. Though the sun is shining, you can't know that it is shining.

Ashramite: So actually one can know one is sleeping?

Swamiji: But the desire should not be there. As long as desire exists in you, you cannot know that you are sleeping because desires prevent the consciousness from touching the Atman. It is projected outside. In the external impulse the mind is pulled outside with great force. Sleep comes from having desires—unfulfilled desires

Ashramite: Not caused by the senses?

Swamiji: It is fatigue caused by the senses in search of objects for satisfaction. They are tired out and get exhausted and then they go to bed.

Ashramite: Why do they become conscious?

Swamiji: Because the karma sare not fulfilled. So the karmas germinate once again. It is like a thief getting exhausted, but not satisfied, so he goes to bed to get refreshed

Ashramite: Swami Sivananda says desires never get old. Man gets older—not desires.

Swamiji: As you get older, the desires get younger (*laughs*). “*Trishna na jirna vayameva jirna,*” is what Bhartruhari said. We become old, but not the desires in us. They are for ever fresh and young, and therefore they are the cause of our rebirth. If they also get old, they will not be able to cause rebirth.

Ashramite. Does it mean that people who sleep a lot have many more desires than those who sleep less?

Swamiji: Y-e-s. One reason is that which I have now given you. There are many more reasons... Sleeping less is poor sleep. Poor sleep is only a symptom. It is something like a person having temperature. The temperature can be for various reasons. Even so, not sleeping has various causes. Sometimes it is due to drugs.

Ashramite: People who do not take drugs also are sometimes very poor sleepers. I cannot sleep for more than two to three hours.

Drawing close to Swamiji a visitor had stated his problem of sleeplessness and allied problems in a confidential, low tone.

Swamiji: Does anyone else in your family have these problems?

Visitor: Yes, my father.

Swamiji: I see! Now you have told me a secret. Rest and reduction of intake of food will help you. Do not read any literature on this problem now. First give up all pills, and sleep as well as you can. Don't read before going to bed. You say you read till midnight. No, you should not do that.

Visitor: I cannot get sleep.

Swamiji: It does not matter. Go to bed by about 9 o'clock at night. Just lie down and rest even if you do not get sleep. No, don't go on one year's leave. It will do you harm. You have not trained yourself to keep your mind at rest. You do not know what to do with yourself. So take only one week's leave; that is enough. Keep working. Stop trying to find answers for useless questions like you have been trying to solve. Will the sky fall on my head? What will I do if the planets dash against each other or the sun burns up the earth, etc.? These have no answers. Even so your questions that you have been trying to solve have no answers. Don't bother about them. They have nothing to do with you. I will give you some medicine from the Sivananda Pharmacy—our Ashram's. Ask the Panditji in charge to tell you how to use it. Do you go to Delhi sometimes? Go and see an Ayurvedic Vaid there. I will give you the address of the Vaid, and you can tell him that "Swamiji has asked me to go to you". He is good in the profession. He will help you. *(After a long pause.)* Have you been meeting any other sadhu?

Visitor: Yes, one. He told me to do *japa*.

Swamiji: And gave you a mantra?

Visitor: Yes, the mantra also.

Swamiji: Do you know it?

Visitor: Yes, I am a Brahmin and have been given it earlier also.

Swamiji: Good, very good. *Japa* is good. Gradually try to increase

the *japa* by, say, ten *malas* at a time. Give a good interval after every increase; you may increase it at fifteen days interval or even only once every month. The mind should not be taxed or fatigued. It will rebel if forced against its will if you slowly make it work longer or harder.

(*The lunch bell rings.*)

Swamiji: Lunch bell? Oh! Today is *ekadasi*?

A foreign visitor: Why do you observe Ekadasi?

Swamiji: It is said that the mind has connection with the moon which influences it, and the movement of the moon is said to come to rest on the Anjna Chakra and, hence that time is best suited for mediation. So you fast to help the senses quieten and to bring them under more control to be able to take advantage of that fact. It is part of the effort for prayers and meditation and a harmonious environment.

Another visitor: Not any biological reasons?

Swamiji: Yes, there could be such as overeating; and one day of fast is good.

5. THE CYCLE OF LIFE

It was a fine morning. Devotees and visitors gathered around Swami Krishnanandaji in the open air under the trees with the winter sun warm and pleasant.

Swamiji: Read two books by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan: *An Idealist View of Life*, and *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*. These books are sufficient for the time being. Don't go too far.

A visitor: Will the human cycle be repeated? Also, will the relation of the psyche be repeated?

Swamiji: Yes, Yes. Not in every detail. But in general it will be repeated, they say. Slight variations in details there may be, but the general principles will be the same.

Visitor: Then which cycle ends? What state do you reach?

Swamiji: You will go higher and higher in each cycle. But somebody else will take your place so that the ground cycle is still there. You see, the government continues though the same persons do not continue to run it. The same pattern of government continues though people retire and go away. So while you may not be there, the system and the working of the government will continue the same way. There are some philosophers who think that the same form will come an infinite number of times in the cycle of creation though you may attain God or Mukti or whatever it is. This pattern of the shape or the structure of your personality is a mould into which souls are cast. And souls will change; when your soul attains salvation, another soul will enter this structure. So you are only a vehicle which carries a particular level of consciousness. Your body is not your personality; your personality is constituted by the level of your consciousness which rises to higher and higher levels, but the mould persists. Every mould is permanent. This is not only a religious doctrine, it is also a philosophical doctrine and a doctrine which is corroborated by modern physics and the philosopher Whitehead. There is a cycle of recurrence of patterns of life. They never cease. They are what in Platonic language is called the Idea. The Idea is not your idea, it is a pattern of the archetype of the moulds into which consciousness is

encased. When consciousness goes on evolving from level to level, the pattern does not change. For example, in a school there is first standard, second, third, and so on. There is a syllabus of teaching in the first standard, another in the second standard etc. If you go from the first standard to the second, you do not study what you studied in the first standard. But that syllabus continues, it does not go out of use when you leave the class. Someone else joins the first standard and goes through the same course. So there is a certain continuity in thinking though the person goes through a series of changing situations. Likewise, they say the patterns of personality continue but the souls change.

Another visitor: Are the norms of human souls the same?

Swamiji: They are infinite. You know what is infinite? You can't count them.

Visitor: Are we coming from the animal level?

Swamiji: Well, that is what our biologist tells us, even religion accepts it. From matter to life, life to mind, mind to the intellect, and from the intellect to spirit. That is the process of evolution.

Visitor: There is also another idea. We start in a kind of Golden Age, and after we have gone the round of cycles, we are back again in the Golden Age.

Swamiji: Yes, you will be going in recorded cycle.

Visitor: You think the Golden Age will come?

Swamiji: Yes, it has come many times before and it will come again; that is what they say. It will never end.

Visitor: There was a Golden Age?

Swamiji: There was a Golden Age, and there is going to be one in the future also.

Another visitor: Can we contact the people of Pitri Loka?

Swamiji: Yes, you can contact people in the Pitri Loka, but not always and not at any time; and not all people, only some, and only on rare occasions. And they can also contact you, but this is not a

usual occurrence.

Another visitor: If I offer *shraddha* to the dead, my father, he will be happy. But we do not have *shraddha* in our religion, so...

Swamiji: You pray for him, yes. This is one way.

Visitor: Will he derive benefit, a consolation, from the *shraddha*?

Swamiji: Yes, very much—certainly consolation. If I deeply think some good thoughts about you, it will certainly benefit you. What is prayer? It is spreading good thoughts; and whomsoever you think in your mind, he will receive the benefit. Telepathic communication. If I deeply wish your welfare, you will be benefited, there is no doubt about it.

Another visitor: What if I have renounced the world? Will I still have to perform *shraddha*?

Swamiji: What do you mean by renunciation? You mean, you have given up something? What have you given up? What have you renounced, tell me? Have you renounced the Pitris also?

Visitor: According to Sannyas, I have given up all my worldly *samskaras*.

Swamiji: If you have given up even the idea that Pitris exist, then of course your question is answered but, otherwise, if you believe they exist, your duty continues.

Visitor: Even after renouncing?

Swamiji: But you've not renounced the idea that they exist. You see, it is not full renunciation. It is some partial renunciation. You might not have renounced the idea that the world exists, for instance. Does the world exist or not? And can you give up the idea, renounce the idea that it exists? Then you have no duties towards the world. But if you believe that it exists and you cannot renounce the idea that it exists, you have a duty towards it. Your obligations are dependent upon what you feel, what you believe as reality. But if you do not think it is a reality, you have no obligation. You do not have a duty towards unreality. But if you believe it is a reality, you have a duty towards it. Ultimately renunciation, true renunciation,

is renunciation of wrong notions. Renunciation does not mean renouncing house, wife, children and property. This is a very crude idea of renunciation. The true idea is different. It is the renunciation of the wrong notions. And what are the wrong notions? That is up to you to decide. Ultimately, the notion that you exist as a personality also is a wrong notion. Can you give up that idea? If you succeed in that, well, you are blessed. But if, on the other hand, you feel that you exist, you have to feel that the world exists. Then you have to believe that there is a Creator. Everything follows one after the other. So everything follows from the belief that you exist. To the extent you can give up this notion, to that extent your renunciation is complete.

Another visitor: Swamiji, you said you have to renounce everything. Why have you to renounce everything? What is the harm if everything is not renounced?

Swamiji: Why is it necessary for you to be healthy? Why not be sick? Are you not born to be healthy?

Visitor. Yes.

Swamiji: Well, then you are born to renounce. Renunciation is the art of being in health, healthy in spirit. And if health is your duty, renunciation is your duty too. I have already told you that renunciation means renunciation of some error. Do you not think renunciation of error is good?

Visitor: Error is mistake?

Swamiji: Is English difficult for you? Yes, error is wrong thinking. You have to understand what is wrong thinking. I have already given a hint. The very idea that you exist as a body, even that is wrong thinking. From that wrong thinking, much other wrong thinking follows, as a corollary.

Visitor: Then renunciation does not mean to give up the world?

Swamiji: That idea is very crude. You cannot leave the world. You are the world. Where are you seated? On the earth. How can you renounce it? Nobody gives you any trouble; why are you renouncing them, poor things? Your ideas give you trouble, your incapacity to

adjust yourself to things gives you trouble. The trouble is within you, and not outside. So, why do you renounce things? Things are not bad. Your idea about them is bad, and that is the cause of all trouble.

Visitor: So, renunciation is a kind of attitude that you take towards the world?

Swamiji: Ultimately it means that.

Visitor: Many people say that when you renounce you should not have any sexual relationship.

Swamiji: Again, it is not renunciation of things, it is the idea, the notion. And what is your notion about it? That is very important to understand. You can't renounce anything at all like that. Each thing is all right in its place. Your adjustment or your attitude, your relationship to the thing, that is what makes it necessary or unnecessary. You use the word 'sexuality'. What do you mean by that? You must first be clear in your head

Visitor: When I say sex, I mean it is a kind of energy...

Swamiji: You can't renounce that; it is inside you. How will you renounce that?

Visitor: But there are people who think that if you renounce, you should not use energy for a purpose for which it is not meant.

Swamiji: The purpose? It is strictly for the purpose of experience so that you may transcend the experience by passing through it. The tension of desire to be relaxed is the secondary purpose. The energy is misused if used for secondary pleasure and will end in debility. It is intended to strengthen the psychophysical personality. This is another name for the energy for your whole system. You understand me? It is an electrical force and it is intended to strengthen your body and mind, both. You become weak when you spend it in any manner whatsoever, just as when you spend your money you become poor. Supposing you go on spending what money you have, you become weak financially. But if you keep it, conserve it, your strength is well known. Who would like to lose strength? This is a very simple question. Then what is the point in losing? If you lose strength, then

naturally it is not beneficial to you. Energy is not meant for losing, but for conservation, which is the main thing.

Visitor: Why?

Swamiji: Because you want to be healthy, not become sick.

Visitor: What is the use of conserving this energy?

Swamiji: So that you may be healthy. Otherwise you will fall sick mentally and physically. You become so weak that you droop, you cannot stand up and walk, and you have to be taken care of by doctors.

Visitor: Is it not this energy...

Swamiji: Yes, I know what you are going to say. You say it is a cycle. It is an old Western doctrine. It is not something new. It is theoretically sound, but practically it is not workable. It strains and spends itself whenever it is directed towards objects. Energy goes out even by looking at things. Even when you look at a tree, the energy flows to the object. We are not attached to the tree and we are not trying to possess the tree, but even the act of perception will make your energy flow. That is the very reason why you are able to see the tree at all. If the energy does not flow towards an object, you cannot see the very existence of the object. In the yoga system, you have got a very important classification of psychological function—impersonal psychological function and personal psychological function. Impersonal psychological function is perception of an object. The personal psychological function is attachment to an object or aversion towards it. I see a tree, that is impersonal perception. It is my tree or it is somebody else's tree, I like it or I do not like it. This is a personal psychological function, and this is lower than the earlier one. Even the earlier one affects yoga negatively. You should not be aware of even the existence of things. They are not outside you.

Visitor: You should not be aware?

Swamiji: Yes, they are not outside you as you imagine. They are one with all things, and interconnected with all things. And if everything is connected with everything else, then it is not true that things are

outside. So even your idea that things are outside is wrong. And to believe that it is yours or not yours is still worse. The latter is studied in abnormal psychology. As a matter of fact, whatever you have gathered from Adler, Freud, Jung and other modern psychologists is abnormal psychology where they study the function of the mind in terms of objects liked or not liked. But when you are merely looking at things and being aware of things, even then you are in a little error. This is not perceived by the psychoanalysts of the West. You have to go especially to the yoga system of Patanjali for this. So what I am driving at is this—I am coming to the point that the more you have a universality of outlook, the less are you conscious of external objects.

And then your question—the sex question—that question itself will not arise. You will never feel any impulse towards external objects afterwards. The impulse itself will cease. The energy will not move towards objects thereafter. It will be conserved in the Universal Passion. You will become indomitable to forces. Energy is everywhere, it is not only in you. And it is not supposed to be spent. The question of spending arises only where it is some object outside. When you are trying to give up the very idea that things are outside then there cannot be an idea of spending energy either. It is not just a river, it is an ocean, it subsists as an ocean. Now the energy is like the river that flows towards an object and you feel weakened as it moves; afterwards you realise that all rivers are in the ocean itself. You are the ocean, you are not a river that moves; the ocean does not move here and there to lose itself; the ocean does not become more or less. It is the same. But the river can dry up or flow with greater force, and so on and so forth. So we are an ocean of force, and not a river of force. If you are a river, you will move towards things like the flowing river. Then you would feel the ebb and flow, you would experience pleasure and pain. But if you are an ocean of energy, you are full at all times. Nothing can either please you or make you dejected, for you are the ocean. The rivers may or may not come—you do not bother. Rivers dry up if rains do not come. They are dependent on something else. So you are depending on an object, and that means you are not leading an independent life. You hang on to things, persons and objects. But when you become impersonal

your nature and realise the universality of things, this question will not arise. You will have no desire for anything afterwards. You will not even be aware that you are a man or a woman. The question of sex does not arise then.

Visitor: Swamiji, it seems to me that that stage is an impractical stage?

Swamiji: You have to go stage by stage—you can't jump into the skies in one day.

Visitor: That is, you just decide in your mind...

Swamiji: You've got to keep the idea before you, and gradually work for it. It does not mean you will succeed in one day. It is not possible. But the ideal is to be kept in the mind's eye, and gradually, slowly, step by step, you've to work towards it just as a person, to accumulate wealth, keeps aside just one dollar, one rupee, a day. He does not become suddenly rich in one day. Even so you go on conserving energy by right thinking, and one day you will succeed. That it may take years does not matter.

Another visitor: In Kantian philosophy they think if you are able to use this kind of energy in the right way, you are able to conserve it.

Swamiji: Yes, that is the right way, that is what I am telling you.

Visitor: This is what you are saying?

Swamiji: Yes, yes, yes. It is the right way where you have got to gradually withdraw yourself from attachment to things, and then energy will not flow towards objects

Visitor: It will be very difficult for me! (*Laughs.*)

Swamiji: (*Laughs.*) It is not only your problem; it is everybody's problem. It has to be overcome slowly. Whoever is born is attached. The problem is there, and you have to slowly transcend it.

Well the *langar* bell is ringing! Go and have lunch.

6. POONTHANAM'S VAIKUNTHA

Another day of sunshine. There are birds chirping and monkeys frisking around on the trees. Visitors, seekers of truth and Ashram inmates are gathered around Swami Krishnananda's feet. It is a small crowd of about ten to fifteen, all ready to laugh, listen and question. Swamiji is in a humorous mood. An atmosphere of joviality pervades.

Swamiji: Poonthanam, the Kerala Krishna *bhakta*, describes creation in such great detail as if he was himself helping God with creation.

An ashramite: He describes creation with great imagination.

Swamiji: Yes. Imagination. He says golden paddy grows in Vaikuntha. Not the kind of paddy that grows on Earth. Golden paddy. So in Vaikuntha people eat gold rice.

Ashramite: The story of Poonthanam's life says that he could not visualise Vaikuntha. Then once he had a dream of Vaikuntha, and he saw gold rice. He wrote the famous *Jnanappaana* after he lost the child that God blessed him with in answer to his prayer. And Poonthanam took his *Jnanappaana* to Narayana Bhattathiri, the author of *Narayaneeyam*, to seek his help in composing a particular stanza in *Jnanappaana*. But Narayana Bhattathiri disregarded him and dismissed him with derision. Krishna appeared in a dream to Narayana Bhattathiri that very night and said: "Poonthanam's *bhakti* is dearer to me than your *vibhakti*." Poonthanam's *Jnanappaana* became very famous, and it is so even now.

Swamiji: Yes. Narayana Bhattathiri was a Sanskrit scholar and Poonthanam's poem was composed in simple Malyalam. The story has it that Narayana Bhattathiri's devotion to God, his erudite emotionalism, could not tolerate the mere Malyalam language. Then he saw God in a dream. "My dear friend," said God, "Poonthanam's devotion, his *bhakti*, is greater than your *vibhakti*. His devotion is higher than your understanding of Sanskrit." Poor Bhattathiri was contrite, and asked Poonthanam for the *Jnanappaana*. But Poonthanam, in the meanwhile, convinced that *Jnanappaana*, as it met with Bhattathiri's disapproval, must be useless, had thrown it

into the temple tank. Bhattathiri then himself went into the tank and retrieved the book. Poonthanam was said to have been bodily taken to Vaikuntha.

Ashramite: Yes, correct. He went to Vaikuntha with his physical body.

Swamiji: He had a vision of Lord Krishna; he fed Him with fruits and many other things. Earlier he had told his wife, “God is coming tomorrow, Narayana is coming, Krishna is coming. Please prepare lunch. The poor wife thought her husband had gone crazy.

(The whole anecdote was related in a monoact)

Then she wept. She said to herself “My husband is going off his head. Till yesterday he was all right. Why is he talking like this now?” Next morning Poonthanam started sweeping and cleaning, sprinkling water to purify the atmosphere, and made all such preparations in all earnestness. He spread the leaf, placed the seat, kept the *lota* of drinking water, ever busying himself with the minutest details, with love and reverence worthy of a guest of honour. And at last he said, “O listen! Lord Krishna is coming. I hear the sound of the Panchajanya. He is coming. He is coming.” The wife thought that he had gone mad. “Here He is coming! I see him coming!” He hurriedly brought water and said, “Lord, welcome!” and poured water as he washed the Lord’s feet. His wife was miserable. But Poonthanam ran here and there in the various actions of welcoming a guest of high regard and love. He spread the plantain leaves and led Him to His seat, served food on the leaf...

Another ashramite: Which food?

Swamiji: Real food. There was food in the house, the wife had prepared lunch. And Poonthanam was asking, “O.K.? A little more of this?”... just as we speak to any guest. And the wife, who was looking on, was seeing nothing! And Poonthanam was asking: “Can I give you a little more? Is it tasty?” All this as if someone as sitting there in person. But to the wife nobody was there! *(Swamiji’s acting and presentation brought peals of laughter from the listeners, he himself joining in.)* Then after the Lord’s lunch was over, Poondanam said, “Take rest, please take rest! Then he said to his wife. “Now

He says I must go with Him. Please permit me to do so.” And immediately he vanished. He attained moksha. Nobody could know what had happened to him! He only told his wife, “God is calling me, I am going. He has come to take me. After lunch He is taking me in a special taxi”!! (*A roar of laughter all round*). And Poonthanam vanished! The poor lady, the wife wept. She never understood the mystery.

Ashramite: Who recorded all this?

Swamiji: There is no history behind it, for it is not a very ancient story.

Another ashramite: Yes. I also have heard it from my elders—related orally. But now Poonthanam’s life history has been printed in book form.

A visitor: Jaidev also attained moksha similarly. So also Mira and Kabir.

Swamiji: Yes. Tukaram also. He went bodily to heaven.

Ashramite: Did Mira attain heaven with her body?

Visitor: They say she did.

A foreign visitor engages Swamiji in conversation. She had learnt hatha yoga from her ‘teacher’.

Swamiji: He taught you only hatha yoga? I see. You ask him to teach you some other yoga now. When you go back, you tell him, “We have had enough of hatha yoga, now let us learn some other yoga.” Let us see what he teaches next. You tell him that I have suggested this (*laughs*). He will think that you have gone to a wrong man. Is he a friend or your Guru, or what is he? I see. Friend! Not Guru? To some extent? You studied under him?

An ashramite: You cannot have a Guru “to some extent”. Either he is your Guru or he is not.

Swamiji: (*Laughs*) If you learn something but not everything from him he is your Guru—to some extent. You have half a Guru, one-fourth Guru, you can have also one-eighth Guru if you learn one-eighth from him (*laughs*).

Ashramite: Which means the Guru need not be an entire Guru?

Swamiji: If you study the entire thing from one Guru, then he is your entire Guru, whole Guru. But if you go on studying one thing from one, and another from another, then you have “fractional Gurus”!

Ashramite: It is different when you learn from different Gurus as Dattatreya did. And Dattatreya had twenty-four Gurus. You may say each was 1/24 Guru. Dattatreya did not sit with them in the sense of the disciple sitting before a Guru and learning at his feet. This is the traditional Guru-disciple meaning.

Swamiji: That kind of Guru who teaches through his own reactions to things is a greater Guru than he who orally teaches doctrines and dogmas. The Guru who teaches without speaking is a greater Guru than the Guru who tells you this and that.

Ashramite: Yes, Lord Siva taught the Sanat Kumaras by His silence.

Another visitor: Is the world real or only a hallucination? Does evil exist or not?

Swamiji: In hallucination you see only what appears as real; it is there for that time. You cannot say that it is not there. But when your mind gets rectified, you will not see it

Visitor: Why is that?

Swamiji: That means that your eyes are not seeing properly. What can be done to the eyes of a blind man or in the case of a cataract when the vision is defective?

Visitor: But that which somebody else sees?

Swamiji: Not somebody else’s eyes, I mean. It is you that is interpreting things. And you say that that interpretation is correct. It may not be correct. Have you seen the whole cosmos?

Visitor: Can you avoid feeling that this is not there? We have to conclude that the other person is there.

Swamiji: You place yourself outside the person and are seeing him.

Visitor: We are outside of the totality.

Swamiji: When you see the whole of the cosmos in its totality, then

you will speak from a different perspective altogether. You are not seeing things as God sees. You are seeing them as man sees. Evil is there for a person who does not like a particular thing which he calls evil. You do not like it; that is why you call it evil. A broken bangle is ugly, isn't it? But the very same bangle, when it is full and round, is considered beautiful. You may be a very good-looking person. Supposing something happens to your nose or ear, will you still be called handsome? Evil, thus is the name that you give to the irrelevance in the context of any occurrence. Any occurrence out of context becomes irrelevant, and that is ugly, that is evil. But when it is in the proper context, and seen in its proper relevance to the totality of things to which it actually belongs, then you will see it in a different light, and your interpretation of it will be different. Is it good to kill an enemy? Warfare occurs when the enemy attacks you. You are just led to kill the opposing army. These are various aspects which have some connection, one with the other.

Visitor: Swamiji, if God exists then why is there sorrow and evil in the world? For we are told that God is good and we should therefore worship Him. If evil and sorrows are there, then why worship Him who has created such things as evil? How is it possible for one who is good to create evil? Is there not therefore justification for us to hold that God does not exist?

Swamiji: (*A pause*) There is no God for that man who sees suffering in the world, that is true. God who creates a suffering world is not God. So if you believe that evil is there, suffering is there, and God must have created it, then that God may not exist, eh? So it goes to the other extreme because a compassionate God does not create evil. You are now getting into more difficult problems. Whether God exists or not is an important question: Whether a cause exists for an effect? God is only a name you give to the cause of the world. Now, can an effect come without a cause? Then a cause must exist, then God must exist. God is only a name. Instead of God, I call it Cause. What does it matter? Only names differ, you only use different terminology. So if the effect is in the Cause, evil must be in the Cause (*laughs*).

Now let us take the pot. Does the pot exist in clay? There is a pot made of clay. The effect must be in the cause, and the pot is the

effect. Therefore, the pot must be in the clay, according to this logic. But do you see that the pot is in the clay? It is not there; the effect is not in the cause. Then all your logic of effect being in the cause is defeated, and the whole philosophy falls to the ground. The effect is not in the cause. But if it is in the cause, then pot is in the clay. Is it true? You bring a lump of clay and let me see the pot! And if the pot and the clay are the same, then why do you say, bring me a pot? You can say bring me clay. I bring a lump of earth and say this is a pot. Will you agree? So there is something in the pot which is not in the clay. You understand me? If you touch the pot you are touching only clay, nothing else, see? And yet it is not true that it is the same as clay. Then you will not be using two words. So what is a pot? You touch it and you are touching clay only. So don't say, "I am bringing a pot." You are bringing only clay. Wherever you touch the pot, you are touching only clay. Yet you say it is pot. Why do you call it a pot? Because pot is a concept. You are asking me if evil exists. If pot exists, evil exists. So, evil becomes a concept in your brain ultimately. When you see evil, you are seeing your own brain projected outside. That means you are an evil man. It comes to that. Do you accept it? You are not seeing evil, you are seeing your own evil outside.

Visitor: But we see that...

Swamiji: That is your own brain going out. You are the culprit. You have to be arrested for that, not somebody else. So, a man who sees evil is an evil man. What do you say? So it is hazardous to say, "I am seeing evil."

Visitor: Swamiji, I found...

Swamiji: This logic will take you to a very peculiar situation where you are the culprit because you made the statement. This pot that you see is a peculiar space-time concept. It is not the substance that you are seeing. That is why you cannot answer this question whether evil exists. But you tell me whether space- time exists or not.

Visitor: Yes it exists.

Swamiji: Ah, yes, it exists as a concept. So then you are dropping into the idea that it is a concept. The whole world is a concept! It

means that the world does not exist except in the idea of the person. Is it true?

Now, again, you are going into deeper philosophical problems. It is a concept, and it is not a substance. And a concept cannot be regarded as a reality, because it is only a pattern of thinking. It can change this way or that way. The space-time complex indicates that there is causal relationship among things. Space, time and cause—these are the creators of the world, not God. God did not create the world, so you need not say God created evil. It is the space-time complex that creates the world, and it is the space-time complex that is the brother of evil. This itself is the greatest evil. And there is no other evil than that. All the evil you see is because of space-time relationship.

I do not know if you have read the great logical epistemological analysis made by the philosopher Emanuel Kant. He has spent all his life answering this question; his whole life was spent only in answering this little question you put to me, and I am trying to answer it in a few sentences (*laughs*). And yet he was not able to satisfy people. But he has landed on some great problems. You cannot know reality because you are conditioned by space-time, and therefore whatever you say is conditioned by space-time. And even your conception of good and evil is conditioned by space-time. So long as you are conditioned, you are dependent. You are not independently thinking. So long as you are not thinking independently, your perceptions are not valid. Everything follows from that. Nothing that you see can be regarded as valid ultimately because you are conditioned by space-time causal relationship. And if you can overcome the dependence on the space-time complex then you will see the noumenon and not the phenomenon.

Visitor: Then how to see the noumenon? Does Kant say how?

Swamiji: He does not know the technique. (*The visitor laughs heartily.*) Afterwards his successor, Hegel, and others, turned the table the other way round. There was some error in Kant's way of thinking, though he paved the way for everybody else. If you cannot reach the noumenon, how do you know that the noumenon exists? He says everything that is known is conditioned by space and time. Then your idea of the noumenon is also conditioned by

space-time. So you cannot say the noumenon exists. You are seeing only phenomenon, according to this philosophy. So even your statement that the noumenon exists is not valid because you say it only through an idea, and idea is conditioned by space-time. And space-time permits only the perception of the phenomenon, you see.

So here is Kant's mistake: that he posited something transcending phenomenon yet asserted that no one can know anything but phenomenon. That was his self-contradiction. This was discovered by those who succeeded him, like Hegel, and Thomas Green, Bradley, and others. Ultimately, the question you put can be answered only by this: that the objects of the world should merge into the subject. Then only the noumenon can be seen. When you see an object as outside you, you are seeing a phenomenon. Seeing the noumenon is the art of meditation: the merger of object with the subject, and vice-versa. When the object becomes the subject, with the communion of one with the other in meditation, the distance between them, verily space-time, vanishes. And when space-time goes, causal relationship goes. Then you will never put the question 'who created the world' because space-time itself has gone, and you have become one with the thing you are putting the question. Then you will never put a question like that. It is another way of asking whether you exist. You don't ask that question, you are asking if another exists. When you become one with that thing about which you are putting the question, the question ceases. And that is what in yogic language is known as samadhi, or communing with Reality.

So, no questions can be answered ultimately; relative answers can be given, but absolute answers cannot be given unless you become one with that thing about which you are questioning. That is called intuition. Now you are perceiving things, but not intuiting them. And intuition is the entry of your consciousness into the very substance of the object, and not looking at it from outside in space and time through characters which define it as distinct from other objects. You do not see quality merely in things. You do not describe them by qualities. You enter into them and become the object itself. And then you know it as it knows itself. If you want to know me fully, you have to become me; otherwise, you cannot know me. And then, you cease to be, and I cease to be; it is something else

altogether; a transcendental element comes in.

If you want to know creation, you have to enter into the substance of creation. And that is called meditation. *(A long pause.)* Communion is the great intuitional awareness of things as they are, and not things as they appear to be. *(Pause.)* Everything that is outside you is a phenomenon and a relative perception and, therefore, you cannot have an absolute knowledge of it. There is no such thing as Absolute knowledge in a relative world, and therefore there is no Absolute answer also to a relative question. All questions are relative, so all answers can be relative only; they are tentative, makeshift. You bring a cup of water and ask me, “Is it warm or cold water?” The answer is relative to the condition of your body. Now the Ganga is very cold, but if you dip yourself in it in June it is very pleasant, not biting.

I am going to tell you a humorous story. *(Every sentence in the narration is acted out by Swamiji. So the humour and interest get intensified.)*

A man said, “If at all there is a creator of the world, it must be a devil. Because it is such a stupid world that he has created, a sensible person would not have created this world. He who created this world must be a devil.” The other man said: “If the devil had created the world, I will tell you what should have been the nature of the world.” Then he gives a funny description. If the devil were the creator of the world, what would happen is this: The moment you put your foot on the ground, the ground would crack and you would sink in. If you touched a leaf, it would turn into fire. If you drank a cup of water, it would simply scald you like molten lead. And the fact that this does not happen shows that the devil is not the creator.”

Ashramite: Who made that statement? And who answered it?

Swamiji: I do not remember the man who made the statement. The other man who answered is Gerald Heard, an American thinker.

Another visitor: Is the world absolute?

Swamiji: Einstein, whom nobody has the courage to refute *(laughs)*... says it is not. Up to this time nobody dared to refute Einstein. Newton said that space and time are absolute. And Einstein refuted it saying space and time are not absolute, they are relative.

And today he is the god of scientists. So let us take him as God for the time being! (*Laughs.*) If space and time are absolute, they will catch you forever, you cannot get out of them. And the very fact that you are thinking that it is possible to get out of them shows that they cannot be absolute. If an enemy is an absolute enemy, you cannot defeat him. If he is not an absolute enemy but a relative enemy, then there is a possibility of defeating him.

That the world is not really absolute can be shown by the fact that you can get over it and reach God. But if it is absolutely real, you are absolutely bound to the world, and there is no hope of reaching God at all. But you have a feeling that it cannot be so, that you do have a hope of reaching God. That hope is the greatest mentor that is inside you. You have a hope that everything is all right and one day you will reach the Absolute. And that hope will defeat the argument that the world is absolute and therefore space-time is absolute, because space-time and the world are one and the same thing. They are not two different things. If they are absolute, you cannot transcend them; and if you cannot transcend them, there is no hope of salvation. You are eternally bound. But your conscience will not permit you to accept it, and your conscience is your greatest teacher. So, perhaps Newton is not right, and Einstein may be right! Space and time look absolute because we think in terms of them when thinking of the world. The thief becomes welcome if you become friendly with him and you also become a thief. But if you are not a thief, you do not regard theft as desirable. If you join a group of thieves and become one of them, then for you thievery will be all right. (*Laughter all around*). Yes! So you have joined this party of space-time and they look all right. But if you detach yourself from them, they look relative, and then they do not look all right to you.

7. BEYOND MERE REASON

It is Sunday. Swami Krishnananda does not give a morning Darshan to visitors, devotees and ashramites on Sundays. But this Sunday, being the last day of the All India Philosophical Conference, which was held in the sacred hall of the Samadhistan of Sri Gurudev Swami Sivananda Maharaj, some delegates to that conference came to meet Revered Swamiji. Such of us as took the chance to see if there could be a morning darshan were lucky to join them and have a delightful informal conversation on the deeper aspects of life—philosophy and metaphysics. Revered Swamiji had been requested not only to inaugurate the conference but also to deliver the valedictory address later that day. The conference had been held in the Rastra Bhasha. Swamiji spoke on both occasions in his usual effortless and artful way in English, conveying the subtlest or most intuitive facts. Swamiji was pinning down some delegates to a point.

Swamiji: You had some rare and interesting objectives. You are trying to find out, investigate into the nature of experience for the purpose of finding out some content. Though in the beginning you may feel you are finding nothing, how can you have a contentless experience?

A delegate: No experience is without content.

Swamiji: Experience without content is a meaningless word. It cannot stand. Immanuel Kant said metaphysics cannot help in the search for reality because of the defects of the instrument being used.

Delegate: Kant has said that not only rational metaphysics but also rational psychology is empirical.

Swamiji: Well, anything that is rational according to Kant, is empirical. So the charge Kant brought against metaphysics is the charge against science also. Where do you stand finally? (*Delegate laughs.*) We have cut the ground from under your feet! Neither can you define truth nor philosoph .

Delegate: We have agreed that science has as many limitations as philosophy. As philosophy is identified with ratiocination, it will have limitations. The same is the case with science also. Both have

limitations in regard to the methodology they adopt.

Swamiji: Now let us argue from the opposite side. There is something in philosophy.

Delegate: Yes, yes (*laughs*).

Swamiji: Philosophy is not as poor as it is made to appear by Immanuel Kant. It has a tremendous strength within it, which can be brought out by a proper advocate of it. A case looks weak when it does not have a good advocate. But when it has a capable advocate to handle it, he will bring out the strength of the case. Kant was not a good advocate of philosophy. He could only find out the flaws but not the good points in it. Unless there were good points in it, people would not be running after it. Let us see what are the good points in philosophy which you do not find in science. Dr. Radhakrishnan has brought out some of these ideas in his *Idealistic View of Life*. Kant's charge against antonymical arguments are unfounded though they look reasonable. There is something in your reason which is beyond reason. Otherwise, you will not even exist. The fact that you are existing shows that reason is not the ultimate factor.

There is something intuitive transcending your own reason. You are happy. Who makes you happy? It is not reason that makes you happy. Reason is a frail instrument. It is conditioned by the 'category', as you say, a tricky thing, which can't make you happy. And if you are not happy, you cannot exist in this world even for a few minutes. It is joy that keeps you alive. And why are you happy? It is not rationality, it is something else in you that keeps you going. Kant cannot help you here! Only Swami Sivananda Maharaj can. (*Both laugh heartily.*) It is a total revolution—a self-revolution—where you are totally revolutionised. Well, you are holding a big conference. It must have some impact on human life. Tell me what the impact is.

Delegate: (*Laughs*) It is not such a strong thing perhaps as to make its effect felt by me.

An ashramite: I don't agree that there is no outcome after all the effort and the good intentions. The concrete outcome may be only very subjective. But it is bound to be there. How can it be that a huge

wave dashes at you and nothing happens to you? Only we are not aware of its impact in any appreciable measure—at the moment, we should not expect this impact to be felt as quickly as, for instance, you get light the moment you put on the switch.

Delegate: You see, this is the ideal we have; but the impact is not palpable or manifest. Immediately the impact should be on your students and if no student has been touched by it, then only the professors will be chewing the cud.

Swamiji: Why should it be so, it all depends on the professors. They should see that the effect is felt by the students.

Ashramite: The whole effort is to make teachers influence the students.

Swamiji: The teacher's personality is expected to be such that it permeates the sensitivity of the students. And if the professor's knowledge is solid, it is bound to have impact upon the student.

Ashramite: If you are a self-realised being, the students will feel the impact automatically—your presence would be enough. And this is the supreme type of inspiration.

Swamiji: Time for luncheon and your next session. Thank you all for giving me darshan. God bless you.

8. ONENESS IN DIVERSITY

A foreign visitor sought Swamiji's guidance in the matter of removing obstacles in spiritual advancement and meditation.

Swamiji: What are the obstacles that you wish to overcome?

Visitor: Strong desires and attachments.

Swamiji: How many?

Visitor: Endless, very difficult to keep count of

Swamiji: There must be some main ones, from which others branch out. Choose, let us say, about five or six of the main ones. To tackle a small number is practical and easy to begin with. Take each of these desires and attachments separately, and tackle it. Let us say there is a man who is suffering from a number of diseases like eczema of the foot, anaemia and a weak heart. The physician will not attempt to cure all these ailments at the same time, nor will he give the same priority to all these problems. He will tackle one disease at a time. Since the heart is weak, the doctor first tries to strengthen the heart, then he may treat the causes of anaemia, and turn his attention last to eczema which needs a prolonged period of treatment.

In reality there may not be as many desires and attachments as you think you have. It may be only a few that are taking the shape of many. Make a list of all the desires first. Then classify them into what can be fulfilled or can be tackled successfully, what cannot be fulfilled, what should not be fulfilled, those that are impracticable, those that are unnecessary, and those that are mischievous in their nature.

Consider each of these listed factors with knowledge and intelligence. With them you would prepare yourself to face an enemy. The enemy cannot be ignored. You must use the wisdom you have gained in life, which is common sense, in preparing to face the enemy. Difficulties arise only when the desires are what you do not want to give up. Then only God can help. At a moment you are in between the desire to give up and the desire not to give up. Suppose you want to stay in the Taj Mahal hotel and have a desire to have a cup of coffee or to have a good meal, satisfy these

desires, because they are practicable. Suppose you desire to become the president of the country with no means of achieving this end, it is an impracticable desire and common sense should dictate that this desire should be given up because it is impracticable and foolish. Castles in the air...

In satisfying any desire, examine the pros and cons of the matter and wisely come to the conclusion whether it should or should not be satisfied. The desires of the ego, like wanting to become the president of the country, must be tackled by the use of common sense and deep philosophical study of the science of life. A philosophical investigation must be made as to the ultimate purpose of a desire and the necessity of satisfying it.

Such a philosophical investigation leads to the desires being thinned out and finally dropping off. It is this philosophical investigation that the mind must be trained to make, and this training must be carried on persistently and tenaciously. Then you will get the result you want to achieve. What are the studies you do? You say you are a psychologist. What books have you read?

Visitor: *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* by Dr. Evans Wentz has been translated into English. It deals with the astral body; conventional philosophy like Kant's, Hegel and Plato.

Swamiji: What do you understand from them?

Visitor: They all say the same thing. Society makes it difficult to practise the guidance Swamiji has given. How to strike a balance between the different demands made upon us?

Swamiji: By seeing the presence of oneness in diversity. In our physical body there are different features like the ear, the nose, the mouth. Also there are millions of cells of the body. There are several limbs in the body. Although all these are different from one another, we see the body as one whole, and not as different parts as though not related to the body. The consciousness we have regarding the body, its oneness, must be expanded in the outer world also. This no doubt is not easy, but only then can the balance be maintained. The outer world is as much an organic whole as the physical body, is. The senses gather information and report it to the mind. The mind accepts these reports. But supposing the mind says that the leg is

unconnected with the body, reason will not accept it. Use the same logic to supersede the report of the senses.

The attitude of affirmation of the organic oneness of the world must be ingrained in the mind. The eyes may tell you that the sky is shaped like a bowl. You do not accept this statement of the eyes. The senses give such unfounded report even with regard to the externality of the world. While you reject the statement of the eyes about the sky, why in the report of the senses that the world is external to you, unconnected, why do you believe this statement? The sun is not a ball although the eyes see it as a red ball of fire. That the sun rises only in the east is a convention of the society for its own convenience. The sun is rising in your west when it is rising in another place. Overcome all these illogical statements of the senses and social conventions, and drive deep into the mind the affirmation that the universe is an organic whole. This is meditation, and your whole life becomes meditation if you meditate like this. Have you read any other books than what you told me already?

Visitor: I have read Aldous Huxley.

Swamiji: That is no use. Have you heard of Paul Brunton? No? He was a British author and his *Wisdom of Yourself* will be of good help to you.

Visitor: I have read Yogananda's book *An Autobiography of a Yogi*.

Swamiji: That is not enough for your purpose.

Visitor: I have read the *Mind and its Mysteries*, *Jnana Yoga*, *Realisation of the Absolute*, *Ten Upanishads*—all by Swami Sivananda.

Swamiji: Very good. But all this additionally needs practice to achieve the result. Also, aloneness is a must. You must find time to be absolutely by yourself without having to attend to anything whatsoever. What is your profession? What are your hours of work?

Visitor: I work for a public institution on an average nine hours a day. It is roughly forty-five to fifty hours a week. I am at my work and the work is with drug addicts and alcoholics, to get students particularly off their drug habits and alcoholism.

Swamiji: When do you go to bed? What exercise do you do? What is your hobby?

Visitor: I do running. I like to go hiking. I also am interested in photography.

Swamiji: Running after work, after you are already tired, is not helpful to restore energy in your body. Do not have too many hobbies. Doing many things is distracting to the mind. You must find time to sit alone and meditate. Hobbies like photography have got aesthetic value, but aesthetic values are not beneficial ultimately because it is a sensation of enjoyment. This is only stuff and nonsense ultimately, which is a waste of time for you. So you must find time to be alone and to meditate. This will lead you to what you wish to achieve and remove the obstacles in your path in the form of desires and attachments.

(An Italian visitor has joined the gathering with her child, a toddler.)

Visitor: May I take photos of people here, the kitchen, the other buildings in the Ashram?

Swamiji: Why? What do you want to do with so many photos?

Visitor: I want to send to different people who are interested in Ashrams.

Swamiji: Yes, you can take photos. What is your profession?

Visitor: I am working in a company which manufactures natural food. It is called Macrobiotics. The object is similar to philosophical ethics. Like massage is a natural way of restoring strength to the muscles and nerves.

Swamiji: Can you get rid of wishes, thoughts by feeding people with natural foods?

Visitor: No good with macrobiotics.

Swamiji: So go to macro psychotic, not biotic.

Someone: Another objection, Swamiji, is that the company cannot supply truly natural food.

Visitor: There are people who oppose this idea of natural biotics.

Swamiji: Jesus also was opposed by people, like you are now opposed by people. While opposition need not be a discouragement, there are other points to be taken into consideration. An integral outlook is necessary to effectively overcome opposition. Snakes, for instance, eat very pure food. They live on pure air. But they are dangerous elements in the world. A pure dietician, like the snake, can be a dangerous element in the world. The food must be natural to not only the physical being of man but also to his vital being, also to his social environment.

And, finally, it must be natural to the cosmic vibrations. So macro-cosmic is more important than anything that goes to make man. This is a very important point to be noted. You say you are Italian, but you speak English so well. What can we do for you? What do you want from the Ashram?

Visitor: I am just travelling around. I am going to South India on a tour. I like travelling and seeing places.

Swamiji: Why do you want to obey the law of your likes? Why do you want to be subjected to likes and dislikes?

Visitor: There is much disturbance all the time in Italy. One wants to get away for a little peace.

Someone: The whole of Europe is like Italy. Going from bad to worse. The world must be coming to an end.

Swamiji: A German, Oswald Spengler, has written a book called *The Decline of the West*. It is very depressing and revolutionary in thought. He proves his statements scientifically, and this title has become as famous as Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, which scientifically puts forth the Theory of Evolution. So is Schopenhauer's book *World as Will and Idea*. But it is not true that the world is going to the dogs. It is going to God... There are three huge volumes of this book. He spent his lifetime writing it. Such was his devotion to study.

No modern student is prepared to devote himself to such a lifetime study. They are like flitting birds, picking now from here, now from there. They are made of straw, and have no substance in them. They move, float on the surface, and can never dive deeper than that. The world of today, therefore, seems to be going from

bad to worse. But history moves in a circle, and therefore there is the theory of the recurrence of values. The extremes exchange their places. Prosperity swings to austerity, and then to the reverse direction. The world is relative in its values, and hence it is never in a position of wholeness. So at any given period of time we have to take a little from all sides of nature, or the world, as you may put it, in evaluating the position we are in.

Someone: Is this historical cycle mechanical?

Swamiji: Yes, mechanical; it is accepted so by the East and the West. The details of the points of the circle will vary, but not the points of the circle as such. The menu of our food is varied every day, but our eating is not varied.

An ashramite: According to this theory of the recurrence of values, it would become necessary to repeat transmigration, birth to birth, to ingrain correct thinking into the mind?

Swamiji: Yes, a single dose of medicine cannot cure disease. You cannot heat ten quintals of water with the fire of one matchstick

Thank you all for giving me your darshan. Now, it is time for luncheon. Go and have your food.

9. UNIVERSAL ACTION

A pleasant morning. The usual small gathering around Swami Krishnanandaji with ashramites as also foreign visitors. Swamiji greets visitors as they drop in one by one. Some of the questions have not been taken down but Swamiji's answers have been recorded and are given below.

Swamiji: You are nothing, you are something. That is called mutual sacrifice. You give me what you have and I do not have, and I give you what I have and you do not have; that is how it goes on. The sun and the ocean and the earth are all collaborating in making rain. If the ocean is not there no rain will occur, but if the ocean is there and no sun, then also there can be no rain. The gravitation of the earth is equally necessary, otherwise the water will not fall. You see how many things are necessary for rain. These are only three factors. There are many others such as the mountains, the trees, etc., which all help in bringing about a little thing called 'rain'. You do not know how many factors there are contributing to the fact that you are breathing. You think breathing is a simple process. It is not so. It is very complex, and it is made possible by various systems in the body. Even your breathing is God's will ultimately. Let us realise that. We should not think that we are the masters. We do pranayama, but we cannot do even pranayama unless God wills. He is the driver of the vehicle of life. The vehicle will not go unless the driver is there. Again, the driver alone is not sufficient though control is necessary; the wheels have to be in good condition and the body of the vehicle should be built. This is karma yoga in the Bhagavadgita: a little action comprising many factors, and one who thinks that only one factor is sufficient is ignorant

Nobody ever does anything independently. Everything is done with the collaboration of the other forces of nature, so that every action is a cosmic action. There is no such thing as an individual action. Any universal action, even if a leaf falls from a tree, the whole universe is aware of it. I think Christ said: "Even if a sparrow falls it is the will of God..." "There is no such thing as chance in the world. Everything is ordered methodically by a great purpose which is beyond human understanding.

There was a gardener working in his field and, nearby, another man was building a house. The first man prayed to God. “Please God send rain.” His neighbour was at the same time praying, “God, let there be no rain. I am building a house”. So what should God do? The doctor prays for more patients and the patient prays, “May I heal quickly”.

Q: Where is the heart located in us?

Swamiji: The heart gets fixed on something which you are thinking in the mind. When you are thinking of me, your thought is fixed on me, and when you are thinking of a mountain, it is fixed on a mountain. It has no place of its own. It is fixed on something of which it is thinking at that particular time. It shifts its location from moment to moment. It has no house of its own. What it is interested in, that is its house. It is a universal, all-pervading something, so it cannot have a location, but it can tie itself into a knot on what it is thinking of any particular object. You belong to that thing which you love from the depth of your heart. When you start loving something, you are tied to it. Essentially you are independent, absolutely independent, but you appear to be dependent when you are hanging on to something else for support.

Q: Because you are always thinking of that something?

Swamiji: You are loving it, not merely thinking of it. You have an affection for it—that is why you are dependent. When you love an object you are depending on that object, otherwise you would not love it, and to that extent your independence is gone. You are selling your independence by loving objects in the world and purchasing trouble.

Q: Is thinking inside or outside space and time?

Swamiji: It is always in space and time. Mind cannot think except in space and time, and space is inside, outside, both. You can see some part outside of you or you can see some part inside, but still it is spatial. If you think of something it is always in space, even if it is merely a concept—psychological—it is still a spatial concept. You cannot imagine anything except as it is located in space.

Q: But thought itself is outside space?

Swamiji: God is transcendental to space. The very fact that you think of space shows that God is not in space.

Q: If you can get outside of space and time, in that state?

Swamiji: When you think of an object, it is always outside. Otherwise, what is an object?

Q: But is your thinking outside space and time, Swamiji?

Swamiji: No, you cannot be outside space and time. Everything is in space and time.

Q: But is your thinking outside space and time?

Swamiji: Just as your Atman, or soul, is transcendent to space, though to normal experience it does not appear to be so. You can only infer by argument that it is transcendent. The fact that you can see something in space and time should imply that you are transcendent to space and time. Again it is by argument, by inference. You cannot actually experience it unless you enter into the object by meditation.

Q: Then when you go into a state of bliss, why can't you think?

Swamiji: No, you do not enter bliss like that. It is only a corollary of the state of identification of subject with object. When you enter into the object by absorption, you feel a great happiness. It comes only as a result of absorption with the object. The first thing is absorption, then follows bliss. Bliss is only an effect that follows from the union of the subject with the object.

Q: At that stage are you outside space and time?

Swamiji: There is no space and time at that time. It simply vanishes. You cannot see outside or inside at that time. Space vanishes.

Q: And at that time can you think?

Swamiji: No. The mind ceases to think. That is why you are happy. As long as you are thinking, you are unhappy... There is no object to think of. The object has become the subject. When object and subject blend together in union there is no idea of space time. That is why you are happy. Happiness is the outcome of the abolition of the consciousness of space and time. When you feel the difference

between you and something, there is no happiness. Happiness is the result of union with the object. As long as you maintain distance, there is no happiness. In love, in intense love, the difference between subject and object vanishes and there is happiness. As long as you feel that it is outside you, there is no happiness.

Q: I feel a strong sense of duty towards my parents and also very strongly the separation, difference, between them and I have a hard time pleasing them, and yet their aims for me are different from my beliefs. They are most interested in my material success and...

Swamiji: You see, pleasing them is a little different from performing your duty towards them. They may be having some ideas of their own, which when fulfilled will make them happy, but that is very different from your duty. Suppose they are poor, they have nothing to eat, your duty would be to provide them with food. That is a duty. But if they are unhappy on account of some other desires that they have got... suppose they want a three-storeyed building and they are unable to get it, they are unhappy, and I do not think it is your duty to provide them with a three-storeyed building. It is not necessary for a person, though they cannot be happy because of the desire present in them. Your duty is to feed them and provide them with the minimum necessities of life—food, clothing, shelter, as they call it—because they are your parents. Especially if they are poor and cannot maintain themselves for some reason or the other, I would say it is your duty to do so. If they are well-off then it is a different matter, then there is no problem. So duty is different from pleasure, they are not identical.

Q: Is duty not only in terms of the physical body?

Swamiji: No, not necessarily. There are various types of duty.

Q: Sometimes what people want is not necessarily good for them.

Swamiji: Naturally. I say I want a bicycle. Why do I want a bicycle? But if you do not give me one, I become unhappy. It does not mean that you will make me happy merely by giving me a bicycle. It is a foolish desire, and one should not give in to it. But if I am hungry and I want food because I have not eaten for three days, then it is your duty to give me food. You have to use your common sense and

understand the difference between pleasure and necessity, and you must use your understanding to see what is incumbent upon you.

Q. What is my duty to the Absolute...?

Swamiji: Why worry about the Absolute unnecessarily? You should keep quiet. This is like waking sleeping dogs, you understand? Don't wake up sleeping dogs, they say. If you wake them unnecessarily they will growl... (*gesticulating*) grrrr... and jump on you. (*Laughter.*) It is a joke, and an interesting joke it is.

It is a very philosophical joke—the Absolute is like a sleeping dog. It does not interfere with you and it does not expect you to interfere with it, and if you unnecessarily poke your nose, it will bark and pounce on you. Do you want this to happen? (*Laughter.*) How many hours can one sit alone? God is far away and I am not bothered about Him much. Let Him mind His business. I am worrying about you people—about your getting a room or getting food. Am I to think of the Absolute or about your accommodation? Which is more immediate? So I shove God somewhere in the corner and I do not bother about Him but worry about you. You want a room, another wants yoga, another wants medicine, yet another has some other problem to be solved. Now, what do you say? Am I to leave these things for the Absolute? Why don't you follow my path of hard work?

There have been saints who could make God work like a servant. Let me tell you a story from the South. There was a lady who used to visit a holy man every day. She would prostrate before the holy man and keep some sweet porridge, *kheer* in a vessel. This went on for one year and neither she nor the saint spoke to each other. Then one day the saint asked, “Mother, what is the matter with you?” Then she said, “Maharaj, I am in great sorrow. I want your blessing.” You see, that saint was a great man. According to the story, he was capable of speaking to God Himself. Every night he would speak to God. Everyone used to go to him for his blessings. So this lady said, “I am coming to you for some help. I am grieving to death. I have no child. Will you bless me with one child”. “Oh, well, I'll ask God,” he said. “Please will you talk to God tonight and let me know what his answer is? If I can get a child or not.” “OK, I'll ask God tonight,” the saint said. Next morning she came, “What is the answer from

God”? “I am very sorry, he refused. God said, ‘No, this lady cannot have children’”. She beat her breast in sorrow. “If God says this, there is no use to live in this world.” She decided to commit suicide and ran to jump into the nearby river. “I’ll die. I don’t want to stay alive.”

When the lady was running she saw a man coming along, a very unkempt, crazy-looking man. He stopped her and asked her, “Mother, why are you running? Why are you crying? What is the matter?” She said, “Don’t talk to me. This is no time to talk. I am going to end my life.” Still he persisted, and reluctantly she replied? “Well, God Himself is not pleased with me. I have talked with the great saint who has told me that God has refused to give me a child.” “Oh! Is that all! This is a small matter. How many children do you want?” “I want one.” “You will have two,” he said. Now she could not understand how it was that when God himself had refused, this man was saying she would get two children, but these words acted like a balm on her heart. Someone had said something which was so satisfying, whether it was going to materialise or not didn’t matter. So she gave up the idea of committing suicide and went back home. She had two children, and after some time she brought them to the saint who had said that God had denied her one. “Who are these children?” he asked. “Your children.” “You have children?” he said, “How is it possible? God had told me that you cannot have children. God can’t tell lies.”

That night the saint encountered God and asked him. “How is it that you made a fool of me? You told me it is not possible for that lady to have a child, and now she has two children?” God replied, “My dear friend, you must understand my predicament. I have great affection for you because you run after me, you are a devotee who runs after me, but that gentleman who told her that she will have two children, he is a person, a devotee whom I run after. I run after him, while you run after me. That is the difference. So, when he says something, I cannot refuse. If he had said a hundred, I would have given the lady a hundred children.” The saint wondered who this man was after whom God was running, and thought “I have heard of men running after God, but I have never heard of God running after men.” Such a running after of a man by God takes place under very

special circumstances. This parable is of tremendous significance. Anyone can run after something great. There is nothing important about it. But can you imagine God running after a devotee? What must be the intensity and the character of his devotion to draw God towards himself and make God run after him! This is the devotion which can be called real sadhana. If sadhana can be so intense that it draws the whole cosmos to itself, then it is real sadhana.

Is it possible to have such a devotion? This type of devotion is another word for the utter surrender of the self to Reality. 'Utter' is the word, which is not possible unless the whole being is concentrated on that object. You may call it God, you may call it the Absolute, you may call it anything. If your whole soul is concentrated on it, that endeavour of yours will be a success. Even a thief can succeed if he concentrates wholeheartedly on that point, but, unfortunately, nobody in this world can be a hundred per cent interested in anything. Even your love for your own baby is not absolute, your love is conditional. Under certain conditions you like a thing. When those conditions change, you stop liking it. A husband cannot love his wife, a wife cannot love her husband unless certain conditions are fulfilled. But the love of God is unconditional. You cannot limit it and say: "Under these conditions I love God."

You may ask me, "Why should I love God unconditionally?" Everything is done for some purpose. My love for God has a purpose. If the purpose is ulterior, then you regard God as inferior to that purpose. You are regarding the motive behind your love as something superior to God Himself. You are using God as an instrument, you are exploiting God. This is what every devotee is doing; therefore, God is not coming. We may not be consciously thinking like this, but unconsciously we are feeling that if we reach God we will get something. That something is more important to us than God Himself. People say, "If I get a job, I get a salary." You are not interested in the job but only in the salary. Because the salary is not possible without the job, you say, "I'll take the job." Likewise you know you cannot get something unless you go to work, so you think it is a very justifiable attitude to use God as an instrument for something that you like, e.g. peace of mind, bliss, immortality—so many things. This is exploitation.

God is the highest end, He is not a means to an end, but

subconsciously we feel that He is a means to something. We are grieved by the sorrow of the world and the pains that are inflicted upon us, and we want to get rid of them. We don't want God, we want only freedom from pain and suffering, and we know that cannot happen unless we go to Him, just as you go to the President or Prime Minister for some sanction or permit or something. And that something is your intelligence, not God; we must not forget that. God can understand this; He is omniscient. He knows His devotee is a very shrewd person who wants to use Him, so He says, "I will not go." He is afraid of you. (*Laughter.*)

You say you want the Absolute. You cannot get the Absolute unless you want only the Absolute, and you cannot want the Absolute only for certain reasons. You have got certain ideas, you have got the consciousness of the world. You have got the idea that you are a doctor, that you are a lady, that you exist in Rishikesh; you see, you have so many contradictory ideas, ideas which contradict the idea of the Absolute Advaita—without a second. These are impediments. How can you abolish from your mind all ideas of relativity? It is not possible. If it is possible, then you can reach the Absolute. It doesn't take two days or three days. But no human being can achieve this feat. So many ideas are in the mind: "I am a human being; I exist here, I have this. This is the world, the sun is shining, the wind is blowing. These are obstacles to the surrender of the self to the Absolute. You must have the technique of transforming every perception. There is nothing wrong in all the ideas; the sun shining, the wind blowing, etc., they are all manifestations of God, but you should not make a bifurcation between God and the world. You see God as if you are outside God. It is not so.

Going to God is not a movement in space and time. It is a transformation, like waking up from a dream. A little training of the mind is necessary to understand what is necessary, what the point is. You see, it is like a lawyer who cannot take up a case unless he knows what the matter is. So when you say, "I want the Absolute," you must know what it means. The Absolute is that which includes yourself also. So you are asking for yourself ultimately—and you are already there. So is there any sense in your asking for it? It is in a different cosmic sense that you are asking for yourself, and

for that you must give up all little thoughts, all thoughts of worldly objects, and desires of every kind. There should not be any ambition or desire left in your mind. If that is possible then you need not speak to me, you may speak to the Absolute directly.

It will answer your questions provided your heart is clean and clear. "Ask and it shall be given." That is what Christ said, but your asking should be with the whole, totality, of your being, not merely by your lips. Your whole being should surge forward like a wave of devotion, and it should pull you like a magnet so that it would be impossible for you to exist without it. A great devotee said that it would be impossible to exist in the world without God. It would be like hell for that devotee. If you get such a pain because of the bereavement from Him, and you are restless without Him and you cannot exist without Him, He must come. There is no doubt about it. But be sure that you really want Him and not something else.

Another visitor: What is the relationship between man and the law of the land, his native or visiting land?

Swamiji: All law is created by the human mind and its thoughts. Law is amended now and then by the parliament. You can change laws; that means that you determine the law, the law does not determine you. If man can change law, why should man be afraid of law?

Q: I can see that a man can be afraid of how another man can use the law against him.

Swamiji: Now you are entering into deep waters. You are thinking that another man has made the law. Who made the law?

Q: All the men together.

Swamiji: So law is a manifestation of the total mind.

Q: In theory.

Swamiji: Oh, so now we are entering into philosophy. It is not made by this man or that man, but by the totality of mind. This totality of mind is a very peculiar thing. It is very difficult to understand what is totality. You are a part of the total, so you have a right in the context of the whole or total to which you belong. You need not be afraid of the total, because you also belong to it. It is like a member

of the family getting frightened of the family itself.

Now, what is a whole? Many minds put together make a cosmic mind, can you say that? If all the human minds think one thought, can you say that it is the Cosmic Mind thinking? That is not true. There is a quantitative uniformity, but there should be a qualitative identity of this total with what you call the Cosmic Mind. You are a human being, Mr. So-and-so, you are not the total of the limbs of the body. Suppose some limbs are missing, you would still be a whole being? People without limbs still feel themselves to be complete. So what is man? Man is not the body. Likewise, what is mind? It is not the total of the individuals. A parliament does not become depleted merely because ten members are absent, so parliament is not the total of its members. It is something else.

This is what I meant by saying that it is qualitatively different from the whole that you are thinking of, though quantitatively it has some point. I think we should not talk much on this subject. It is a very ticklish subject (*laughter*). You have to think about this matter. It leads to philosophy. From law you go to philosophy. Some points for you to think about when you go back home.

Q: “I just go through life,” someone says, “doing my work, and I don’t worry about these things. I know when I die I go back into the earth.”

Swamiji: Why does he think he goes back to the earth? What is “go back to the earth”?

Q: What he says, in effect, is, there is no reason for all of this. It is just what he considers the Existentialist belief that we just go on. There is no overall cause or reason, and no point in asking all these questions and trying to answer them. What do you say to such a man?

Swamiji: I would say nothing to such a man. Let him go to the earth. He says, “I will do my work.” But why should he do his work? That itself is a reason for life, otherwise he need not do anything, he could just meditate. He will say, “I work to have a house, to be comfortable.” Why does he want a house, to be comfortable, to have food to eat? Everything has a reason, and he sees no reason. I would ask him, “Why do you want to exist? You could perish by simply not

eating. Why do you want to work hard and maintain yourself alive? There is a reason behind this also. This is shallow thinking. There is a reason even for the love of life: why the urge to maintain yourself? What the reason is he doesn't understand? Let him go further and not stop halfway. His understanding will become better and better.

10. THIS IS THAT

This morning Swamiji is sitting inside his Kutir. The people around the Swamiji put questions to Swamiji and even as Swamiji keeps attending to his papers, all questions and problems are discussed.

A visitor: What is the difference between ‘Thou’ and ‘That’?

Swamiji: To avoid the difficulty in understanding the import of the sentence, they use two terms: Thou and That. But really what they mean is “That is That”, not Thou and That. It makes no sense when you say That is That. The distinction is not clear in this phrase. Hence Thou and That.

Visitor: You mean That within you and That outside you, i.e. That elsewhere?

Swamiji: Yes, yes. They want to avoid the idea of this distinction itself; so the import is quite different from the mere grammatical meaning of it. There are two meanings, the linguistic and the indicative, in the Mahavakya ‘That thou art’.

An ashramite: Swamiji, what is the meaning of the picture where Kali Mata is dancing over the prostrate form of Lord Siva?

Swamiji: Prakriti, in her dance of creation of the world, loses control of herself. Her dance ceases only when it touches the Absolute which is its Lord and holds it under His control.

Another ashramite: In Durga Saptasati, women doing the *paths* also pray “bless me with a *bharya*—wife.” It does not sound sensible.

Swamiji: *Bharya* does not mean only wife. It means one who loves you much.

Another visitor: Why does one dream?

Swamiji: Past impressions deep in the subconscious come up as dreams. You cannot say when these impressions were formed. It may be many lives back or recently.

Visitor: Do the dreams also delve into the future?

Swamiji: Yes. They go both forwards and backwards.

Another visitor: May I ask a question? Is renunciation Sannyas?

Swamiji: It all depends on what you mean by renunciation. Leaving one's home and coming to Rishikesh is no renunciation. There are all kinds of renunciation. You have your home, and have come here in search of knowledge. A certain kind of renunciation is effected. But the implications include other circumstances also. It all depends upon the definition. The word as such sounds simple. But the meaning is difficult to comprehend. What do you renounce? Renounce what?

Visitor: The Self.

Swamiji: Ah, yes. You have gone to the very root of it. You are renouncing renunciation itself. In Buddhism they say, "I renounce the concept of right and wrong. I renounce the concept of truth and non-truth." After renouncing all these, that is also renounced. After all your circumstances have been renounced you must renounce the Self also in the Absolute. That is renunciation.

Visitor: My main idea was to come to know how Swami Sivananda started and how he developed his technique. I have finished reading his life. I wanted to know how he taught others. Surely not through books like the Patanjali Yoga? He was a very practical man. He was a very valuable man.

Swamiji: Master Sivananda never taught by word of mouth. He never gave any lecture. He said, "You see me, that is sufficient." He very rarely spoke.

11. THE CAUSELESS ABSOLUTE

A visitor: The transcendental is superior to the Absolute. Is it not?

Swamiji: That the transcendent is higher than everything else, and therefore it is also higher than the Absolute, is not correct. There is no relativity in the Absolute. If there is relativity, then there is its attendant causality and effects as well as mutability of relationships proceeding therefrom. Such cannot be Absolute. Absolute must be causeless and transcending all relativity. Nothing transcends the Absolute.

Visitor: Why two words for one? Why call it the Absolute and also the Transcendental?

Swamiji: You are a human being and you say you are an American or an Indian. Why? The words 'Absolute' and 'Transcendental' are two words to describe the same thing but are used as required contextually.

Visitor: If the Absolute is imperceivable, how can it be also manifest?

Swamiji: It is the same relationship as the dream has to waking consciousness. The same mental force is the connection between the waking and dream consciousness. Dream manifestations are projections of the mind, which works in the waking consciousness.

Even as there is no real existence for the dream world, the world is only a projection of the mind in relation to the Absolute. When you meditate on the Absolute, you are really thinking of yourself. The Atman is the Paramatman only. You are merging with it. The body might have to face trouble in the process as, in meditation, you are reversing the prana which current normally flows outward. It is like reversing the flow of Ganga back to its source. There will be terrific force and waves will rise high

The inward flow of prana is similar—there would be tremendous change which the body is unable to take. It is not possible to describe that experience. It is subjective and is personal to everyone. Any unfulfilled desire can obstruct the inward current and then a catastrophe may occur. You should be prepared for this reversal of the prana current, or else it might destroy you. A milder result

would be frustration. Desire is the assertion of the personality. In meditation the personality is dissolved. So you must be prepared for this dissolution of the personality like you are prepared for any situation that may suddenly arise. Otherwise there is frustration and more serious consequences follow.

An ashramite: Sometimes the body sways gently. Is it also the result of meditation?

Swamiji: Yes. Any systematic movement of the body is the manifestation of Divinity which has been stirred up in effective meditation.

Someone reads from an Upanishad.

Another visitor: What has been said about meditating on the parts of the Virat as isolated from the Virat itself is very interesting.

Swamiji: Yes, the king explains to the disciples, who are themselves yogis, you are getting some benefit, no doubt, because of your concentration on this or that part of the Virat. In truth there is danger in such a meditation in that you take a part for the whole and emphasise it. However, it is very difficult to meditate on the Virat in the manner this Upanishad tells us. The Upanishadic meditations are not for the average man. It is, as you may say, for post-graduate level. The Upanishads start from that level. But a beginning is made in the ordinary meditation and the level at which the Upanishads teach is reached by and by with the traditional religious activities of worship, devotion and concentration of mind.

The reading of the passages from the Upanishads was resumed. The passage said that what the yogi follows for meditation is also the process of physical death given in the Upanishad. That is to say that the process of the physical body's death by first losing the senses, then the prana and finally the warmth of the body is for the meditator the same process of losing or withdrawing the sense contacts, getting beyond body consciousness, withdrawing the flow of the prana inward, and thus though the warmth is retained by the body due to the controlled prana within. Becoming dead to the world is the same for the meditator as well. But when the yogi is inert as a corpse with his prana held within, and he does not breathe in the

state of samadhi, the yogi still retains the heat or fire-principle by merging himself in Brahman, the Eternal which is the source of his being.

12. SYMBOLISM OF THE IDEAL

A visitor: Swamiji, why is a perfect ideal concept which is God, represented by a stone or stone images?

Swamiji: These *lingas*, or symbols, have a great truth in them which cannot be explained or understood easily. God is everywhere and therefore why not in an idol? You say that the statue is so unlike the high idealistic concept in your mind that it can be an obstacle to the contemplation of the concept in the mind. It is because of this that you feel scandalised that the *linga* or symbol should represent this idealistic value poorly. This view is very different from the great value inherent in the *linga*, which a prosaic mind cannot see.

Now, a currency note is only a scrap of paper in the hands of a monkey; it has no value for the monkey. Because the government has symbolised it as money, this piece of paper has value for you equivalent to the amount printed on it and arbitrarily decided upon by the government without reference to you. If the government can give value to the currency note which otherwise is only a piece of paper, why cannot divine value be symbolised in the stone idol? Now supposing I give you the photo, which, again, is only paper, of the president of a country and ask you to spit on it, won't you feel scandalised and take it a sacrilege? It is just a paper, and yet you connect it with the president. Why?

We have wrong ideas of God, the world and ourselves, and hence wrong notions get into our heads. We need a thorough revaluation of all our values and to rid ourselves of all prejudices before we can understand God, the world and the relationship between them and thus come to the naked Truth. A poet has said: "The starry heavens above and the moral law within are two mysteries." And another, "Man alone can go to heaven, man alone can go to hell." Animals cannot go to either.

The visitor now placed another problem before Swamiji. One day her Guru said he would show her God because she wanted to see God with her eyes. The Guru told her to wait outside a room. He went inside and after some time came out, closing the door behind him. "You want to see God? Open that door and you will see God." "When I opened the door", said the lady, "and saw what was inside,

I exclaimed: ‘This is only a man!’” “The Guru answered: “If you cannot see God in man, where else will you see him?” What does that mean? she asked. Swamiji remarked that her first question is answered by her Guru’s statement, God is everywhere and everything is related to everything else.

An ashramite: If animals cannot go to hell or heaven, how can they evolve?

Swamiji: The animal is pushed up by nature to higher stages of evolution up to the stage of man who has a new faculty, namely, the ego. And here nature gives freedom. But freedom to talk perversities will not help him to evolve to still higher planes. His own effort alone can help man in his evolution. He alone has the freedom to fall or to become superman and God Himself. Animals are fortunate for they do not have an ego. Man alone has an ego.

Another visitor: Space is comprehensible, is understandable, but what is time? Why is it said that space and time are created together? There seems no common ground for these two? Is time synonymous with mutation?

Swamiji: Space is not common to you and me but time, which has mutability, is common to me and to you. Space is the involvement of consciousness in it. Space, time, objects come simultaneously together. Time is consciousness of the succession of events. It is only an idea. Time is consciousness of change, mutability in objects. Time is consciousness of involvement in space.

Another visitor: What is the meaning of the expression ‘envy’ quite often used in the Bhagavadgita? How can you envy the Guru? And it is instructed that the Guru’s words should be heard without envy and the Gita should be heard without envy.

Swamiji: The word ‘envy’ is used to mean that even when in the presence of the Guru there is no faith in God’s presence, it is distrust in Guru himself. God’s presence must be seen everywhere, even in the words of the Guru.

There is a book called *The Practice of the Presence of God* by one Brother Lawrence. It is a very interesting book, a great book. Brother Lawrence saw God even in the vegetables as he was

preparing them for food; so great was his ability of seeing God or feeling His presence in everything and every act. And if you try to sense the Presence of God in this way, you are never away from His Presence.

Visitor: How to practise *vairagya*—dispassion?

Swamiji: You neither ask for water in the mirage nor shoot at rainbows. Dispassion is not desiring something even if available. The treasure on the cinema screen does not tempt you, and you do not have to practise *vairagya* over it.

Visitor: Is Yoga Vasishtha the highest philosophical treatise?

Swamiji: It deals with the highest peak of spirituality.

Now time is up. You all go for lunch. God bless you all.

13. SIGNIFICANCE OF PINDA

Two South Indian gentlemen on their way to Badrinath came to have their doubts cleared on the ritual of offering “Pinda” (rice balls) to the departed souls. They wanted to know what the actual meaning of it was. Swamiji said that the rituals had a definite connection with the existence of the departed souls. And the Pindas are best offered at sacred places like Brahmakapala at Badrinath. In a money order the money paid into a particular post office is not actually carried to the addressee; the offerings made to the ancestors reach them in a form required by them in their world of existence. So this ritual must be performed.

A visitor explained to Swamiji that he felt distressed and confused by the suffering that he saw in the world. At the same time, he felt that one should turn inwards and contemplate on the spiritual aspect of human existence. What should one do? Turn inward or turn outward and relieve suffering?

Swamiji: You see neither side fully: only half of this side and another half of that side; this causes confusion in your mind. The conflict is between what you see and what you have not seen. Why see only one side? What is meditation? In meditation you think on something not seen with your eyes. When you are doing work, you see the world. There is therefore a double devotion to both the world and the abstract object of meditation. Hence, confusion and doubt arises regarding which way one should follow. What you see with your eyes appears to be real to your mind, and what you have heard from others seems also real, and you keep thinking of what you have heard. Your sentiment makes you see the world, and your faith in the person who told you that there is something unseen which is real is the other factor which makes you think of it because it is different from your sentiment. It requires tremendous study and learning, and a protracted period of training in the correct way of thinking, to get over the confusion. What you see with your eye is not real and therefore cannot affect you. But you erroneously think that it is real. In other words, you behave according to what the eyes tell you. The eye that has a cataract makes the vision blurred. One needs special glasses to correct the vision. You will find the guide which will help

you see things and think correctly in due course. Even the idea that you have confusion has come to you only now after you had started to think on these lines. So everything will come in its own time. You say you are twenty and all these twenty years these doubts did not come to your mind. But now because you are in the proper atmosphere, the idea has surfaced in your mind. A proper guide will come in its own time and help you to act and think.

An ashramite: First the small light appears and stays for some time. Then the second light appears on the other side. Why is this? I do not know. Which is the light I should concentrate upon?

Swamiji: Who asked you to meditate on light? Your problem is that there is no proper philosophical background for your practice. Your mind should be satisfied with the technique you perform. Otherwise, you cannot answer the questions that come up in your mind. Doubts will come from the very beginning of your practice. It will even put the question: Why do you want God? Every question of the mind must be answered satisfactorily. The horse must know where you are driving it.

Ashramite: I want God. So I am asking my mind to meditate.

Swamiji: You are not wanting God for happiness, and the mind wants something it likes to make it happy. So it must be explained to the mind that wanting God is wanting happiness. This is the philosophical point. Your idea of meditation seems to be confused. Therefore you have various troubles. Wanting God, happiness, what is meditation, and how to achieve success in it, all this calls for a scientific approach. You cannot sit and cry aloud for a house. You must be an engineer to be able to build a house.

Mere sentiment or emotion will not take you anywhere. You are a very important man! God is poor. He is unimportant (*laughs*). God is Ashutosh, which means a simpleton, that is, He is quickly pleased by those that approach Him in this aspect of utter simplicity of heart. He is called Bhola, meaning there is no complication at all. When you approach God, there should be no complexity in your nature. When you approach Him with a plaint, He will react like the Supreme Court Judge and will do what must be done in that capacity. But if you approach Him like the Supreme Court judge's child approaches

him, God will react like a father. All He wants is that you should want Him and nothing less. Then He will do whatever you want. When we are mercenary, and profit and loss are the terms on which we approach God, we go to Him like we go to the judge. We do not realise how loving He is. All heaven and earth are His play. Like a mother covering herself with a cloth and playfully frightening the child, God is hidden behind all this drama. When the mother removes the cloth, the child runs to her and hugs her with love. She is not frightening now. This is how God plays with us.

Another visitor: Swamiji, when one already has a doubt and another doubt assails—how to clear the doubts?

Swamiji: It is better to remove the first doubt before the other doubt creeps in. How will you remove it?

Visitor: By study?

Swamiji: Yes, and by frankly placing your problems before your Guru. A Guru need not be a spiritual Guru always. Anyone who helps you to understand things better is your Guru.

14. THE CONCEPT OF LIFE

A visitor from Italy: The youths in our country seem to have lost their soul, and, of course, long back they have lost God. We would like to have Mahatmas like you tell us why this is so. We have heard of Hinduism and talk about it in a vague way. What is the cause of their losing the soul? How can we bring it back to them? What is the concept of religion and how does it differ from the Western concept or coincide with it?

Swamiji: Many difficulties arise because of the inadequacy of understanding and the lack of a proper judgement of the nature of life itself. People in general have been taking things for granted. They only see the surface of things, and depend upon their sense perception. We look at the world and what the senses tell us as real. We take this as the final judgement of values. However, there is always a bifurcation, unfortunately, between one's self and the world. And therefore there is an attempt to extract from the world and abstract from it such factors and values which could be conducive to one's own happiness. People have been working for their happiness, satisfaction and comfort in one way on the other. Scientific effort, particularly of the West, has been directed towards alienating from Nature factors which are regarded to be contributory to human happiness. Now, this is a misconception, and perhaps also the reason behind the failure of modern science. Values alienated from Nature would not contribute to the happiness of mankind. I would not say that Western world view would remain so for ever. Now the Indian—Eastern—concept of life has been qualitatively different from the Western approach which considers Nature an external reality to be conquered and harnessed for the satisfaction of the human being.

The Indian concept is that life is not bifurcated into the objective and the subjective. In India, ever since the Vedic time, Nature is not considered an external reality from which we must extract treasures for our happiness or comfort. Nature is a friend and not an enemy, and therefore the question of conquering it does not arise. You do not conquer a friend. You attune yourself to the friend. Likewise, you set your character in harmony with the character of Nature. Thus, the

concept in India, the East in general, is an approach to the universal character of the Ultimate Reality rather than the externalised transcendent or, in other words, the so-called theological concept. The basis of the fundamental concept of life in India has been what might be defined as integrality of existence; the universality of being; inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness; friendliness rather than enmity; harmony rather than dichotomy; spirituality rather than materiality or externality. This is the Indian viewpoint in a nutshell. Inasmuch as the human being, or any content of the world for that matter, is inseparable from Nature—a fact that follows automatically from the integrality of life—inasmuch as life is a single organic completeness, the duty of the human being is not to exploit Nature. The word ‘exploitation’ should not be used at all in connection with the purpose of life. The duty of the human being is not to extract anything from Nature, but to set one’s self in tune with Nature. Here is the main point of departure, as I mentioned. You are not expected to exploit Nature for getting some pleasure out of it, because of the simple reason that you are not essentially outside Nature.

I can give only a gross example to make this point a little more clear. The physical body of the human being is constituted of five elements—earth, fire, water, air and ether. The outside world also is of the same five elements

I am not trying to propound a deep philosophy of life, but am only trying to give a prosaic concept by way of this example. If the body is made of the five elements, and so is Nature, what makes you think that you are outside or apart from Nature? The substance of the body is the same as that in Nature. I repeat, you are not expected to borrow or in some way exploit or gather pleasure from Nature, because of the simple reason that you are not essentially outside Nature.

Even physically and grossly, it is impossible to imagine any kind of externality present in Nature. We are organically connected with life as a whole. There is an illusion presented by the senses when they externalise consciousness. There is one completeness in Nature, you and I included. What is it that you would extract out of Nature? Well, that is one point.

The other point that follows from this is that there is nothing

to extract from outside. The question of achieving something in the future from the outside world does not arise. There is only the question of understanding and awakening to the fact that Nature is complete, and therefore you are also complete because of the very fact that you are one with Nature. Now, religion or spirituality is nothing but this hard task of awakening the consciousness to the comprehension of the integrality of existence.

You may ask me why it is called spirituality. It is because reality is the spirit. It is not matter. When we trace the concept of inseparability of the human being from Nature to its logical limit we also will be driven to the further conclusion that Nature cannot be regarded as an unconscious material substance. And your essential Nature is not material because you have intelligence which you are in essence. You know it very well.

Now, from where has this intelligence come? If it is a by-product of Nature, well, that consciousness which is regarded as a by-product must be inherent in Nature. You cannot have an effect from the cause when that effect is not in the cause. So the logical conclusion is that the whole of Nature is scintillating with consciousness. Since Nature is without an externality, as I mentioned, it is essentially consciousness. It follows then that the whole universe is intelligence and there is nothing but intelligence in the whole cosmos. This Supreme Intelligence outside which nothing can exist and beyond which nothing can be, external to which nothing is, is what you call God in religion, the Absolute in philosophy, and the spirit in all mystical sciences.

So this is an outline, or an introduction to the answer to your question. What is the concept of religion and spirituality in India and how it differs from the Western concept and how it also is related. I hope I have made myself clear.

15. THE TRUE NATURE OF HISTORY

On this cold winter morning, the small gathering around Swami Krishnanandaji had somehow come to discuss the role of history in human affairs.

A visitor: History as such has not got a destiny but history as a whole has—I miss the point.

Swamiji: History is another word for evolution—cosmic evolution. The self-realisation of the Absolute, that is the goal of evolution; evolution through the passage of time is called history. There is movement from the lower to the higher stage. Every step in history is a step forward and onward. And it has a cosmic significance. It is not merely the history of India or England or any other nation. This is a wrong notion we have of history. The sickness of any part of the body is the sickness of the whole body. Even if it is only a thorn that has pricked the foot, the whole body is affected. So any event is a cosmic event. When an activity is going on in any part of the body, the whole body is working. When you walk, it does not mean that only the legs are moving. Are all other parts of the body inactive in this act of moving? Every cell of the body is active when the legs are moving. When you eat, is it only the stomach that is working? Everything from head to foot is working in the process of eating. It is a total, complete activity.

Similarly, there is nothing like a temporal event. Everything happens in eternity. There is no such thing as time. It is a misconstruction of eternity that is called time; an empirically interpreted idea of eternity. Sensorily perceived infinity is space. So there is neither space nor time; there is only infinity which seems to be space and eternity which seems to be time. So the process of history is a movement within the body of the Absolute; like the movement of the waters of the ocean within its own bowels. Any movement in any part of the ocean is the movement of the whole ocean. There is no such thing as a part of the ocean moving anywhere. In the same way every event in history is a cosmic event. This is a cosmic evolutionary process towards Self-realisation in the Absolute.

Visitor: Do you include involution in evolution?

Swamiji: Well, it all depends upon your viewpoint. In a cosmic movement, you cannot say which is the beginning and which is the end, which is evolution and which involution. They are simultaneous activities; there is birth and death going on at the same time. Even within our body, cells are being destroyed and cells are being rejuvenated; new cells are being formed. There is creation, preservation and destruction; all three processes are going on simultaneously in this body. Even so, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva—Creator, Preserver and Destroyer—all three are working at the same time. It is not that Brahma creates today and Vishnu protects tomorrow and Rudra destroys the day after. All the three processes are happening simultaneously. But they appear to be different on account of the difference in perspective. Atom, electron, molecule, all exist at the same time. It is not that electrons come first, atoms next and molecules later. How is it that these three things exist at the same time? Because they are not three things, only three viewpoints of the same thing.

Visitor: Evolution is a misleading term for most people.

Swamiji: It is misleading ultimately. But it is an acceptable term from the point of view of mere empirical observation. You see movement, activity, you see a tendency of something to move towards something else. And when you observe that, you call it evolution, but ultimately it is not like that. There is no tendency, no movement, nothing happens anywhere. Everything is Absolute.

16. KARMA

Visitor: I am of retiring age—tired, but not retired!

Swamiji: You will all retire one day and enjoy life. I never enjoy life, just work, work, work. From a young age I have been doing work. I don't know what a holiday is—except when I was very ill and lying in the hospital. That was a holiday for me; but even then it was not a holiday. They used to communicate with me on official matters and would bring the papers, even when in the hospital, so I really do not have a holiday! I give you the reason why I feel happy in spite of all the impositions. The reason is given by Sankaracharya. There are three kinds of connection: the connection of the intellect with the body, connection of the intellect with the ego, the connection of the ego with the Atman. These connections are called *adhyasa*. *Adhyasa* is superimposition. You are transferring property of one thing over to another thing. In Sanskrit these *adhyasas* are called: *karmadhyasa*, *sahadhyasa* and *brahmadhyasa*. These are technical words. *Karmaja* means that which is born out of karma, a superimposition which arises on account of the action of previous births, impressions of previous actions, and this is called *karmadhyasa*. *Sahadhyasa* is a superimposition which is consequent upon a natural juxtaposition of factors. When ghee is brought near a fire, naturally it will melt. It is a natural reaction or result. There is a third kind of superimposition born of illusion, *brahmadhyasa*, mere confusion due to the illusion is the cause of this kind of superimposition. Brahma is confusion, *adhyasa* is superimposition. Now the identity of the intellect with the body is a kind of superimposition. Intellect is not the body, body is not the intellect, but somehow the intellect thinks in terms of the body. It identifies itself with the body, and the intellect is the principle of personality. Your personality is nothing but an expression of your way of thinking. Now, Sankaracharya says this identity, or superimposition of identity upon the body, is due to the previous action, karma. A particular set of actions has to be manifested, materialised and experienced through this body.

The body is the instrument for the fulfilment of certain desires which have been accumulated in the past, and only that kind of body will be manifest as will be suitable to the type of desire that is to

be experienced. There are infinite types of desires accumulated in the past through various lives, and a certain set is allocated to be experienced in a particular life. No one knows how it happens. That is why they say: The mystery of action, God only knows. Somehow the vast number of impulses inside get allocated to groups according to the intensity of their nature. The most intense are supposed to come first, the weaker ones later on, that is the general policy adopted by the allocation of karmas, but it is not a rule that is always followed. Sometimes there is a limited action also which is decided by some power which is not human, who allocates the experiences for a particular life. It is not you, but somebody else—who is it?

That mystery nobody knows. So a group of actions gets isolated for experience through a particular body, and the intellect, which is nothing but the vehicle of action, gets automatically identified with the body due to the karma of the whole. This is *karmadhyasa*. You feel always, “I am the body. I am Mr. So-and-so.” In the thing called *sahadhyasa*, the intellect is identified with the ego, the ego is identified with the intellect. They cannot be separated. Where there is intellect operating, immediately there is ego, and wherever there is ego, the intellect operates. Sankaracharya says this is a natural corollary following from the juxtaposition of two principles, ego and intellect. And the third *adhyasa* is where you identify the whole personality with the Atman which is yourself. You begin to say, “I exist.” Existence is a character of the Atman. But yet you say “I exist” by saying “the body exists”. You superimpose, in a confusion of understanding, the character of existence, which belongs to the Atman i.e. the Absolute, to this personality the “I”.

Now, in the case of great people such as Siridi Sai Baba, Jesus Christ, Swami Sivananda or Ramana Maharshi, some kind of blessings are received by us through their existence on earth. They cannot get out of this karma which has brought about the identity of the intellect with the body. *Karmadhyasa* persists even in saints and sages. They know that they exist as persons, and they feel that this body which moves about feels hungry, cold, hot; they sleep, they do everything. But the third thing, called *brahmadhyasa*, is not there with them. The Atman is not identified with the personality. So, this is a peculiarity. They have no personal desires on account of the

snapping of the connection between Atman and body. They do work like automatons. They don't have any choice, no likes and dislikes, because the root of existence is severed from personality. They do not feel that their body or their personality is ultimately real. That means they have realised that the body personality, the "I" is an appearance. That the real is something else is clear to them.

This conviction gives the satisfaction that nothing in the world can affect them—let the wind blow, let something come, let something go. Everything is phenomenal, including this body and its relationships. So for a particular reason which is trans-empirical, a person is happy... a man may have only one loincloth, another may lock himself in a cave for 25-30 years and not speak. "How can they be happy?" we say. People are only happy when they run about, see things, talk to people, have position, power, authority and so on and so forth. Then what makes the men in the loincloth or locked in a cave happy? It is a conviction that makes them happy, a kind of understanding, of experience, of realisation. This happiness born of inner understanding creates mischief also, unnecessarily. I get nothing by speaking, working—you get the same food that I eat. You enjoy rest, but I don't enjoy any. I don't get salary, pension, leave, no Sunday... work, work, work... what for? You are wondering why these Swamijis in this ashram are working like this, like dogs, like fools. We work because we don't feel that anything matters in this world, everything has lost significance. So in a world which has lost significance, it matters little whether you do this or you do that. I may work as an official or a sweeper, it will make no difference to me. Both are nonsensical. There is no difference. Suppose you are a king in a dream and beggar in another dream, both are dream objects. The substance of both is the same. Just because you are king in a dream does not mean you are superior to the beggar. It looks as though they are different, but substantially both are nothing. Both are dream objects. Likewise in this world. You may be President of India or a beggar on the road, it makes no difference, because both are dream objects. This we learnt from Swami Sivananda.

Q: Is it inevitable that tendencies make me act in a given manner? Or can I use my will and say "I don't want to do this"?

Swamiji: According to scriptures you cannot destroy the effects of

karma, but you will not feed the operation of karma because of the power of your will.

Q: Supposing the tendency to be a murderer is in me, but I use my will power and say, “No”.

Swamiji: When you have got the understanding that murder is a very bad action and you have the choice to refrain from certain actions, it means that some higher karma is working in you. Otherwise, this idea itself will not work. It will not come to you. This idea that you are using your will is the working of a higher mind. The very fact that the higher mind is working shows that you will not act according to the lower instinct. A person without the influence of the higher mind will be so immersed in his action that he will not think in any other way.

Q: Suppose my higher mind is not with me, does it mean that I am condemned to this type of action?

Swamiji: Whatever your mind accepts as real, that it does. Now you are saying that a criminal action is not a good thing and therefore it is an unreal action, and it being so, you will not do it. When a man does a criminal action, he thinks that it is a necessity and a proper thing for him under the circumstances. He does not think it is wrong. The higher mind has stopped working. It all depends upon which is the stronger, the lower instinct or the higher understanding.

Q: But suppose the karma is so strong...?

Swamiji: If the karma is strong you will not even have the opportunity to even think any other way.

Q: And therefore I commit the murder...?

Swamiji: You see, you have no will to choose whether to be born a human being or not. Some karma has forced you to come. The higher mind did not work there.

Q: How far am I responsible for that action before God and before man?

Swamiji: There is a general principle. A thing that happens without the intervention of your personality is to be regarded as a karma

that is getting exhausted, but the thing that you do deliberately is a fresh action added to your old stock. Suppose you are walking along a road and a branch falls on your head, this is the effect of an action, but it is not a fresh action from you, done by you. It is the exhaustion of a previous thing because you have not interfered with it and caused it to fall on your head. But if you think deliberately, “I’ll do this tomorrow,” then that is a fresh action. So it is decided by your personality. If you are not doing something deliberately or with premeditation, or something automatically happens without your knowledge, something is thrust upon you, then it is not your action. When you invite it, then it is your action. If someone pushes you into water it is not a fresh action, not your responsibility, but if you deliberately jump in and commit suicide, it is a fresh action and is your responsibility, and you add to the stock of your karma.

When the Atman is identified with the body it is *brahmadhyasa*. When the ego is identified with intellect it is *sahadhyasa*, and when the intellect is identified with body it is *karmadhyasa*. With *brahmadhyasa* we always feel that we are solid realities. You do not feel like foam on the ocean of the Absolute. But if you have a conviction that on the ocean of the Absolute you are foam, then the original bond is cut, and any action you do will not bind you afterwards. You are not connected to the unreality. It is like an electric wire minus electricity. You appear to be there but are really not there—like a burnt cloth which appears to be there but when you touch it turns to ashes. Such is the personality of a *jivanmukta*, it appears to be there but it really is not there.

Q: Can one keep one’s mind steadily for a long time on something for which one has no real feeling or of which one has no knowledge?

Swamiji: You can do it if it is done for a purpose. Then it assumes a meaning. Take a cashier, he has no interest in the money but he counts it very correctly. He knows that if he does not, something else will happen.

Q: We speak about meditating on God, but many of us have no realistic feeling about it.

Swamiji: The extent of the realistic feeling about God will determine the extent of the intensity of concentration. The less the feeling, the

less the concentration. You must ask yourself, “Why is it that I am having a lukewarm feeling towards God?” Some answer must come from within you.

Q: If a man does not have a real feeling for God...

Swamiji: Then for what else? A man cannot be empty. He must have some other desire in his mind which is exterior to God so that is a very important psychological direction. A person has some other desire, may be family, may be some empirical desire which is not fulfilled and so the concentration on God is reduced, like a river that flows in many directions cannot have great force. A sadhaka must be a very good psychologist, he must understand his mind correctly: “What is it that prevents me from concentrating on God?” There are other desires? Okay, you fulfil them and finish with them. Once fulfilled, the desire cannot arise again in that direction. There are two kinds of desires, those which should be fulfilled and those which are dangerous—and meaningless sometimes.

There was a man from Sri Lanka who wanted to be the president of Sri Lanka. Now, this was not reasonable. But suppose you have a desire to eat two bananas, eat them! Every day eat bananas until you get fed up with them, then the banana desire goes. Even so, you want to see Badrinath—I had such a desire when I was a boy. Swami Sivananda said, “What a stupid desire!” but that desire was so strong that I said, “I will take another birth.” “OK, OK, go!” he said. (*Laughter.*) Now I have seen Badrinath and I have no further desire to see temples. I saw that every mountain is like every other mountain—no use in seeing mountains—otherwise you will go on thinking there is something glorious there. So it is better to fulfil simple desires and they should not be suppressed.

Q: How can you really desire so strongly...?

Swamiji: I cannot understand why there should be desires at all. Desire for God implies desire for everything that is existing, which includes even the little things that you are asking for. And how can the mind go to something that is little when you are getting the entirety? It is an illogical and unjustifiable attitude of mind. When you are given the whole thing you are not satisfied, you want only a part of it. Desire is nothing but a desire for a part, rejecting the

whole, not knowing that the part is included in the whole. So you must educate the mind. Why you go after little things? You can have everything at one stroke.

Q: But you do not have the connection with the whole?

Swamiji: You must go on again and again listening to discourses, seek the company of mahatmas, contemplate their presence again and again. You must meditate on what you have heard. Get saturated with that thought.

Q: So that's the thing!

Swamiji: Ah! The only thing! That is called meditation.

Q: Meanwhile it is difficult to meditate on that point.

Swamiji: You meditate to the extent it is possible: every day—one minute, next two minutes, and so on; and read. Every day read the same scripture, the same part, discuss the same thing. If it is the *Yoga Vasishtha* for example drown in that, then you will catch fire. It takes time, but you will certainly succeed. Practice makes perfect. Go on doing it again and again and you will see that by force of habit it will come. You must persist tenaciously and never leave it. That is the great quality of a sadhaka—like Buddha—“I will not leave it; if not today, I will get it tomorrow. I will not get up till I get it.” If there is tenacity, some mystery, some miracle works and you succeed.

Q: Is it right to say that one should be able to meditate anywhere, say, in the marketplace?

Swamiji: That is in an advanced state. In the beginning you are affected by atmosphere and should be in a special place, but afterwards it makes no difference.

Q: Sometimes, in this ashram there is so much noise...

Swamiji: Keeping quiet has a deep meaning. The whole of your personality should subside in devotion. When Jesus told the waves of the ocean “Be still”, they subsided immediately. So, keeping quiet means you are entering into the Absolute—but that is difficult because you have to go back to your home and not enter into the Absolute!

Q: A book I was reading said *maya* does not mean illusion... *Maya* means cosmic matter.

Swamiji: Neither of these definitions is correct. There was a schoolteacher whom the students asked how to pronounce 'either'. He replied, "You can pronounce it in ai-ther way." (*Laughter.*) *Maya* is not illusion, it is not matter. There are as many definitions of *maya* as there are philosophers. "*Ma*" means not and "*ya*" means which. So, "which is not", "that which is not" is *maya*. It is not there but it appears to be there.

Q: But can you say the material universe does not exist?

Swamiji: It appears to exist. Take the example of the snake in the rope. The snake exists because of the fact that rope exists. If the rope was not there, the snake would not be there. Now, can you say snake exists or not? Existence does not belong to the snake. It belongs to the rope.

Q: When I see the rope and think it is a snake, I am misinterpreting it?

Swamiji: So, the misinterpretation is *maya*.

Q: So, the material universe does exist?

Swamiji: You should not call it material. By material you mean unconscious, that which is inorganic, but reality is not inorganic so the word is inappropriate. You must define what you mean by material.

Q: That which is made of matter?

Swamiji: Matter means inorganic substance, lifeless. Inorganic means that which does not respond to stimuli, that which is *tamasic*, not *sattvic*. By matter we should not mean what the scientist means by matter. It is in a sense philosophical matter, not scientific matter for experimentation. Scientific matter is that which is not organic. You do not call yourself matter. You call yourself a human being. In the language of Spinoza it is 'substance'. Ultimate reality is substance. By substance he means that which really is, not necessarily that which you touch with your fingers. So the substance of the universe is the material of the universe, but it is not material in the sense of

brick and stone. *Maya* is the inexplicability of the relation between appearance and reality. You do not know how the appearance comes; like in the example of the snake in the rope, nobody knows what the connection is. It is some mystery, and that mystery is *maya*, and *maya* is ultimately a mystery. That is the proper definition. It is impossible to describe it. No one knows what created it. You cannot say that God created the world because it is not there. You cannot say that you created the world because you have not done it. Who created it? That is a mystery for you.

Q: What is the reason for it?

Swamiji: There is no reason for it. It is a mystery, which means it is beyond understanding. That mystery is called *maya*. To say ‘illusion’ is stupid, but if you say ‘mystery’ people understand. G. K. Chesterton, a great critic, said of George Bernard Shaw: “People either say that they agree with G. B. S. or they can’t understand him. I am the only man who can understand him but cannot agree with him.” (*Laughter.*) You cannot say how the world is related to God. That mystery is *maya*. You assume something which is not really there and therefore these questions arise.

A little boy saw a lizard on the wall while eating his lunch. A little later when he realised that it had vanished, he thought he had eaten it and vomited and kept on vomiting because the lizard did not come out. Doctors were called, but there was no curing the boy until he saw the lizard come out and once again crawl on the wall. A shrewd man, realising this, asked the boy to vomit with his eyes closed. A lizard was thrown into the vomit—the boy opened his eyes to see it, and was satisfied. This is how you assume the world exists, and therefore you want to find an explanation for it. When you are determined that it exists, naturally you are determined to find a cause for it and the relation between the two. So you have created a mess from beginning to the end by assuming something without any foundation.

What makes you think that the world exists? That you must prove first. That you cannot prove. You cannot say the world exists because you see it. Does that mean that everything that you see exists? There are things that you see which do not exist and there are things that you cannot see which do exist, e.g. x-rays, etc. Thus

the fact that you see the world does not prove that it exists. What other ground have you got? Now you say something unnecessarily and build a huge philosophy on it—a false philosophy.

Q: How can you be sure of the existence of anything, Swamiji?

Swamiji: The same argument holds here.

Q: Are we sure that we exist, or God exists?

Swamiji: Same argument for everything. The world is a mystery, and that which makes you feel that it is a mystery is a mystery.

Q: So, the more we know, the more we realise that we don't know anything.

Swamiji: Yes.

Q: So why try to know?

Swamiji: To feel that you don't know anything. There are four kinds of not knowing... the one who does not know and does not know that he does not know—the fool. The one who does not know and knows that he does not know, he is worthy. The one who knows but who does not know that he knows, he is sleeping; wake him up! The one who knows and knows that he knows, he is the man to follow. We cannot belong to that last category. That is very clear. There is a saying: He who knows that he does not know, really knows. A fool who knows that he is a fool is not a fool. There is something that tells him what he is, and that is transcendental. That which tells you that all this is a mystery is something beyond mystery. That is the real 'You'. The real so-called 'you' is that which tells you that all this is a mystery. That is what you have to search for. "Know Thyself."

17. PRANAYAMA

A visitor: I have come here not for a vacation. I want to be as deeply in yoga as I can.

Swamiji: A daily routine? What is it?

Visitor: I have a daily routine, Swamiji. My routine is to rise at 3:45, do meditation between 4 to 5, then pranayama and asana.

Swamiji: You do pranayama? For how long?

Visitor: Half an hour.

Swamiji: That is good. You hold the breath?

Visitor: Yes. About two and a half minutes.

Swamiji: So much!

Visitor: I do it relaxed. If I feel suffocation, I don't hold it.

Swamiji: You should not hold it if you feel suffocation. I do not think it is good to do too much pranayama. Meditation is more important, and pranayama can take care of itself ultimately in correct meditation.

Visitor: Swamiji, I having been working on this all my life. When I was six years old I can remember pacing up and down trying to understand why I was here.

Swamiji: Are you a married man?

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: You have family?

Visitor: A brother and a sister, and my mother, but they live in other parts of the country.

Swamiji: So you live alone.

Visitor: I feel that now I need to have a relationship with someone who really knows what I am about.

Swamiji: Can you write down in some detail the relevant theme of your meditation apart from pranayama—the meditation that you

follow and the experiences that you have, and the difficulties

Visitor: I feel that if I write it, it will take a long time, whereas if I talk to you, it will be easier. Swamiji knows that I run an ashram in California and I share my experiences in meditation with my students. For example, I suggest a way, an idea for them to fix their mind on, e.g., one day we will meditate on *tat twam asi*—I am that that I am—and I elaborate on that. Maybe I talk on it for half an hour before starting the meditation, and then from there we try to experience it. But in myself now, Swamiji, I feel as if I am about to take a very important step. I don't know what it is.

Swamiji: This is very good. I am glad that you are feeling that within. You want to devote your life only to this?

Visitor: Yes, Swamiji. All my life. Even when I was in profession, in architecture, it was all for this. I worked for fifteen years as an architect in New York—famous young architect, that kind of thing. But the more successful I became, the more irrelevant it seemed. I gave it up in 1970. I need very little, and somehow, God has always provided my needs.

Swamiji: You have your own house or ashram?

Visitor: An ashram. But it does not belong to me. It is a non-profit corporation. When I was a boy of eight, I used to try to recite the Lord's Prayer knowing the meaning and having the consciousness of every word. And if I forgot, I would start again. I would spend hours doing this. I did this on my own. I have trained myself all my life in focusing on and being in the Real. There is only one thing that is important to me and that is to be in touch with the reality of my own essence. And I feel now that there is just a membrane between me and that. I have had experiences of very clear realisations. When I talk in the class, I do not prepare words, I prepare myself by meditation, and sometimes such realisations come as I had not known before. Now I feel that I need to pierce that membrane.

Swamiji: What do you concentrate upon when you meditate?

Visitor: I centre upon the Absolute.

Swamiji: There must be some technique for doing this?

Visitor: Well, first I seat myself at ease and let my body go loose, then I place my mind on that point: In the beginning there was the Absolute only—Om, Om.

Swamiji: The most important thing is, the omnipresence of the Absolute. Omnipresence means it exists everywhere and in everything, which means to say it is in you also. So when you think on these ideas, it is not your thinking, you are not thinking. Your thinking personality has gone. You become the focusing point or the manifesting point of the Absolute Force. You are not thinking, you are not feeling, you are not acting, all these actions are of the Absolute. So that when you think, It is the Absolute that is thinking. Therefore, you must visualise things in the light of the Absolute itself. You should not look at particular objects as if they are separate from one another. Put yourself in the position of the Creator of the universe and what the Creator would be thinking of is the whole cosmos in its totality: a total arrangement of all His creatures, instantaneously, eternally—this is how you can contemplate the Absolute.

Visitor: How long should I do this?

Swamiji: Maximum three hours, but it can be one hour in the morning, an hour in the afternoon and an hour at night. It is possible that the mind gets fatigued by meditation. So you must have an alternative sadhana such as the study of a scripture, whatever you are interested in. There is a very beautiful exposition of the Gita by Krishnaprem, a Britisher whose former name was Nixon. He was a Sannyasin in India. He was a contemporary of Swami Sivananda, they were friends. He wrote a very beautiful book on the Gita: *The Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita*. Tomorrow you rise at 4:00 a.m. using your will. It is a better time clock than a machine.

Visitor: Then I do pranayama for about 20 minutes to half an hour, may be one more hour of asanas, and then I do some study. Right now I am reading *Guru Tatwa* by Swami Sivananda.

Swamiji: You could read a book like *Meditation and Concentration*.

Visitor: I also like the book you wrote on the Kathopanishad.

Swamiji: There is the Mandukyopanishad also.

Another visitor: I had a dream some time ago where Swami Sivananda appeared very clearly.

Swamiji: Mmmm . . . not very important ... you will find at different times different kinds of dreams coming, and you will never know which is what. I think the best thing is just to ignore it. Concentrate your mind on your sadhana and dreams will vanish after a while. You will have no dreams at all.

Another visitor: I have a difficulty Swamiji, I think that I can conceive of God only as an impersonal abstract.

Swamiji: You can conceive of God in any convenient form.

Visitor: But to me it is totally abstract, no personality. I do *japa* and go to the temple, but to be truthful to myself I cannot just copy something.

Swamiji: It does not matter, if you have that feeling you can continue that way. You have chosen one particular method.

Visitor: No, I haven't chosen. With me it is just impersonal, it is abstract, even in *japa*.

Swamiji: This is your way. Only you must not think there is only one way. There are hundreds of ways. Your way is also all right.

Visitor: But it is said by everyone here that you have to have a personal relationship with God.

Swamiji: That is because the impersonal cannot be thought of in the mind. You need the help of a personal concept. You leave that personal later on, otherwise how will you connect the personality of the world with the impersonal Absolute? You do not see impersonals in the world, you see only persons. Now, how will you relate them to the impersonal? You see trees and mountains and human beings. What is their relationship with the Absolute? Are they inside it or outside it, or identical with it, or different from it?

Visitor: Well, I see the Universal Being as one being and everything else a manifestation of it. But I do not have a personal relationship with the Universal.

Swamiji: It is not abstract... Abstract means something not concrete.

That is what you mean. Hardness is an abstract concept. Likewise you think the Absolute is abstract in that sense. Hardness does not exist. It is only an idea in somebody's mind. Only the hard exists. So when you say abstract, the idea of abstract must be clear to the mind. Generally, by abstract we mean unreality.

Visitor: Oh, I don't mean that at all. The way I meant it was impersonal.

Swamiji: Impersonal does not mean rejecting the person, it means inclusion of all the persons.

Visitor: Oh, I see.

Swamiji: It includes all. It does not reject anybody. Abstract should not mean something out of the world, other than the world. It includes the world. However, 'abstract' is not the proper word. You may call it the Totality, the Completeness. That gives a positive comprehension rather than the word 'abstract', which means withdrawing something from something else. Something which cannot exist. Everything is included in the One Whole.

Visitor: I said, impersonal. Now, how do I do *japa* when my whole relationship is impersonal?

Swamiji: *Japa* means the repetition of a concept in the form of a formula to focus your mind on the idea of the Super Being that is in your mind. You cannot think of the Absolute unless there is some invocation. Invocation is done by some prescription, and that prescription is called the mantra, and the repetition of the mantra is called *japa*. The idea of tree comes to the mind immediately when I utter the word 'tree'. That is *japa*. Immediately I utter the word 'tree', I am doing *japa* of tree. Now, when you say Omnipresent, it is *japa* only and when you say Omniscient, Omnipotent, it is *japa*.

Japa does not mean any kind of mystical formula. It is a kind of helpful description of the ideals on which you are meditating. That prescription is necessary because you cannot invoke that idea unless the prescription is there. Some idea must be there of the Absolute, and that idea always comes in the form of some language. Even when you think of the Absolute, the term 'absolute' will come to your mind. That is a mantra for you. The moment you utter the word

Absolute, you have done *japa* of that mantra. So, a mantra need not necessarily be in Sanskrit. It can be any kind of formula, in any language, which describes the characteristics of that on which you are concentrating. One cannot help doing *japa*. Everybody is doing *japa*. Even when you think of something, you have done the *japa* of that thing because you have thought of it.

Visitor: I have been thinking 'Om' all the time.

Swamiji: You can think 'Om', but you must understand what you mean by 'Om'. It is the symbol of the cosmic vibration. It is not merely a letter on the wall. It is not a linguistic concept.

Visitor: I heard it said that 'Om' signifies the Universal; not only this creation, many creations before.

Swamiji: It is the general vibration behind every type of creation, not only this creation. This is only one creation. This is one particular selection of patterns among many other possible patterns. Just as a carpenter can make tables of any shape out of a block of wood, so can any statue be carved out of a block of stone. The possibility of any statue is there, but only one is actually manifested. You can make the statue of a god, a monkey, a tree, anything, out of it. Likewise, within the infinite possibility of God's idea any universe can be manifested. Each atom contains a universe. It is a mistake to think an atom to be small. When you enter into it you will find it is in itself a universe. And this universe that you are in is also an atom in the cosmos. You will find all these things in the Relativity Theory and in Yoga Vasishtha. You will see that this cosmos is in itself an atom only. For you it is a universe, but in reality it is like a minute atom. One can become crazy if one thinks too deeply of these things. There is an infinite universe in every speck of space

Visitor: The world is said to be unreal. Again, it is said that it is part of the Absolute. So how can it be unreal?

Swamiji: Why do you call a dream unreal? It is a part of your mind. It is real only because it is in your head.

Visitor: Isn't the problem with the unreality of the world rather than with our interpretation of it.

Swamiji: It is real as a unified whole but unreal as an external reality. The things outside are unreal. In other words, the things are real but the outside-ness is unreal. A person suffering from schizophrenia has a double personality. That is an unreality. Something has happened to his mind that makes him think that he is two persons. Likewise, there is a cosmic schizophrenia: each one is thinking that the other one is different from him. It is a mistake, an error in thought. You are real and I am real, but that we are different from one another is not real. This concept is unreal. Even the dream objects are real. To think that they are appearing outside is a mistake. They are inside your head only, yet they seem to be outside.

Just as the individual mind manifests itself as external objects in a dream, the cosmic mind has manifested itself as external objects in nature. The pattern of manifestation is the same. Instead of you dreaming, God is dreaming. So you are a dream object of God just as things that you saw in a dream are your dream objects. You are not waking, you are dreaming still, and real waking is that where you will not see any differences.

18. UNIVERSAL ACTION

Visitor: Swamiji, is it correct to say that in everything that we are doing, it is not we who are doing it but the Universal is doing it?

Swamiji: Certainly. We should be convinced of it, we should feel it.

Visitor: But, when I misinterpret something then...

Swamiji: When you misinterpret something, the conviction that the Absolute is doing all things is not in the mind. When the conviction that the Absolute is doing everything is deeply rooted in you, you cannot misinterpret anything. You will understand everything correctly. As a matter of fact, this is called intuition. You can see things clearly. Now the conviction is not deep enough.

Visitor: But if I lack conviction, can we say the Universal is lacking conviction?

Swamiji: You are not believing that it is the Universal that is doing everything, you are only saying so. The moment you feel that the Universal is doing it, the question of conviction will not arise.

Visitor: But, whether I believe it or not, I am still a manifestation of the Universal.

Swamiji: Your belief is only in imagining it to be so. Your feeling is not accepting it. You are still feeling that you are an individual, so there is a contradiction. Intellectually there is an assertion that you are the Universal, but the feeling in you ignores that assertion. Don't you see me sitting outside you? If you feel that the Universal alone is real, you won't see me sitting here. The very fact that you see me shows that your conviction is not deep.

Visitor: But that still is a manifestation of the Universal.

Swamiji: It is only a theoretical conviction, not a practical conviction.

Visitor: But what I am saying is, whether I can see it correctly or not, it is there.

Swamiji: That is true, it is there. But what binds you is not the fact as such. The fact may be anything, it does not matter. Your feeling is the cause of your bondage. If you feel that the Absolute is there, you

are free. If you don't feel it is there, then you are bound.

Visitor: Then I am bound! But, how can an aspect of the Universal be bound?

Swamiji: It is not bound, but you are wrongly thinking that it is bound. How did you create a tiger in your dream? The tiger was not there. Likewise, imagination distorts itself somewhere along the line. That the Self alone is, is only a scriptural saying for us. We take it to be something external. Bondage is a mystery. Nobody can say how bondage arises. The cause of it cannot be seen as long as you maintain individual consciousness. The cause is only discovered when you get rid of it by actual meditation. When you reach the Absolute, it will not be there at all. You do not ask me why the tiger came in the dream. Nobody puts that question. You do not speak about the treasures that you had in the dream. Likewise, you will never put a question, and you will never think anything about this world when you reach the Absolute. You will speak of it as much as a dream, or perhaps worse. The question will not arise. At the moment the individuality is still maintained.

Stealing is not a proper action. If a thief's intellect says that stealing is not good, yet his feeling makes him steal, there is no coordination between feeling and intellect. Likewise, intellect may conclude that the Absolute exists, but your feeling says 'No, I am Mr. So and so'. When feeling joins hands with intellect it is called intuition, and it occurs through meditation.

Visitor: What do you think is responsible for feeling?

Swamiji: Ego. Ego and feeling are the same. That feeling that you exist is the ego, and the two are not different. You cannot say which is the ego and which feeling. Feeling is a function of the ego, and ego is the substance of the feeling. It is not made up of any hard object. It is an ethereal something. Ego and personality are nothing but a knot in consciousness.

Visitor: Can it be removed by the grace of God?

Swamiji: Well, if you believe in the grace of God, it will work. But if you believe you are so-and-so, it will not work. What is the grace of God? It is the effect of your intense belief that God alone

exists. That belief does not come easily. Always we believe in self-effort. When you feel that you exist, then self-effort comes. It is the automatic corollary of the feeling that you exist. Nobody can sit quiet without doing something as long as he feels that he exists. Bodily consciousness will insist that he should act. That action proceeds automatically from his existing as an individual.

Visitor: But why then do people pray to the Lord?

Swamiji: They feel that they exist in the body. When the prayer comes from the soul, then it is good and it will work. If it does not come from the soul but only from the lips, the body remains unaffected even in prayer as a hard rock. Thus, the prayer will not work. Mere copper wire will not bring anything. Electricity must be there behind it. If it is disconnected, it is only wire, nothing else. The feeling should be there, but if you think of something else at that time, it will serve no purpose.

Visitor: Swamiji, how is it that the Absolute, which has the ability to do anything it wants, has allowed for manifestations that are not conscious of their reality, such as we?

Swamiji: Ultimately everything is conscious. Even the atom is conscious, but you do not know that it is conscious. You say a brick is unconscious. It is not so. Modern science has realised the relationship between life and matter. There is no difference between life and matter, it is a continuity. There is a difference of density, degree of manifestation. There is no such thing as spirit and matter in isolation, and completely cut off from each other. When you reach the Absolute, even the densities of manifestation will vanish. It is only from our point of view that they appear of various degrees. At one stroke the whole thing will vanish. When you see a bulldog in a dream, it is part of your mind, and you cannot say your mind is unconscious. So the conscious mind can appear as an unconscious building. The so-called inanimate objects are not inanimate. They look inanimate because they are externalised in space and time.

Visitor: I understand that, but we are manifestations that have false perceptions. Why was that allowed?

Swamiji: Why do you allow the idea of a building in the dream?

There is no such building at all. The same thing has happened in the waking state. What you have done in a dream, the cosmic mind has done in your waking state. If you understand that there is no unconscious object in a dream, then even in the cosmic mind there is no unconscious object. And you ask me why it is allowed. I say, why did you allow the building to come up in your dream? The world has not come about in the same way as the building has not come about in the dream, except in the head of the person. Likewise, the world does not exist except as an idea of God. There is no world like the one that exists in your thought, it does not exist. You are only the cosmic idea, or cosmic meditation vibrating. Why has the electron become a stone? If you see the stone with a microscope, you will not see the stone at all but electrons. If you ask me why the electrons have become a stone, what answer can I give you? It is just what it is. It is a mystery.

Visitor: Swamiji, I cannot sit in meditation in a particular posture for more than half an hour.

Swamiji: You sit in any posture that is convenient to you. I am not prescribing any posture. Whichever posture you use should enable you to sit in meditation at least for one hour continually.

Visitor: That is, sitting on the wooden stool?

Swamiji: Okay, you sit on the wooden stool. You see, posture has no great religious significance. It is only a technique of so seating yourself as does not make you think of the body every now and then. If you sit in a posture which will cause strain to the body you will naturally be thinking of the body again and again, so they say you sit in such a posture as would not compel you to think of the body again and again. It is not necessary to sit, for instance, in *padmasana* if it makes you think of the body too much. You can sit in an easy chair. The point is, it should enable you to forget that you have a body at all. You prepare your own posture so that you can sit for at least one hour at a time without thinking of the posture itself. In samadhi you are not thinking of the object, you have become the object itself. So this is the distinction between the three stages. First three ideas, then two ideas, then one idea only—the thing outside yourself and the object. That is concentration. In meditation there is no outside idea,

only yourself and the object. In samadhi there is only the object; even you don't exist. You are identical with it. So from this test you can find out where you stand. How many thoughts occupy your mind. These will tell you where you are.

As for prayer, it does not mean just uttering some words. It is not muttering a mantra or chanting a formula. It is a surge of the feeling inside where your whole soul wells up into consciousness and gravitates towards God. You feel as if you are pulled by a magnet, cosmic in its nature, towards your goal of life. If that feeling is there, then that is your real prayer, otherwise it is a mere uttering of words.

Q: If anyone meditates, concentrates on an object, is he thinking or is he not thinking?

Swamiji: There is no such thing as thinking unless you become it. You can become it by abolishing your separation from it. You meditate as if you are that, not as if you are thinking.

Visitor: What is that?

Swamiji: It may be a tree, or anything—it does not matter. If you want to have the intuition of the tree you must feel that you are the tree itself, not Mr. So-and-so thinking of the tree, because then it remains an object and you cannot know it. Intuition is the absorption of your mind in that object. It may be a particle of sand, it doesn't matter.

Visitor: But there are so many trees, ideas... it becomes an obstacle...

Swamiji: It is not an obstacle. The idea itself is the subject. As a matter of fact, the tree is nothing but an idea of the tree. That idea is the object before you, and with that you enter into yourself. You are thinking that that idea is arising from the mind as if the idea is different from the mind. You must identify yourself with the idea itself so that the idea does not arise outside. There should be no spatial distinction between you and the object. That is called samadhi. Samadhi is nothing but abolition of spatial difference. There is no space between you and the object, you are one with it.

We imagine that there is a beginning to creation. It doesn't start at one time. It is a cycle. There is neither beginning nor end. God did not create the world on some day, one Sunday. It is only a story.

It is not like that. God is timeless, so naturally He cannot think in time. So the moment you say He started creating at one time, you think God is in time. He is timeless, so the question of creation in time does not arise. It is only our concept. Creation is an eternal process... It is a chain of cause and effect like a circle with neither a beginning nor an end, not a straight line with a beginning and an end. So you have been running around like this eternally.

Visitor: Does this mean that a human being can go back to the vegetable kingdom?

Swamiji: If you think like a vegetable, you will go back. But you will again come up. You can go back and come up again and again. What you will become will depend upon what you think. If you think like a vegetable, you will become vegetable, if you think like an animal, you will become an animal. Animals attack, and if you also attack you will also become animal. Human beings don't attack. So whoever attacks, even though he may be in human form, has the characteristics of an animal. Only the tail is missing.

Visitor: Swamiji, I think I read somewhere that statement: In the beginning...

Swamiji: It is only a saying for a mind that wants such a statement. The child's mind requires a child's answer. A boy was asked: "You see, my dear boy, the Sun is here in the morning, slowly, it goes in the evening and next morning suddenly it comes back. How does it happen?" He replied, "When we are sleeping the Sun must be jumping back." Now, well, this is a great answer to be given by the boy. There is no rational answer to the mystery. The thing that was there in the west suddenly comes to the east. For all practical purposes, this could be a good answer for the boy. But you say the Earth is moving, etc., etc. That is also a theory, not a final answer. We are thinking we are very wise by simply imagining that the whole Earth moves, and therefore the whole answer is given. But so many other things are moving. The Earth is moving round the sun, the sun is also moving towards some great star called Sirius, and the whole thing is moving in the Milky Way, and the Milky Way is rushing at tremendous speed towards something else. Where are they rushing to all the time? Why are they so restless? The idea that something

is created involves several contradictions which cannot be logically explained.

We have a habit of thinking in terms of cause and effect. This is what the great German philosopher, Kant, argued about throughout his life. We have got some habits, and we want to justify everything in terms of those habits. There are four kinds of habits of the mind, says Kant. According to him, these four habits are called Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Morality. Everything has a quantity. Whatever you think has a size. You cannot imagine anything without some size. Everything has a quality of this kind or that. It has some relation to something, some connection, positive or negative. And it is in some condition called moral. You cannot think of anything except in these four ways. The mind is shackled to this way of thinking. Even when you think of God Himself, who is supposed to be above all conditions, even He is thought of in terms of these conditions only. He has size, shape, quality, relationship. He is some state, whether pleased or not, thinking or not, doing something or not. And he has a relationship with you and the world, etc.

Now, you are conditioning the unconditioned and this habit of relating effect to cause is the reason behind your trying to find a cause for the world. You find that the world is in the nature of an effect because it is changing and transforming itself and, as everything has a cause, God also must be having a cause. Without that, how will the world go on? Naturally, according to this argument the creation of the world must have taken place at some time, because we think only in terms of space and time. So we assume certain factors, and on these assumptions we also assume God must have created the world at a certain time. And He must be there.

These are all kinds of corollaries, or effects, that naturally flow from the habit of mind. So, Kant concluded nobody can know what truth is. Because the more you think of truth, the more you condition it. So, metaphysics and reality are an impossibility. That is the final conclusion of a great tome, *Critique of Pure Reason*, that Emanuel Kant wrote. He spent all his life in writing that book, a great masterpiece. Of course, he did not say it so bluntly as I put it, but finally it boils down to this. The ultimate Reality cannot be known, as the moment you start thinking of it, you condition it. So,

as they say, the moment a man opens his mouth he puts his foot into it!

All this is discussed in the Vedas also, in the Rig Veda. The poet humorously says, “Who created the world and how it was created, God only knows; perhaps God Himself does not know.” This is a jocular way of saying what a mystery it is, because eternity does not create itself. The moment it is created, it ceases to be eternal, and you are contradicting yourself by saying that eternity is there and that it creates. That which creates or is created is a thing subject to transformation. If something comes from something, that something from which it comes is subject to transformation. If time can come from eternity, then eternity also is subject to transformation, and anything subject to transformation is not eternal. And to say that eternity is subject to non-eternity is a contradiction in terms.

The whole theory is an explanation satisfying our temporal intelligence, but it cannot satisfy that higher aspiration which sees truth as it is. Man’s mind is incapable of reaching God, for the mere reason that God is what God is. He just cannot be what you think He is. That is not possible. He cannot be subjected to analysis by the logical intellect. He is not the object, He is the subject itself. He is the Universal Subject, and therefore to analyse Him is to convert Him into an object, which is a travesty of the truth.

Visitor: Can we say that the world existed eternally?

Swamiji: Why do you call it the world? Something existed eternally, you can call it the world, God, anything, the Absolute which is a word that is supposed to signify ‘unchangeable something’, an unchangeable, perpetual something, which does not bear relationship with anything else. That something is designated as the Absolute. You can call it by any name.

Visitor: But creation is changeable, and as such was it existing eternally?

Swamiji: Now you are saying it is changeable because you have cut yourself off from creation. If you become one with creation, perhaps you will think differently. You are looking at creation as an object outside you. That is the whole trouble. You cannot understand anything if you cut it from the subject that knows it. This is the effect

of modern science also. The moment you try to observe a particle through a microscope, the microscope disturbs the position of the particle. It means that the means you adopt in trying to understand the thing, to analyse it, disturbs the position and the character of the object, so it happens that without the means you cannot know it, and even with the means you cannot know it.

Similarly with this creation and God, or whatever it is. You cannot know anything unless you enter into it. The moment you set yourself outside it, you see through the spectacles of space and time like a man with jaundiced eyes. There is no such thing as space and time for creation as such because space and time are part of creation only. Space and time is the pre-condition of creation, so there cannot be creation without space and time. Space, time and object all rise together, so your mind tells you that you are outside the creation, else you would not be making the statement. Actually, you are a part of creation, so when you say you are thinking of creation, creation itself is thinking of creation. When somebody asks you a question about creation, you must ask him the counter question: "Who is putting the question? You have placed yourself in a false position by separating yourself from the total creation of which you are a part, so you cannot know about creation unless you first give up the idea that you are outside it."

You do an action for a purpose, but God's action is not action in the sense of a human being's action. It is the spontaneous manifestation of cosmic nature. Nature means that which is not artificial, which is not produced at any time, which is not manifested, which is not created. In your case, action is something which is motivated and is created at some time.

Visitor: But you also said that that should be done by me. There is nothing in the three worlds that should be done by me.

Swamiji: What does the Sun gain by shining? Nothing! And yet it shines. It is only an outward example symbolic of expressing that there is no motive behind it. It just exists in the form it is. The universe is not what it is for some purpose, because if you say it is for some purpose you are isolating the purpose from itself. It is its own nature and just exists, and the action of God is nothing but God being Itself. God's being Itself is called action, just as the Sun's being itself is

called shining, but in our case it is not like that; therefore, we are not happy about action.

Visitor: This world would perish if I did not perform action.

Swamiji: If reality does not exist appearance, also cannot. It would collapse. It is something like saying that if the ocean does not exist, the waves cannot exist. The order of the universe is nothing but the symmetry of the Atman—what you call system. It is nothing but a manifestation of Atman’s perfection.

Visitor: In the fourth discourse on the Bhagavad Gita, “Inaction in action and action in inaction”...

Swamiji: When you physically act but mentally are not connected with that action, that is inaction in action; when physically you are not doing but mentally you are active, that is action in inaction.

Visitor: Which is better, Swamiji?

Swamiji: No question—both are no good! (Laughter.) But if you want to draw a comparison, you can say that inaction in action is good. You must mentally ignore it though physically you are active. Karmayoga is nothing but that. It is intense action while mentally maintaining the poise. You are stabilised in mind but physically you are very active. You maintain an outlook on life which is permanent, and on the basis of that you work. You should not get disturbed by anything that you do or anything that happens. The rain falls on the mountain top, but the mountain has no concept of the rainfall. However much the rain falls, the mountain is steady.

Visitor: That is a sage’s reaction.

Swamiji: Yet, it appears as if he is reacting, but he is not really acting. Nothing affects him because he is not concerned with it. Reaction arises because of your concern with things but if you are not concerned, it won’t affect you. You are not bothered about either this way or that way. There is an old saying that when a cow gives birth you are concerned as to whether it is a bull or a heifer. If it is a heifer you are very happy, if it is a bull you are not so happy. But if a jackal gives birth you are not bothered. There is no reaction from you of either joy or of disappointment.

19. HE, THE ALL PERVASIVE

A typical bright winter morning. The sun shines upon a group of people, Welsh, American, German, English and Indian, about twelve in all, sitting around Rev. Krishnananda Maharaj who meets all with a sunny smile and warm welcome. This morning's dialogue starts with a query from an Indian visitor.

Visitor: Have I got all I need to know about yoga and spiritual life by having learnt the asanas? What else is there to learn, Swamiji? I want to know and learn all the aspects.

Swamiji asks a few questions by way of gauging the visitor's intentions and the nature of his query.

Swamiji: What do you want to do after knowing all aspects? I see... You want to see God? Who is God? What does He look like? Do not tell me what somebody has said. You tell me what you in your mind think about God. What do you say? There is God? All right. Then, what does He look like, in face, in form, etc? Yes...? I see. But WHERE is He?

Visitor: He is all pervasive.

Swamiji: All right, then think of Him like that. Think of Him always existing everywhere. Do *japa*. Read Jnaneshwar's Gita, Tulsidas's Ramayana, Srimad Bhagavatam, and then you have read enough. You need not read anything more.

Visitor: Thank you Swamiji for the guidance. I have to leave now. Please bless me.

The major part of this morning was spent in the routine and inconsequential personal conversation with a number of visitors who casually dropped in to pay their respects to and receive the blessings of Swami Krishnananda Maharaj. Some of these visitors were government officials and others army personnel. The Ashram work also took a good bit of Swamiji's time and attention with a number of messengers and papers brought in for his attention and direction.

A visitor: (Amidst a lot of interruptions) Swamiji, how to get the

conviction that I am on the right path of realising the spiritual truth?
That in all the diversity there is only one Unity?

Swamiji: Meditate for one to three hours, daily. And meditate on the basic unity of things. Daily meditation on this truth of unity will ultimately bring the conviction. For, though invisible, it is unity which is at the back of your consciousness, and your very thought is the truth of this unity. As you say, the diversity is only an appearance on the surface. The presupposition of diversity is this truth of unity. From what you say, I understand that you are engaged in too many spiritual activities. Cut short activities, barring this contemplation, because the other activities are unprofitable in view of your need as they are no solace to the soul and are not satisfying. Happiness and satisfaction is immense and immanent when you are literally happy, and this happens when you are utterly alone. This is the truth, and this is true happiness. Do not be a busybody, for this brings only fatigue. This is no life. Also, be positive in your outlook and confident that you will get what you want. This hundred per cent certainty that you WILL get what you are seeking makes a tremendous contribution to the strength of the mind, and the mind gets what it seeks. Miracles will take place in the intense faith in the Reality you seek. Because of the intensity of your aspiration, God will come to you. He loves you more than you love Him.

Offerings of fruit and sweets and other things come in from the visitors and in rare cases are accepted. As is generally done, these are distributed among the devotees present.

Visitor: Swamiji, I want to learn yoga.

Swamiji: What do you mean by yoga according to your own understanding? You say you know nothing about yoga. But unless you have learnt something about it, you would not have thought about it.

Visitor: Well, I think yoga is asanas and meditation and study.

Swamiji: You may stay in the Ashram and learn these aspects of yoga. (*Addressing a German visitor*) Where are you staying?

Visitor: At the Laxmi Narayana temple.

Swamiji: What are you doing there?

Visitor: Sleeping.

Swamiji: Like Laxminarayana on Adishesha! Well that is yoga. So your sadhana is progressing well! (*Laughs; so does everybody else.*)

Another visitor: If there is a lack of conviction, as our young friend has said that there is unity in the diversity around you, how to go about to get the full conviction, of this truth?

Swamiji: It comes through understanding. The intellect needs education, for its capacity to comprehend the truth is inadequate at present. If you tell a baby that the brick has atoms and electrical charges, it is very hard for the baby to understand. But the conviction that the brick contains atoms which have electrical charges comes by his being gradually, over a period, educated in the science of 'matter'. Even so, the perception of the truth, this inner secret, comes when educated by the teacher, that is, yourself training the mind and the intellect. Start with a little conviction that you have, even though it is little, and meditation, contemplation and study will in time bring about this conviction in full. The more you meditate, contemplate and study, the teacher within you will tell you the inner secret of firm conviction. But, to start with, you need a guide. (*Turning to the young British visitor*) Who helps you in your pursuit of spirituality? Are you totally independent of any guide? Oh, I see, so you have a guide. You may go back to him and get further guidance. You are staying for some days in the Ashram? Good. You sit in meditation every day for one hour in the Ashram meditation hall, it will help you. In the beginning you feel it is only a physical act but slowly your involvement in it will deepen and you will begin to understand what meditation can mean. You say that you do more asanas than anything else, but some reading, along with the physical asanas, is necessary.

To another visitor: Go on with the work. Without work, worry and tension will increase. Forget the past. Engage yourself in useful reading. Even if your mind is not taking in what you are reading, continue with it. Read loudly if you are unable to concentrate on what you read. Read sacred texts like Ramayana, everything will be all right. God will bless you. Gradually your mind will be able to

relax and you will be able to work normally. Oh, the luncheon bell.
Go for your lunch. Thank you for your darshan.

20. THE PATH OF GLORY

A pleasant sun shone overhead. Monkeys were frisking about on the branches above, peering down to see if there was anything they could snatch and leap back into the branches. The ‘chats’ started with a question from an old American devotee who runs an ashram in California.

Devotee: Why is it compulsory for us to read the *Glory of the Gita* which runs into several verses, reducing the time available for the verses of the Gita itself? Why? I never read them. Sounds like blackmail to me, this compulsion.

Swamiji: It is only to give you an incentive to read the text, and does not have much importance by itself. We have a peculiar system of glorifying everything. The greater the glorification, the greater the incentive to read it. Not worthwhile by itself. When an article is advertised, you have a peculiar weakness to go in for it. It is a tradition—just give it that amount of value. After the death of a person, they read a sacred text such as the “Garuda Purana”, in which there is a vivid description of hell! When people hear what kind of tortures are meted out to a miser cringing from doing charity, or to one who shows lack of respect for his responsibilities and duties, they get frightened and do a lot of charity, pay respect to their duties and so on, because they think, “Oh! Let me be saved from such a torture.” The “Garuda Purana” picturesquely and vividly describes what happens to the soul of the man who has not done charity or fulfilled his duties or one who has lived a bad life, etc. etc. So it is likely to inspire the living to mend their ways (*laughs*).

An ashramite: Does not the charity and the like done by those left behind benefit the departed soul

Swamiji: No, no, nothing of the kind. It has no connection with the departed soul. It is meant only for those left behind.

Devotee: The glorification of the Gita is so long that you can hardly complete the reading of the verses in a given time!

Swamiji: (*Laughs.*) Yes, yes, reading even one sloka of the Gita is enough if you can understand the meaning of it properly. One single

verse is sufficient for contemplating the glory of it

A foreign visitor had been sent by his Guru to meet revered Swami Krishnananda. After he had been in the gathering for about one full hour, the visitor asked Swamiji what his name was.

Swamiji: *(Without showing any emotion)* I am he whom you have come to see.

The reaction of the gathering to this was one of shocked amusement. This instance has a place in this chronicle of the Darshan Hour Talks, because it is a typical example of some of the Western visitors who come for the Morning Darshan without any real interest or without knowing why they have come.

Visitor: How long have you been a Sannyasi?

Swamiji: *(After a moment of silence, in the most even voice)* About 35 years. All my life.

At the end of the session, later, all but one or two old disciples remained.

Ashramite: These people remind me of urchins throwing stones into the pool, just to while away their time.

Swamiji smiled indulgently.

A visitor, a German, had been initiated in meditation to concentrate on the centre between her eyebrows, which is considered a very suitable point to concentrate on during meditation.

German Visitor: This has landed me in the problem of physical disturbance. Is it right and is it the only place or the best to concentrate upon? I am unable to control the mind in meditation.

Swamiji: Has anyone controlled the mind? None except the Realised Souls. It is not necessary to fix on that point for the most effective concentration. The control of the mind is very difficult, because the mind is not an object. It is like air. How will you hold it? But there is a way, a technique. The air is everywhere and you cannot hold it. But it is concentrated in some place. Find out where it is thus concentrated, the source from which it is flowing everywhere

The mind, like air, is concentrated at some spot on an object.

What the object is, is of little importance. But it should be held firm there and never move away from it. It may be only a tree the mind is concentrating on or it is just thinking of. Hold the mind there, on the tree, and do not let it move even an inch from that place, location or object. Then it will tend to become very strong. The mind is always thinking. But it is thinking of one thing at a time. Let it think of that only and not any other thing. That is called meditation. You go from shop to shop to purchase something. When you do not find it in one shop, you go to the other and so on until you find the thing that you are looking for. It is not for nothing that you tire yourself going from shop to shop. Is it not so? Similarly, the mind is searching for something while thinking of various things. What is it that it is searching for? Here comes another question. What is it that the mind is searching for?

German Visitor: It is going here and there thinking of the Divine.

Swamiji: It is not thinking of the Divine. It has no idea of the Divine. It wants to unite itself with some object, and when there is a union with that object it gets pleasure. And it is looking for pleasure. It is pleasure that the mind is searching for. It does not want objects, which are only instruments in creating the psychological circumstances called pleasure. If an object cannot bring pleasure, who wants it? There is the tiger, the cobra, etc. Will you search for a tiger or a cobra? Will you love it? Will you want to hug a tiger or a cobra? Hugging a child gives satisfaction, but not hugging a tiger or a cobra. So what you seek is pleasure and not an object. Do not make the mistake of thinking that your mind wants this or that object. You do not want anything other than pleasure. And if you think that a particular object can give pleasure, you go near it, but if it does not give any satisfaction, you will leave it alone and go to another place or object. So your life is spent in this way looking for pleasure and not for a particular object, which it really cannot find. And nowhere will you find this pleasure you are seeking for. Because it is not a commodity of this world. It belongs to some other realm altogether. But you are mistakenly looking for it here, unnecessarily going on a wild goose chase, as they call it.

I have given you a simple picture of the state of affairs. You cannot get in this world what you want in the life that you live here.

Now comes the next question. Then where else? See, one question leads to another, endlessly. You can find it only where it is not where it is not. You cannot get water from the Sahara desert, where there is no water. You will get it from the Ganga. You must first know where the Ganga is, then only can you go for water! So the mind is searching for what is not there in the objects. If there had been pleasure in any object, there would have been no necessity for the mind to move from one object to another. That it moves from object to object shows that these do not give satisfaction. So it is not available in the world, it is available somewhere else. Where is that place? It is not in books, universities, nor even in Mahatmas and Gurus that you can get this satisfaction. You are thoroughly mistaken in looking for it in them. If you know where it is then you will never open your mouth thereafter; you will close your mouth forever thereafter. Do you understand what I say? These are the answers to your various questions on meditation. Do not concentrate of the “*Trikuti*” (*middle of the eyebrows*) unnecessarily. It is not going to give you anything at all... What is the time?

A voice: 11:50 by my watch.

Swamiji: Oh! Long past lunch hour. You are all starving! Go, go for your food. God bless you all.

21. WAR ON OUR MINDS

A visitor: Why is there always war in the world? Why is it that peace is always in a precarious balance? If philosophers rule as kings, there will be peace. The example is, the epic figure, King Janaka. War is the result of the selfishness of individuals. We had one example of a King-Philosopher in India, that is King Janaka. In Rome there was a philosopher king, Marcus Auroelius. When one enjoys absolute power, one becomes absolutely corrupt. For absolute power corrupts absolutely when it is not combined with wisdom. War, like poverty, has two causes: one is the selfish exploitation by the powers that be; the second, which is more the cause for poverty, is idleness, which is the ideal workshop for the devil.

A lady from a foreign country who is connected with the Theosophical Society at her place as well as Adayar, Madras, asked Swamiji if he knew about the Theosophical Society and if it was possible for a person belonging to the Theosophical Society to get guidance from Swamiji.

Swamiji: Yes, I know the Theosophical Society very well. I am a friend of all, and even of Satan! So even if Satan comes I will welcome him as a friend and make him sit with me and give him advice if asked for. Satan is not a negative figure. Negative thinking is a kink in your head. God does not create negative things. When two nations are at war with each other, one army defeats the opposing army, and is victorious. They glorify this victory. If the other army won, they would also have glorified their victory. But this glorification is defeat for the other side which has suffered severely in order to give you victory. Such one-sided vision, without the vision of the whole, is negative. Such negative thinking is undivine. To have vision of the whole is divinity.

But it is very difficult to think divinely. We can, unfortunately, think only as human beings. But at least you should understand how your thinking goes. When you see things as God sees them, it is Truth. When you feel love for all, you feel as God feels. When you act as God acts, it is justice. It is not that God manifests Himself in different forms. But your mind sees Him as different forms. The object you see does not change, but your mind changes its form.

For example, if you look at an object with coloured glasses, you see it tinged. Mirrors of uneven surfaces reflect the same object in different forms. Such is the trick of the mind.

Q: Is meditation different from prayer?

Swamiji: Meditation is a superior form of prayer. Meditation is the inner culture of the mind. The two are different in the sense that prayer is a current flowing with the thoughts towards God. Meditation is the highest prayer where the thoughts are fixed in God. Any attitude towards God is prayer. Success in meditation is bound to come if understood correctly and practised regularly.

Amidst the usual small gathering around Swami Krishnanandaji is a German couple who have been in the Ashram for a few days in the course of their tour. Swamiji enquires about their welfare and comfort and asks:

Swamiji: What do you want from us? What is the purpose of your visit?

The wife: The aim in coming to the Ashram is to get some guidance at understanding what yoga means. I am a sociologist and my husband is a scientist.

Swamiji: Why are you interested in yoga?

The wife: Perhaps as a sociologist I could help people to a better way of life, a better understanding, and thereby they may gain peace in their lives.

Swamiji: Swami Sivananda has written some books particularly suited for Western minds interested in the study of yoga: *Raja Yoga, Mind, Its Mysteries and Control, Concentration and Meditation, Thought-Power*. Then there are two useful books by Shri Sundernath Dass Gupta: *Yoga in Relation to Other Systems of Indian Thought* and *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*. You may also look into *Yoga and Western Psychology* by Gerald Coster.

Another visitor: I am interested in hatha yoga and the practice of it. Is there a book suitable for me?

Swamiji: *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. Also *Romello Calle*—he lives in

Madrid—has written two big volumes on this subject. Abridged editions are available now.

Visitor: What is meditation? What does it mean?

Swamiji: Affirmation of the mind and confirmation to reality is meditation.

Visitor: Why is the mind getting involved in events?

Swamiji: Events affect the mind only when it thinks on them and thus gets involved in them. This involvement is due to the ignorance of the ego. There are three types of ignorance which the ego affirms: I am everything... I am nothing... I am something.

Visitor: What is *purushartha*?

Swamiji: *Purushartha* is the effort directed in the discharge of your duty. One's duty changes with the expanding consciousness in greater and greater degrees of the existence of the Supreme Reality.

Visitor: You mean I expand in my existence?

Swamiji: Existence is not bodily consciousness—this is a wrong notion, so also is the notion of psychological and social existence. Existence is indivisible. Love and goodness are man's real nature.

Visitor: But there are likes and dislikes in one's life.

Swamiji: Dislike arises when there is intense conflict of your limited individuality with the existence of the other's limited individuality. Your true existence is the absolute existence in God. What restricts it to the bodily existence is the ego. Hence, conflicts arise. But the human tendency is towards pure goodness and cooperation. Our real agony is due to our separation from God. We are made to forget this agony by temporary pleasure, which ultimately lets us down in bringing an end to cheap pleasure. Fulfilment of every or any desire is only cheap pleasure. The mind soon discovers this to its consternation. This temporary cheap pleasure is not capable of stopping the deep urge to obtain the ultimate pleasure in the reunion with the Absolute. This drama goes on. And we are both the actor and spectator of this drama, which is directed by the urge for ultimate pleasure of finding ourselves one with the Absolute. But here goes

the luncheon bell. Thank you for your darshan. God bless you.

22. THROUGH STRENGTH OF YOGA

The morning “chats” began with a question from a visitor.

Visitor: How do we get spiritual strength by yoga practice?

Swamiji: Your affiliation to God is your strength. It will save you in this life, and in your future life also. What I mean is yoga without giving it a label, yet it includes all the yogas. You don't want labelled yoga. You want a living yoga which is helpful in your practical life, not yoga for demonstration purposes or as an institution, but something which can keep you balanced and happy and without having to complain against anything. The yogi sees everything in its proper place. When you see a thing misplaced, then it is not yoga, and then you complain. You say it is very cold, or it is very hot, or you say it is wretched, it is a nuisance. Everything appears wrong to you. You appreciate nothing. But nothing is wrong with rain or cold. Nothing is wrong with the cyclone either, if you see it in its cosmic setting. But if you have a parochial outlook, you see only atrocity. A cyclone is blowing and people are suffering. This should not have happened. This is something like your saying somebody's body temperature has risen to 105°. This is awful, a horror. You don't understand the other aspects of it. The temperature has risen on account of the body condition. It is only an indication, as the doctor tells you.

We have no comprehensive outlook, that is why we are suffering. And yoga is nothing but a comprehensive outlook of things. It is not just the Bhagavad Gita, nor the Upanishad. You may call it by any name you like. But you cannot be a comprehensive person so long as you are weak of mind and incapable of understanding all aspects. You miss some point, and then you say something is wrong. If you see that point, you say everything is all right. If you have perfect peace, you give peace to others by your very being. You radiate peace and become a magnet of completeness and strength—a source of energy and peace. But if you are a partial being, you become wretched yourself and make others around you also wretched (*laughter*).

An ashramite: When I have been blown off by the cyclone and

everything is destroyed...

Swamiji: Nobody is blowing you off. No one is so angry with you.

Ashramite: All right, accepted. But, how do I take my pain, saying that cosmic balance is being set up? That does not help.

Swamiji: Your suffering is due to lack of understanding. If the Sun shines and you say, I can't see, it means that your eyes are not fit to receive sunlight. Your eyes are incapable of receiving sunlight, may be due to blindness.

Swamiji: (*Addressing another ashramite*) Thank you for this book. It is the *Philosophy of Madhusudana Saraswati*. Madhusudana Saraswati was a great scholar and saint, who lived about a hundred or two hundred years ago. He was a master in philosophy. Also a great devotee of Lord Krishna.

Another ashramite: He was a Jnana Yogi.

Swamiji: Jnana Yogi and a Bhakti Yogi. He believed in Krishna only and in nothing else. And yet, nobody was equal to him in the philosophy of the Absolute. He is the topmost philosopher of the Advaita Vedanta—and how he combines Advaita with devotion to Krishna is a wonder. That is the knack of the man; a great man is capable of reconciling anything with anything else.

A voice: The intellect and heart join together.

Swamiji: Everything, that is the sign of greatness. He can be reconciled with anything. He never refuses anything. He never rejects anything. He doesn't say anything is wrong. That is the sign of greatness. Everything is in its proper place, and at the proper time, under the given circumstances. So this is, again, yoga.

Ashramite: Swamiji, you said that Lord Krishna's ways, His *lilas* in His *avatara* were all a breaking of social norms, so to speak.

Swamiji: I explained.

Ashramite: That it was a spiritual interpretation, an explanation of God's attitude to man. How is it a spiritual interpretation?

Swamiji: Because, to say that the Ganga water is very cold is a human

attitude. But before God it is not cold. It is cold only to your skin. To the fish in the Ganga it is not cold. So, is Ganga water really cold or not? Now you see! Your statement is not correct. Any statement that we make is relative; you may be right in terms of your sense of touch in saying that Ganga water is cold. But the fish in the Ganga does not say it is cold, because they have adjusted themselves to the atmosphere. You cannot adjust yourself to it in the same manner. And if the temperature of your body is the same as the temperature outside, you will not say it is winter. So all social laws, personal predilections are judgements made on the basis of the experiences from the point of view of your present state of personality. And it need not be correct. (*Emphatically*) It cannot be correct. It is relative.

Just now I gave a broad example of fish and yourself. You may say it is winter but the fish do not feel the pinch. So it is a question of the condition under which a person lives. And if the condition changes, your outlook changes. And you will not see things as before. If you have got a microscopic eye, you will not see the wall in front of you. You will not see the building, you will see only vibrations. You will see electrons or protons. And if I tell you it is a building you will say, "Where is the building? I cannot see tiny building". God has given us a very gross eye and we see only a large structure. So who is correct? Is the microscope correct, or we? The circumstances are different and we speak from a different level of being. God speaks from all comprehensiveness.

Ashramite: What is the ear or eye with which we should hear or see His *lilas*, so that we understand His purpose?

Swamiji: You understand your level of existence first. You speak from your level only. Do not overestimate yourself and try to see as God sees from a comprehensive level.

Ashramite: You mean to say, what I cannot understand, I should leave alone?

Swamiji: Yes. You should not try to disturb your present feelings. The disturbance arises on account of the fact that you try to overcome the limits of your feelings. Whether they are right or not, that is a different matter. They may be right. They are right only as long as they are incapable of transcendence. When they are capable of

transcendence, they become wrong. When you are dreaming, the objects that you see in the dream appear real, but now they are not real. You have transcended them. So, when I say it is real or unreal, it depends upon the point of view, the level of being from which I speak. You are a human being. You cannot get over this idea.

But it is not true that you are a human being ultimately. You are something else. You are a unit in the Cosmic Force. But you cannot understand it. It is no use talking about it. So what is your present state? You are a human being. You cannot forget that you are an Indian. You cannot forget that you are a woman. All these are false notions ultimately—you are neither a daughter of somebody nor the mother of somebody. You are neither Indian nor are you a human being. You talk from your point of view and from facts as they are for you. If you think from God's point of view or the Cosmic point of view, you will see it all differently. But it is no use telling you all this—because you will never see things like this. If I tell you you are not a woman, “Who says I am not a woman?” you will ask. So you take the standpoint of your present experience. If you're a woman, accept it.

But when you realise that you're not a woman, then you speak in a different language and you experience different things. So, as long as your feelings and your connections are inseparable from your present level of understanding, you have to follow only that law. That is what Bhagavan Krishna says in the Gita—do not disturb the present state of affairs. You should not speak to others from your point of view of God. Their point of view may be quite different. Do not disturb that. You have to go stage by stage, from one level of another. All yoga is transcendence and not negation. You don't negate anything, you transcend it. You should understand the difference between negation and transcendence. You do not negate the nature of a child, but you transcend it when you become an adult. When a child behaves in a particular manner, you don't call it stupid behaviour. It is valid behaviour at that level. But if you now behave like a baby, it is invalid. You have transcended childhood. So at that level it is valid, at this level, it is not valid.

Ashramite: So the Bhagavatam puts before us various

levels of understanding?

Swamiji: You have to find your level first

Ashramite: Yes, but it puts forth all the levels.

Swamiji: Yes, yes.

Ashramite: And so it is no use trying to understand something higher than your level.

Swamiji: No, no, no. You should not jump like that to the sky. You know your level and work on that level. And when you fulfil the law of that level, you will automatically be liberated from that bondage, and you will be taken to another level. And then you work at that level. Like that, you go higher and higher until you reach the Absolute. You should be a happy person at every level. You must always be friendly and happy and balanced and coordinated with every type of atmosphere, that is your wisdom, that is called the wisdom of life. Never reject, never disagree, never become irreconcilable and never be intolerant.

Ashramite: It is very difficult to decide at what point you should act, Swamiji.

Swamiji: You know you are hungry just now; your entire biological system is hungry, needs food. So you give food.

Ashramite: If I start feeling excruciatingly hungry, but if the bell for food has gone long back and I will not get food now, what happens?

Swamiji: If you do not get food there, go where you can get food. You cannot say you can't get food anywhere in the whole world. You may not get food in the Ashram kitchen because you have not gone at the proper time. But it is possible that you can get it somewhere else. You know that it is possible.

Ashramite: I increase my sufferings which could have been forestalled if I could have had...

Swamiji: That is ignorance. Ignorance of law is no excuse. Every law is a kind of system which has a reaction.

Ashramite: Swamiji spoke of intolerance. Now that is exactly the

point I want to know. Up to what point you should tolerate?

Swamiji: No, there is no limit for tolerance. Christ suffered due to his goodness. But you cannot say he did a wrong thing. And you will be taken care of by other forces, which will not let you feel at sea. Because you follow a system of perfection you will not really suffer. It is a mistaken notion. If you follow the law from the level in which you are, then you will not suffer. You have made a mistake in your calculation and therefore suffer. You do not have diarrhoea because of eating, it is because of eating wrong things; so many *laddus*. You must realise that.

Ashramite: But I do not know that I am eating one too many. There is no indication to show that I am not digesting it.

Swamiji: Your sensations will tell you. Correct eating is to fill your stomach half with food, one fourth with water and the rest is for air. The stomach should not be filled with food onl .

Well, it is lunchtime. Go for lunch.

23. ON SILENCE

An ashramite: They say *maun*, silence, increases will-power. Is it so Swamiji?

Swamiji: There are many types of silence, and all types of silence are important in one way or the other. Even high speed is silence. The roar of the Ganga at Gangotri is so great that it creates silence all around. This silence deepens the activity of the mind. The spinning top, when it spins very fast, looks as though it is only standing. Even heightened activity is silence. This is how God acts. Ramana Maharshi, who indulged in mundane activities like cutting vegetables and cooking or giving interviews to Bhaktas or praying in the act of Pradakshina of Arunachalagiri, said: "I'm not doing any work."

God, whose work is done at an intense speed, is like the X-ray or the Gamma rays or the Beta rays—all emanating from the cosmic movements which come through interstellar space and can be called interstellar rays. The mind's eye cannot catch these very subtle waves of very high speed. In the same way, though God is here and now, we are not able to see God, for the frequency of the waves is too high for the mind to catch it. Our human eye is not of the nature of the radio, the microwave installation etc., which can catch the X-ray and the finer rays of the cosmos. Our human eye is an old and rusted instrument, and is ineffective to receive the cosmic waves of the soul and the self. The tuning has gone off, and therefore we have now become unfit for the task of seeing God, who is here and now. We are impervious to the glorious great influence of God's rays, which are ever flowing all around us as the sun's rays are bathing us. If you sit inside a cave, shutting off all the sun's rays, and say, "It is all dark," it is all your own incapacity to realise that you have cut off the sunlight flooding the whole space around

This cutting off is perhaps what can be called the fall of Adam and Eve. At the level of cosmic personality they were unaware of their individual personality and did not feel that they were naked. Nature does not wear clothes. Neither does man wear clothes when he is alone in the bathroom. It is only in the presence of others that you feel you must wear clothes. This is because of the consciousness of your

individuality as separate from the 'other'. This consciousness is the apple, the forbidden fruit, after eating which Adam and Eve became self-conscious and were untied from the cosmic consciousness, and thus fell from heaven.

Satan, who is always in opposition to the Cosmic Reality or God, comes in the form of a snake and tempts Eve with the desire to eat the fruit. Freud says that the cunningness of desire wriggles shrewdly like the snake. You have the story in the Old Testament: God called Adam and Eve. "We cannot come before you, we are naked," they said. "Who said so? How do you know? You ate the forbidden fruit! Go hence!" Thereafter the angels with the flaming sword prevented Adam and Eve from entering heaven. The subject-object relationship is the tree, the consciousness of the 'other' is the forbidden apple. Identification of ourselves with the structure of our individuality is the cause of our fall, which is personified in the fall of Adam and Eve from heaven.

This is the original sin separating the part from the whole. And for this you carry the cross all your life. Every one of us carries a cross, and it is on this cross that you are finally crucified. The crucifixion of Christ is a mystical representation of the fact of the abolition of the individual personality in the love of God. It is the same idea as Jnana-Yajna which, in other words, means knowledge of the Absolute, or the identity of the personality with the Absolute. The Infinitude and all-comprehensiveness of the Absolute is awe-inspiring, with which the ego is frightened because it knows that its insignificant individuality will be abolished in this vastness

It is common experience that anything vast like the expanse of the sky or the ocean extending to the horizon frightens us; even the hugeness of the elephant frightens us. This is the nature of the Absolute, beyond the reckoning of the dimensions of the human personality. It is this frightening dimension that gives rise to the worship of anything beyond the scope of the human mind. This is the origin of popular religions of the world, and therefore they worship gods to propitiate them, to relate their individuality to the gods in a manner that the human mind can understand, in a relationship without losing its own individuality. For, we exist only for the ego, to strengthen it and maintain its personality; this is where Satan

speaks and tells you: “Let the world go to the dogs. I must exist, that is what matters, no other thing.”

The silence of this ego-personality so that it dies to live—this silence is the greatest type of silence. This is rebirth, birth into a new spirit and a new dimension, birth into the universality of the spirit. Birth and death are the real problems. The problem of Arjuna, whether he must live by winning the war or die in the battle, this problem is of the physical level. “How long can I continue to live?” is the real question for the ego-personality. We live our lives precariously because we do not know what our future is. It is the same fear of the future, “What will happen if I lose my identity in God!” that prevents our seeking God earnestly. Because of this fear, we do not want to see the Creator. If we meet Him even for a while we must “die”. This we do not want. So we hide our heads from Reality like the ostrich, only out of fear. However, finally you cannot hide Reality for too long, and so we come face to face with facts. This the ego is unable to do. The ego calls Evil to its aid, “be thou my God”. Thus, finally, the result is that the world comes, red in tooth and claw, to attack the ego. Before that we should realise our position in this world of today and the other world of tomorrow, and somehow silence the ego.

24. COSMIC EVOLUTION

A visitor enquires about various aspects of yoga.

Swamiji: There are various levels of yoga, and it is the order of the levels that Patanjali discusses in his Yoga Sutras. We should not forget that a nut is as important as the dynamo in producing electricity and, in this sense, every action is yoga when you connect it with the ultimate purpose of life, which is God-realisation. That the goal of life is God-realisation is what Swami Sivananda Maharaj never tired of stating. The caste system, a largely misunderstood matter, is related to Patanjali's levels of yoga. Work is allotted according to the level of fitness of a person and that is "caste". Meditation is the art of setting the self in tune with God. So there is nothing more important than yoga for the human being. And one has to pass through various levels of yoga without missing a single step, absorbing the lower into higher as one rises from level to level. And meditation is the highest level, leading to samadhi, through which you set yourself in tune with God. And God is not a goal to be reached somewhere far away from us. For, as he says in the Bhagavat-Gita... *pasyame yoga maisvaram*. When He reveals Himself to the *tapasvin*, as to Arjuna, He identifies Himself with the whole cosmos.

Visitor: Why do such sad things as cyclones, typhoons, etc. occur, bringing death to so many people?

Swamiji: Death is a change in life. It is an occurrence of evolution. But people do not understand it as such. We send children to school to learn of life. Similarly, such happenings are there to make people understand that every action, even every disaster is a link in the chain of cosmic evolution. When the doctor amputates a limb he is thinking of the health of the rest of the body. Karma is also part of the reason for such occurrences. Every action is an

interference in the cosmic vibration, and it gives a kick, so to say, and this is what is known as *karmaphala*. The whole world is an electromagnetic field. The engineer knows how to walk over such a field, but a child does not, with the result that he trips. If the interference with the cosmic vibration is not corrected, i.e. is not in tune with cosmic vibrations, the *karmaphala* gets worse, or, like interest on an investment, gets accumulated.

Visitor: I hope no compound interest!

Swamiji: Yes, even compound interest. Action decides the *karmaphala*. If a robber, in the process of robbing, you cuts your hand, he gets the result of doing an action for his own selfish purpose. But when a doctor amputates your arm deliberately, he does not acquire any reaction by way of *karmaphala*, because it is an impersonal act. So you can say that such catastrophes are partly due to the law of karma and partly due to universal cosmic evolution.

Visitor: Swamiji, should I try to change a person when I feel that it is good for him to change or should I leave him alone even though I know that it is for his good that I should change him.

Swamiji: In trying to change, you should not destroy. If you understand that the action is in tune with God's will, then you can take action. But such a knowledge can come only to a yogi who understands things in the light of God's will because of yoga being utterly impersonal. Unless your knowledge is totally impersonal, you cannot judge correctly. Your doubts whether your understanding of an action is in tune with God's will or not can be cleared only by your own consciousness of God's will. For example, the sun, the Ganges, or, say, fire are good or bad not in themselves. What matters is your consciousness of the value that the sun on the Ganges has for you. Great yogis have made statements regarding these matters because they had consciousness of the values that things have.

Another visitor: Why do sannyasis wear orange-coloured clothes? Has it got any special meaning and value?

Swamiji: It is merely to distinguish this class of people from the others.

Visitor: Is there a particular influence that colour is supposed to have on a person? Is it not an indication of what the sannyasis are meant to be?

Swamiji: These theories about colour or other things are unimportant, and not of any value or meaning.

Visitor: (*Just then the temple bell for the second kala, arati, started to ring.*) What is the meaning of the bell at puja time?

Swamiji: The temple bell and the bell at *puja* time indicate something auspicious and good. It is merely by social agreement that the ringing of the bell indicates that. It is said that this world comprises sounds, colour and motion. The postal stamp has value for you because you have been told that it has such and such a value in your society. The monkey does not value it because in his society it has not been agreed that this stamp has a value.

Visitor: Why is camphor or other light waved at *arati* or *puja* time?

Swamiji: It is to give a visual direction to your mind to the force of spirituality behind the act. Every act must have a coordination of purpose, without which the act has no meaning, value or attraction. Religions must have coordination of purpose or else they are useless.

Visitor: Is it necessary for everyone to have initiation and only from a yogi or sannyasi?

Swamiji: A Guru is necessary to give mantra. It is not necessary that he should be a sannyasi or yogi, but the Guru must be capable of guiding you in the practice of your mantra by his comprehensive knowledge of what initiation from the Guru to the disciple is meant to be.

Visitor: You have very clear-cut ideas, Swamiji, about all problems.

Swamiji: Doubts must be cleared by clear-cut thinking.

Visitor: Why, in spite of guidance from the Gurus, sannyasis and yogis are there catastrophes in the world?

Swamiji: There are two aspects in the guidance you get. One is the aptness of the guidance in the context of your problem and understanding. If this aspect is wrongly handled, the guidance becomes useless. The other aspect is that one should take into consideration the level of understanding of the person to whom guidance is given. The guidance given may not be meant for that level. It follows that there should be obedience to law. In a sense, obedience to law is the control of it. So if you understand the law, obedience is the result, and the object of obeying the law is fulfilled. We have to clearly understand the Cosmic law behind cyclones, tidal waves, earthquakes, and such other phenomena. The phenomenon rightly understood is truth. But if it is not rightly understood you call it a miracle or a visitation. There are no miracles. There are only natural phenomena.

That the sun, the stars and the heavens do not fall on your head is a miracle to you. But science tells you why it is that such things do not happen. Once you understand this scientific law, it is no more a miracle. A cow walking on four legs, a man walking with two legs—neither is a miracle. A rustic, ignorant of the levels of the density and the pressure it exerts, is wonderstruck to see the aeroplane weighing tonnes of steel flying in the air. It is a miracle to him. But when you understand the laws of science, you do not consider it a miracle but a natural phenomenon. The pilot guides the plane through the different densities of the atmosphere. The levels are the density of forces, and when you reach a particular level you are able to operate that law and control that force. Different forces work at different levels of density. When the pilot is at a particular level of density, he can operate the force of that level. But he cannot operate that force from a lower level of density. Similarly, a low level of understanding cannot operate the law of the higher level. Hence, guidance must be given for the level at which guidance is asked for.

Another visitor: I would like to make a study of Indian philosophy and yoga in its many aspects.

Swamiji: I will suggest books which will take you months to read. After that you come to me again and we will discuss more on the subject.

Another Visitor: How to get into the practice of meditation? How does the natural process come?

Swamiji: Meditation is a natural process according to your capacity for understanding it. A cow cannot meditate on spiritual knowledge because the level of its intellect is low. And there is no such thing as natural thinking. You say, for instance, it is now daytime. But it is true only to you, for it is not day for everyone in the world. So, any thought is untrue once you begin to think in this “natural” way, as you put it. You cannot accelerate the working of Mulaprakriti. All its three characteristics – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* – are working simultaneously, and you cannot distinguish one from the other. So when the mind works in the natural way, as you put it, it is really acting true to its own nature, because it is not taking you to the truth behind the thinking. Meditation counteracts this unnatural thinking of the mind, and the unnatural thoughts then cancel each other. The meditating mind is like a still lake. Because meditation is thinking a single thought, you can call meditation a natural process, in that sense.

Visitor: To quicken the result, cannot pressure be put upon the meditational process?

Swamiji: No. Only by education of the mind meditation can progress. It is not by pressure, by bringing your will to bear upon it that meditation can succeed. Because meditation is not an activity. It is an automatic adjustment with reality. Schools teach you only how to think properly. They educate you into the way of thinking correctly, clearly and purposefully. Now all this is only a directive for the child or student to think properly, and no student can be made to think faster or deeper by teaching itself with cramming knowledge. This must come from within the student himself.

Even so, meditation is only the process of educating the mind to think properly. The mind is habituated only to think in terms of body and ego, and not in terms of Truth. The mind is involved only in the personality, and cannot think beyond it. This way of thinking must be counteracted. This is what meditation does. It is “awakening” you to your own self and not a physical act of driving you to yourself. Hence, meditation is not tiring, it is an activity which leads you

to your natural state or natural thinking, if you like to call it so. Externally meditation can be regarded as religion, internally it is concentration. Ultimately both the external religion and the internal concentration fuse together into a natural state or condition. That is the nature of samadhi.

25. AWARENESS

The chill of winter was in the air. There was bright sunshine too... Devotees, visitors, admirers and ashramites, about fifteen in number, sat in a close circle before Swami Krishnananda as questions were put and problems discussed.

Question: How can one be convinced of God's presence as immanent and transcendent?

Swamiji: The technique is meditation, where a persistent affirmation that God alone is, is made. This brings the conviction that God is everything—"all existence". Meditation is focussing the mind on something. What is that something? That decides the whole matter. If the focus is on God, then you can feel God. And if He is omnipresent, then you do not exist as an individual. For you two things cannot co-exist, and your individuality vanishes.

There is no question of thinking or meditating on God within yourself or outside, because God does not exist as if in a vessel. He is omnipresent. The vanishing of your individuality is God Realisation. "Awareness" of this fact cannot come to you until you feel convinced that only He is and not you. Two realities cannot co-exist. That awareness is the awareness of God That is the realisation of His omnipresence.

Effort is a natural corollary to the sense of existence. With persistent meditation on God, you achieve Nirvana—the vanishing of you. That is God possessing you rather than you possessing God. Then only the feeling of joy exists.

The point is, social relationships arise when the sense of otherness arises due to the intelligence working in the individual. Until that state, the newly-born soul works only through instinct. Social relationships do not exist at birth. It is an accretion which grows upon the individual along with his growth of social relationships. And so it is a movement of consciousness in the outward field of space-time complex.

Ignorance and emotions go together in a child. A brick does not have the evil qualities of human beings, but it is not for that reason superior to human beings. In its biological existence the child is also "matter". The child must develop for the child to be able to

meditate. It must know, at each stage, the various levels through which it passes. That is, it must become aware of itself and what surrounds it as it grows. The child passes through all the processes of evolution from childhood to the adult stage. It is like the awareness that expands gradually as you come into the waking state from sleep. Thus, the accretion of social relationship grows. The regression of the mind from this accretion back to the state of the newly-born would be what you achieve through meditation, at which point the realisation that God alone is and nothing else exists, dawns.

Another point to remember is this—negative withdrawal of the mind without positive concentration on the omnipresence of God creates darkness.

Another point to remember in meditation is that you should concentrate on God as a totality. When you see the District Collector, you are seeing really the whole Government, but you think of him only as part of it. Even so, the Ishtadevata on whom you concentrate should be conceived as a part of the totality, which you will come to know ultimately. The idea of God is a partial concept in the Ishtadevata, chosen for meditation. It is only a ‘point’ of focus which leads to the awareness of all the forces or attributes of the totality, the Reality which has got focused in the Ishtadevata. The mind meditates on the object of its desire to possess it. This is an attitude of duality. The subject wanting “the other”, the object. This is materialistic meditation and not spiritual meditation. Both are meditation only in the grammatical sense. Meditation on the totality is meditation on the Universal, and not on duality and multiplicity. Therefore, this is spiritual meditation. This meditation will free you, and will not bind you as meditation on material objects will. Both these are actions of meditation. It is for you to decide what your act of meditation should be. Even potassium cyanide, normally a poison is nourishing food under certain conditions. The purpose, the motive, the direction are all important factors in meditation.

A visitor: Is *japa* a better healer than time... because in *japa* one detaches oneself from the problem and gets attached to the mantra.

Swamiji: *Japa* increases the vitality in you, and this vitality cures. *Japa* is not diversion, but rising from the lower to the higher level of understanding. It is not detaching from one and hooking on to

the other at the same given level. *Japa* is a vertical ascent—not a horizontal movement leaving something out and grasping something else to proceed forward.

26. GURU GYAN

This morning it is rather warm. Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj sits inside the Kutir. A few devotees are around him but there is a stream of Ashram staff who come and go with their papers and problems. Along with attending to correspondence and occasional jokes Swamiji answers serious questions and problems posed by the devotees.

Question: Swamiji, how does one realise God?

Swamiji: If you can be independent of the world, you will see God in everything. The differences of opposites prevent you from seeing God in everything, because opposites do not exist in God.

When God's will passes through your personality, it is your 'free-will'. When the cosmic urge manifests itself through you, your personality makes 'effort', that is, causes the freewill to act, the effort one makes to act. Effort, from the layman's point of view, appears as an isolated activity. When you are writing, the nib moves. Is it the nib that is writing? The eyes are unable to see what is behind the visible form. When the little finger moves, the child thinks that it is the little finger only that is moving. But mature minds with knowledge of the working of the human body know that the whole physiology of the body is taking part in the movement of the little finger .

Q: Is a Guru necessary for success in meditation?

Swamiji: Meditation is the summing up of all our spiritual activities; the purpose of all activities is to be one with everything. But even in meditation, space and time come in, and this is what spiritual activities try to overcome.

Until bodily consciousness ends you cannot merge with the cosmos. Intellectual solutions do not end it. The heart will rebel against them. So the intellect and the heart are to be brought into harmony. In this, only studying under a Guru can help. This harmonising is a super-mundane effort. Biological, physiological and intellectual perception must be gone through before the universal percept can come in. In attaining this goal, the Guru will help. So complete dedication to the Guru helps in the process of first harmonising the

conflicting biological, physiological and intellectual perceptions and then going beyond them—that is, going beyond the mind. You may suffer a great deal. That is your purgatory. Unfortunately, these days it is hard to find such a Guru who can help you so fundamentally. Nor is to be found such a devoted, courageous disciple who wants the solution. You must learn to climb on your own shoulders. Such is the difficulty in real meditation. But if you have sincerity, the true urge to meditate—and not merely as an experiment—and the confidence in eventual success you will find vistas opening up miraculously and you will merge with the cosmos.

Q: What is prana?

Swamiji: It is the vibratory motion of the whole cosmos, it is the energy which is cosmically called Hiranyagarbha. Prana is the higher personality of the individual.

Q: Is it an object?

Swamiji: It is not an object, but a principle. Nothing can exist without its unifying power. It is impersonal, beyond individuality, and the ego and all pervading.

Q: Is it identical with dharma, and also with the ultimate Truth?

Swamiji: It is dharma in the sense that it is a law that integrates the individual with the universe. It is energy, electrical energy, for instance, to which everything can be reduced by the process of reduction of the gross into the subtle. What modern science calls electricity is something like a gross form of prana. The word 'dharma' is not applicable to prana because the former means a law, and only in this sense it is applicable to the latter. Considered that prana is also a law of the universe, dharma and prana could mean the same. Prana is a universal law because it coordinates, harmonises, integrates and brings together every element in the entire creation.

Q: Is prana the ultimate Truth?

Swamiji: It is not, because a vibration, a motion is transient, and this is not the characteristic of unchanging Truth. But tentatively you can call it Truth inasmuch as it is the subtle essence of the cosmos. It is, relatively but not actually, the Truth.

Q: What is its origin? Has it anything to do with *prakriti*?

Swamiji: The origin is the Atman, the Supreme Being itself. It is the breath of that Being. *Prakriti* is also prana itself. *Prakriti* is a potential condition of prana. *Prakriti* is a Sankhya term, and ultimately means the same thing as in the Upanishadic language the term prana means. The two terms are different ways of expressing the same thing.

Q: Are the *gunas* dependent on the power of prana?

Swamiji: The three *gunas* are the three ways in which the universal prana operates. When it works by way of destruction and division or isolation of one thing from another, it is *tamasic*. It is *rajasic* when it works by way of stability of things. When it is subtle enough to become transparent and therefore capable of revealing the harmony of things, it is *sattvic* and is superior to the other two *gunas*.

Q: Is prana identical with Existence?

Swamiji: Since prana is an expression of existence, how can you say they are identical? Prana is an expression, a vibration, a motion, a manifestation, relatively, of the Reality, and, therefore, we should not call it Existence as such, because it is a manifestation of the Eternal Being, but it is not the Eternal Being itself.

Q: If its existence is Existence itself, is it co-related with the will of God as the originator of the Universe?

Swamiji: Yes. The will of God manifests itself as cosmic prana in its grosser form. But cosmic prana at a higher level is called God.

Q: What is prana '*mrityu*' or the Death Principle?

Swamiji: It is the Principle of Death only in the individual and not in the cosmos, because the cosmos does not die as the individual dies. There is death in the individual but not in the universal, it can withdraw itself from the physical embodiment called the body. At the time of death the prana in the individual withdraws itself from the physical body, and gets absorbed in the mind and it is this psycho-physiological complex, the blend of prana, senses, the mind, the intellect, etc., which is called the subtle body, that reincarnates in a new existence. So prana '*mrityu*' is not death by itself, but it is

what causes death by extricating itself from the physical body when the purpose of the physical body is completed.

Q: Is prana playing with prana which is present in all manifestations through prana, i.e. Shakti itself? What else can it be other than the substance of everything of thought and matter?

Swamiji: The answer is not different from what has been said already. Prana, thought, matter— they are interconnected and convertible. The movement of thought is prana, and the thinking aspect of prana is thought. Matter, of course, is something grosser, it is the visible individualisation of things that we call prana. But the energy that is behind matter is prana. Higher than prana is thought, which is the cosmic thinking principle.

Q: What is prana in relation to the Consciousness of the Absolute?

Swamiji: Consciousness co-vibrating through space and time is called prana, whether it is vibrating universally or individually.

Q: Does prana at any stage dissolve in the Absolute?

Swamiji: Prana, being the manifestation of the Absolute, naturally gets absorbed in the Absolute at the time of the dissolution of the universe and also at the time of liberation of the individual.

Q: Would even the attempt at meditation to realise the identity with prana be bound with cosmic consciousness, or is there a passage to the Absolute transcending the universe and its Shakti?

Swamiji: Everything is cosmic ultimately; because everything is correlated, interconnected. Whenever you breathe, naturally you get connected with cosmic prana. The intention of meditation is to connect one's prana with the Cosmic Prana. Only then does it become a passage to the Eternal. It is not only prana that is trying to connect with the cosmic but everything else that is also in us, for example, mind, intellect, etc. The individual prana in us by means of pranayama should be harmonised with Cosmic Prana which neither inhales nor exhales. Similarly we must harmonise our individual thought with the Cosmic Will or the Universal Thought. So also we have to harmonise our individual understanding with Hiranyagarbha, the Cosmic Intellect.

Q: Why did the substratum, or Cosmic Prana, vanish as the Lord of the mind, Indra, appeared? Are not the Cosmic Mind and the Cosmic Prana inseparable?

Swamiji: They are not inseparable because the cosmic mind is the internal condition of the Cosmic Prana, or in other words, the Cosmic Prana is a grosser manifestation of the Cosmic mind.

The principle of ego is called Indra. While speech can express by means of fire—the principle of nature of reality which is symbolised in Agni as its deity—and while we can act in consonance with the Universal Being by means of the expression of the prana which is symbolised by the deity Vayu approaching the Supreme Being, Indra cannot approach the Being as Indra is the ego. When the ego approached God, God vanished, because God is and the ego is not. So it is that Indra could not see the Absolute. Even so, though speech and prana could visualise the Absolute Being, they could not understand the nature of the Absolute.

In the Kenopanishad, the story of the Yakshakanya explains the limitations of the ego principle which is represented as the deity Indra, the king of the senses, but who affirms its individuality, its duality in opposition to God. So when Indra approaches the Yakshakanya she disappears, while earlier both the fire principle, which represents speech symbolised as the presiding deity Agni, and Prana, symbolised as the deity Vayu, could approach and talk to her. We can act in consonance with the Universal Being symbolised as the Yakshakanya by the expression of speech and prana, and hence these faculties can visualise the Supreme Being but cannot understand the nature of the Absolute. Indra, the ego principle, could not visualise the Absolute, so the vision of the Yakshakanya disappears. But in as much as the ego can comprehend by means of its intellect the higher realms of Reality, the Reality is explained to Indra by another celestial—the consort of Lord Siva, Himavati herself.

Similarly even in our practice of harmonised activity like philanthropic works and social service, we are not able to understand the nature of Reality, though by such harmonised activity we are trying to break our ego down. But in Indra, who is the principle of ego itself, there is a direct opposition towards God, so when he

approaches, the Absolute vanishes.

This is a lesson to us as well. We should not meditate when we are possessed by our ego. Such a meditation does not rank ever with studying the scriptures, or doing social service, which, at least to some extent, is good. But when we contemplate on the Absolute with our ego intact it is no good because where there is ego, God vanishes. The meditating principle is not the ego, it is the Universal Being itself. It is God meditating on God ultimately. So if you consider yourself as Mr. So-and-so and then start meditating on God, God does not come to you because He is inclusive of your being also.

The concept of the universal means the affirmation of an idea that other than the object of meditation nothing else exists; that is called universalisation. If you believe God is all, you should not think of non-God at the same time. That is the essence of concentration. If something exists, and only that exists and nothing else exists, and your object of meditation is so complete in itself that other than it cannot be, that is called the universal concept. You should not think of anything except that. How can something be outside of that object? First of all, you have to convince yourself that the object of your meditation is all-pervading and it is all-existence. It should be the only thing that exists. It should not be one of the things in the world. That is concentration.

Spiritual life is not easy. Its prerequisite is a lot of thought. We have to think in a new way altogether; to think only of One thing, and not anything else, because nothing is outside of what you are thinking of. The essence of concentration is exclusive absorption in an omnipresent reality. At that stage everything which up to then was regarded by you as finite becomes an integral part of the Cosmic Being. It is an awakening into the true relationship of things to Reality. When you realise the integral connection with the Absolute, you will realise every particle of sand, in every particle of dust, everywhere, is God Himself. That is meditation. The moment you are aware of this, you are happy. It does not need sitting in the meditation hall with closed eyes. It should not be that you are happy inside the meditation hall and unhappy outside. You must be happy in the street, in the market place, in the bathroom, and not only in

the temple or a meditation hall. That is your travelling in space. You must travel in consciousness first

Q: Is time equal to consciousness?

Swamiji: Time is consciousness of the succession of events. This is different from the Time Spirit, which is Narayana Himself. The hub and the wheel and the spokes—all are a figure of speech, a cliché of the sacred text even. As is the analogy of black rat and white rat eating the thread which means time, that is day and night is the symbolism of time.

Q: How to solve the problems arising out of meditation?

Swamiji: In meditation, you have to determine what you concentrate upon, whether you meditate with or without pranayama. And for how long you should meditate. And search and find out if there are any deep desires which have been suppressed. These will raise their hoods like a stricken cobra. These are the points or questions which must be considered if any problem arises in meditation.

27. SOCIETY VERSUS INDIVIDUALS

Visitor: How is society different from individuals?

Swamiji: Individuality has many aspects. Social relationship with others is one. Then there is the psychological aspects—you think and feel in a specific way and have particular aims and objects. This is unique to yourself and distinguishes you from others. Then you have a particular relationship with the world as a whole or the cosmos, and finally with the Maker, the Absolute Itself. Each of these aspects is emphasised in various places in the Bhagavad Gita. It is a universal system that the Bhagavad Gita deals with. That is why they say that it is a universal scripture. It is not a Hindu scripture, nor is it a religious scripture. It is the scripture of yoga—in the sense of your attunement of your ‘being’ with every level of reality. I repeat: every level of reality. You may spend a whole life in its study, yet you will not be content with it.

But all aspects of your individuality are not manifest in society. Society is thus different from the individual. The difference is because of the fact that it is a partial manifestation of the individual conditioned by the circumstances of the matter or the case, its time and place, the purpose, and so on and so forth. Social laws, social morality, its ethics, etiquettes, needs, even politics—leave alone sociology—these are all conditioned by the requirement of a particular pattern of relationship among the human minds. And when the pattern changes, ethics, morality, politics, government, everything changes. That is why new laws are continuously being enacted by parliaments. The pattern of relationship among the individuals changes. It is so because of the differences in mental levels that manifest themselves at different times in the course of the process of evolution. Therefore, new patterns of society emerge in the course of history. You have layers and layers of personality within you, and each one has these layers. When one particular layer comes up, there is one particular outlook on life, and when that changes, the outlook and the relationships change. So infinity is inside you! Infinite changes are possible in society—giving rise to infinite permutations and combinations. Therefore, there is an infinity of relationships dormant in the human psyche, all of which

are not manifest at the same time. Even God would not manifest the totality of His powers at one time. They say that this universe is one—one particular possibility of manifestation—and not the only possibility. It is a particular abstraction from the total whole, and that particular abstraction is the present universe. The next creation may not be like this, it may be different, even as the next government may not be like the present government, etc. And you will not be thinking of morality and ethics after two thousand years in the same terms as you do today. Your ideas of morality and ethics will also change.

So you now understand the difference between the individual and society. The individual is the conditioning factor of society, and therefore you have to understand the individual first before you can understand the vicissitudes of human society. Then comes the question why the individual is made in a particular manner, why the individual mind works in a particular way. A human mind works in a human way, a frog's mind works in a frog's way, a cow's mind in a cow's way. Again why should the human mind work in the human way? There is then the particular relationship with the universe. Now, from society you come to the individual and from the individual to the universe—and why should the universe be like this? The Cosmic Mind manifests only certain potentialities at a given moment of time due to various reasons. A particular pattern of manifestation of the Cosmic Mind determines the world. The structure of the universe thus determines the individual, and the individual determines the society. So from effect you go to the cause, from society to the individual, and from the individual to the universe, and from the universe to the Absolute. This is hard stuff to understand. It requires deep philosophical study.

Ashramite: What comes first, Swamiji, the society or the individual?

Swamiji: Again you are asking the same question. Have you not heard what I have been saying?

Ashramite: I have heard.

Swamiji: Cause first, effect thereafter—God is the First Cause, then the universe comes into being; there is then the individual, then the society. How can there be society without the individual? You

remove all individuals and where would the society be?

Ashramite: So you've to first start with society then . .

Swamiji: Yes. Your social relations should be controlled first. The practices in yoga of *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama* and *pratyahara* are relevant in this context. *Yama* stands for social relationship, *niyama* for personal discipline. Then you move into the area of cosmic relationship—*asana*, *pranayama*, on to samadhi, which is God-realisation. The Patanjali System is nothing but psychological abstraction from the external to the internal, from the internal to the universal, and from the universal to the Absolute.

Swamiji to an American psychiatrist: Why do people take drugs?

Psychiatrist: To escape from emotional problems and to experience other realms... and dejection, boredom.

Swamiji: Yes, escape—escapism. They can't face reality. It is very difficult. Essentially it is lack of understanding. It finally comes to that, lack of understanding—and everything follows. They have no proper education. They gather useless information and get bored. An understanding of life—how can you have this understanding? It is not something that you can get from a shop or from the market place. So where does it come from? (*Very jocularly*) They say understanding should be really called upper standing. You stand above everything and you (*laughing*) wrongly call it understanding! (*heartily laughter*).

A visitor: Can a spiritual man be called an anti-social individual?

Swamiji: An anti-social individual is the most dangerous element.

Visitor: But an anti-social individual is eventually a reformer. He re-orientes society—so also a spiritual man does not conform to society either and is a leader of society.

Swamiji: If a person is anti-social, he is not a spiritual man. He is a foolish man. (*Jocularly*) God is the most dangerous man, therefore people are afraid of Him. He does not conform to society, and He has created this world (*laughter*).

Another visitor: How does one tell a spiritual man from an ordinary

man who conforms to norms?

Swamiji: A spiritual man never shows that he is spiritual. That is one important point. The moment he demonstrates his spirituality, he ceases to be one. A spiritual man behaves normally and as any organic or inorganic body in creation does a cow, a dog, a pig or a man. The moment you come to know that he is a spiritual man, it means there is something lacking in him. He is not really spiritual.

An ashramite: How come?

Swamiji: It is only egoism that projects a personality. Otherwise he will be like you only.

Another ashramite: He identifies himself with everyone. This is spirituality.

Swamiji: He is absolutely normal in every sense and circumstance. He need not have to announce himself to be something different. The ego of attachment will come out of the spiritual image that is projected. There is no ego in a spiritual man. It is gone completely. He will be one with everyone. Even that he will only try to be so but will not project his ego to do so.

Visitor: If the others find out that he is a spiritual man

Swamiji: It would be their mistake (*laughter*).

Visitor: Ah! But it is nice to find out the spiritual man

Swamiji: You will soon find that you are mistaken. It is a question of a second, to have the light on if you know how to put on the switch.

Another visitor: Why do we remember dreams?

Swamiji: Sometimes you are aware that you are dreaming and that also is dream only.

Visitor: Why is it?

Swamiji: That is the peculiarity of the mind. A person who is dreaming that he is dreaming is called a philosopher. But if you don't know that you are dreaming, you are caught. You are in a very unreal world, really speaking. But if you know that you are in an unreal world, and even that knowledge is a dream only, you

are at least aware that it is unreal. That is called philosophy, and philosophy also is an unreality only. It is a part of the world. It is only a tiger you see in a dream, that dream tiger standing before you. It can roar in such a way that the sound can wake you up, even though it is unreal. But your waking up is real, though the dream tiger was unreal. So the real effect can follow an unreal cause. Very interesting, isn't it?

Ashramite: But the dreams that you see in the dream, that doesn't help at all.

Swamiji: That will not help. It is only a phenomenon.

Ashramite: How does it happen?

Swamiji: Because of the peculiarity of the mind. There are layers of mind; one works at one time and the others do not.

Ashramite: If you experience a dream while in meditation, what is it? It is not sleeping because you are conscious that it is collection of a dream only. What is it?

Swamiji: You can't call it a dream. How can you call it a dream?

Ashramite: Why does that dream come up like that?

Swamiji: Dream cannot come in meditation.

Ashramite: The recollection?

Swamiji: Why do you call it a dream then? A dream is an unconscious occurrence. You have no control over it. But meditation is a conscious effort.

Ashramite: But why does that surface at that time? Is it because the mind is comparatively calm and so the recollection comes in?

Swamiji: That can be like so many other things that come into the mind. While meditating you might recall many things. You might even remember events of your childhood.

Ashramite: But that recollection is deeper than the ordinary recollection.

Swamiji: Yes, Yes, because your mind is in meditation—concentrated better—your recollection is better. As a matter of fact, only in

meditation will you start remembering everything. Because you are forcing the mind to concentrate, it creates trouble for you by turning up all past memories. “Do you know what kind of person you are?” It tells you! That is what memory means. It tells you, “Don’t think you are as good as you think you are. Why are you meditating?” Even Buddha is supposed to have had such experiences. He was threatened: “What do you think you are! Get up, go,” and so on, something started telling him. But he remained unmoved. All sorts of temptations came: “There is something better than what you are asking for, take it; why are you torturing your body? Get up.” Then more beautiful things come up: delicious food, a hall of fine, glorious visions, very sensational and pleasant. Buddha paid no heed.

Ashramite: Nachiketa did the same thing.

Swamiji: Yes. Something like that. Then finally the illumination came to Buddha. So you will have to pass through all these stages if you take up yoga seriously. There will at last come a stage when there are no longer any visions. But if you are serious and wholeheartedly practise meditation, you will get all these troubles. First will come temptations of various types. They will tell you: “Here it is, this is something better than what you are asking for. You are asking for an airy nothing. Here is a concrete beautiful thing”. But if you are strong enough and do not listen to its voice, then you will be threatened by all sorts of forces in the world. This can go on for some time and there might be harassment from all sides—social, political, familial. Physical illnesses might worry you. In the midst of all these odds, you will have to hold firm to your position. Whatever it is, I’ll not give up. Then, there is a chance. So there is a test period before something comes to you.

It is the dark night of the soul, as the mystics call it. The soul passes through it, completely oblivious of everything, not knowing where it is moving. It weeps and cries and begs for support, and cannot find any. Dante describes it as the “Inferno”. Purgatory is the next stage, where you are cleansed of all impurities. Then comes paradise. There are three stages, Inferno, Purgatory and Paradise (*laughs*). Everyone has to pass through these. Hell is suffering, torture of every kind. Almost like going through death. At that stage you feel even death is better than that kind of life. You pass that

stage. Then you pass through a process of illumination—visions of various levels of being, where your nature gets purified. Finally, there is the transcendental experience. And that is the Goal. So you must be aware of all these things. You must expect all these things and, when they come, you should not be caught unawares and say, “Oh! What is this! I never expected these things.” You must expect everything. The world is made in such a way that you must expect everything. Friends become enemies, father and son disagree, they go to court and fight, husband and wife quarrel, nature is not friendly, the government is unhelpful, society is against you, health is failing, there is poverty. You have every kind of problem. But this is the world. You cannot help it. You cannot expect only honey and milk to flow in the world; you should be ready for the thorns as well

Ashramite: At such times, do you try to go into the cause of it...?

Swamiji: The cause is very clear. It is the old impressions of the mind working havoc. You have passed through various lives, through various incarnations. Nothing is happening outside. It is happening inside only. It is projected outside like a cinema. The picture is in the film, but you see it on the screen outside it. Even so, all the causes are in your mind only. And it looks as if it is happening outside in the space-time world.

Ashramite: You mean to say I have got the thorn in my mind?

Swamiji: Everything is inside.

Ashramite: And it has pricked me from outside, on my finger

Swamiji: It looks like an external phenomenon due to the projection of it in space-time. The example I gave you of the cinema: The picture is not on the screen, it is in the film. It is somewhere else, but it is projected outwardly and you see it somewhere else. Similarly, all defects are seen outside. You see it here, there, moving about and you say: “Here is a mistake, and there is a mistake.” But it is a projection from you going out in space and time.

28. PARABHAKTI

The summer sun has become too strong for the devotees to gather for darshan in the open outside Rev. Swami Krishnananda's Kutir, Guru Kripa. What worried the devotees was that if they were to gather there Swamiji would not shift his chair from his fixed place where the sun would be fierce on his head, and he was still not quite out of a severe bout of asthma. He also refused to consider a Shamiana being put up overhead. One is led to conclude from this and his other routine personal habits that he likes to live with nature to the maximum extent practicable. Maybe he thinks that the view of the mountains far and near, the open sky and the Ganga that glimmers as it lilyingly flows under the bright sun will be marred by the crude intervention of a Shamiana. Perhaps Swamiji also feels that the monkeys frisking about on the trees above and on the low parapet wall around the open space may get scared by this intrusion. The monkeys invariably form a part of the morning Darshan-hour. So do birds. This morning we gathered inside his kutir, and so it would be for the rest of the summer and the rainy season, till winter comes.

A student, who had been studying Kabir, asked whether nirguna bhakti was not superior to other forms of bhakti. Rev. K. by his characteristic vivisectioning sharp and analytical questions had brought the student finally to the point.

Swamiji: What is *nirguna*? Without any quality. And you want to love that which is without quality? How can you love something which has no quality? Because love is attraction for some quality, and anything that has no quality is not capable of attracting one. So where do we stand now?

Student: Kabir sings of such an object.

Swamiji: What is your understanding of *nirguna*? Do not worry about what other people say. Your reason must accept what they say. You cannot accept what others say unless your own reason is able to substantiate it. It is not possible to love something without any quality, something which has no characteristics. The question is what characteristics it has. You have got a peculiar idea of the word *nirguna*. Actually, the word does not mean "bereft of qualities".

What it means is that it is a kind of quality which is different from the qualities you see in the world. Or, as some say, it is a thing which possesses all qualities, whether you term them good or bad, and yet is *nirguna*. Because everything is in it, the question of good or bad does not arise. The question of good or bad comes only in comparison with another and when everything is in it, there is no question of comparison. Therefore, either it is an embodiment of every conceivable quality or it is something which has no quality.

Now, to have “no quality” is also a quality. That is one definition. So it is just impossible to conceive of anything without any attributes. When you conceive what you call God, or whatever, in your mind as a substance or reality or Being which is inclusive of every quality, not only some qualities which you like, then you have conceived rightly. You think God should send rain, or warmth, He should give you long life, wealth, promotion etc. God, you believe, is a person capable of blessing you with all that you require. But you do not expect him to punish you for wrong doing. If He does, then you do not like that God. A retributory justice is not what He should give; God should act in such a way that it will always give satisfaction to your ego. This is the conditioned quality you attribute to God.

You cannot say that a judge is bad if he has ordered somebody to be hanged. Even if you have sentimental objections, you do not call the judge a bad man. God is like a judge—He is the dispenser of the Universal Law. His is the quality of Perfection, and what you call *nirguna* is nothing but attribution to God the quality of Utter Perfection and All-Inclusiveness and exclusion of nothing. When you conceive that, it is called *parabhakti*, and is the same as *jnana*. But if you think of Him as a conditioned being, as a father, mother, and so on and so forth with sentimental attributes foisted upon Him then it is *saguna bhakti*.

But then, you have to proceed from *saguna* to *nirguna*. You cannot think of God as all-inclusive, Absolute. It is not possible for all minds to conceive such a thing, though He is that ultimately. In the beginning you must take Him as an ideal which is conducive to your sentiments. Then, as you will be gradually expanding your sentiments into larger dimensions, you will find that He includes every other sentiment also.

What is good for you may be bad for somebody else. There is a popular story of two people: a farmer who wanted rain immediately over his dry fields and a man who was building his house. When the farmer prays for rain, the other man prays to God not to send rain because his house under construction will fall. Now what do you say? Should God send rain or should He not? Both are neighbours, and both pray for the particular favour they are in need of. That is to say, that our devotion quite often is human, sentimental, and very limited. To think of God like that is like bargaining with the shopkeeper or the tongawalas. In spiritual terms you think of Him as the dispenser of Universal Affection, as Universal Perfection. It need not necessarily be sentimental satisfaction, but it will be legal justice which may not give sentimental satisfaction. And if you can see satisfaction in that justice, then you are a spiritual man. Love and law should go together, God combines both qualities. He may not give you what you want, because you may have asked for something which is wrong. Why should He give it to you just because you ask for it?

Question: Love, we say, is what we want to offer God. What is love?

Swamiji: It is attraction towards something, any kind of attraction, any pull, anything pulling another thing is called love. Even if an apple falls from the tree it is love only, as you may put it. You can interpret it psychologically, socially, politically, spiritually, morally—at any level. Anyway, ultimately there is one law only that works in love. When that law works through emotion you call it love, when that law works through physical objects you call it gravitation, when the law works through the mind you call it sanity, when the law works through society you call it organisation, when that law works through government you call it the constitution; when the law works through God it is moksha. That is all. It is the same thing working in various ways.

Q: So the word ‘love’ as we use it in the ordinary world is love working through the emotions? At the emotional level?

Swamiji: Yes. There is only one love working everywhere. It is interpreted in various ways. When, therefore, you talk of God as *nirguna* you attribute no qualities to Him. But that is a mistaken

notion. It has all the qualities, any quality can be attributed to it, and it is present there, just as in a block of stone any statue is present.

Q: Then there is no difference between *saguna* and *nirguna*?

Swamiji: There is no difference. The difference is created by your mind.

Q: But the words indicate the difference between the two. There is an external quality in one which is absent in the other: the visible and the invisible.

Swamiji: There is no difference like that; anything that you say about Him is an attribute. God is neither *saguna* nor *nirguna*. You cannot call Him by any discriminating name like this. Whatever you say about Him is a quality that you attribute to Him and by attributing a quality you condition Him in space and time. *Nirguna* itself is a quality you are attributing to Him. You may think of Him in any way. He is not like that. Nobody can think God as He is. Yet there is no harm in thinking Him as you want to see Him. It is acceptable to Him (*laughs*).

Q: Which is the Self the Upanishads condemned?

Swamiji: Upanishads never condemn anything; they raise you up.

Q: I mean the distinction between the Self that loves everything and “self-love”. Which is the Self referred to here?

Swamiji: There are Infinite “Selves”. Any Self can be taken to mean that Self.

Q: What is that self-love?

Swamiji: Love is “pull”. In this context, which is the Self that is “pulling”?

Q: Kindly explain.

Swamiji: The subject is pulling the object, and the object is pulling the subject, the manifest and unmanifest Self, the Absolute—the Self which is “pulling”. Anything outside you pulls you, therefore, you are not really separate from that thing. You are seeing with your eye.

Q: Is there any “outside”?

Swamiji: It may not be there, but you think it is there. Why do you get frightened by the tiger in the dream when it is not there? So, even if it is not there it still works (*laughs*). You are outside it. And that pulls you. Yes! That which pulls you is what, according to your viewpoint, is outside you, and it can be at any level—from the physical up to the Absolute. There is the social level, sensory level, mental level, intellectual level, moral level, and there is the Absolute level. And each succeeding level transcends the previous level, so that you cannot say that the world contains anything but the “Self”. The whole universe is nothing but the Self.

Q: The whole world is nothing but the Self, and this is what is meant by the honey—

Swamiji: The Upanishads use the word “honey” to explain the pull one exerts upon another; the Upanishads really mean to explain the basic independence of things by the use of the word honey. Honey means—you eat and when you get satisfaction, you call it sweet. Any satisfaction of a need or an urge is sweet, it is honey. Because you get satisfaction of any kind of urge, it is sweet, it is “honey”. This is why people want objects. That pull is exerted because of the basic inseparability of things; or else the pull is not there. There is an invisible connection between one thing and another which the eye cannot see—but that pull still works. And that is the thing that keeps you hopeful always for a better future. Always you think, tomorrow will be better; we never say ultimately everything will go to dogs; we say, on the other hand, whatever be the difficulty on hand, one day it will be all right. This is the hope which every person entertains. How does that hope come? This is not logically deducible. It comes from a source which is trans-empirical.

Q: Swamiji, you have said that everything is a completeness, a whole by itself and rests in the whole universe. Yet you state there is a link between all the wholes that are in the universal whole. Which is this link when each whole has an independence of its own?

Swamiji: The higher Self is the link between the lower subject and object. You are seeing someone sitting there. You are the subject, he

is the object, and there is some link between you. That link is the Self which is transcending you both. And that Self which links you both is also the subject to another object which is still higher and which you can't see now. And that is again linked by a still higher Self. Like that it goes on endlessly until you reach the Absolute. These are the planes of existence.

Q: So the link is not with the Absolute directly but only with a higher self?

Swamiji: It is a manifestation at a lower level. It is like a Patwari is the Government, a Tehsildar is the Government, a District Magistrate is the Government. Which is the Government? They are all different degrees of Government. So all are Government. Similarly everything is Self, but various levels of manifestation (*a deep pause*). If you are able to speak like this always, you will not even eat your lunch. You feel so happy even to think like this. There are certain things which can make you happy even without physical possession. As, for example, when you read Shakespeare or Kalidas, why are you happy, my dear friend? I put this question to you. Yes, there is a larger self which is evoked by the study of such things. So it is the Self that gives happiness, and not objects.

This is made clear by the statement that the Atman is satisfied by the Atman. The deeper you go into the Self, the less you feel the need for external objects. The higher the Self, the better is the satisfaction. This is what you have been studying in your Kabir. You must realise that there is a connection between the subject and the object. You have got a wrong notion that one thing is different from another. It is thus that you have got love for or hatred of things. But if you know that both are linked together for a higher purpose, you will attribute reality to that rather than to you and that object. And that is what you call spiritual meditation.

Meditation is nothing but the recognition in consciousness of the connecting link between subject and object. Then you will have regard neither for yourself nor for somebody else. Neither will you love yourself nor hate another, because you are connected with something else which is transcendent to both. And like that, there are many levels of transcendence until you reach that ultimate transcendence, which you call God. And that thought itself will make

you happy. Not only happiness, it will give you all power. You need not run from shop to shop for anything then; you can get everything by such thinking itself, everything will flow to you by the power of this thought. If you know how to manipulate the thought.

When the relationship between circumstances is not understood, you feel they are uncongenial. When you feel that your hand is not congenial to you and you cut it off, it is called schizophrenia. When you lose sight of the connection between circumstances, you feel like hanging yourself. It is unhealthy thinking, improper because proper understanding is not there.

Q: What is the *pratyahara* for it?

Swamiji: There is no *pratyahara*. You have to be properly educated. What we learn is but trash. True education is nothing but the insight into reality. If you lack that insight you are an uneducated being despite all certificates you may possess; they are meaningless. By insight into reality, I don't mean the highest Reality but the reality immediately above. There are various degrees of reality, and reality is nothing but the Self. When you have insight into the reality immediately above, you are supposed to be an educated man. If you cling to the lower one, then you are an untutored rustic who takes things only by the perception of it through the senses and does not apply reason properly. When you judge the lower in terms of the higher, it is called morality. Ethics, justice, righteousness, etc., is nothing but judging the lower in terms of the higher. But if you cannot have the consciousness of the higher, how can you judge? You can have only a limited view.

Then in answer to another question Swamiji said:

It is a peculiar notion that love of God means hatred of the world. Love of God is love of righteousness. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." It does not specifically say "love", while love may be included in righteousness. But righteousness is the proper word: the Cosmic Justice. Cosmic Law includes love; as a matter of fact, there is nothing above this law. Happiness, power and sense of perception, everything follows. We are afraid of law, justice... because we think of it as a punishment inflicted upon us. Love is nothing but justice

of things. What can be done if you don't like justice? How can there be love and happiness without justice? Health is a satisfaction you get out of maintaining the physical laws of the body. But if you say, "Oh! I don't want any law. I won't even follow the law of the physical body," it will not do. Law is the operation of the harmony in things, balance that is maintained at all levels. That is what is called law. It is not an infliction. It is a system of working in a harmonious manner.

But we do not like harmony; we have often some selfish motive, an axe to grind. We do not treat others as we expect to be treated ourselves. Here lies the mistake. We can't be happy with onesided favours. How can you be happy if your family is suffering, how can the family be happy if the community is suffering, how can the community be happy if the whole nation is suffering, how can the nation be happy if the whole world is suffering, and how can the world be happy if the whole cosmos is going out of order? So which is the proper thing to think of, ultimately? Your family or larger things? (*Laughs.*) If all the planets go out of order from their orbits, what is the use of your U.N.O., your family love, etc. They can crash on you and crush you in one moment.

There is a law higher than you are thinking of. Ignoring it completely, you are busy thinking of your bank balance and such petty, silly, things. You are exhorted to give in charity, love your neighbour as yourself, and so on. Why should you love your neighbour as yourself? Because yourself is present there; that pulls you automatically. Why should you have otherwise to love your neighbour as yourself? What purpose? Only because yourself is there that pulls it.

So again the higher self is operating even when you do social work and even ordinary government service. Everything is conditioned by that one law only. The divine law.

Q: How to distinguish illusion from reality? The mind can give a false vision by the illusion it produces in place of reality. What is an unreality?

Swamiji: Illusion is not an unreality. It is the wrong juxtaposition of reality. The mind can never produce what it has never conceived. It cannot hence replace reality. The snake in the rope, for instance. You

have seen the snake and know what it is. The rope is there in reality. Both the snake and the rope are realities. The illusion of the snake in the rope is the juxtaposition of two realities in their wrong context. The mistake you have made is just this. Each exists somewhere. So illusion is not a part of non-existence. That is why we talk of the world as an illusion. The world is illusion, unreal because of the idea that the mountains, the trees, the rivers and the people are outside you. It is this conception of the world that is unreal, while the world itself is real in the sense that it is a degree of reality which makes it an illusion. It is the externality-consciousness which you call the world. The thing as such is perfectly all right, just as the tiger in the dream. The tiger in the dream is neither real nor unreal. It is real in the sense that it is an idea in the head, but it is unreal in the sense that it is outside you. If you know that it is inside you, you will not feel frightened of the tiger you have imagined in the dream. So, if you think of the whole world contained in a cosmic form, you will not be frightened of the world. But you have an idea that it is outside you, and that frightens you like the tiger in the dream. It is not outside. There is one organic completeness working everywhere.

29. AGONY BEFORE ECSTASY

Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj is in a reflective mood. There are a dozen or more people in his room but he addresses one visitor in particular in intense seriousness, looking only at him. Many questions are not recorded, only Swami Krishnanandaji's answers are given. The visitor has taken down the dialogues of the morning darshan over an extended period, excerpts of which are given here.

Swamiji: You will ultimately become like a child. All your greatness will go with the wind. Too much book learning is not good—you have to give your heart to God, not merely write on Him, before it is too late! What is the use of all your learning otherwise?

Swamiji gave a terrifying description of the agonies before the ecstasy.

Swamiji: Like Christ, one must be crucified, like Buddha one must suffer before one gets Enlightenment. We must endure all sufferings if we really want to realise God. If we don't want God then we will be free of these tortures; but if we truly seek God, we will have to weep, not merely in tears but the soul must cry out for God. When this happens and the ground breaks from under your feet, you, cry in desperation—intensely longing for Release. And then Grace, or whatever you want to call it, comes and you are free...

A true devotee never asks God for anything.

Question: What if you ask for Liberation?

Swamiji: In that case, you are asking for God Himself, God alone, not asking for another entity. You must not use God as a means to achieve some end—God is an end in Himself.

There are three kinds of disciples: one like a watery banana stem. No matter what you do, it won't burn. Yet if it stays in the fire long enough, some effect will eventually be seen. Second like firewood; you must blow at it, tend it carefully, and it will catch fire, and the third like gun powder which catches fire immediately .

When *bhaktas* get a lot of happiness—things are going well with them in life—they praise God. This is like you praise the sun in winter. But when these *bhaktas* suffer they condemn Him, as you

curse the sun in summer.

You praise God as if giving him certificates... Oxford University wanted to give an honorary D. Litt. to Bernard Shaw, who said ‘It’s an insult for you to offer that to me...’ God doesn’t care for your praise. It is all subjective—it gives you pleasure by giving Him praise.

Q: What is the meaning of Darsan?

Swamiji: It is seeing a holy object. The influence it has on you can be great, depending upon the strength of the source. For example, if you sit for an hour out in the sun in summer at noon, you may get a tan but if you sit before candlelight, it won’t affect you.

Q: What is prasad?

Swamiji: It is taking a consecrated thing. It may affect you immediately or much later.

Q: Is pilgrimage of any use?

Swamiji: It depends on what your motive is. Is heaven the motive? An action may produce good reaction (karma), bad reaction, or no reaction at all. To get moksha you have to get beyond all karmas—good karma as well as bad karma. A *jivanmukta* would vanish without karma so he must have some *prarabdha* karma that is *sattvic* that compels him to do good; otherwise he could not act at all.

Q: Is there really such a thing as grace?

Swamiji: You want God to be partial; why should he be partial to you? God is just, as Isavasya Upanishad tells us, He has established and fixed the law permanently. But this law of karma is not mechanical. When Ramana Maharishi attained liberation at such a young age, it was not that he just got ‘there’ quickly as it appears. The ceremony of awarding you a Ph.D may take a moment, but you must have laboured six years for it. So Ramana may have passed through the ‘steps’ in his previous life.

Q: What is the difference between mantra japa and meditation?

Swamiji: Japa is the verbal or mental repetition of words. Whereas in meditation you are dealing with concepts. Usually, you cannot

separate the two, i.e. words and concepts. When you think of a tree, you think of the word tree. The two are practically inseparable, but theoretically they can be distinguished.

Q: Then we must repeat the words over and over until the mind becomes overburdened with words and drops words.

Swamiji: Mantra is that which protects you and elevates you. All mantras are equally good. They are suited to each individual in accordance with his or her temperament.

Brahmacharya is living as Brahman lives. It is not just a Now externally imposed, if it is only that way then the mind will rebel against it. It should be spontaneous—it should arise from within. If there are falls now and then, in the beginning, don't worry about them. Just forget about what has happened and carry on—after a while it will become a habit.

Q: What is your definition of morality

Swamiji: Morality is the attunement of oneself with the environment one finds oneself in at any time. It is always changing—the law evolves. When you expand the nature of your being, the morality changes. Morality may be relative from place to place, time to time, but it is of absolute necessity. You cannot sever yourself from the environment because you are vitally related to it.

To find out if an action is moral or not, apply it to everybody and imagine what would be the result. Suppose everyone tells lies, then lying won't work. Suppose everyone is a thief, then stealing won't work. If, when universalised, it works, then it will be considered good. Morality is realising that everyone is an end in himself—not a means to some end. Others also are subjects—not objects to be exploited. Anything that conduces to the higher integration of personality is moral. Anything that tends to disintegration is immoral. The intention behind the action is what is most important. A man makes an opening in the wall—it is all right if he is planning to put a door there. It is different if he is a thief planning to steal.

Q: But they say that the path to hell is paved with the best intentions?

Swamiji: When the intention is bereft of understanding, it is merely emotional and bad karma results. All factors must be taken into

consideration. A king had good intentions in giving away a thousand cows to the poor, but by chance a Brahmin's cow got into the herd that was to be donated. The Brahmin wanted his cow back. The king had no way of finding it and offered 10, 20, 50 and even 100 cows as compensation—but the Brahmin would not settle for any but his cow. He cursed the generous king to be reborn as a lizard.

Q: But the really spiritual man is beyond the laws of morality?

Swamiji: At that stage you cannot call him a man—he is a Universal Being. He is beyond law, but an ordinary human being cannot break the law. The law works only for individuals, not for the *akasa*, which is universal. According to circumstances one may modify one's rules of behaviour. When you travel by train, you modify your programme somewhat, e.g. you cannot take a bath. You have to change even more if you are a general on a campaign—you cannot act as you do in peacetime. Some might even steal rather than die of starvation.

Q: They say it is necessary to follow the Guru without demur?

Swamiji: (*Jovially*) Yes, otherwise one may land oneself in trouble. A disciple and his Guru happened to go to a land where they found any quantity of any food costing two pennies. The observant Guru said, “We must leave this place immediately, it is a place of fools.” The disciple however stays on despite the Guru's advice, and with overeating becomes very fat. After a time a wall collapses and a man is injured. The king wants to hang the man responsible for the mishap. They blame the mason, then the cement mixer, then the water carrier, and each claims he is not responsible for the faulty construction (20 years ago) of the wall. The water carrier says he got late in bringing water because a woman was singing. They bring this woman and are about to hang her but the rope is too long, for she is thin. Then the king orders a “fat man” to be brought. They found no fatter man than this disciple, who is brought before the king. The disciple recalls what the Guru had told him and prays, “Oh Guru, please save me.” His Guru, who was an omniscient *jivanmukta*, comes to the rescue of his disciple. He appears before the hangman and says, “I want to die—this is a very auspicious time—whoever dies now will be a king in the next birth.” The hangman informs

the king of the happening. The king rushes to the gallows saying: “Then let me die,” and he is hanged. As they escape, the Guru tells his disciple: “You should have listened to me, I told you this was a place of fools.”

To various queries, Swami Krishnanandaji made the following remarks: If you want to live 100 years, it is a sin; if you want to die, it is a sin. You should not condemn life outright; make the best of your life here, 100 years is only symbolic.

The utter condemnation of this world is a negative, pessimistic attitude, hence wrong. But also falling in love with it, being captured by the beauty of the world—is also wrong. The truth is somewhere in the middle. Some fanatics believe that their mantra alone works, and also only if enunciated correctly. A Tamil devotee used to chant “*Namah Chivaya*” with such faith that he was able to walk on water. One day a grammarian corrected him: “*Namah Shivaya*.” But when the man started reciting correctly—he fell into the water.

A sweeper wanted a mantra, and approached a proud Namboodiri Brahmin of Kerala. He was angry that she should even ask for a mantra. She persisted. He yelled at her: “Frog curry” (*Tappla curry*). In her innocence, she took it to be the mantra given to her and repeated it with such devotion that she became enlightened. When people asked her who her Guru was, she mentioned the name of that proud Brahmin. People went to him and raved about his “disciple’s” saintliness. He had forgotten all about her—but when he remembered he felt very sorry, for he was still in the samsara and she had become enlightened with the “frog curry” mantra.

Swamiji: Our knots, *granthis*, are on account of our personal needs, and our relationships are established on these. One must distinguish between what one needs—that which is necessary—and what one wants—which is unnecessary.

Q: Some sages had families—is celibacy necessary?

Swamiji: I may live in a garden, yet I don’t think of it as my garden. So, only if there is psychological attachment can you say that the rishis had families. The physical presence of or living amongst ‘wife’ and ‘children’ means nothing.

Q: Ishvara is associated with sleep, Hiranyagarbha with dream, and Virat with waking—does this mean all our individual experiences come out of sleep as the world comes out of Isvara?

Swamiji: The waking state, dream state, and deep sleep state are more and more dull in the Jiva, but the reverse is the case of the cosmic state where Isvara is greater than Hiranyagarbha, which is greater than Virat. It is like seeing your reflection in a river from its bank, where you appear upside down. Everything is upside down here—*sirsasana* is like that, everything is upside down for us.

You must see the object as subject. When you think of someone or something as an object, it is an insult to that person or thing. When the object becomes the subject, it is yoga. You are able to see that the object does not depend on the subject. The subject is in the object, only you do not see it.

Q: How do the Vedas give knowledge of Nirguna Brahman, if they were revealed by Saguna Brahman?

Swamiji: If Vedas are eternal, they cannot be said to come from anyone else. If they come from someone else, they cannot be eternal. So to say Ishvara created, or revealed, them is only a way of speaking. The Vedas are a thorn to remove the thorn of ignorance. They negate the Vyavaharika plane, but do not give knowledge of Brahman. A tiger in a dream can remove the dream experience—by waking you up with fear.

Q: In Brahma Sutra 1.2.26, Sankara says the gods have knowledge of Vedas. Then are the gods omniscient and on the level of Ishvara?

Swamiji: Only Ishvara can really be omniscient. The “knowledge” of the gods is only a concession—but it cannot be equated to Ishvara; no one can be equal to Him.

Q: In Mundaka Upanishad 3.1.1 Sankara says God is pure, wise, free, and omniscient, then how can he be limited by Cosmic Ignorance—*maya*? *Maya* is often called the *upadhi*—adjunct of Ishvara—is it a mistake to call it an imperfection?

Swamiji: You can see the sun. But suppose you have a cataract, then you cannot see the sun properly—but that is your fault—not the sun’s. It is an imperfection of your vision to say that Brahman has

limitations or adjuncts.

Q: Some Advaitins say Sarva Mukti means we attain Ishvara, then finally all attain Brahman; but Ishvara is not different from Brahman, so how can we attain this entity?

Swamiji: This is only a theory that may appeal to your sentiments—it is not real. When you say “all” attain, you have an idea of a finite number of souls—but really the souls are infinite, there can be no end—no “all” attaining. So this is a democratic theory that can be misunderstood. There is no ontological entity called Ishvara to be attained. Ishvara is like the X in a mathematical equation. It has no ultimate value but it helps you to solve the problem—of Reality—just as X created by you for the purpose of solving a problem. You think that Ishvara is infinite and the world is finite. You think that the finite has come from the infinite. But it really is not so; there is no finite

All these theories of cause-effect i.e. creation, appeal to you. If the Sruti gives the ultimate truth—that the infinite comes from the infinite, which means nothing is (really) produced—you won’t accept it. But really Sruti teaches us metaphysically—not literally. They mean to teach non-difference, not really creation.

The infinite is in the finite, the whole is in the part, the soul pervades the body, that is how the infinite can be here in the finite, as it is said in the Gita. The ocean is in the drop; but the ocean which is so vast cannot actually be in the tiny drop; so says the Bhagavadgita—I am here, yet I am not here.

No one can be as difficult as God—He is a confusion Master. For really the drop is in the ocean, and the ocean is in the drop in a way which we don’t quite grasp. The essence of the ocean and the essence of the drops is the same—it is water—they are not two.

Q: What is the benefit of *sirsasana*? Sivananda says it is good for memory and brain power. Rajneesh says it makes you stupid. Who is right?

Swamiji: *Sirsasana* is the best asana. But it should be done for five minutes at the most. You won’t get good memory immediately. Something may do good as well as bad. Someone says, “Eat, it is good for you, you will be strong.” Another says, “Don’t eat—

it's bad for you, you will get diarrhoea.” Actually your memory improves as your body consciousness decreases. The more the body consciousness, the less the memory and the ability to concentrate.

Q: What is the locus of *avidya*—is it in the *jiva*... as the Bhamati school asserts... or in the Brahman... as the Vivarana school asserts?

Swamiji: It can have no place, for it is not real. Each thinks it belongs to the other. A guest showed up at a wedding party. The father of the bride thought that the man had been invited by the groom's family. And the family of the groom thought he was a guest invited by the bride's family. He stayed there many days—enjoying their hospitality. Finally, one day the bride's father and the groom's father were talking about him. When they were about really to ask him where he belonged, he vanished. *Avidya* is like that—it is not real, so it vanishes when you enquire about it.

30. REALISING BRAHMAN

Swamiji: Ishvara is like the government—it is not perceptible, but it is everywhere. You cannot say where it is, but if you do something wrong you will feel its effects. You say the Government is in Delhi, but if you break the law you will feel the government’s presence here. Ishvara is a logical concept—not an ontological or metaphysical one.

When you realise Brahman, even the Mahavakyas will not matter much to you. “Aham Brahmasmi” will be only words, and you will be beyond words. You will attain that Silence which is beyond all theories. You will not want your books then. If one would attain God by books, you could spend a few days in the National Library in Calcutta and have realisation. But getting God is not that easy. Even if you memorised the Encyclopaedia Britannica you would not have knowledge.

There are different names of God: Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha, Virat, but they are names of one single being, just as Michael is one person but he can be analysed medically, physically, psychologically etc. If you exist as an individual, He (Ishvara) exists also as an individual. But once you lose your individuality, even He goes.

Actually, Ishvara is not different from Brahman. The same ultimate reality is there. The name Ishvara is given only for relational purposes. Brahman is Ishvara in relation to us. Just as the same man may be a father, brother or son. You call it Ishvara because of your isolation from it. You pray to your own higher nature which is so vast that it looks like another entity altogether.

Because Ishvara is a cosmic individual you pray to Him—like you bow to an individual who is a leader of the nation whom you yourself have elected—whom you yourself have put in that supreme position. To think as God thinks is our goal, the problem is that we think as men think.

When milk becomes curd, milk ceases to exist—it is totally in the other. But when God ‘becomes’ the world, it yet continues to exist in itself. Really nothing ceases to exist, for there is no difference between cause and effect.

Q: Is logic the same as metaphysics? Is the law of the mind the same

as the law of the universe? Logic is the manifestation in the mental realm of the Ultimate Metaphysical Principle. Vedanta Metaphysics asserts that Reality is non-dual. So the psychology, epistemology or logic of Vedanta must be based on this non-difference of knower and the known.

Swamiji: This is based on the problem of whether there is a metaphysical thing-in-itself— noumenon—on which the logic of phenomenon is based. This is a great mystery—but it is not unsolvable. Kant died before he got the answer.

Q: In Advaita, Brahman is self-luminous and yet self-consciousness is said to apply only to Isvara, not to Brahman. Please explain.

Swamiji: Self-luminous, *svayam prakasa*, means Consciousness Itself. You are not aware that you are aware. It is awareness pure and simple. The question of self-consciousness, as you think of it, is an individual subject opposed to an object. The Absolute does not have self-consciousness. Rather it is Consciousness-Itself. Ishvara is the highest self-conscious being. It is the universe being aware of itself as existing. You cannot imagine what this kind of self-consciousness is. Ishvara is aware of the object as identical with Himself. He regards the objects of the world as you regard your hands and feet. Hands and feet are objects in one sense, for they can be seen by you, but they are vitally related to you just as the whole world is related to God.

Brahman is Consciousness Itself. Ishvara is Self-Consciousness. Jivanmukta, you may say, is a little lower. He has not merged completely into Brahman, until final death of body and still needs some external objects, to maintain life.

Q. If life is a movement from *ananda* to *ananda*, why is it we should be detached from it?

Swamiji: If you know life is *ananda*, then everything is fine. What do you want detachment from? You want detachment from wife, children, and property because you think these are the causes of sorrow—you want to renounce liabilities. Really you should think about being attached to life. God is not such a fool that He cannot understand these tricks of the human mind. They say stone walls

do not a prison make, so do not stone walls make an ashram or a church. So you leave stone walls of your home for other stone walls. What is the difference? Religion is a construed idea—in this sense it is the opium of the people. You see religiosity, conservatism, will get you on with ordinary life, but won't cut ice with God! Religious groupism, sectarianism, has the same purpose as political groupism in terms of parties or nationalities. Whether the left leg is broken or the right leg is broken—it is the same. You cannot be religious unless and until you renounce religiosity. Don't call yourself a Hindu, Christian, Advaitin etc. There was a man at Stanford University who wrote the *Religion of no Religion* (or William Centwell Smith wrote the *End of Religions*). When you know that you know nothing—still you have knowledge. Cut it all away and something remains.

At Dakshineswara when Ramakrishna was alive, a poor man in dirty clothes came and recited something in a temple. No one could understand the language, but all present felt a spiritual presence in the temple when he was there. They went to Ramakrishna and told him about it. He said: “You fools, that was a God-realised man, you should have prostrated before him—go, find him.” The people went looking for him and found him in a gutter in Varanasi. The filthy sewerage water was flowing down to the Ganga. The people asked him, “What is truth?” He replied, “When you see this filthy water and the holy Ganga are one you know the Truth.”

One Mouni Swami of South India used to keep a pot of spit, urine, etc. People thought he was a great saint. So they went for initiation. He insisted that they drink the contents of the pot and the people ran away. One half-crazy man went there and, when ordered, he drank the scum in the pot—he went into samadhi. They asked him later what it tasted like—he said it was sweet nectar. These are real men of religion. But you want someone who asks you to read Gita, do japa. You want comfortable answers. This is the father of religion—not religion.

Q: So ultimately we have to give up everything?

Swamiji: What do you mean everything, wife, children?

Q: No, I mean theories, beliefs, sects, etc.

Swamiji: No it's something quite different from that. You must

discriminate which thoughts to retain and which to dismiss at any moment. When a man comes to a doctor with 105° temperature and eczema, certainly the doctor treats the fever first

Common sense is the most uncommon thing in the world. When you have been starving, eating is more important than meditation; but when you are drowning, being saved from the water is more important than eating.

When is the best time for eating? It is when you are hungry. Same with meditation. Samsara is timeless. Time began with creation, so in that sense it is said to be beginningless, or eternal. But remember it is not real. The people you met in dream last night exist for you. Where are they? Your recurring question is based on the assumption that there has been creation—why do you assume this? No one has seen God creating.

Q: But Sruti teaches creation; why would it mislead us?

Swamiji: When you think Sruti misleads you, they cease to be scriptures. A friend ceases to be a friend when he robs you. Tiger in dream can wake you.

If you really investigate all social organizations from UNO down to the family, you will find they are all based on selfishness. (*Laughs*) Love everyone but trust a few, so they say.

Tantra, when really understood, is a very scientific method. It is living in the law of God and not caring about the laws of man. But Tantra is not for everyone; if one does not have freedom from passions, it may come back on him like an atom bomb! As Pope in his *Essay on Man* has said, genius and madness are very close to each other.

The world is a psychological complex—it is only a spatiotemporal existence. You say clay and pot are two different things. But clay is the only substance. Pot is simply name and form.

You have to be aware of the presence of higher levels. When you reach a certain level, don't be satisfied. Ethics or morality is judging the lower in terms of the higher. If you judge everything from the point of view of its connection with the whole, you won't make mistakes. The whole is the determining factor—you cannot say that the doctor is wrong when he cuts off the leg to save the body. If you judge, judge its relation to the whole. Every judgement is a

universal judgement—you judge yourself. Totality of consciousness is Ishvara.

Q: Steeped in ignorance—wisdom dawns?

Swamiji: When materialism reaches its breaking point, it becomes spirituality (this is modern science). When the thing becomes worst, it reaches the point of the supposed opposite—it is like a circle. You think problems are caused by another—'someone is causing me trouble'. You should analyse yourself and see what it is in you that makes them act that way—why should they trouble you unnecessarily. This analysis of the mind is psychology. From this you can understand sociology and politics—for they mean only organizations of individuals; and from these you can pass on to philosophy and then spirituality.

Ordinarily you are not sure of your goal. The destination must be clear in mind before the journey starts. At least for 30 minutes a day you must give yourself solely to God. That means your feeling, thought, and will are all totally directed to God. Prayer, in that case, is not one talking to another but God talking to Himself. For when the three aspects of your personality are united, it is Intuition. Normally you don't give hundred per cent of yourself to anything—that is why your life is a failure rather than a success. Mentally you are partly here listening and partly taking lunch already, or partly in some shop or elsewhere. Ordinarily you are disintegrated. Your emotions want one thing, your mind another. They must come together in wanting the goal, God-Realization.

Q: In his introduction to Gita, Sankara speaks of both *pravritti* and *nivritti* as dharmas. But is not dharma included only in *Pravritti*?

Swamiji: Dharma in *pravritti* and *nivritti* does not mean dharma as a *purusartha*. *Pravritti* is a preparatory dharma for *nivritti*. Moksha is the goal and condition both. *Nivritti* conditions *pravritti*, only you don't know it. It is like the fact that you have a U.S. passport and are U.S. citizen—you are bound by that, to some extent, though you don't think of it often.

Swamiji: The more you act with spontaneity the more you act with divinity. This means that you do not have to be conscious of

others. This also means you are effortless and impersonal. Nothing is attained when you make too personal an effort—it gives anxiety. The magician’s tricks are spontaneous to him, anxiety to us.

Desire for Moksha is not desire for any one object—it is so wide that it dissolves. It is not really a desire—when you are cured of disease, you are healthy.

Q: If rebirth is true why don’t all people remember their last birth?

Swamiji: Because of intense concentration on this body, you forget the past body; and because you have desire for more pleasure, you take a new, young, body. It is a mercy that you don’t remember everything. A person is a friend of yours now. Maybe you had hated him in your last birth. If you remembered, you would be burdened by memories of the previous birth. If you love a thing constantly without break, it is meditation. If a cobra comes in the room, everyone will be wholly concerned with it. Similarly in surgical operations, or in tight rope walking across Ganga. You cannot have wholehearted concentration on anything unless there is necessity. And you don’t feel the necessity of knowing God.

Consciousness has still desires to satisfy. Dream has a beginning from the point of view of waking, but in itself you cannot say when it begins or ends. When you are in dream, you cannot determine the beginning. When you wake up, you know when you went to sleep and when you woke up. Avidya is like that.

By intense sadhana we can experience some bad things in dream that would have happened in waking life. In dream you fall from the tree and you may avert it in real life. By intense meditation, you can save time—pass a needle through many lotus petals instantly. You can compress rebirths into one life if you really yearn for it. God is timeless, so you can have God instantly. Love of God can break these formalities.

A young man approached a Guru, wanting to be his disciple. The Guru replied: “It is not easy being a disciple, you have to do whatever the Guru tells you to do. You will get no respect, whereas the Guru will get all the respect etc.” The young man replied, “Then make me a Guru.” (*Swamiji laughs throughout.*)

Q: Can everyone work miracles?

Swamiji: You also worked a miracle—your consciousness materialised this body. But it took some time to do this because the will was not strong. Thus, you forget that you were responsible for this. All the pains you get are because of pleasures you desired at one time.

Q: Are *murtis* useful? Often we see worshippers of one deity hating worshippers of another.

Swamiji: As the mind cannot conceive the universality of existence, it grabs, catches hold of some names and forms as symbols. A currency note is only a piece of paper, a flag is only a piece of cloth, but you worship these. Anybody who doesn't like something is a fanatic. He is like a horse with blinkers.

You don't blame a scorpion when it stings you because it is of such a low level, self-consciousness is lacking. But you hold men responsible because you say they have self-consciousness and take premeditated actions.

Q: What is the relation between God with form and God as formless?

Swamiji: The form (*sakara*) is present in the formless (*nirakara*), just as the statue is present in the block of stone. You may not see the statue, but the sculptor may already have an idea of it. All the statues are present in the same block of stone—simultaneously. Self-preservation—desire to preserve the ego/personality makes us like certain things which preserve our personality and makes us hate certain things which seem to go against our personality.

Q: Is one free from karma if one acts according to the will of God?

Swamiji: If you feel you are doing anything, don't talk about the will of God making you do it. If your self-consciousness is there you will get reaction. A fountain pen doesn't write, it is only an instrument.

When you have made your best effort and still realise you are utterly helpless then you surrender and some other, higher power will work.

A man said he renounced all and went to a forest to meditate, taking some money with him. Someone asked, "Why do you take money?" "Suppose God doesn't come—I must have some money."

You should not pray to God for anything except spiritual

enlightenment—illumination—wisdom.

Nothing is absolutely unimportant. If you neglect one aspect and go to extremes, you will see the aspects you have considered unimportant will reappear. Extremes are easy; via media is more difficult

It is not wisdom to complain. Make the best of any circumstances; when you learn from it, you will be free from it. If it is unavoidable, you can't complain. If it is avoidable, you have already avoided it, so there is no problem. Your strength, your resources are shown only when you are tested—when you are opposed. If everyone opposes you, you will see your inner strength come out. Even God may look weak unless he is opposed. A rich man doesn't always show his money—only when it is necessary.

Q: If one acts without concern for fruits, dedicating all to God, can he put forth his best effort?

Swamiji: When you surrender yourself, ego, this is the highest achievement, and you no longer act with your own personality but act only as an instrument of God. The question of self-effort no longer arises at that stage, for you no longer feel that you exist as an individual. When you think you are a person, it naturally follows that you think you act with your own efforts.

31. SEEING GOD IN OTHERS

It was the auspicious day of Skanda Sashti. Out in the open terrace are the devotees, admirers and visitors gathered round Swami Krishnanandaji seated as usual cross-legged in his armchair. The glow of his genial face was enhanced by the orange colour of the shoulder wrap and the sunlight playing upon his whole person. Due to the festival, those gathered today were few in number. Among these are a very young Italian couple who speak little English and between themselves in French, not in Italian.

Swamiji: How is it you, being Italians speak French. What is your mother tongue?

Visitor: My wife speaks only French, her province is near the French border. So I too speak French.

Swamiji: Do you understand the few simple instructions I have given you for the practice of yoga? It is good that both of you are interested in learning the practice of yoga. But how is it that you are wearing orange-coloured clothes? Don't you like white clothes?

Visitor: Yes, we do, but we like this colour more.

An ashramite: Swamiji, what does “*yagnena yagna kalpitham*” mean?

Swamiji: It means, I offer the sacrifice, in sacrifice. God sacrifices Himself in *yagna*.

Ashramite: Would Swamiji like to tell us today what was referred to in passing the other day—man's propensity to see evil in others, while he has to put in an effort to see the goodness in others?

Swamiji: Cosmic consciousness does not brook the idea of the other because the other does not exist. The ‘other’ does not exist for the cosmic consciousness which has no quality, and which is not conditioned by space and time in which alone duality can exist. So when in man's consciousness there is duality, the ‘other’ existing in space and time, and as if in opposition to him, the sense of enmity also comes up.

Ashramite: But, Swamiji has said that the natural tendency for man

is goodness and cooperation?

Swamiji: Yes. But once it gets individualised as the ego, it brooks not another. The ego of the *jiva* does not allow the ego of another individual along with itself because its superiority suffers. That is what it will not like. *(At this point Rev. Swamiji turned in his chair completely to the right and spoke vehemently)* Hey, why are you keeping on looking at me like that? I have not done anything to you, then why are you staring me in the face?

(The ashramite thought some person was actually standing behind her and Swamiji was addressing him. So she turned round to see who had so angered Swamiji. The whole crowd burst into laughter at this, for Swamiji was merely addressing the air, acting out what he spoke. Swamiji and the ashramite joined in the laughter.) The limited consciousness sees only enmity in the 'other'. The mind does not comprehend the universality of consciousness until it has transcended itself. Thus, the rationality of the universal consciousness turns out as externality in the individual.

Ashramite: The mind is the ego, is it not?

Swamiji: Yes. They are one and the same thing, two words stand for one thing. And this externality causes unfriendliness and prompts, as a first reaction. That is why this first reaction of seeing evil while the natural tendency is goodwill. Ego is the counterpart of the outside object, love of the ego is there in the object and forms the cause of all the troubles. Mind is ego, mind is ego in function, movement. *(Pause.)* You have to wait for the reality of consciousness to unfold itself in meditation. The waiting is the positive affirmation of the reality, and it shall come into being by meditation.

The ocean is not in the waves, yet the waves are the ocean. They are within each other, inseparable. When Lord Krishna assumed the Visvarupa, the vision showed the interconnectedness of everything with everything else. Nothing is outside yourself. To consider otherwise only brings enmity. You must love everything; it is yourself only. Even trees respond to love; fields yield better in quiet, undisturbed atmosphere. They do not like noise and bustle. Trees respond to music—they vibrate joyously when you approach them with music. You will understand that language is the language

of love. A crow used to bring one fruit every day to feed a yogi who knew the bird's language! The language of love.

Nothing exists outside you. You know Saint Francis of Assisi used to talk to wolves. They listened to his commands. The saint knew the language of animals, for he loved them. We should dislike evil, not the man who does evil. But we foist the dislike of evil on the man who does it. The universal consciousness cannot bear the idea of duality. This is foisted by the ego of the individual on another individual. You should go beyond space-time consciousness due to which persons and objects look external to you. You cannot have anything outside your consciousness. A conception otherwise is a psychological blunder. To get beyond such a conception you have to meditate to restore your unfragmented consciousness. The mind must be gradually taken up to its ultimate level of universal consciousness.

32. BEYOND HUMAN MIND

Swami Krishnanandaji discussed the procedure for extending the visa of an Iranian visitor. He mentioned that the United States was engaged in a dispute with Iran, and proceeded to discuss international relations.

Swamiji: What we view as wars and crises are cosmological forces adjusting to maintain the universal equilibrium. These forces or powers or laws are responsible for international as well as national events . See with a broader perspective! “How trivial are my individual concerns when compared with the Grand Design of Cosmological Unfoldment.”

When the human body is ill, forces within it adjust among themselves to cause fever, purgings, etc. Greed, nationalism, racism, hatred, none of these are natural to mankind. Wars, crises and the like are the “purgings” of the sick body of the planet. These adjustments are constantly taking place, on a time scale far beyond human mind.

Visitor: Swamiji, is there a large adjustment of these forces coming in the next decade?

Swamiji: These impersonal forces have another time scale. A decade is nothing to them. The planet Earth is a speck of dust to them. View it with a broader perspective. What we consider important is not of eternal value.

The order of society will remain within roughly the same limits for another hundred years or so, with small fluctuations. We are in a period of transition.

Visitor: Swamiji, what are we transiting from and to?

Swamiji: We are moving from diversity to intergation. The Universe tends to Yoga, towards completeness, and harmony.

Visitor: Swamiji, are these cosmological powers what we refer to as Vishnu, Zeus, and other Gods?

Swamiji: Yes. Call them whatever you like. They are beyond name and form. They are powers, forces and patterns. They are entirely impersonal, just as the forces within your body are....

33. THE WHEEL OF NATURE

The morning darshan had begun about half an hour before this chronicler joined in. Hence the abruptness at the beginning of the following conversation. There were about twenty in the gathering, as usual consisting of many nationalities and types of people.

A visitor: Why does Mother Durga nonchalantly turn the wheel of life? She seems terrible!

Swamiji: The wheel represents the centripetal and the centrifugal forces of nature. The whole of nature is like the movement of a wheel, with the spikes moving up and down with the rolling of the wheel. When you are caught by the centrifugal force, you are urged towards externality and objects of the senses. This is what the book is talking of in that story. But there is another side of it which will take you back to the source. It works in two ways, like the spokes that go up and then down. The spoke below will not always be below, it will go up in its turn. When it is moving down, it looks as if you are going down. So whenever the urge of creativity takes the form of a movement towards externality, you think of the object of the senses and you cannot get over the consciousness that they are desirable things. But this state of affairs does not continue for long. The wheel moves, and the upward evolution follows. The Divine Mother is only a symbolic name for the Cosmic Energy moving in two ways. In the lower realm of externalisation in space and time, the phenomenal world and the higher realm of the universal urge towards itself, which is integration in the Absolute.

Visitor: But the second part of my question is that...

Swamiji: The sage is telling you, now you are caught in the lower earth and you are moving towards external objects, and, therefore, you are thinking of them again and again even if you learn bitter lessons from them. The love for the objects of senses is so intense that you feel even a drop of honey sticking to the bitterness of things is worth it. That is one stage in which a person may find himself in. People learn their lessons in the course of evolution and begin to realise the defects in objects they desire. It is a mystery of evolution that you are educated into, it is the art of discovery of the true structure of things, and then you recognise the hollowness of

the pursuit of the external things. You are then taken by the upper current; the higher tides take you off to the upper, higher realms.

There are two kinds of ‘*maya*’, as they call it. *Maya* is the force of creativity. It is called *avidya maya* and *vidya maya*. *Avidya* means the force of ignorance and *vidya* is the force of knowledge, both come within the realm of creation. Even your desire for knowledge is a part of creative activity because that also is desire. It means higher and nobler desire but even then you are bound, as they put it, by a golden chain. Whether you are bound by a golden chain or an iron chain, bound you are. Just because you are bound by gold and diamonds, it does not mean that you are not bound. An ‘A’ Class prison or a ‘C’ Class one—it is prison anyway. You might be treated better as an ‘A’ Class prisoner. Similarly the desire for knowledge is better than the desire for sense objects; it ends in bondage.

The story you are referring to is in connection with the human fascination for sense objects. And why it is so is given in the story. It is the lower movement you are getting caught in—the movement of *prakriti*, *maya*, the Divine Mother, whatever you call it. When you take resort to the higher plane then you don’t get attached any more. When you take refuge in the higher aspects of the same force, it protects you. It is a great integrating and protecting Mercy.

Visitor: I have another part of the question. The Divine Mother is described as not constantly playing with the wheel of life but almost at random and that...

Swamiji: Yes—whatever you do and whatever you think even, to a large extent is not actually of your own making. Though you think that you are the agent, you are following the course of Nature. The evolution of the universe is the determining factor of every one of your activities, wrongly imagined by you as your activity. So in that sense you may say the Universal Force is playing with you—as with a toy, as it were—and making you feel as if you are doing things. But it ceases to be a terrifying force toying with you the moment you know that you are not isolated from that Force.

Visitor: That is what you mean by...

Swamiji: Ah, yes, yes, when you commune with the Force you cease to be a puppet in its hands—when you are outside of it, you are

controlled by it. When you identify yourself with it, you become the lawmaker rather than the person who has to obey the law. A lawmaker also follows the law, he does not break it. But because he is the maker of the law, no bondage is felt by him. A king can make the law, but he doesn't break the law he makes. And yet he follows it in a different sense altogether from which the people obeying it follow it. Similarly, you become the force of law which becomes identical with your own will.

Now, sometimes your will does not go hand in hand with the will of the cosmos. Then you feel it is like a weight on your head. When your will is turned to the Universal Will your wish, will, action and way of thinking become part and parcel of the law of the universe. You, then, are not a toy to be played with by anybody.

Visitor: So I am not under fear, sorrow...

Swamiji: Nothing of the kind. At that time, there will be nothing of the kind. Such feeling comes only when you are outside it, you are thinking that somebody is doing something to you. That is why such questions arise in your mind. When you become THAT which is appearing to do something, then this question will not arise. As I just mentioned, where you become the maker of law yourself, you will complain against yourself. Now you complain because you think somebody else has made that law, and it is not palatable to you. Once you get tuned to Him you will not complain. This point is very difficult to grasp. Is the lion cub afraid of the lioness? No, it rolls on the mother's body. But you cannot play with the lioness like the cub does. Nor can you be like the tiger cub who bites and scratches its mother in play—you can't touch the tiger. The cub is tuned to its mother and the mother to cub. It is so even with God.

You will not be afraid of even God, let alone the play of Forces or law that makes a toy of you, once you have become part and parcel of that law. You will never see any kind of ugliness or error or suffering in this world. Whatever takes place in the cosmos, which apparently looks pleasant and unpleasant to you, will cease to be so when you become one with that. The cells of the body may not know your intention. They are thrown off! They might think that you are a cruel God to have removed them from where they were and destroyed them. The purpose of the cosmos and the way

it works and the justification behind it can be appreciated only when you are one with it; otherwise, it looks like a terrifying autocrat! And it ceases to be that when you yourself become the autocrat. Then no questions arise.

An ashramite: Swamiji, this is the same as when Lord Krishna in the Bhagavat Gita says: “I turn the world mounted on the machine?”

Swamiji: Yes. Yes. It is exactly the same.

A devotee: Swamiji, what is the meaning of “*Purnamadah purnamidam*”...

Swamiji: It is another way of saying that nothing comes from anything. How can the full come from the full? Can you imagine? When the full comes from the full, that from where it comes will cease to exist. It says after removing the full from the full, the full only remains. When you withdraw a thousand rupees from your account in which you have only one thousand rupees, do you think there will be another thousand there? But here it is not like that. When you withdraw the whole from the whole, the whole remains. This is a symbolic way of saying that nothing is happening. Infinity can't be removed from infinity. Who is the remover of it? If it itself wants to remove itself, no purpose is served. And to say that infinity alone remains even afterwards makes matters still worse. It is only a symbol.

Visitor: What is the significance of it, Swamiji

Swamiji: The significance is that the universe is Absolute. It is unlimited, complete. There is neither evolution nor involution, neither going up nor coming down, neither pleasure nor pain, neither hell nor heaven, neither creation nor destruction. Everything is as it ought to be. One cannot understand this point. It will simply make one crazy to think like this.

So, they say there was a Creator, He created the world. You are seeing the world. You want to know who the creator is. Therefore, what can I do? I have to say there is a Creator. Because your desire is to find a creator, we have to find one for you. What happens—you put a further question! So I have to explain the process of evolution and involution. But these are only answers to the questions that arise

in the mind of the individual. And these need not necessarily be valid questions. An invalid question cannot evoke valid answers. So, as they say, the devil will have to be paid its due—the answer has to be of the same category as the question. Naturally the argument will proceed on these lines: Since God is Infinite, whatever He creates must also be charged with Infinit . And the process of the coming of the Infinite from the Infinite also should be of the same category. It cannot be something else because God cannot create some non-God from His personality: He alone exists. This is only a symbolic explanation of the imagined process of creation, an answer that is evoked by a question from the mind of the individual which takes it for granted that there is a world outside and therefore it should have been created and, therefore also, there should be a process of coming and going. You have taken everything for granted. You take it for granted that you are there as a person; you don't doubt this point. As a corollary you take it for granted that the world exists. And, therefore, you have to take for granted that the Creator must also be there.

Now, why do you take all this for granted and then expect a logical answer? How do you know that the world exists? Can you answer this question logically? You say: "I see it". But do you know that what you see need not necessarily exist? Is it true that whatever you see must exist? Is it a logically acceptable proposition? Are there not things in this world which exist but you cannot see them with your eyes? If that is the case, why should the world be there as you see it? Can you say that the proof of the existence of something is in merely seeing it? The moment you see a thing, does it follow that it exists?

Then you've got a peculiar logic of cause and effect. Every effect must have a cause. You see from your experience of the world that something comes from something, and therefore the world looks like an effect. Thus, you insist that there should be a cause. So you imagine also an Extra-Cosmic Creator. In order to satisfy your curiosity you believe God created the universe. But He created it in such a manner that He has become the whole Universe. The full has come from the full—the whole Universe is full. And the process of coming also is full and the returning of it is also full. So it is purely

a symbolic explanation, like the X in an equation. The equation can be solved only with X, if the X is not there you can't solve it. Yet the X has no value, you know that? So the valueless thing helps you in finding the solution

A voice: X has a value always.

Swamiji: But X is meaningless arithmetically, it is not 1, 2, 3, 4 etc. Yet it is a help to you. See? Likewise this entire cosmology that is presented before us by the scriptures or logic or whatever it is, is an 'X' in the solution of a tremendous problem which is before you. And when the problem is solved the X vanishes. It cancels itself.

Visitor: What is meant by a "Swami" Swamiji?

Swamiji: I can't answer your question! I am one. (*Laughs.*)

Voice: (*Laughing*) Personal question.

Visitor: But what is the meaning, Swamiji? It must have a connotation. What is swamihood!

Ashramite: Is there such a thing as "swamihood"?

Swamiji: Like Gurudom (*laughs*). Swamihood is the life of a person who lives the life of a recluse, or to put it in a more popular language, who has become a monk.

Visitor: Swamiji must mean something.

Swamiji: One who is controlled. One who has authority. One who has restrained himself. It can mean all these things.

Another visitor: Swamiji, what is the meaning of Rishikesh?

Swamiji: It is not Rishikesh, it was Hrishikesh which has got corrupted into Rishikesh—"H" is the first letter, not R. Hrishikesh means the land of God—one of Lord Krishna's names is Hrishikesh.

Ashramite. What does it mean?

Another visitor: One who has controlled himself—his senses.

Swamiji: Yes—its literal meaning is that. Hrishika is "senses". Isa is the Lord—the Lord of the senses is therefore Hrishikesh. People have made it Rishikesh, meaning it as the place of Rishis. And thus

later it became RIKHIKESH. They write Rikhikesh also R, I, K, H, I, K, E, S, H. This is a Hindi distortion of a Sanskrit word. See?

Voice: Kes is hair also.

Swamiji: It is not Kes, it is Hrishika and is...

Voice: I thought it was Rishi and Kesh.

Swamiji: No. No. It is not Rishi and Kesh. If you know Sanskrit grammar, this doubt will not arise.

Another visitor: Swamiji, what is the etymology of the word “swami”?

Swamiji: Well, one who has mastered one’s own self, “*swa*”.

Ashramite: I see.

Visitor: And “*mi*”?

Swamiji: While “*mi*” is only a suffix, it is a grammatical peculiarity Sanskrit grammar and...

Voice: That means master of oneself.

Swamiji: Yes. Yes. Especially it means a controller, and a self-controlled person, master of senses, master of one’s senses and the mind. But now it has lost its meaning. It has become jargon for anybody who has taken to a social order of monkhood, as you call it.

Visitor: What are the ordeals that a swami has to pass?

Swamiji: Ordeals—is it? You’ve put a very...

Another visitor: They are not ordeals. They are only disciplines to attain an ideal.

Swamiji: (*Laughs heartily*). They are naturally ordeals. (*Continues to laugh*) One who has no personal desires—whose desires are directed to the welfare of all but has no personal desires. No selfishness, see? The renunciation of selfishness is the ordeal through which he has to pass—if you call it an ordeal (*laughs heartily*). Naturally it is an ordeal, therefore, you can’t get out of it. It is like peeling one’s own skin, see? You can’t remove your own skin without stoic courage. It is so much one with you that you just can’t remove it, it is as good

as removing yourself. The annihilation of the ego, or selfishness, is like annihilation of your personality itself. So it is so painful. And nobody wants that because love of self is the greatest love. And when you try to annihilate it, you have destroyed yourself, for all practical purposes; it looks as if it won't exist at all. You are nobody. It looks as if you are becoming nothing, though it is a way to become everything later on (*laughs again heartily*).

Voice: The body itself is the house of God. And so it has to be looked after as the Temple of God?

Swamiji: Looking after the Temple of God doesn't mean selfishness
Ashramite: (*Bursts into laughter.*) That's it.

Swamiji: That is quite a different thing. You are looking after the school in which you may be the principal; but you are not attached to that school, you may be transferred tomorrow to another school. You look after that school when you go there. You have no personal feeling towards the school in which you may be the principal or a professor, though you are very carefully looking after it. See? The manager of a bank has no attachment to that bank, even though he carefully looks into everything with concern. He doesn't say, 'it is mine', but he works for it as if it is his and much more than his. So it is a duty that you perform, not an attachment that you manifest in looking after your body the 'Temple' of God.

Voice: So it is your duty to attend to it.

Swamiji: You have got many kinds of duties, but that is different from attachment.

Another visitor: Swamiji, If thoughts originate from the mind...

Swamiji: Thoughts do not originate from the mind. The thoughts are same as the mind. It is like waves rising from the ocean. But the waves and the ocean are the same thing. They are not two things.

Visitor: Then emotions, what are they?

Swamiji: The same thing—they are the mind.

Visitor: They are from the mind Swamiji?

Swamiji: They are the mind. The mind working, mind in movement.

Visitor: Then when they say: “This has come from the heart” what do they mean?

Swamiji: It is emotion, one process of the mind. Normally, thinking is identified as the mind, and understanding with intellect. Assertion is called ego. But all four functions are the same in structure though in different form. They are not four different things.

Ashramite: Swamiji, in one of your expositions you kept saying: “It is the mind that thinks and doubts. It is the mind that thinks and doubts”. You were insistent in repeating these two words. Why? Is doubt not a thought?

Swamiji: It is a thought.

Ashramite: Then why do you say...?

Swamiji: There is impersonal thinking and specified thinking. Doubt is specified thinking

Ashramite: Specified, I see..

Swamiji: Yes. Specified thinking, whether it is this or that, that is called doubt. But general thinking is, I am seeing something in front of me.

Ashramite: I know, yes.

Swamiji: That is general. In the early morning you see something in hazy light. “Oh I am seeing something... Is it a tree or a man?” That is a doubt.

Ashramite: But wherein comes the necessity to distinguish between these two sides of the same thought?

Swamiji: That is general thinking and specified thinking. It is only a distinction between two forces of thought. When you are merely visualising something, it is called a thought.

Ashramite: Yes?

Swamiji: And when you are doubting whether it is a man or a tree, as I mentioned...

Ashramite: It becomes more personal? More subjective?

Swamiji: Yes, more subjective, more specified and pinpointed to an object.

Ashramite: Pinpointed: that is it.

Swamiji: And when you clearly know that it is only a tree, the intellect is working. It is decided that it is a tree and not a man. And when you see it is a tree of your garden, your emotion is working. So all things are working one after the other in respect of the same object. And, somebody is interfering with your tree! You get angry. That is another part of the mind.

Ashramite: Emotion?

Visitor: There are two aspects in respect of everything, one is feeling, and the other is emotion.

Swamiji: Yes. Love and hatred. They are the two aspects. Likes and dislikes. Love is an emotion, hatred also is emotion. But both are two aspects of the same force, like the waves going forward and falling backwards.

Visitor: Is it right to be ruled by the emotion?

Swamiji: It is not right to be ruled by the emotions. But you are, what can I do? It is not right to be ruled by anybody or anything. It is better to be a master and rule everyone. Why do you want to be ruled by anybody? But you are ruled. That shows you are a slave, you have become subject to that.

Visitor: What do you mean by saying you should work with all your heart?

Swamiji: That means you should not show only lip sympathy, but feel whatever you do and act.

Visitor: How is it that sometimes we hate what we love most?

Swamiji: You have a double attitude towards a person; not only to persons, but to everything. It is not true that you love a person hundred per cent and it is not also true that you hate a person hundred per cent, for various reasons. Under certain conditions you

like him and under certain other conditions you do not like him. You like your son very much because he is your son. But under certain conditions you may not like him if he behaves in a way you do not like. You may not even look at his face in spite of the fact that he is your son, due to which fact you love him so much! You have fondled him, educated him, which shows your love for your son. But under certain circumstances, you may not like him. So circumstances determine the attitude of every person or individual. Ultimately love and hate arise on account of misconceptions in the mind. You do not understand a thing correctly. Therefore, you sometimes like it and sometimes you dislike it. Neither are you justified in liking something in him nor are you justified in disliking something in him. Both are wrong notions. You have to understand the true nature of things.

The lunch bell goes and Swamiji asks the visitors to go for lunch.

34. CONCEPT OF THE GURU

Swamiji: Even a tree can teach you, be your Guru. A Guru comes to remedy a wrong, to correct a particular defect. And once that is done, the Guru's work is over. The Guru can come as fire, bull, bird, in any form. Like a physician who comes in repeatedly when you fall ill, the Guru will come again and again until moksha is attained by the disciple. There is a story in Chhandogya Upanishad, that of Satyakama Jabali. When he asked for initiation, the Guru told him to tend two cows and a bull, in the forest, and come back to him when these had multiplied into a thousand cattle. The poor man spent years in this work in the forest and patiently increased the cattle to one thousand. When he returned to the Guru with the cattle and asked for initiation, again the Guru said, "Go and tend the cattle, come later". The Devas, who alone witnessed the whole thing, took pity on him and sent a bull and caused it to give initiation to Satyakama Jabali, who became filled with true knowledge. You think, "What can a bull do?" But even the bull can become your Guru and initiate you.

There is the other case of the disciple who got his initiation by fire—the sacrificial fire, the fire God. The disciple came to the Guru with a glowing face, radiant like the fire. And the Guru asked how it was that he looked effulgent like the very face of the God of fire—Agni. The disciple answered: "No man initiated me. The fire spluttered and I was initiated."

There are so many stories like this.

Ashramite: I see. So this then is the meaning of Dattatreya saying he had twenty-four or more Gurus?

Swamiji: Yes—Dattatreya had twenty-four Gurus, the elements, birds, human beings, everything. And that is why the Guru tests his disciples to find their level of understanding. Then the defect is corrected. Only what his mind can take at the given level should be told to the disciple. It is no use talking Einstein's theory to a child in kindergarten. (*Smiles to himself.*) I will tell you a story. A teacher wanted to test two boys for their I.Q. He gave them ten rupees and said, "I want you to buy whatever is needed to completely fill your room roof-high." One boy thought deeply for a long time and then

bought a cart-full of hay, straw, etc. and stuffed them in the room full to the ceiling. The second boy also cogitated over what would fill a room's corners too and took the decision. He bought a fine lamp, filled it with oil and lit it and placed it in the room. Lo, the whole room was filled with light. The I.Q. of the two boys was obvious! (*Laughs aloud.*)

I will tell you another story. It is not relevant to our talk, it is only that it is funny. A certain official had applied since long for certain rights which had not been granted to him. Despite a long wait and several reminders there was no response from the officer concerned. The applicant went in person. He met the clerk concerned and spoke to him, The clerk replied, "I am not doing you any harm by putting away your papers and never letting the officer to see them; but you will not reward me for that, for not doing any harm to you. You are grieved that I am not doing good to you, that is the office's job not mine." The applicant understood his meaning and gave him a hundred rupees which pushed the clerk to complete the papers and promptly get them signed by the officer concerned. The clerk's point was, "You are not doing me a favour for my not doing you harm."

Ashramite: Why is it, Swamiji, on the one hand you say we must withdraw ourselves from attachment and on the other hand that we must pray for the departed souls?

Swamiji: Because you have not withdrawn yourself from the body relationship. You are still body-conscious. And as long as that is there, you must act accordingly.

Ashramite: Swamiji, on Thursdays we offer special prayers to our Gurus. And on that day is it not right to meditate on the Guru instead of the Ishta Devata we daily meditate on? Can I change the object of meditation for this way?

Swamiji: Why not? Guru and God are one and the same. Guru is God. God appears to you in the form of Guru.

Ashramite: When Arjuna saw the Cosmic Vision, he did not see it as the transcendent being. He saw it as a total of a variety of objects in their individuality. Is it because he was still body-conscious? And hence asked only to see that form of which Lord Krishna had told

him? That is that he exists in every single object of the world. And this Viswaroopa was not what he actually asked for?

Swamiji: Arjuna was not conscious of his being within the vision. He saw it as external to himself, as an object. He did not merge in the vision. And the purpose of the vision granted was not to make him merge in it. Lord Krishna wanted to show Arjuna that aspect by which the latter could understand that it was but the Supreme Being that was fulfilling all the objectives. It was to show that the feeling Arjuna got that he was doing it all—fighting, standing against all those that were his near and dear, and the venerable—was erroneous. The object of that vision was not to make Arjuna merge in it. It was to make him fight. And to clear his three doubts: (a) Will I succeed? (b) What will the world think of me? (c) What will happen to me? We Pandavas are so few in number and the Kauravas were so many. These three doubts never leave us till the very last. And it was after eighteen chapters that Arjuna’s doubts were cleared. We also have these three doubts. And we are only in the first chapter. Quantity always frightens us. We do not realise that a mountain of straw can be destroyed by a single spark of fire.

Swamiji (*to a visitor*): You know the Biblical story of the three seeds? Jesus gave them to be sown. Don’t think the body does not need care. It should not be neglected. It will kick you otherwise. When the stomach says “I want food,” you must give it food. After satisfying the hunger you can tell the body, “You see, you should not eat too much, nor very rich fanciful food or it will upset you, you will be in trouble.” Only after the hunger is satisfied the stomach will listen to you. But if you straightaway refuse any food to it, it will give you trouble. You should treat a beggar also like that only. You should not send him off saying, “No, this is not the place for you to beg at, go away, don’t come here.” You must give the beggar something first, then you may tell him, “Look I have given you today, but don’t come tomorrow, I will not give you anything.” Then the beggar will listen to you.

As children we used to ask our grandmother, “Which is greater, the Sun or the Moon? And why?” She replied: “The sun is shining uselessly in day time when there is already light, but the moon sensibly shines when there is no light.” (*Everyone bursts into*

laughter.)

It is said that a good disciple should shut every other *indriya* but keep his ears open—to allow the Guru’s words in! The Guru and God, manifest when a need arises, a crucial condition that needs immediate righting of matters. Only then they incarnate, and once that need is fulfilled they disappear. The Gurus are also of different types. There are Gurus who by a mere look or touch transform the disciple; others bring about transformation by their speech and example. Extreme love and extreme hate can materialise Godhead.

Ashramite: How can extreme hate make God incarnate?

Swamiji: Why not? Hiranyakashipu hated Lord Narayana and He incarnated out of necessity in the form of Narasimha.

Ashramite: Yes, yes.

Swamiji: The Lord had of necessity to take that form; it was the mind of Hiranyakashipu that gave that form to Lord Narayana. The Lord can incarnate in any shape or form. He was incarnate as the Nara in the form of Lord Rama, to destroy Ravana. I mentioned earlier also that Guru can come as a bull, fire, bird—anything as the situation demands.