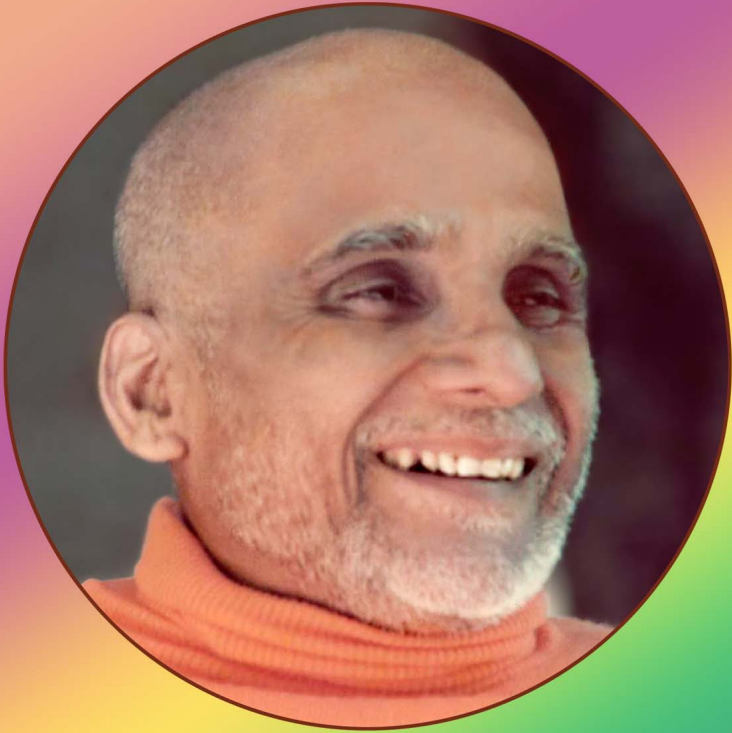


Darshan of Swami Krishnananda in 1996



**Sivananda Ashram
Rishikesh, India**

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

These are transcriptions of recordings of Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj's morning darshans with ashramites, guests and visitors during the year 1996. They are in chronological order.

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ABOLISHING OUR KARMIC DEBT

A visitor: I would like to practise dharma. My mind jumps like a monkey from one place to another all day, and I talk too much. I would like to settle down and be peaceful and more relaxed.

Swamiji: If you follow dharma, you will be peaceful. You tell me what is dharma.

Visitor: Dharma is what sustains the whole world, the whole creation.

Swamiji: If you deeply concentrate, meditate on this dharma of God's creation, the mind will not go like a monkey.

Another visitor: I have left everything and come here.

Swamiji: You cannot say that you have left everything until you have left the Earth itself because the Earth will catch you wherever you go, so don't make such statements. It is not a logically valid statement. It is a statement which is emotionally made, but not logically valid. You are sitting on the ground of the Earth, and you are saying you have renounced everything. The Earth is sticking to you. When the Earth is sticking, the family also is sticking because they are on the Earth only. You have renounced nothing, so don't make any false statements. Amend your statement. Nobody can renounce anything.

This word itself is the jargon which conveys no sense finally. It is an orthodox jargon which looks like a very well-phrased idiom, but it is not having any real significance. When your connection with the whole Earth is removed, then you may say you have renounced everything. Don't make any such statement, but try to be humble and simple.

The physical body goes with the Earth, and the Earth is connected to the families, so who can renounce anything? The meaning of the word must be understood first. You have a dictionary meaning of the word 'renunciation', but this metaphysical meaning is not easily clear.

Can you renounce yourself also? Is it possible?

Visitor: Renounce myself? In what way?

Swamiji: Renounce whatever you are. You think you are physically

renouncing, but mentally you are another thing. Anything that really exists cannot be renounced. Only that which does not exist can be renounced. Any apparition, appearance or illusion can be renounced, but that which is really there cannot be renounced. That which is really there is something with which you have to establish a relation of friendship, equality and harmony so that your relationship with your family is one of friendship, equality and harmony, and not a sense of belonging. Neither do you belong to them, nor do they belong to you. You are on a par, so the relationship is one of equality; therefore, one cannot renounce the other.

So is the case with the world. It is on par with your physical body, as the body is made up of the very same substance as the world is made of. Hence, you are not standing outside the world. The physical body is nothing but a composition of the five physical elements; so as long as the body continues, a relationship with the world also continues. Renunciation doesn't really mean cutting off the connection. No one can cut off a connection with that which is really there. The family is existing, the world is there, your body is there, everything is there. The real renunciation is an establishment of equanimity and harmonious existence between yourself and everything else, and in the end it is a state of harmony with the entire creation.

Harmony does not mean renunciation. It is a kind of unity that you establish with all that exists. Your consciousness is identified with all that exists, including the whole cosmos, so that you have not renounced anything; you have become everything. So there is a difference between renouncing and becoming. It is very difficult to understand this. When you have become the very thing which you want to renounce, there is no renunciation. As long as you think that it exists and it is outside you, you are thinking of renouncing it, but you cannot renounce it because it persists in existing. As you are existing, it also exists. What right have you got to renounce an existing thing? Your only duty is to establish harmony so that it becomes one with you in an equanimity of understanding, and that law also applies to the whole universe, and to God. It is a question of universal harmony and equanimity of consciousness with everything that you consider as existing. This is spiritual awareness where you

don't renounce anything, but you become all things.

Do you understand what I am saying? Don't go to extremes in ideas. Be careful.

Another visitor: I want to give up work and devote my time to contemplation and meditation.

Swamiji: The world is a field of activity, and the soul is a field of contemplation, so the world and the soul go together. Nobody can go to extremes in ideas without understanding the relationship between body and soul. Everybody has to work as long as the world exists and the body exists, but everybody should also meditate because the soul is there. This is the Bhagavadgita in essence: consciousness of God centred in the soul, and activity to the extent necessary for the maintenance of one's physical existence.

Another visitor: Can meditation become dangerous, like a drug?

Swamiji: It can become dangerous provided you have worldly desires in your mind, because if that is the case, the worldly desires which want to be fulfilled in an earthly way collide with your aspiration for the spirit, and a war will take place. It is like God and the devil fighting with each other. Desires concerning the world are devils, and they also have some strength. You know the biblical story where Lucifer fought with God. Though he was defeated, it caused a tremendous upheaval and that is why a situation of that kind, if it arises in the mind of a person, can be regarded as disastrous. You should not move towards God unless desires for the world have almost gone to nothing. Only a person who wants God wholly, and wants nothing else from the world, will be free from this consequence which you call dangerous. You should not mix up sensual desire with God knowledge. They cannot go together.

Another visitor: We have committed so many imperfections in this life, and cannot be united with God with all these imperfections, so how do we remove all this?

Swamiji: Suppose you have borrowed somebody's money in dream, in the dream world, and it is a debt that you have incurred. How will you pay the debt? What is the way? In dream you have borrowed a lot of money from somebody, and you know that 'borrow' means it

is a debt. How will you pay that debt? Not by paying money back, but by waking up from the dream you have immediately paid the debt. So here is the answer to your question. Whatever action you have performed, this way or that way, is abolished in one second when you reach God. That is called waking. There is a spiritual awakening. There whatever actions you have done get negated in the same way as all your borrowings are negated by awakening. You have paid the debt immediately by waking up.

Visitor: So I shouldn't get worried over it?

Swamiji: Do you worry over the dream when you have woken up?

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: Then why are you talking again on the same subject? That means you have not woken up. You are still dreaming only. That's why you are suffering. I am asking you to wake up, and then all your debts are paid in one second; all your karmas are destroyed because whatever you have done in the dream has no effect when you have woken up. There is no karma. The karma has vanished completely because you have woken up. What do you say?

Visitor: Beautiful answer.

Swamiji: Now go on remembering this point, and don't forget it. It will give you peace of mind. Don't confuse yourself unnecessarily by entangling in emotions.

FINDING A TEACHER

A visitor: Does the length of life depend on one's spirituality?

Swamiji: It is just karma. It has nothing to do with spirituality. The length of life depends on the karma of the past, spirituality or no spirituality. It is irrelevant.

Another visitor: How can one find a teacher?

Swamiji: You find a teacher who will be able to clear your mind. When God wills, He will bring a teacher to you. When you are ready for it, the teacher will come to you. Or, the other way, you have seen thousands of people in the world. One of them might have attracted you as the most important person. You can take that person as your guide. The most important of all those people whom you have seen in this world, that person you can consider as your Guru. Nobody is equal to that person, that person who you take as your Master. You might have seen thousands, and one of them must have attracted you as the chief. That person is your guide. Otherwise, wait until God sends a Guru to you. There are two approaches. Either you do the work yourself by selecting the person you like best or, if it is not possible, wait until the light comes from God Himself. But if you cannot wait until God's light comes, use the other technique of choosing by yourself whom you like best. There must be somebody whom you like best. It is not that you don't like anybody. So that person is your teacher, according to your conscience.

Another visitor: How can I stop wanting things for myself?

Swamiji: If you become one with the whole universe, then you don't want anything afterwards. If you become one with the whole cosmos, there is no question of wanting anything.

Visitor: How do I become one with the whole cosmos?

Swamiji: By deep meditation on the whole cosmic structure as identical with you. A little meditation is not sufficient. The whole day you must think only of this. You should not have any other occupation. You may be doing work, but still there should be a background of thought that you are one with the whole creation so

that there is nothing outside you. Then desires do not arise because you have got everything.

But your mind is a trickster. It will not allow you to think like that. Hammer this point into your mind again and again that you have got everything because the whole universe is abundantly rich; therefore, there is no poverty in the cosmos. You stand outside the universe; therefore, you look poor. Meditation is nothing but this simple technique of identifying yourself with the whole structure of the cosmos so that you become physically, mentally and spiritually strong. Because you have isolated yourself from creation, you feel weak and troubled. Briefly I have explained to you the technique of meditation, but you will forget it.

There are tremendous issues in life that you cannot take as a joke. It is not a little lecture that you are hearing. It is a medicine that I am injecting into you. But the mind is so fickle that you cannot remember this for more than two seconds. You are busy with other things rather than concentrating on this great issue, which is in your heart itself. Keep quiet. You should not talk to anyone; mind your business and be one with the whole creation, and it will protect you. You don't require policemen and an army to protect you. The whole cosmos is at your back, but you have no faith. You are doubting, "Is it like that?" The mind will say, "No, be careful." Both God and the devil are sitting inside you. God tells you what I am telling you, but the other man says it is nonsense. Hence, the positive voice of God must work powerfully in you, and it will reject all this empirical thought that invades the good thought in your mind.

Great training is necessary in meditation. It is not a little job that you sit there for a few minutes, and think, and get up. Deeply involve yourself in this great structure of creation, and never believe that you are inside it or outside it. You are that only. Then, in a few minutes, you will see energy entering into you. Nature has repelled you because you have repelled nature. You are thinking that you are an independent person. There is nothing independent anywhere. Everything is one with everything. Everything is connected to everything else. There is an interconnection of every atom with every other atom, which includes yourself also.

The mind will not allow you to think like this. It is a trickster, as

I told you. The body has got its own calls; the mind has got its own whims and fancies. That is why good company is necessary, a good Master is necessary, and you must have patience enough to wait for the results to follow, even if it be after a long time.

Another visitor: Swamiji, the other day you said that enlightenment is knowing the future.

Swamiji: No, it is knowing the past, present and future included in the total time process. The time process has no past, present and future. It is only a mental creation that they are three different things. Every moment is a future or a past. The moment you think, the present has become the past, and it immediately places its leg on the future. So every moment it is past, present and future together. Actually, time is an eternity. Because of the peculiar inability of the mind to catch the process of time, we make a distinction between past, present and future.

You need not worry about that. If you carry on the meditation properly as prescribed, time will take care of itself, and you need not bother about it. The main thing is this point which I have been telling you now. That will allow you to solve every problem.

BRAHMACHARYA, TANTRA

A visitor: What is *brahmacharya*?

Swamiji: *Brahmacharya* is the art of sublimating the energy in spiritual contemplation. Suppose a person says “I am a *brahmachari*” but goes on thinking some nonsense, then he cannot be called a *brahmachari*. So actually, one can know whether or not a person is a *brahmachari* by knowing what the person is thinking in the mind. Even if the person is a celibate, not married, but his mind is thinking of sex, he is not a *brahmachari*. This is very important to understand. Because it is a very difficult subject for ordinary people to grasp, in India there is a systematic scientific discipline chalked out for handling this energy. For the first twenty or twenty-five years, a person lives a life of total 100% self-control. That is called the *brahmacharya* period. After that, he becomes a householder. He marries, but he lives a very disciplined life. He marries not because he wants sex but because it is necessary to handle it in a very harmonious manner for social life. After that life is over, he renounces. Though he may live with his wife, there will not be any attachment, one to the other. That is called *vanaprastha*. Then finally, he lives alone. That is called *sannyasa*. This is the systematic development of the disciplinary process as declared in Indian cultural pattern.

Visitor: Some yogis here in India, they use *ganja*.

Swamiji: No, that is very bad. It is not good.

Visitor: In some parts of tantra they use sex. Is this correct? I want to know something about this.

Swamiji: Do you want to practise tantra?

Visitor: No. I want to know about this, tantra and sex.

Swamiji: It is like saying that you want to know how to make an atom bomb. You should not ask that question when you cannot understand those things. Tantra is a great science which is known only to the Guru and the disciple. It cannot be told to the public, in the same way as everyone should not know how to make an atom bomb. These questions should not be raised because they are capable

of being understood only by two persons: one Guru, one disciple. A third person cannot understand it.

But this practice is not suitable for Kali Yuga because, in this age, everybody's mind is weak. So we should not practise tantra.

Another visitor: What is our spiritual relationship with our ancestors?

Swamiji: You have got a relation, correct, because you have come from your ancestors; therefore, the relation continues. The genes of the ancestors are present in our body even now. Therefore, we have a connection.

Visitor: What is our spiritual approach, our connection with our ancestors?

Swamiji: You have to be very grateful to them, and pray for their spiritual welfare.

Visitor: What is the technique for control of the mind, mind control?

Swamiji: Thinking of all things as God, and not thinking only something. If you think something, the mind will go out, but if you think all things at one stroke, the mind will not go anywhere. This is the same as thinking of God.

Visitor: Swamiji, in our country now there is so much violence.

Swamiji: I think it is everywhere, in all countries.

Visitor: Yes, they also speak about this. In the world there is so much violence now. What can we do for that violence to become less?

Swamiji: Whatever you can do socially, within your own circle, that you do, and what you cannot do by social contact with people, that can be done only with prayer to God. You have to try to lessen violence by either political means or by social means. If none of them works, then only God's grace is the remedy. But, as far as possible, it is everyone's duty to see that something is done by social means to reduce this attitude of people. Always applying political means is not good. Social means are better. And finally, pray to God.

Visitor: Why does God permit this difference of races in the world? People are black, people are white, people are different in the world.

Swamiji: Otherwise, there will be no world. If these things do not exist, there will be only God but no world. So when God creates the world, He has to create variety, because the world is nothing but variety. When variety goes, there is no world also.

Visitor: What is your suggestion for starting on a spiritual path?

Swamiji: When you get up in the morning, sit quietly for half an hour. Don't suddenly jump up from the bed. Sit quietly. On the bed itself, sit up and close your eyes for half an hour. Then deeply think in your mind from where you have come. You have come from your father, and the father has come from another father. So many fathers are there, so who is your real father? Finally, you will find that there is only one father, who is the Universal Existence. That is God. He is the real father, because all other fathers came from Him only. So close your eyes and meditate on that all-pervading Father.

Are you Christians?

Visitor: Most of us are Christian.

Swamiji: Then you can pray to God through that great prayer in the New Testament: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy name." Chant that prayer every day. "Thine kingdom come.... Thine is the kingdom and glory and power for ever and ever. Hallowed be the Father in heaven." Like that you pray.

So for half an hour sit and meditate, and also offer this prayer, called the Lord's Prayer. If you have time, you can increase the half hour to a little more, but if you have no time, half an hour is sufficient. This is one aspect, one form of spiritual practice.

The other form is the study of a holy scripture. You may read the Bible, you may read the Upanishads, you may read the Bhagavadgita, whatever you like. One chapter or a few pages of this great scripture you read every day. This is the second thing.

The third thing is, take the name of God. Do *japa*. The fourth thing is, keep only good company. Be in the midst of people who are good, and not disturbing to your mind. And because of certain necessities in life, if you are working in an atmosphere where people are a little disturbing, don't interfere with them too much. Mind your business. For you this is sufficient.

Visitor: Is it necessary to read the Bhagavadgita with a Guru, or can we read it alone?

Swamiji: A Guru is necessary, but if you cannot find a Guru, read it alone at least. If you cannot find the Guru, have the Gita. That is sufficient.

Another visitor: What is the difference between the subconscious mind and the emotions?

Swamiji: The emotion arises from the subconscious. The subconscious is the reservoir of desires, and emotions arise as desires only. So practically, you may say they are one and the same thing. Just as clouds contain water, the subconscious contains desires. The clouds are full of water; likewise, the subconscious is full of desires.

Another visitor: The inner Guru, what can you explain about this?

Swamiji: The internal master is the Guru, and that is God Himself. The God inside is the internal master, and that internal master tells you always what is proper and what is not. This is called conscience. There is a thing called conscience, which tells you what is proper and what is not. That is the voice of God from within.

Visitor: How became the fanatic way of living?

Swamiji: Too much of egoism makes a person fanatic.

TWO TYPES OF SHOCK

Swamiji: There are two types of shock that a person receives, two kinds. One shock is when the sense organs move towards a desired object and the mind feels that it has got what it wanted. Hear properly what I'm saying. When the mind moves through the sense organs to an object which it loves dearly, and it is satisfied that it has got what it wanted, an emotional shock will take place in the whole mind-body complex. Only those who have experienced it will know what I am saying. It is not a theory. Very few people get what they want, so they would never have felt this joy of an internal nervous shock which creates the impression that whatever one wanted has come. This is the opposite of spirituality. This shock that the sense organs induct into the mind because of the feeling that the desired object has been obtained is a negative of the spiritual bliss that one aspires for. So much about the shock received when the sense organs are satisfied. This has nothing to do with spirituality.

There is another shock, and it is caused by spirituality. Only those who are practising deep meditation know what that shock is. Sit quiet. Open the eyes or close the eyes, as you like. Feel that the mountains and the rivers, and the sun and the moon and the stars have suddenly jumped on your body. It is not merely enough if you hear what I'm saying. You must be able to feel what I'm saying. The sun and the moon and the stars and the sky, and the entire creation, has come and sat on your body. It has entered your bloodstream. The bloodstream has received into its function inside all the energy of the sun and the moon and the stars and the sky and planets – everything. As I told you, merely hearing what I say is of no use. The mind has to accept that such a thing is so. Then you will get a shock. The whole body will tremble when it feels that the whole universe has melted into liquid and gone into the veins of a person. Such an energy will enter. That kind of shock is a spiritual shock, which is quite different from the sensory shock about which I spoke.

If you have ever felt such a kind of shock, I may say that you have touched the borderland of meditation. But if you have never felt a shock of that kind, then you remain in what you are as a physical entity – a man, a woman or whatever you are – and you have not

touched the borderland of Reality. If this shock has been felt by you and you are able to accept it every day in your meditations or in your daily life, God has blessed you, you may say. If this shock has not been felt by you even once, God has not touched you.

So going to Uttarkashi, talking to this man, that man, visiting a temple, ringing a bell, and so on, is not spirituality. The shock of God's entry into you must be felt by you. Have you felt it at least once, or are you still the same person? Have you felt this shock at least once?

Visitor: I felt a tremor in my body, Swamiji, from a sense of devotion towards God.

Swamiji: Don't say 'a sense of devotion'. Has the whole world entered into you in meditation?

Visitor: In meditation, it's fleeting. Sometimes it comes, sometimes it goes.

Swamiji: Let it fleet. Even for a moment have you felt this?

Visitor: For a moment I have felt this, Swamiji.

Swamiji: Then you have touched God if this feeling has arisen in your mind. That is one point.

The second point: As long as you are conscious that you have got a body, it is your duty to take care of the body also. If you are hungry you have to eat, if you are thirsty you have to drink, if you are tired you have to sleep. You cannot harass your body in the name of God. Going to Uttarkashi and sitting with a mahatma in the cold wind is not a... The body is as much real to you at present as God is. I am telling you all this so that you may not go to extremes, going to sit with some baba under the impression that everything is fine. These babas cannot protect you. No baba can protect you, only God, and God can protect you only if you have felt this shock. God comes as a shock – not like a sensory shock, but a different kind of shock which will look identical to it – so sometimes sensory experience and sensory joy is mistaken for spiritual experience. Cupidity may appear as divine devotion. Sensory attraction may look like divine bliss. These are two different things. Now I won't say anything more. You can use your discretion and use your mind.

Another visitor: You spoke about two shocks, a sensory and a spiritual shock.

Swamiji: This is a great spiritual secret, and difficult to understand. Suppose in a lottery you are told that you will get one hundred million dollars. Will you feel a shock suddenly, a shock of joy? You will feel something unusual taking place in your personality. This is called a shock. Or there is another kind of shock. You have lost everything. Your job has gone. You have not got one penny in your hand. Everybody pooh-poohs you; they condemn you. They don't even want to look at you. You are hungry. You can't get food. You feel that life is miserable. That gives a shock: "I have lost everything. I had so much of property, so many relations. Everything has gone."

So I mentioned two kinds of shock. One is, you got more than what you expected. Another is, you lost everything. Either way, you will get a shock. Both these kinds of shocks are connected with the physical body, self-respect, and the desire to live. They are empirical. They are connected with one's life in the external world. Since the world is not really external – it is an organic, universal substance in which you are also included – any experience caused by the feeling of the externality of the world cannot be regarded as having any connection with spirituality. So neither are you getting a hundred million dollars, nor are you losing everything. The shocks caused by these two events are purely conditions which are associated with the externality of the world. That is to say, the joys and sorrows of life cannot be associated with spirituality. This is one kind of shock.

There is another thing, a spiritual shock, about which I mentioned in some detail. It has no connection with the materiality of things. It has connection with the universality of the whole of creation.

Close your eyes for a few minutes. Deeply feel that you are inseparable from creation. Every atom, every leaf, every tree, the space-time complex, the sun, moon and stars are impinging on your personality not merely as external things outside you, but as organic essences of your existence itself so that it is not anymore yourself feeling the impact of the coming together of the universe, because you are not existing separately from this universe. The whole universe is feeling its own total existence. If that feeling can go deep into your heart, you will feel a kind of universal shock entering into

you. That shock is the sign of spirituality.

CONTEMPLATION ON GOD AND SERVICE OF HUMANITY

A visitor: Is Vedanta one way to go to God?

Swamiji: Vedanta is not the way to God. Your love for God is the way to God. Even if you know Vedanta but you have no love for God, you cannot reach God. Vedanta means knowledge of God.

Visitor: What is love of God?

Swamiji: Wanting God only and nothing else, that is called love of God. But for that, you must know what you mean by 'God'. What is the meaning of 'God'?

Visitor: Everything. God is everything.

Swamiji: How can you love everything?

Visitor: By feeling love for everything.

Swamiji: Can you love everything?

Visitor: Be in everything.

Swamiji: Is it possible to love everything?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Then that is the way to God. Are you satisfied?

Visitor: Okay.

Another visitor: What is the meaning of 'I am God'?

Swamiji: Why are you asking this question again? Already this question has been answered just now. What is the meaning of 'Everything is God'? That is the same thing as 'I am God' because the 'I' is included in everything.

Another visitor: What is an Avatar?

Swamiji: Avatar means the coming of God from heaven to Earth. When God descends to the Earth it is called Avatara, Incarnation.

Another visitor: What about discipline on the spiritual path?

Swamiji: Discipline means control of the sense organs, and not allowing the senses to go on thinking of objects of the world. When the senses are controlled, the mind becomes very strong. If the mind goes on thinking hundreds of things through the sense organs, the mind becomes weak. So spiritual discipline means increasing the strength of the mind, which requires the restraint of the sense organs from taking the mind away to objects outside. This is the main discipline in spiritual life. The more you think of the objects outside, the more your mind becomes weaker and weaker.

You said that everything is God. If you can think everything, then the mind will not go to the sense objects because you cannot move to everything at the same time. Hence, the mind gets controlled automatically if your idea of totality, or everything, is clear in the mind. Thinking of all things at the same time is also discipline. Either you think all things at the same time or you think nothing, one of the two. But if you think of only certain things due to a desire for them, the mind will become weak.

All this is very difficult to practise unless there is a Guru or a teacher. It is not easy to control the mind. It is a very great secret which requires complete discipline under the guidance of a teacher. So that is my brief answer.

Visitor: How can we meet our Guru?

Swamiji: The Guru will come to you when you are ready for it.

Another visitor: How was your meeting with Sivanandaji Guru? How did you get to him? What kind of internal work were you doing in yourself to find your Guru? Did you come to Rishikesh to meet Swami Sivananda, or did you come for another purpose and then met him?

Swamiji: No, we came for Swami Sivananda only, not for something else.

Visitor: What was that special moment when you found that he was your Guru?

Swamiji: When you see a person like that, you will know he is a Guru. But you cannot easily find such people. There is great power and majesty and greatness and grandeur in their personality. Actually,

if you live with a person for some time, you can know what kind of person he is. Any one of you can find out your Guru by trying to live with that person for some time, whoever that person is, and in a few days you can know what kind of person he is.

Visitor: During the time that Swami Sivananda was here, what was the sadhana?

Swamiji: To keep the mind always concentrated in God and keep oneself busy in the service of people. The personality is dedicated to service of people and, at the same time, the mind is devoted to God. This is the main sadhana of Swami Sivananda. Merely doing service is not sufficient if the mind is not thinking of God. They must go together. The thought of God and the spirit of service must go together simultaneously. Contemplation and action, they go together. That is the essence of spiritual life.

Another visitor: Can you explain about the *yugas*? When will Kali Yuga be finished? Now it is very difficult.

Swamiji: After four million years, so you have enough time to suffer. Why are you worried about *yugas*? What is the problem?

Visitor: No problem.

Swamiji: Instead of worrying that it is dark and night, be happy that tomorrow there will be daytime. That is better than thinking of darkness. There is darkness and also there is daytime, isn't it? So is it better to think of night, or better to think of day? Which is better? As night will pass away and day will come, likewise the Kali Yuga will also go one day and then the truth will come. So you cannot ask the night to go immediately. It has its own time, and likewise is this also. It has its own time to go.

Another visitor: How can we live it, because we live in duality? How can we live in duality and in unity at the same time?

Swamiji: I told you, contemplation on God and service of humanity. It is unity and duality combined together. When you do work, there is duality. When you think of God, there is unity.

AFTER DEATH

A visitor: I want to ask you: How can one find humility?

Swamiji: In the might and grandeur and majesty of this vast creation, what is your position? You look like a little speck. Does this knowledge not bring humility to you? You are like a speck, insignificant and with no consequence before this mighty, wonderful, powerful universe; will it not make you humble? Will you show egoism before the universe? Will you show your might and egoism before the vast ocean? You will find, if you think over the matter, the reality of life is so vast and incomprehensible that you are nowhere in this universe. You are like a wisp of wind, with no significance whatsoever. The importance then, that one attaches to oneself, is a height of ignorance. If you know the truths of the universe, you will find that you are nowhere in it. Thus, become humble. Before the mighty God, should you not be humble? What do you say? Before the mighty God who created this universe, what are you? You are a very small nothing. So be humble.

Visitor: Yes, okay. Thank you.

Another visitor: Swamiji, I was thinking about what you said three days ago about time – about past, present and future being the same thing – and I was thinking what it means in the actuality of one's life, and...

Swamiji: It has no connection with your life. You are unnecessarily worrying about things which will not affect you in any way. Let time be there or not be there; how are you affected by that? There is space, there is time. How are they affecting your life? They are conditions of your existence. Without time and space you cannot even exist.

Visitor: Of course.

Swamiji: They are conditions of your very being and are, therefore, highly respectable forces. You are dependent on the operation of space and time, which means to say, you are involved in space and time. You are yourself that because of your organic involvement in

the process of space and time.

[To another visitor]: Suppose there is no life. In what way are you worried about it? Suppose I say you will not exist after death. Are you satisfied? What do you want me to say? Suppose I say you are not going to exist after death; then your problems are solved in one minute because you are not going to exist at all.

Visitor: You said that there are karmas and...

Swamiji: Why are you worried? Suppose I said you are annihilated completely in death. You are creating a problem by saying you are not going to be annihilated. What do you say? You are believing that you are going to continue, isn't it?

Visitor: Not me, but what has been ingrained into us that...

Swamiji: There are people who say that nothing is going to take place after death. There are people who say that something will take place. Whom are you going to believe between these two people?

Visitor: I don't have knowledge, so I am asking you, Swamiji.

Swamiji: If I say anything, I will be creating more trouble for you. You are now happy. Okay?

Briefly, you are going to continue after death, and you will carry the impressions of whatever you thought, felt and acted to the next world. In the next world you will be exactly what you are now unless, of course, you repent and amend yourself, and you become a better person so that in the next birth also you will be a better person, without any kind of grief. But if you bungle your life, do wrong things, think wrongly, feel erroneously, do bad things, then the impression of it will be carried in your mind to the next birth and you will suffer it as a consequence of what you are in this birth. This is the fact. Nobody can be annihilated. There is no such thing as annihilation of anything. Everything is permanently existing, only it gets transformed into a new form when the body perishes.

Visitor: But Swamiji, how are new forms being created?

Swamiji: They are created by your desires. You have had so many desires which are not fulfilled, and those desires which are not fulfilled will re-create themselves after the death of the physical

body. That is called rebirth. It is the re-creation of your unfulfilled desires. If a person has no desires at all, he will not be reborn. He will attain God. But everybody has a desire, so everybody has to be reborn, and they will be reborn in the same way as they have been thinking and feeling and doing in this birth. It is carrying over the balance sheet. Whatever was left over in the last year will be brought forward to this year. That is exactly what is happening. It is a balance sheet currently maintained by God. Nothing is lost, nothing is gained. Whatever is here will be carried forward.

Visitor: Swamiji, my question also was how are new, additional forms created?

Swamiji: There is no additional form. It is a manifestation of the present form only. It is not an additional form. Whatever forms of desires are left here will manifest themselves in the next birth.

Visitor: But those are the desires of the human being, Swamiji.

Swamiji: You have got many desires, don't you think? They will take form, exactly the form of what you wish. You are thinking you want something. That form of the thing that you want will be manifested in the next birth. Whatever you are thinking, that will get manifested. Whatever is the form of your thinking now, that will be manifested in the next birth because desires cannot be destroyed; they have to be manifested in experience – if not in this birth, in the next birth. So one has to be very careful in thinking and doing actions. You have to pay for it in the next birth. Whatever you have done here will be paid back to you in the next birth.

Visitor: In the next birth also there will be the human form?

Swamiji: No, not necessarily. Suppose you have been thinking like an animal and have very animalistic thoughts in your mind, very crude and barbarous; then you may become an animal in the next birth. If you are thinking only like a human being, then you will be a human being. But if your mind is very cruel and unsympathetic, then it will revert to the lower species which is the form of your present way of thinking.

Visitor: Man is the creation of God, one form of the creation of God.

Swamiji: They are the creation of your desires. Why do you bring God into it? Man is a creation of his own desires, and God has given you freedom to think whatever you like. You can stand or fall; both freedoms you have got. If you think like God, then you will not be reborn, but if you think like a man, you will be reborn as a man. It depends upon what you are thinking. You will be exactly what you are thinking. If you think like God, well, wonderful. Then you will have no rebirth because God is not reborn.

It is a very serious question which you have to think over deeply, so amend your way of life. If you think like God and act like God, then you will have no problem. But if you think like a businessman, a cheat, a deceptive man, telling lies, then you cannot become God. Just imagine what you feel when you deeply think of God. Immediately you get purified of all your desires. But if you think like a businessman with family entanglements and so many bundles of desires, then how will you get a better birth? You get what you deserve. You are only carried forward from the state which you are in. Nothing new is created.

Another visitor: So the next life is like this one.

Swamiji: It is only a continuation of the present one. Whatever you are now, that will be continued in the next birth.

Another visitor: Swamiji, what is repentance?

Swamiji: Repentance is a deep feeling for the wrongs that you have done, and the decision that you will never do it again. Feeling deeply grieved over the mistake that you have committed, and taking a promise that you will never repeat it again, that is repentance.

Another visitor: Can you control your thoughts and your desires?

Swamiji: The desires and thoughts will cease completely if your mind is united with God. Otherwise, you cannot control it. It will run after the sense objects of the world. Only God-thought is the remedy for the control of the mind; otherwise, nobody can control it. It will move wherever it likes.

Visitor: If it moves wherever it likes, it's hard for me to get the idea that you are your desires, and it continues to go on because that's an endless stream of thoughts and desires that's coming out. If you

cannot control your thoughts and desires, then there is an endless stream of...

Swamiji: You can. That's what I'm telling you. Unless your soul is united with God, you will take rebirth and there will be a stream of the continuity of desires, and you will again be suffering the same thing as you are suffering now.

Visitor: Then how can you be united with God?

Swamiji: What are you studying with your Guru? You are studying that only.

Visitor: But we are studying that we are not our mind and our desires, but we can act...

Swamiji: If you are not your mind, what else are you?

Visitor: I think what is left is your true self.

Swamiji: You are a self or a mind? What are you?

Visitor: I think, the self.

Swamiji: Where is the self? When the mind has gone, where is the self? Actually, the mind itself is the self. Where is the self outside the mind? Has anybody seen it? You can very well know that there is a mind; how do you know that there is a self outside the mind? How did you come to that conclusion?

Visitor: I think it is a state of where I feel I am not my mind.

Swamiji: If you are not your mind, what are you then?

Visitor: An expression of something else.

Swamiji: No, there is no expression when the mind ceases because it is the mind that expresses itself, and the question of expressing ceases when the mind does not exist. Who is to express himself? The expresser has ceased when the mind goes. You will not be existing at all when the mind is abolished completely.

Visitor: So the mind is not the cognition of something, or an experience of something else?

Swamiji: No, the mind itself is the experience. They are not two

things. Mind is nothing but a bundle of experiences, and when you abolish the experiences, the mind also goes. Vice-a-versa, when the mind goes the experiences go, etc. Then what remains of you afterwards? You said 'self', but what do you mean by 'self' when the mind has gone away? This must be clear in your mind. I'm not going to tell you anything; I'm only clearing your mind so that it might be bright and reflect the truth, whatever it is.

Visitor: Thank you very much.

Another visitor: If your mind is set on God, then where is the room for repentance?

Swamiji: The greatest repentance is unity with God, and there is no need for another repentance. All problems cease at that time when your mind is united with God.

Another visitor: What do you mean by 'God'?

Swamiji: Unfortunately, I am not your Guru, so I cannot initiate you into all these problems. I am only discussing in a friendly way some minor things, but I am not prepared to dig God into your mind now. I think it is not my duty. I am going beyond the limit of my contract with you. It is a serious matter. It cannot be spoken in a few minutes. You have to stay with the Master for years together in order to understand what it means. You cannot be travelling from place to place. You will get nothing out of it. Why do people travel from place to place and waste their time? Stay in one place with one Master until you get what you want. So much travelling is not good because all your money goes, and you get nothing out of it. You must meet the target of your requirement. One Guru, one thought, one method of meditation, and one aim of life. You should not have two Gurus and two thoughts, two aims. It should not be like that. You should aim like an arrow piercing its target, only one point. If your mind is one-pointed on the great goal of life, whatever it is, that is called meditation. Meditation is not discussion, it is not argument, it is not logic; it is nothing of the kind. It is the directing of consciousness on one thing only, whatever that be according to your conception.

Another visitor: Swamiji, what you think about modern yoga as it is

practised now?

Swamiji: Why are you calling it modern? It is ancient.

Visitor: Yes, but the way it is practised nowadays, do you think it still the same?

Swamiji: What is the way in which it is practised these days?

Visitor: In a classroom with many people, for example, rather than the *shisha* and Guru relationship.

Swamiji: There is no harm if all people sit together and do yoga. What is the difficulty? Let others also join you. Why are you objecting to it? And why do you call it modern? It is an acceptable thing, and if you don't want to do it in the presence of other people, you are free to do it individually. It is according to your convenience. There is nothing called modern and ancient in yoga. It is just what it is, like medical science. If you feel it is convenient to do it in the presence of other people and have discussion, etc., very good. But if you feel that the presence of other people is a distraction, you need not go for it. You do it independently. It is left to your choice.

Another visitor: Swamiji, you mentioned about thought, that we become what we think and what we desire. So would you say that thought creates karma?

Swamiji: Thought creates karma, you are perfectly right. The movement of thought is itself a karma. It is a kind of action. Thought itself is an action.

Visitor: Thought is action?

Swamiji: Yes.

Visitor: But you also said we always think, that there is always an endless stream of thoughts and desires.

Swamiji: That means you are endlessly doing something.

Visitor: But that would mean there is no way out.

Swamiji: Meditation on the universal Absolute – that is the way.

Visitor: So you are saying I have to meditate until I don't have thoughts anymore?

Swamiji: When you do meditation, the thoughts will not be there at all.

Visitor: But when I meditate, there are thoughts.

Swamiji: That means you are not properly concentrating the mind. There is some insufficiency there. Your concentration is not enough.

Everything you can understand, even the stars you can count, but you cannot know yourself. You are the greatest mystery in the world. The stars in the heavens are not the mysteries. You are the mystery. You are the greatest mystery. The sky is so vast, and you are the person who is aware the sky is so vast, so there is something in you as vast as the sky; otherwise, you cannot know that the sky is vast. You cannot know that the star is very distant unless you are also distant in some way. You are larger than your little body. Your consciousness is spreading up to the stars. Your dimension is as vast as the starry heaven; otherwise, you will not even know that there are stars. Like that, you analyse yourself. This is what is called self-analysis. And then see that there is something great and grand in you. A spark of divinity is already there, and it can become a conflagration and a great fire of God that is burning inside you. Why are you crying and weeping? This you have to tell yourself. This is the process of self-purification, and the way to meditation, finally.

Now you have to collect yourself. Make yourself a single focus of attention on that which you are aspiring for. I think this is more than anything else. There is nothing like meditation. It brings you everything, all the wealth of the world, and the wealth of the heavens also. When you sit, breath calmly, close your eyes, and feel that you are in the presence of this tremendous universe, of which you are also made. The earth and the water, fire and air and sky, and sun and moon and stars are touching you, as it were. They are not away from you even by one inch. It is the false imagination of the distance in space that makes us feel that we are outside and we are humble and simple, and all that. "The whole sky and stars are touching me, and I'm charged with the power of the whole cosmos, and the soul of the universe is within me." This much affirmation is sufficient for meditation.

REPENTANCE AND PRIDE

Visitor: The other day you were talking about repentance.

Swamiji: Yes, I explained it. It is a deep feeling of remorse in one's own self for having done what should not have been done, and an affirmation in the mind that in future you shall not commit such mistakes. That is repentance. If you deeply feel that you have made a mistake, and you are feeling the pinch of your conscience that you ought not to have done it, and simultaneously you are deciding that you will never commit such mistakes in future, that repentance will absolve you from the consequences of those actions.

Why are you putting this question? Do you feel that you have committed some mistake?

Visitor: I wondered how it related to being happy. You were saying we should be happy no matter what the circumstances.

Swamiji: Do you feel there is some obstacle to that process of being happy?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: What is the obstacle?

Visitor: My own pride.

Swamiji: You are proud of what?

Visitor: Of being special. I am special.

Swamiji: Nobody can be called important before the Great Power of the universe. The world force can crush you to pieces if it wants. That it has permitted you to live for some time in the world is due to some good actions that you have performed in your previous life. Otherwise, people die in the womb itself. They won't be born at all. There are such circumstances due to some actions which they have performed in their earlier life. I have never seen any person who feels that he or she is greater than others. I have never seen such a person because it is the highest and deepest form of ignorance, and you may call it stupidity. Everybody is equally important. Everybody has a right to live, to eat, to breathe, to sleep, and to be

safe. Everybody has a right for this, and so there is no comparison between one person and another person. Each one is as great as the other, or as unimportant as the other.

We sometimes use the word VIP, very important person, or it may mean very insignificant person [laughter]. It can be both. VIP means both: very important or very insignificant. So you can give any meaning of it to yourself. Are you a VIP? Use the word very carefully because it has a double meaning.

You are not living in the midst of human beings; you are living in the midst of the cosmic forces, which are manifestations of the Creator of the universe. Before such a vast ocean of power and grandeur which is this universe, can you imagine what is your position? Humblest of the humble, littlest of the little. Always you sit in the back seat, not in the front seat. You cannot have any occasion to become proud because there is nothing in you which can make you feel that you are very important, more important than anybody else. Otherwise, what is the enlightenment that you are seeking? Enlightenment is the knowledge of the truth of the universe, but if you are totally ignorant of it and imagine that you are something different from what you really are, then what is enlightenment? If you have a misconception about your own self, how can you have a correct conception of anything else? So all learning becomes a waste. There is a basic ignorance of the facts behind things.

To enlighten you is the duty of your Guru. You cannot enlighten yourself by yourself. People go to schools and colleges. If that training is not necessary under a teacher, then everybody can sit in one's own house and become a well-trained person. Why do you want to go to a teacher or a professor, or anybody? Why do you want a mentor and a guide? Only one who has trodden the path can guide you on the right path. You are just beginning, but there are others who have already covered the path. They will give you the whole knowledge of all the difficulties that they have faced on treading the path. So a spiritual teacher is necessary, and it is the duty of the teacher to enlighten you if you accept the teacher as your Master.

I am practically telling the same thing every day so that it may be driven home into your mind.

Visitor: I was thinking about what you were saying about why are we

continuing doing retreats and coming here every day. I was thinking that if the universe is infinite and the truth is infinite, then *satsang* also can go on forever.

Swamiji: Okay. It is good to have *satsang* always because the mind cannot keep concentrating itself on the truth always. It often slips down from its concept of truth, and so a repeated scrubbing of the mind, just as you wash vessels every day, is necessary.

One devotee went to Ramakrishna Parmahansa. He had a great Guru called Totapuri. Ramakrishna Parmahansa got initiation from a great Master called Totapuri, and when Totapuri went to Ramakrishna Parmahansa one day, he asked Ramakrishna, “What are you doing every day?” “I am meditating every day,” he said. “Why are you meditating every day? Is it not sufficient if you do it once?” Then Ramakrishna Parmahansa said, “The brass vessel has to be cleaned every day; otherwise, it may become dark, black. Just as a vessel is cleaned every day, I have to clean my mind always.” Then Totapuri said, “Suppose your vessel is made of gold; then you need not go on cleaning it because gold cannot get tarnished.”

The hidden meaning behind this conversation is, if the mind is like brass and capable of getting contaminated by outer influences, then every day you have to do meditation; every day you have to do *satsanga*. But if your mind is made of gold, that is, it is free from every kind of impulse characteristic of the world of nature, and you have no impulse of any kind, it is perfect concentration on the Universal Existence, then you need not have to repeat it every day because you are always in that condition. This is what the great Master told Ramakrishna Parmahansa.

So you must learn the art of perpetually maintaining a background of your concentration of mind on the ultimate Truth. It is not necessary to forget it for twenty-three hours of the day and try to bring it to a concentration point only one hour in a day. If your practice is perfect, you will be meditating even when you are walking on the road, because a mistake cannot be committed even when you are travelling. You cannot say “I will rectify myself after the travel is over. I will sit quiet in a temple or an ashram, and then start meditating” because when you will slip out of the point of concentration, no one knows.

Meditation is practised not because it is a kind of ritual routine everybody should do, and afterwards you may miss the point and think something else. It is a background of thought which one has to maintain always. That is to say, whatever work you are doing, wherever you are moving, whatever be the occupation, your background is a rootedness in the Universal Being. As a universal being you can walk on the road, you can travel in a train or a bus, you can fly; but you are a universal being that is doing that. If you say you are a Mr. or a Mrs., this person or that person, from this country or that country, though it may be a fact, there should be an outer periphery of your thinking, but the background is that you are a universal being eating. Even when you eat your lunch it is a universal being eating universal food. The Upanishad, especially the Chhandogya Upanishad, is very insistent on this practice of eating universal food, and the eater is also the Universal Being. God eats the universe, as it were, when you have your lunch. But who can have such a thought? It is the Universal Being eating the universal food of the universe.

Do you remember you are a representative of God and a spark of divinity? Every particle of matter is connected to every other particle of matter, modern physics says. Every atom in the universe is connected to every other atom. The material universe is a large organism. Even if you take a morsel of food, it is made up of matter. If it is the truth that every particle of matter is connected to every other particle of matter in the whole cosmos, the morsel of food you are taking is a part of the organism of the universe that you are eating. Inasmuch as the organism has no parts, every part is conditioned by the total organismic power, you are virtually eating the whole universe. If you injure a part of the body, say a toe, you are injuring the whole body. The body will feel the pain. So if you have the consciousness that you are a universal being and then you take your lunch, the whole universe will vibrate with the power of your divinity. That is what happened in the case of Lord Krishna eating a leaf. Even if you take one atom, it is like eating the whole universe because one atom is connected to other parts of the universe, and the total universe stands before you even when you touch a particle of matter.

So is the case in your soul. Your soul is not a segregated part of the Absolute, because there is no segregation anywhere. Everything is connected to everything, so every soul is connected to the universal soul. Hence, any action that you do is the universal soul performing an action in the universal material existence. The whole action is an integral action taking place.

Only a universal being can think like that. What I am telling you is something of the nature of the highest meditation, and I mentioned to you that always you must be in a state of meditation because always you are in the universe, which is integral, and always your soul is integrally related to the Absolute. So everywhere there is divinity, everywhere there is integrality, everywhere there is interconnection. No isolated individual exists anywhere. The quantum physics of modern times will tell you of the integration of the whole cosmos. Everything is everywhere and, similarly, every soul is everywhere. If you can conceive this position, you won't know exactly what is your position in this universe. The whole universe is your body, and the soul is the Absolute, so the Absolute is donning the whole universe as a garment, as it were. Inasmuch as no soul is different from another soul, all the souls – integrally connected with one another – form the Absolute Soul. We don't have many souls; we have one soul only, just as the whole ocean is behind all the drops of the ocean. Therefore, whatever you think is a universal thought; hence, the universal thought that is manifested through your universal being materialises itself as a universal consequence.

Actually, meditation means God thinking Himself as the total existence. This is the whole truth which I illustrated in a little story from the Mahabharata: Lord Krishna eating a little particle. Incidentally, it happened to be the whole universe that he was swallowing, as the Universal Soul that he was. This is the way you have to meditate. Simply doing some little thing and imagining that you are meditating and afterwards thinking some nonsense, this is not going to benefit you. Throughout the day you must be conscious of the fact that you belong to the whole cosmos, and never think that you are an isolated part, which you are not. The spirituality of your personality should be a perpetual spirituality. It is not that you are spiritual for one hour of the day and unspiritual for

twenty-three hours. You cannot say, “I am very busy. Meditation will come afterwards.” You should not be busy like that. Even when you are busy, you are universally busy. Okay, do the work, be very busy, but do it as a universal work and a universal performance. When you travel, it is a universal travelling; when you eat, it is a universal eating; when you speak, it is a universal speaking. Can you understand the consequence of this kind of consciousness? You will be blessed in a moment. Do you catch what I said?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Be happy. I have given you a big bundle of messages of a universal connotation. Okay?

Visitor: Thank you, Swamiji.

SENDING LOVE

A visitor: Swamiji, can I send love to other people? Often I feel so much, and I would send it.

Swamiji: Please send it.

Visitor: Is it enough when I think of these people?

Swamiji: Even when you do not see them physically, you can send love by thinking. I don't say it is the only way, but it is a very effective way. If you think something in your mind, you have actually contacted that thing by your thought. Thought is the best way of communication. You may send any wave of love, or whatever it is. Whatever you think about a particular object, that will be communicated to that object through space and time by the transference of thought power. You can love even the stars in heaven, and your love will reach there. The stars will shine better afterwards.

Visitor: Suppose I want to send my love to my son, for example.

Swamiji: Yes, you can think of him and feel love for him, and that love you are emanating by thinking of him will be communicated to him automatically and instantaneously.

Visitor: Can you love everybody?

Swamiji: It is very difficult to love everybody.

Visitor: Often I can love all, and often...

Swamiji: If you send love to all, it also includes your son because your son is a part of the all, so there is no need of sending love to one individual or one thing particularly. When you love the All, the particular individuals also are included in it, and they will receive your love automatically.

Visitor: That is better.

Swamiji: That is better than individual love because the individual is included in universal love.

Another visitor: I haven't really deeply understood what real renunciation is. What does it really mean?

Swamiji: People generally think, in common parlance, that renunciation is an abandoning of contact with certain persons and things: You have no contact with anybody in this world and you are alone; you physically and materially possess nothing, a condition which you have adopted voluntarily. There is involuntarily abandoning things, and voluntarily. If you want things but you cannot get them, it cannot be called renunciation. You must have it, and then you must not want it. If you have whatever you want, and yet you are not attached to it, that is renunciation. But if you are poor and have nothing, poverty is not renunciation. Having everything and yet not having any contact with it and being satisfied – only a person who has everything, that person can renounce.

Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to say only a king can renounce, because he has everything, but the poor man on the road who is sitting there with nothing, what will he renounce? Can he say he has renounced everything?

Actually, this is only an outer form of renunciation, but there is a real spiritual import behind it. You are connected to everything in this universe. You are not alone. Every part of your body, which is made up of physical elements, is borrowed from the five elements outside. There are material particles in your body, there is water, there is heat, there is air, there is space – all the five things are inside you. So your existence is, in one way, a borrowed existence. The materials for your existence have been borrowed from the five elements outside.

Now, think carefully. You are existing because of the existence of the components which constitute your body. If the five elements are the only things that are inside you, or are you, the world cannot be considered as something outside you. The idea of outsideness cannot arise because of the fact that whatever is outside is inside also. The idea of outside and inside vanishes. If there is neither an inside nor an outside, what remains is a universal existence. If this consciousness of your being a universal participant in the whole cosmos is maintained by you, then there is nothing which you have to renounce. It is a still higher form of renunciation where the very necessity to renounce does not arise because of the fact of your having a connection with all things in the universe. This is the

spiritual concept of renunciation. But leaving some people and some physical objects and running away from that place, that is a lower type of renunciation.

You have the whole universe connected to you; therefore, there is nothing for you to abandon, and nothing for you to possess also. There is nothing called possession, nothing called abandoning, inasmuch as the whole universal material is constituted of your body, and vice versa. You are a cosmic individual; therefore, you have got everything in you which the universe has got, and by deep thought you can summon the forces of nature into you. This is the characteristic of what you call a superman or a Godman. So I am trying to make you a divine individual by saying this. Would you like to be a divine individual?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Now you have become one already. Do you believe you have already become it? Don't doubt anything. You see, your doubt is spoiling your career. You have understood what I say, and I feel you are satisfied, so why don't you assert this consciousness always?

Visitor: Sometimes I am not really sure if I do the right thing.

Swamiji: If your understanding has accepted what I have said, then your feeling will also accept it. If the feeling and the understanding join together and the whole truth is accepted in your total personality, you have ceased to be a human being at that moment. You are a divine person. Be happy.

Visitor: Thank you.

EKADASHI, THE UNIVERSAL BEING, CONSCIOUSNESS

Swamiji: Today is Ekadashi. In Indian tradition there is a thing called Ekadashi. That day people don't eat a square meal. They eat little food. Every fifteen days we have one day which is called Ekadashi. Ekadashi is a Sanskrit word which means 'eleventh day of the fortnight'. It is believed that on the eleventh day of the lunar fortnight the mind locates itself in the centre between the two eyebrows. From the navel up to the crown of the head the mind moves up and down according to the movement of the moon. The mind is connected to the moon's movement. Now, there are fifteen days in a lunar fortnight. On the eleventh day, the mind is at the middle point between the two eyebrows. That point is suggested as a point for concentration of mind. The psychology of this prescription is that as the mind is in its own place of concentration on this day, it is easier to concentrate today than on other days. The more you eat and stuff your stomach, the less is the power of concentration of the mind because part of the mind goes to contribute to the digestive process. You can take a little bit of food without disturbing the mind, but if you eat a square meal then the circulation of the blood gets concentrated in the stomach and you feel a little sleepy due to that. But if you eat less, the sleepiness will be less and your concentration power is more. This is the story behind Ekadashi.

A visitor: I am trying to hold on, I am trying to be aware all the time of what you said yesterday, the great Universal Being.

Swamiji: What are you thinking the whole day?

Visitor: The great Universal Being.

Swamiji: Then you are the most blessed man in the whole world. Nobody can shake a hair of your body. You are perfectly safe. Okay?

Are you all maintaining in your mind the consciousness of the Universal Being? Any one of you? Are you hesitating?

Another visitor: Sometimes.

Swamiji: Why are you hesitating to do some good thing? You may

hesitate to do a wrong thing, but to do a right thing, why are you hesitating?

From the point of view of the ordinary world perception this great right thing may look like a wrong thing. That is why there is fear. The sense organs, who are wedded to the objects outside in the world, will tell you that you are doing a wrong thing because the consciousness of the Universal Being is totally against the welfare, wishes, longings and passions of the sense organs. That is the difference. What is right for the world is wrong for God, and what is right for God may look wrong for the world. So you must handle this situation very carefully. It is like walking on a circus wire with great concentration.

Another visitor: Swamiji, you spoke about friendship the other day, and about seeing all men as our friends. I wanted to ask you to expand what you were saying about friendship and seeing all people as our friends.

Swamiji: If the only thing that exists is the Universal Being, then this Universal Being includes every person in the world. The people in the world cannot stand outside the Universal Being, so when you are united with the Universal Being, incidentally you are united with every person also. Then what other great friendship do you want? You are not only a friend of people; you are united with them through the Universal Being, so it is something greater than ordinary friendship. You are becoming one with people in the wonderful fraternity of God-consciousness. So through the Universal Being everybody becomes your friend.

Visitor: Right.

Another visitor: What is consciousness? Is it mere thinking?

Swamiji: No. Consciousness is the principle of unity with things. Thinking cannot unite you with others. Thinking is contained within the body only, but consciousness operates through the whole cosmos. So there is a difference between consciousness and mind. Mind is the principle of thinking within the body, and consciousness is the principle which pervades the whole cosmos. There is a difference between thought and awareness through spirit.

Visitor: Swamiji, is God beyond consciousness, or is God consciousness?

Swamiji: God is the same as consciousness, universal consciousness, without any object before it. The mind has an object in front of it, whereas consciousness has no object outside it. It is everything. There is a difference between consciousness and mental operation. When the mind thinks, it thinks of an object outside, whereas consciousness is conscious of itself only. God is just 'I am I'. He has nothing outside Him: "I am what I am. I am not something else." The mind says, "I am something else outside in the marketplace," but the consciousness says, "I am eternal, and therefore not bound by the time process of sensory consciousness." God does not think of marketplaces, railway trains, and so on, because they are inside His body, so why should He think about them? For us they are outside. Therefore, we have to adopt a means of contacting an external object. That means is called the mind, which is a little drop of consciousness getting externalised in space and time. But in God-consciousness there is no space and time. They are all involved in God only.

It is a difficulty to even think what it is. You have to get identified with every conceivable thing. This is a step that you have to take in developing cosmic-consciousness. There should be nothing outside you. If anything is outside, you are that only, so that you cannot think anything outside. If you are this person, you are the other person also. You are everything, whatever it is, even a wall, a tree, a river, a mountain – everything. Then the mind will not go out. When the mind ceases to think externally, the consciousness that is the deepest spirit within you will rise up to an awareness that is universal. It requires great practice, and merely wool-gathering thinking is not adequate. Tremendous concentration is necessary.

Visitor: Swamiji, universal energy is not the same as consciousness?

Swamiji: Energy is a movement of universal consciousness through space and time. So universal consciousness is superior to universal energy. It is only a manifestation in space and time of universal consciousness. As space and time do not operate in universal consciousness, it is far superior to energy.

THERE IS NO IN AND OUT

A visitor: We are taking that inward journey, but because of this God-consciousness, the awareness of the cosmic-consciousness, can we also go out?

Swamiji: There is no such thing as out. It doesn't exist. In the cosmic existence, the 'out' and 'in' doesn't exist. Is space outside or inside? It is neither inside nor outside because it is everywhere, so such words cannot apply to it. The words are unsuitable expressions. A thing that is everywhere is not outside, and it is not inside also. Do you understand the point? So you should not say 'outside', 'inside'. These words should not be used.

Visitor: Why do they call it an inward journey?

Swamiji: These are all wrong definitions. That is not a correct definition. It has a meaning of course, but it is inward in the sense that it is transcendent to the body. It is above the body; it is the innermost self of everybody, though it is universal.

These things are very difficult to understand, how a thing which is everywhere can also be the innermost self of everybody. Because it is everywhere, it has no outside and inside, but because it is the soul of everybody, you can say it is inside also. But it is insideness together with all-pervadingness, so it is not inside like a bucket which contains water. You can say the water is inside the bucket, but the Universal Being is not inside in that sense. It is the deepest reality of every individual; therefore, you may call it as the inner self, but because it is universal, the word 'inner' is not suitable. It is better to use the words 'all-pervading universal existence' and not use 'inward', 'outside', etc. They are confusing because that which is everywhere is also inside, so you need not use the word a second time. It is a redundant statement.

This question that you raised – 'in', 'out', etc. – is in a little book called "Self-Realisation – It's Meaning and Method", which is some lectures I delivered many years back that mainly touch upon this subject, and you can go through it and see. Then you will never put a question afterwards. It is very clear from all points of view – Self-

Realisation.

Visitor: Swamiji, I am shocked that after so many years I am exposed to this cosmic consciousness. So many years I have lived, and only now I am exposed to this cosmic consciousness that we are all one, especially from this book “Your Questions Answered” – wonderful experiences. First time I have experienced it.

Swamiji: Very good. I am glad. Everywhere you go, you will find you are surrounded by the most powerful forces of the universe. You are not a helpless person. The wondrous powers of the cosmos are touching your body, if only you are accepting it in the core of your heart. The universal magnetism is having an effect upon you, but you develop a personalised, individualised magnetism by egoism and unnecessary self-affirmation, by which individualised magnetism you are trying to repel the universal magnet which is trying to have an impact upon you. There is a conflict created every minute by our inability to receive the effect of that cosmic magnetism, due to the fact that we are so much fond of our own individuality, this body, so-called. There are no bodies and individuals in the cosmos; therefore, there is a perpetual conflict between you and the world outside, the universe outside, and God Himself.

These are all very simple, easy-to-understand matters. The highest truth is easy to understand. It doesn't have any complication about it. In the same way as you know yourself very well, you can also know the universe very well. It is made in the same way as you are made. There should not be any conflict between you and what you call the outer universe. Be a friend of all things – the whole Earth, the whole sky, the entire stars, the sun and moon, and the beautiful breeze. Be a friend of all these things. In a friendly way, the sun is shining upon you, giving you energy. In a friendly way, the air is blowing through your nose, keeping you alive. In a friendly way, the Earth is keeping you fixed on its surface. If the Earth resents your presence, if the sun does not shine, if there is no air at all, you know what will happen to you. Though you do not bother about these things, they are bothering about you. You are not kind to the Earth, not kind to the stars, sun, moon – nothing. You are concerned with your own self. But the universal God is so kind and compassionate and merciful that free air is given, free water, free heat free light

from the sun, and the surface of the Earth is given to you for your grounding. So the cosmic forces are very charitable in their nature. They have no selfishness. It is we who are uncharitable and full of selfishness. So you have to turn the tables round and try to think as the whole world, the whole universe, thinks, and not merely you as somebody thinking. This art is very important to learn and very easy to understand, and you will be blessed even within a few minutes if only your mind can concentrate on this great truth of truths. There is nothing more for me to say. This is the whole sum and substance of the reality of existence.

EVERYTHING IS FLEETING

Swamiji: We are all people brought up in an atmosphere of the stature of Swami Sivananda, and so whatever we are thinking is a reverberation of the thoughts of Swami Sivananda. He was, to our knowledge, a superman in the sense that he was more than a human being in the compass of his relationship with the world. We have been told by him, and by other saints and sages with whom we had contact, that this world is not all because everything is fleeting, everything is momentary, as the great Buddha once declared. Everything is fleeting, everything seems to be existing for a moment, rather, and it moves and moves and moves. Buddha considered life as a kind of flowing river, but I do not know whether he has answered the question as to the direction in which the river is moving. If everything is fleeting, it is fleeting in one particular direction. If nothing is stable, nothing exists for more than a moment, then nobody exists. This conclusion will follow. This was a great quandary that people have tried to observe in the teachings of Buddha. If everything is momentary and nothing has stability for even a moment, even the Buddha himself does not exist for more than a moment, and his teaching has no stability.

These questions were raised by other thinkers by saying that either Buddha did not give a clear answer to these obvious questions behind his teaching, or that people have not understood what he was saying. There were many people who felt he was so great that his teachings were not properly grasped by anybody. It is not true that he was saying that everything is moving without something which moves. It is like flying with something which is not there to fly. A bird must be there in order that there is flying. In the case of the meaning that we try to draw from his statements, the bird is not there and only the flying is there. Then the Buddha's teachings also are momentary, and they do not exist even for a moment.

This is not merely the teaching of Buddha; it is also accepted by great yoga teachers like Patanjali. The only thing is, they make a difference, which is to say that unless there is a target, nothing can move. From the birth to death of an individual, there is a growth and a movement towards some aim which life seems to be having, and

we are not living for nothing. He lived for something.

Is there any meaning in life at all, or it is totally meaningless? Buddha said *anityam asukham*: The world is unpleasant and impermanent. That would mean to say that there is no meaning in life because it is unpleasant and it is not at all existing, even for a moment. But everyone feels that one should exist. Nobody wishes to pass away after one moment. There is an inward feeling of a desire to continue to exist and not allow oneself to fly like a momentary flowing drop in the ocean of life, and a simultaneous desire to live as long as possible. No one will feel satisfied by being told that they will be living only for a few months. It is a horror because the limitation put upon one's own existence is a deathblow to the longing to exist for a long time. From this, people have surmised by way of induction that the longing of every individual, of everything whatsoever, is for eternal existence, and not to subject oneself to passing in a form of momentary fluxation.

There are two types of longing, apparently, in every individual. One is the desire to defy time, which catches hold of the throat of everyone and wants to destroy it. "May I not be annihilated" is the wish of everyone from one side. The other side is, "May I have more and more of things. If I have a hundred million dollars, I would like to have five hundred million dollars. If I am the owner of a property extending to hundreds of acres, I would like to extend my domain. I would like to annex more into my kingdom. I would like to rule over the whole world, if possible. Why not? I would like to rule over the skies. Why should I be a limited, foolish man, sitting with a limited position? The more I have, the better for me. Nothing can satisfy my desire for possession because if I possess something, there is an unsatisfactory condition arising due to the existence of something more than what I already have."

It is said by great masters that the desire to possess more and more in a horizontal fashion is a subtle longing to overcome spatial distance. You do not like to be located in a particular space, and limit your belonging also to a particular area of space. The wider is your existence, the larger is the dimension of your personality. Endless is your desire to expand your personality, so that you would like to be one supreme individual with no necessity to contact anybody else

because space includes everybody.

One desire of the human being is to defy the limiting character of space by creating a distance of one thing from another thing. The other desire is to live perpetually, which is the desire to defy the time process. If you overcome subjection to the time process, and also overcome this subjection to spatial limitation, on one side you become eternal, on the other side you become infinite. So the longing of everybody is to merge infinity with eternity, which is a tantalising something, the greatest object of desire of everybody. I would like to be eternal, defying the time process, and infinite, defying the limitations imposed by space. Such a being, if it could be there, is regarded as the Absolute. In religion, we call it God. We call it by any name, like Ultimate Reality, etc.

So the search for the meaning of life, according to what we have understood, seems to be to find such apparatus by which we can become infinite and eternal at the same time. This we call perfection.

You have all heard what I told you. If you have anything to ask me, you are free to ask. Either you have understood what I said or you have not understood what I have said.

Visitor: Swamiji, I can follow your analysis when you say I am not satisfied with only one object. I have to have the other object, and finally I have to have...

Swamiji: Where are the other objects?

Visitor: I have to rule the whole world, you are saying.

Swamiji: I have already told you, the whole world merges into the Infinite, and when you become the Infinite the whole world – all people, America, England, sky, everything – goes into it. So it is not one person. You are not a person at that time. Don't use that word. There is no personality. It is a super-individual existence which includes everything that you call human beings, oceans, stars, everything. The world is not outside that Absolute. It is a manifestation of the Absolute itself, so when you reach the Absolute, you have reached everything. The whole cosmos is identical with you at that time.

It is difficult to conceive it in the mind by people who are accustomed to think purely in empirical terms, sociological terms.

To think like this requires great training.

Visitor: Is it possible to think it?

Swamiji: It must be possible. If it is not possible, you have to make it possible. This is called education. By the process of education, you learn what you were unable to understand. The mind is dull. It is not grasping all these mystical and mysterious processes involved in thinking like this. The whole life is a training in getting identified with the Supreme Reality. The whole of life is the process of education. You can never complete your education at any time. You are always a student. Always you are student; knowledge is never complete. It is endless, and you are expecting to be endless in your existence. This is what they usually call in religion God. It is not a person; God is not a person. It is a universal inclusiveness of consciousness. You must be able to catch it in your meditations.

Visitor: Swamiji, I am asking now, when I want to approach this Reality, is it not a mistake for myself to invent this process of time which is necessary?

Swamiji: You are perfectly right. It is a mistake in inventing a process of time. You can overcome it in one minute by your identification of self with the whole thing. The time process ceases in one minute in your meditation. Actually you are right in saying there is no need for a long process of time in achieving it. To achieve a timeless being, time is not necessary, though they are contradictions. Your question is perfectly valid. In your meditation where you identify your existence with all existence, the time process ceases for the time being.

Another visitor: I want to ask, can you tell us something about forgiveness because I see that love is one of the vital things in cultivating our divinity, and very often...

Swamiji: Would you like to be forgiven?

Visitor: Of course.

Swamiji: Then why not forgive others?

Visitor: I want to forgive others, but sometimes there is difficulty. Sometimes we think we have forgiven people, and then maybe after

a month or so we realise we haven't completely forgiven.

Swamiji: If you think you are a human being and would like to be forgiven, why should you not concede that same benefit to other people who are just like you?

Visitor: Yes, I agree, but I am saying it seems to me more difficult than that because at times I think I have forgiven people...

Swamiji: There is no difficulty if you agree that other people are as important as you are. If you think that you are superior and they are inferior, you will find it difficult to forgive them. Why not you be a little charitable and feel that others have the same feeling and difficulty as you are having? Humanity is one integrated mass of equilibrated thinking and feeling. We are thinking of humanity, not of one particular individual. So when you say "I would like to be forgiven", you mean to say that the whole humanity may be forgiven by the mercy of God. Do you understand me?

Visitor: Yes. Thank you.

Another visitor: The question now is, how to merge directly into this Truth, into this Absolute, in this very moment?

Swamiji: You require a very able teacher whom you should consider as a Guru. How long did you stay in this ashram last time?

Visitor: I was here nearly one year altogether.

Swamiji: Do you think in one year you have not understood anything? You have forgotten. Whatever you heard, you have forgotten.

Visitor: I have not, Swamiji.

Swamiji: You cannot afford to forget this because you agree that it is the most valuable thing that you have to do.

Visitor: I agree.

Swamiji: If it is the most valuable thing, you cannot afford to forget it. You say, "How I can do it, how I can do it?" and all that. The question does not arise because nothing is so valuable as this. You will perpetually go on thinking it, and merge yourself in it. The few words that I spoke to you have entered you, and you have understood

the meaning, and you have to brood over it again and again, and think nothing else, at least during the time of meditation, though not always. Do you understand me or not?

Visitor: I understand you.

Swamiji: You require a perpetual guide when you have doubts of this kind. A Guru is a person who knows more than what you know, and also knows how to obviate the difficulties that you are facing in your life. He is like a physician who knows what your illness is, and also knows what are the medicines that he has to give you to cure you of this particular metaphysical illness. I don't want to call it psychological. It is metaphysical, something more than a psychological difficulty.

I think you will be perfectly all right. You are a sincere man, as I believe, and with these little things I have told you, you have understood very carefully, and there is no need of repeating it again and again. The only thing necessary is to deeply sit and meditate, and don't think anything else except this thing. Of course, it is not possible to think like this throughout the day, but at least when you sit for meditation, which may be for one hour or two hours, as the case may be. And also, have faith that you are going to get it. You should not go like a doubting Thomas: "It may be or it may not be." "No, it must be. I have understood it. It has entered into me, and I shall achieve it certainly in this life itself, not in the next birth. I don't want a next birth. Now! What is wrong with me? I'm perfectly all right. I have no defects in me. I am an honest person; I am sincere. I want it!" Assert yourself, and you become that. Whatever you assert in yourself, that you become. You are your own teacher, finally. You must learn the art of positive thinking, and avoid doubts and suspicions of every kind.

ATTAINING MOKSHA

A spiritual teacher: What I've been thinking about a lot lately and speaking about a lot lately is that the key to a perfect liberation and a perfect understanding is the secret of being able to not know anything and to hold on to absolutely no trace of knowledge in order to feel and be secure in this world. So what I've been thinking and speaking about a lot is this delicate balance about how to be very much here in this world of time and space, and yet in order to be here and to feel very comfortable, very at ease, very deeply at ease, the secret is just to learn how to hold on to absolutely nothing and to feel that one doesn't need to know anything in order to be.

Swamiji: Your organisation is called Moksha Foundation, isn't it?

Teacher: Yes.

Swamiji: It enables people to attain moksha.

Teacher: That's the idea.

Swamiji: But people have several different ideas about moksha.

Teacher: No doubt.

Swamiji: Moksha literally is supposed to mean freedom, but freedom from what? The answer to this question also is multitudinous. A person is in a prison. When he is freed from the prison, you can say that he has achieved moksha of some kind. He has removed the bondage of being in a prison. Liberation from bondage is moksha, so being freed from prison life can also be called moksha in one sense.

A person is bound by social restrictions and regulations, which makes a person unhappy. If social restrictions are lifted up, one may be considered to be free from some kind of social bondage. There is also political bondage. There is psychological bondage. There is intellectual bondage. And so these are all lower types of liberation. Even to be freed from hunger and thirst is a kind of moksha.

But actually, as far as the common interpretation of it is concerned, in India particularly, moksha is freedom from reincarnation, freedom from the necessity to be born again into this body, or rather, we

may say it is the freedom from the finitude of one's existence. We are physically finite, socially finite. In every sense we are finite because of the fact there is some external atmosphere which limits our operation. No one can be entirely free individually in the world as long as there are other people who also seek the same kind of freedom, because the existence of another is a limitation on the freedom of one person. One person cannot have infinite freedom because there are other people who also would like to have infinite freedom, so infinities and infinities will clash. So we have only relative freedom in this world – comparatively good, but not absolutely all right.

The infinite freedom is what we seek. Limited freedom is not satisfying. Nothing limited can satisfy a person. Everything should be unending, vast in dimension, and also imperishable. The freedom should not be perishable freedom. You are free for one day; tomorrow again you are in bondage. People in the court are let off with bail. That person seems to be a little bit free, but he is caught by the net of the necessity to go again to the court and be questioned and perhaps may be even be sent back to prison. So relative freedom, tentative freedom, conditional freedom – on these conditions you have freedom – is as good as having no real freedom. We want, for instance, health. It should be unconditional health. We do not want to be conditionally healthy in our body because conditional health is limited health, and limited health is no health at all.

So I am coming to the point of the meaning of moksha. It is the freedom of consciousness from the sense of finitude. We have consciousness; everyone is conscious, but the old habit of imagining that the consciousness is within the brain, within the body, prevents the experience of the unlimited expanse of consciousness. If my consciousness is inside my body only, then that consciousness has no infinite compass in its operation. If the consciousness is within the body only, what happens to that consciousness when the body is no more alive? This is a very difficult question to answer. Does the consciousness also cease to exist when the body loses consciousness?

There are doctrines in the West, such as behaviourism, which hold that consciousness is an accretion of the brain cells; it is an accretion of material forces. Communist doctrine and materialism

hold a similar view that consciousness is an epiphenomenon, an exudation from matter. What exists is only matter, and if anyone says there is also consciousness which is other than matter, the answer of these people is it is an exudation of matter. That is to say, matter only exists, and what we call consciousness is only an emanation of matter. By this statement they seem to solve the controversy of the relationship between consciousness and matter. But they do not realise that their argument has a flaw because if consciousness emanates from matter, matter should have consciousness inherent in it. A matchstick emanates flame. That flame is potentially present in the matchstick. So matter has latent consciousness in it in order that consciousness may emanate from it.

Now, conceding that consciousness is hidden in matter, in which part of matter is consciousness located? Since matter is ubiquitous – the whole universe is matter – it would mean that consciousness is potential in the whole of matter. We cannot say that there is only a little bit of matter emanating consciousness. The whole universe of matter emanates consciousness. Even taking the stand of the materialists and the behaviourists, this contradiction arises from their doctrine, they don't realise. The whole of the material universe is potentially consciousness, which means to say, in other words, the universe is consciousness. As they say that there is nothing outside matter, by a logical deduction of this situation we come to the conclusion that there is nothing outside consciousness because of the very fact that consciousness is hidden in matter.

Now, we are all included in this vast universe. We are not outside the universe. For the time being I am using the word 'we', though it is not an adequate description of our situation. If the whole universe is aglow, radiating with consciousness, what are we then, who are inseparable from the universe? We are consciousness, which cannot be located in any particular place. Matter cannot be located in any particular place, so consciousness cannot be located in any particular place. Therefore, we are not existing in one place only; we are existing everywhere. This is moksha. This is called spirituality.

The appreciation of this particular thing which I have been expatiating during these few minutes, and the transformation of one's existence into this great position that we have arrived at, is spiritual

life. It does not mean reading a book – Bible or Gita or Upanishad – it does not mean going on pilgrimages, it is not worshiping in a church or in a temple. This is spirituality. It is hidden within you, hidden within everybody. I briefly mentioned it is all in all, and we are inseparable from that, so basically every one of us is all in all. As there cannot be several all in alls – the all in all can be one only – then our so-called multiplicity, individuality and sociability get melted down into this menstroom of the indescribable glory that awaits us.

What you call evolution in the modern sense is nothing but the development of potential consciousness to the infinitude of consciousness. That is evolution, whether it is biological, psychological or sociological. These days we talk much about evolution. We have got Darwin's theory of evolution, and many other people in the West have developed doctrines and theories of types of evolution, all which boil down finally to this attempt of the finite centre to expand itself to the unlimited that it should be. If you have fully grasped it and it has entered your mind, you have become that by the deep appreciation of it, then you must consider yourself as most blessed. But if you find any difficulty in maintaining this position in your life, then you can tell me what difficulty you are facing. We shall try to remove these problems, because problems are meant to be solved. They should not be kept there as problems only. Every problem is required to be solved, and if there is anything, that has to be solved.

There will be one difficulty which is common to everybody, and especially common to Semitic religions – Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Islam. They have one common feature of asserting the Ultimate Reality as a transcendental existence. They never like to use the word 'immanence' of God. There are mystical aspects of these religions also, which accept the immanence of the otherwise Transcendent Being. The limitation imposed upon us by the operation of space and time compels us to feel that God is beyond space and time, the Absolute is far, far away, beyond the stars. The Father in heaven, the Allah or whoever is the God, is not in this world. And Christianity adds a clause further by saying that the world is evil, it is sinful. The earlier you get rid of this sinful

world, the better for you.

The immanence of God in the world is refuted because God cannot be present in a simple world. Here is a special doctrine of Orthodox Christianity. But yet there is also another set of Christians who are called the mystics of Christianity. There are mystics in Islam, called Sufis. The prevalent types of Islam, Sunni and Shia, reject the Sufi doctrine of the immanence of God. These Sufis, who propounded the infinitude and the immanence of God everywhere, were hanged, they were impaled, because Islam always asserts that God is transcendent – far, far, far.

So moksha also will be very far. Reaching God is not an immediate possibility. How many kilometres away is God? You cannot answer this question. So the very assumption that God, or the Absolute, is distant is unfounded, logically indefensible. If God maintains a distance, He will maintain the distance forever. If that is the case, there is no question of moksha, or of reaching God. So there is this contradiction in the doctrine of the complete transcendence of the Creator of the universe.

In India also we have got such doctrines. I don't know if you are all acquainted with the philosophical systems of India. The main features of Indian thought are theology. One is that God is irreconcilable with human individuality; this system is called dualism. Human deformity of existence can never be reconciled with God's kingdom. You are always separate from God.

There is another doctrine which says you are not identical with the Absolute, but you are a quality, an expression or an adjective of the Absolute. The example given of this adjective is as is the relationship between the soul and the body. The soul is not the body, which is well known to everybody, and yet you cannot separate the body from the soul. You cannot keep your soul somewhere and body somewhere else. So this doctrine, known as Visishtadvaita, a doctrine propounded by a great philosopher-saint called Ramanuja of the bhakti cult, or the cult of devotion, propounds the doctrine of the organic relation of God, even as the body is organically related to the soul but it is not identical with the soul.

There is another doctrine which is called non-dualism. The main propounder of it is Acharyasankara, and its base is the Upanishad.

The Upanishad declares *sarva khalvidam brahma*: All this is the Absolute.

I am just mentioning there are varieties of doctrines in the world, and if we are to accept only that which is rationally acceptable and logically sensible, we are perforce brought to the conclusion that God, the Absolute, is consciousness, the meaning of which I tried to explain a few minutes before. And you are that stupendous Absolute consciousness. The relationship between you and the Absolute is not a relation at all, just as there is no relation between a drop of water in the ocean and the ocean itself because the ocean does not contain drops. The ocean itself is a big drop. So our relationship is no relation, it is total organic identity. If God is a blessed being, we are all equally blessed because we are inseparable from that Supreme Being we call the Absolute. The achievement of this great goal is moksha. Here I stop. Is there anything you want to say?

Teacher: You put me in meditation listening to you.

Swamiji: This itself is a meditation. The establishment of consciousness in the Absolute persistently, as long as possible, is meditation. Actually, we have no other duty except meditation. We are born for that, live for that, and will die for that. All other activities are only accessories to this great aim. Hari Om! God bless you.

THE BACKGROUND OF THOUGHT

[Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj was talking about his responsibilities as General Secretary of The Divine Life Society.]

A spiritual teacher: How do you sleep?

Swamiji: How do I sleep? It is a great question. I get very good sleep, no problem. When I go to sleep, I cease to be a human being as much as possible. I connect myself with all the five elements – earth, water, fire, air, ether, sun, moon, stars, space-time, everything. If that is possible, there is nothing that can disturb your mind because that which is going to disturb you is within this universal campus of creation as a whole. I take a deep breath, and switch on the consciousness to the consciousness present in everything anywhere so that there is nothing that can prevent the mind from going to sleep.

People cannot sleep because there are agitations caused by circumstances outside. At that time, the circumstances get identified with everything, which is the whole of creation, and inasmuch as I cannot stand outside creation, the agitation loses meaning. The universe cannot agitate itself. This is one form of meditation. At least, I am trying to be in this type of mood throughout the day. It is not only during the hour when we sit for meditation because even when we are not sitting for meditation, the soul may depart, and does it mean that the soul should depart when there is some non-universal thought in the mind? Then immediately it will take rebirth. Rebirth is caused by the affirmation of finitude of oneself and the separation of oneself from the Infinite. Meditation is the strong exercise of consciousness to be one with that from which it can never be separated.

One can pass away in the bathroom, or when you are taking lunch a little grain of food may get stuck in the throat and somebody dies at that moment. You cannot tell this predicament, “Please wait until I sit for meditation.” Any moment is a moment for exit from this world, and therefore any moment is a moment for meditation.

We do a lot of work, and nobody can sit quiet without doing anything. But we have a technique of identifying all activity with the

Cosmic Being so that action does not stand apart from meditation. In Western parlance there is a saying: contemplation in action. How is it possible to contemplate when you are acting? There is a feeling that activity is a part of this world, and that meditation belongs to the other world. It is not so. There is no such thing as this world and the other world. It is one mass of interconnected organic being, so the actions that you perform are also within the campus of this universal inclusiveness. This should be the background of thought, though outwardly you may be busy with certain things. There is a little difference between the background of thought and the ordinary thought connected with normal work of the day.

I will give an example as to what the background of thought is. You have to catch a railway train. It is time to go to the railway station. You are busy. You have to run immediately to purchase a ticket. This may be considered as an activity connected with the world, but that person who is so busy in thinking that it is time to leave this place, run to the railway station, purchase a ticket and see that he has a seat in the train, with all these thoughts suppose he has in his pocket a large amount of currency notes. He will never forget in the busy activity of going and purchasing a ticket, etc., that there is something very valuable in his pocket. Even when he goes to the bathroom, he will remember this. This is the background of thought of that which is the most valuable thing for that person. Going to the railway station and purchasing a ticket is a valuable exercise, but with that attention in the direction of going to the railway station, the attention towards that which is in his pocket cannot be obviated. That is called the background of thought.

There is a person in prison. There is a judicial order that he will be executed three days afterwards. But every day he is getting food, he can take bath, he can read a book. With all the things that he is doing – eating, taking rest, and taking a bath – he will never forget that he will be here only for three days. That is the background of thought. It will persist again and again: Gentleman, you are here for three days more. Together with this background of thought, he will have the thought of eating food, reading, taking a bath, etc. Like this is to be our exercise.

There should not be a difference between spirituality and

secularism. We always talk of secular life and spiritual life. We do not believe in such a bifurcation. It is like cutting off the world from God. Will you be able to cut God off from the world? The world has come out as an organic emanation of God's being, and if you consider anything connected with the world as secular, then the relationship of the world with God also will be secular, and you are injecting a little bit of secularism into God also, which is not possible. The secularism that we are thinking of in our mind is only an outward motivation of consciousness through the sense organs in the direction of what actually is not outward. The world is not external to the consciousness because the world is organic with the Creator of the world, which includes ourselves also. Therefore, anything that you do is organic to God's existence. Therefore, any performance should not be regarded as unspiritual. There is nothing unspiritual in a world which is created by God. Would God create unspiritual or ungodly things?

If you are convinced that we cannot impute any such error to God that He has created something which is different from Him, then that which is different from Him should have come from Him only; therefore, there cannot be anything different from Him. Thus, we become happy always. With all the multitudes of noises and activities, we keep calm in our mind, and we can have good sleep. This is my answer to you, how I sleep. [laughter]

A foolish person cannot be happy in this world. There must be a little bit of wisdom worth the while, and if you persist in not understanding the circumstances under which you are living, you require education – education in the light of your relationship with the whole environment of the cosmos. We do not belong to any country. There is no country, actually. The whole globe of the Earth is one mass of matter, and do you think the Earth is always thinking that this side is America, and that side is India? Is the Earth thinking like that? There is no such thing. It is only a demarcation that you have made psychologically for your convenience. There are no countries on the face of the Earth. It is only one mass of material substance.

In the same way is the case with everything else. I am repeating the same thing which I mentioned earlier: We belong to the family

of God, as religious people say. Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of humanity is the way in which religions speak of our relationship to things in the world and above. To be truly spiritual, the idea of God being above should be removed from the mind. That which is above is certainly at a distant place; it will take time to reach you, and when you are in trouble it cannot help you. Hence, only that can be ready to assist you in your difficulty which is not away from you. If God is sitting beyond the stars and He takes time to come here, by that time you will perish here. There is no distance between God and what He created. It is one integral existence, of which everything conceivable – yourself and myself and everybody – are vitally related, and even the relationship, the relation itself, is part of this organism.

The cells of our body are organically connected with our being. Therefore, we do not feel that we are a bundle of little, little cells. We feel that we are one integrated individual, notwithstanding the fact that we are made up of little, little pieces of brick, millions of them, known as cells. But in spite of the fact that these cells are multitudinous, we do not feel that we are made up of little bits of brick, of material substance, because there is a vital, conscious relationship established between the cells and what we think we are, so that the so-called relationship of one with the other is also constituted of consciousness only.

Yesterday I mentioned that all is the Absolute. When you utter this, a tremendous shock should enter your being, like a high-voltage current entering the body. If you touch a high-voltage current, what do you feel at that time? A shudder, impossible to describe. Sri Ramakrishna Parmahansa, the well-known saint, used to say the entering of the Absolute into your being is like a wild elephant entering a thatched hut. It will break open everything and make itself as the owner, the very existence of that hut. You cease to be when God enters into you.

It is very difficult to understand the situation. God is so concerned with Himself, so to say, that He would not permit the existence of anything outside Him. That is why the reality of God is called 'I am what I am'. I am, that's all. You cannot say that another thing is. He won't permit your existence. He will absorb you into Himself so that

you cease to be there.

Yesterday I referred to Semitic religions, which are not able to understand the possibility of this kind of unity with the Universal Substance. They are very fanatical. They will not tolerate any kind of talk like this because they think the world is sinful and you are a sinner from the time of Adam himself. How can a sinner become God, or even touch God or go near God? This is one doctrine. If we are essentially sinners, we shall never become divine because one thing cannot become another thing. A is A only; A cannot be B. It is simple logic. So there is a flaw in this doctrine that a human being is a sinner. If one thing is one thing, it will be that only, forever; one thing cannot become another thing. So if there is a possibility of a sinner becoming divine, the divinity must be implicit in that which you call the sinner.

I mentioned yesterday that if all this is matter, then that which knows matter should be implicit in every part of matter. Likewise, the divinity, which is quite different from sinfulness, has to inundate the entire particle of the existence of sinfulness; otherwise, the sinner cannot reach God. So there is a difficulty and a great mistake in dubbing things in the world as sinful things and then trying to reach God. They are contradictions. The ladder between Earth and heaven, God's existence, has necessarily to have a connection between what is below and what is above. You cannot climb the ladder unless the ladder touches Earth as well as heaven.

So there are some very erroneous religions, which I can designate only as fanatical and fundamentalist, and totally misguiding, which we have to rise above with the effort of our conviction of what the Almighty existence is. If we have doubts, then there is no greater obstacle to us than doubts. No other obstacle is there except in our disbelief in what we are trying to do in the spiritual field. A person has entered the spiritual field and doubts: Is it a feasible way, or it is an erroneous way, or I am confounded? Finally, a doubt will come: Is there a thing called the Absolute Being? Am I going to reach it? How will I reach it? Is the method that I am adopting correct or not? Is my Guru a proper Guru, or may I go to another Guru? These kinds of doubts, like an avalanche, will descend upon a person. Faith is absolutely essential in what one does. A faithless work is no work at

all. The mind is elsewhere, and you are doing something else.

So I feel that spiritual life is very easy, and I think that nothing can be so easy as that because to be what actually is must be the easiest thing, and to be what is not is a difficult thing. It is easy to tell a truth, but it is more difficult to tell a lie. You have to scratch your head a hundred times to tell an untruth, but truth automatically manifests itself because it is the nature of what is. We cannot connect ourselves with what is not.

Therefore, the great duty of every person is to know what actually is; and if there is a difference between what is and is not, then what is the relationship between the two? That relation also is abolished because it cancels the distinction between what is and what is not. This is a little bit of metaphysical argument, but it is very simple to understand.

Coming to the conclusion, we are blessed to be able to think in a proper way, and to decide once and for all that we have no other duty than to be totally immersed in this All-Being, which is all-perfection, all-knowledge, all-power, deathless, immortal blessedness. In the Sanskrit language it is Sat-Chit-Ananda. It is; therefore it is called Sat. It is conscious; therefore it is called Chit. It is total freedom; therefore it is called Ananda. Existence which is conscious of itself is total freedom. These three words are not different from one another. It is a difficulty in language that makes us use three different words. Existence is conscious that it exists; therefore, it is totally free. This is what you call God. Existence, consciousness, bliss are not three different words. There is a grammatical difficulty in expressing this condition, but if you can deeply think over the matter, you can imagine what it is to be conscious that there is existence. Existence is undivided; everything exists, so it is the consciousness of undivided existence. Therefore, there cannot be anything outside the undividedness, nothing to cause agony and bondage to you, so it is freedom and bliss: existence-consciousness-bliss. But it is not my existence, or that man's existence, or this person's existence; it is all-existence. All-existence is all-consciousness and all-freedom. This is how we can define God, if at all. What else can I tell you?

Teacher: Nothing. [laughter]

Swamiji: This is what some of us here are trying to achieve in our

life. With all the activities, this background of thought is always there. We are very busy, yes it is true, but we know there is a huge treasure. I cannot forget that. That background of thought should be maintained always.

THE ROLE OF THE GURU

A spiritual teacher: In the West now there is a big controversy about the role of the Guru.

Swamiji: What is the controversy?

Teacher: Well, many people in the West are questioning the value and significance of that role.

Swamiji: I think this question arises due to a misunderstanding of what a Guru means. They think it is some person saying something to somebody. It is not like that. A Guru is an embodiment of an experience and wisdom far superior to the person who is regarded as a student or a disciple. If a guide is not necessary at all and one can get on with oneself, then one need not go to schools and colleges and universities. You can just purchase some books and become a PhD or a Master of Arts or whatever.

It has been found that a person who is ignorant of the higher nature of knowledge requires guidance on the path which leads to the higher comprehensiveness of knowledge. You require a guide for everything. A person cannot stand alone in this world. Otherwise, why should there be any kind of teacher? But there is some important aspect of this matter, which is also to be considered, namely: Is the Guru a physical body? If that is the case, when the body of the Guru is no more, there will be no Guru. So many people feel that they have lost the Guru and go on beating their breast and striking their head, and feeling bereaved.

It is not the body of the Guru who gives instruction. The body does not speak. It is the wisdom that speaks through the instrumentality of the speech of the Guru. The Guru is the comprehensiveness which is not outside the student, but above the student. There is a difference between being external and being above. A teacher may look like an external person before a student, but that teacher is, at the same time, above the student's comprehension. In a way, the Guru is the higher self of the student manifest in the personality of an individual who looks like a human being.

It is not easy to be a Guru; it is not anyone and everyone. Firstly,

the Guru has to be established in a state of experience and knowledge far superior to the student's or the disciple's, so-called. Secondly, the exterior location of the personality of the Guru does not mean that there is no other element involved in the Guru's existence. You understand what it is to be higher than someone else. Now I give a small example. The president is higher than the prime minister. He does not physically sit on the head of the prime minister, so in what sense is he higher? The professor is higher than the student; he is also external because you can see him and photograph his body, but he is nevertheless higher. This 'something being higher' is not a perceptible category. It is a conceptual appreciation. Do you understand what I say?

“Oh, a very big person has come.” When you say “very big person”, it does not mean that he is very stout in his body, nor does it mean that he is very tall, taller than other people. His dimension of knowledge and power is wider than the dimension of knowledge and power of other people.

This understanding applies to the Guru also. The Guru is higher, not outside. A higher thing cannot be destroyed. Even if the personality of a president perishes, the president does not perish. It is a principle, and not a person. So a Guru cannot die, even as the government cannot die. Persons change, but the principle does not change. So nobody should cry that the Guru is dead, because the principle which was operating through the personality of the Guru is eternal. It was a blessing to students, and the blessing will continue even after the departure of the body if the student's consciousness is in a state of communion with the consciousness of the Guru. It is not one person sitting with another person; it is one state of consciousness trying to commingle with another state of consciousness. A student is one state of consciousness, and the Guru is another state of consciousness. One is larger in dimension, another is lesser.

So you should not take into consideration only the body of the disciple or the body of the Guru. The Guru is neither a man nor a woman, and so is the case with the student. The student is not a man or a woman. It is a principle of requirement in a particular state of consciousness. You are consciousness; you must accept it. The

consciousness is using this body as an instrument of its operation, but we ourselves are not the body. So is the case with the Guru. And I feel there should not be any kind of controversy, provided there is an appreciable understanding of the meaning of it. Without a guide, you cannot exist anywhere. Everywhere, even when you walk on the road, you want a policeman's guidance: Where shall I go? Which way is the road? Otherwise, it is a mere self-complacency of a person: I can get on with myself.

The depths of the cosmos, the intricacy of life and the mystery of all creation is so astounding that no one can say "I know everything myself". It requires a very powerful guide with an insight into these mysteries. A Guru is necessary, provided we understand what a Guru is. It is not just a Tom, Dick and Harry. It is one accepted principle of the higher dimension of knowledge. I cannot say more than this about the Guru. It is something higher, and not external. You can see the body of the Guru, but you cannot see the Guru as such. You can see the person who is in the post of a president, but you cannot see the presidency. You also cannot see the government. Where is it? Can you show me? If you go on looking around, you will not find the government anywhere. You see only people. So what is the government? Does it exist or not? So is the Guru.

You have put a very good question and a very important one, which is harassing the minds of many people these days.

A visitor: If a Guru who is established in the Absolute gives a clear instruction to a disciple, telling him what he has to do, is it possible that the Guru is telling this only in order to test his disciple, or is it always to be taken literally?

Swamiji: The Guru does not test the disciple, but educates the disciple, instils into the mind of the disciple the knowledge which, at present, is not in the disciple. There are cases where tests also become necessary, but that is not the primary goal of the Guru. The teacher need not go on testing the student. He only enlightens the student, and if the Guru or teacher you accept is competent, then that instruction should be followed because it comes from a higher source of knowledge.

When you understand everything, you may regard yourself as a master. But you should not have doubts in your mind. A person

who has a doubt cannot be a teacher or a Guru. There should not be a single doubt in the mind. Everything is clear, from top to bottom. Such a person only can be a real Guru.

There is a definition of Guru in the Upanishad: *shrotriya* and *brahmanishta*. *Shrotriya* means he is learned in the deepest lore of spiritual living. He is highly learned, and he is himself established in the higher reality. He must have two qualifications in order that he may be a teacher. If he is established but he will not say anything, then you will not be benefited by him. But if he says that he is not himself established, that also is no good. So he must be a *shrotriya* and a *brahmanishta*: established, and also learned. He must be able to clarify your difficulties, and he must himself be convinced about it. A person who is not convinced himself cannot teach. There are some teachers who simply don't know what they are going to teach.

There was a teacher who was teaching biology. The student asked, "Sir, what is biology?" The teacher didn't know the root of this word 'biology'. "'Bi' means two," he said, "like bilingual, and all that. 'Logy' means arguing. It is two kinds of arguments; that is biology." Now what to do with these teachers? Then afterwards the boy came to the house and told the father, "I know what biology is." He told him the same thing. The father was stunned. He said, "This is the kind of teacher you have got?" So many people are like that. They are not convinced themselves, and then they try to teach, which will be like a shell that is presented, without any substance.

The primary criterion is that one should be satisfied with oneself. Each one should put a question to one's own self: Am I a satisfied person, or have I any crochets in the mind, or doubts and harassments psychologically? Spiritual life does not mean living in doubts and suspicions, etc. It is a clarity that is spirituality, and each one can make some kind of assessment of oneself by putting a question to oneself. It is called self-checking or self-analysis. Am I quite satisfied? In almost every way, am I satisfied? Or is there something that is pinching me, causing me agony? If there is such a difficulty, it has to be handled first, and such problems should be removed. Self-satisfaction, composure of mind, a smiling face, goodness of behaviour, and love of God, this is spirituality. All these factors must be combined. You are essentially a good person; everywhere you

are a good person. You don't irritate anyone. You are a really good person, with some element of godliness. Ultimately it is said that only God can be really good, and any element or percentage of it in your personality also makes you good.

In India especially there are some ways adopted to keep the mind in a state of concentration on the higher spirit. One of these methods is chanting, reciting, repeating the name, whatever you call it, of that great Principle. There is a great Divinity, God, or the Absolute, the Universal Being, whatever you may designate it. You are stunned by its presence. You are awestruck by the thought of it. You are delighted, and at the same time frightened by the vastness and magnificence of that Being, and you want its blessing.

“Come, Great Almighty, come!” When you utter this sentence, you feel a shudder within yourself. It is like saying, “Vast ocean, come and enter me.” You tell the Atlantic, “Atlantic, come and enter me.” What do you feel at that time? It is a shock. Would you like the Atlantic to enter into you? You will be unable to say what is happening to you at that time. Here is the great Atlantic of the cosmos. But the Atlantic may drown you, and it will appear that it will destroy your existence. The great Almighty also may do some such thing. It abolishes your individual personality. It takes you into its own bosom, makes you itself.

Prayers are offered – “God Almighty, make me Thine. Hallowed be Thy name” – because the name of the Supreme Being is most hallowed, most purifying. In these kinds of recitations, solicitations, feelingful exultations to the great, almighty, Supreme Power behind this universe, the calling enters into your mind. When the name is uttered, the form that is connected with that name also enters your mind. ‘Dog’ – utter that word. Immediately the mind takes the form of that object called the dog. ‘Tree’, you say. When you utter this word, immediately you feel a tall thing standing in front of you. ‘Ocean’ – immediately you feel what it is, the vastness and terrifying thing before you. Similarly, you call the name of the great Almighty. “Mightiest Being pervading all things, all power, all knowledge, deathless immortal, please come to me. Make me Yours.” Go on telling this one hundred times. “Great Almighty, I want You, I want You. Great Almighty, I want You. Great Almighty, I want You. I

want nothing else. You are all in all. Whatever I want in this world, what I can expect in this world is within You, in You, and You are the very thing which I am asking for in this world. Unnecessarily I run after things externally, thinking they are existing outside me, but this outside so-called thing is within You, as I am within You. So I need not run after things because I have to run after You, which includes all things after which I am running. God Almighty, come to me, bless me. Thou art all, and I want You only, and nothing else.” Make this a kind of prayer.

You can create your own prayer. You need not have to read a book or a Bible or some Upanishad to chant the name of God. In your language, whatever is your language, from the bottom of your heart, cry to God “Come!” and He does not take time to come because He is timeless. Only if it is in the process of time will it take time to come, but it is a timeless, spaceless Being. It does not take time to come. At once it will manifest itself, instantaneously. Therefore, you are secure. You have got an eternal friend not far away from you, ready to come to you, to your succour. Consider yourself as blessed because this mighty friend is always with you and you shall never have any kind of problem. “If there is a problem, I will just call Him: Please help me.” This is a mantra. We chant some Sanskrit mantras, but you can have an English mantra also, as I mentioned. You have created your own mantra, which is the expression of the deepest feelings of your heart, and you will be sure that it will get materialised. What is affirmed in your consciousness will immediately get materialised into form and action. So be happy.

Om, Narayana, Krishna, Siva, Jesus – these are also good, but they are all set, ready-made mantras which are in the scriptures. Your heart’s desire and its expression is the real mantra for you. Your needs must manifest themselves through the prayer. This is the whole important matter. Your requirements, your needs, the basic potentials of your heart, the recesses of your heart, they must manifest themselves in the prayer. It is not enough if simply like a machine you go on repeating some mantra, like a Tibetan wheel moving. You know a Tibetan wheel? They write a mantra on the wheel, and rotate it, so it means the repetition of the mantra. That kind of wheel is no good. It must be the rotation of your own being.

You are repeating your own soul, practically. This is prayer, what they call *japa* in Sanskrit.

Do *japa*. *Japa* is the best thing – calling the name, calling the name, calling the name, that’s all – and immediately the form which corresponds to the name will reveal itself. Name and form go together. Whatever name you suggest in your mind, that form will manifest itself instantaneously because that form is spaceless and timeless. So there should be no fear, provided your heart is open, clean and sincere, and it is really wanting it. Here Christ’s statement is to the point: “Ask and it shall be given.” “Knock and it shall be opened.” “Seek and you shall find.” Can there be a more profound instruction from a Guru than this? Seek and you shall find. Your heart should say it, and not merely your eyes and ears.

God bless you. I have nothing more to say.

SWAMI SIVANANDA

Swamiji: Swami Sivanandaji came to Rishikesh in the year 1924. For twelve years he did intense *tapas*, or austerity, on the other side of Ganga. There was no Divine Life Society at that time. It was all a forest. No human beings were here at that time. Twelve years of intense *tapas*. He used to go to Lakshmanjhula side where he was alone and no people were there, and stand waist-deep in the cold water of the Ganga, facing east and praying to the powerful sun rising in the east. He would take three dips in the Ganga when he took his bath. Why did he take three dips? The first dip was for the salvation and blessedness of all those people who left this world, who have gone to the other world. Another dip he took for the blessedness and welfare of all people who are alive in this world. A third dip he took for his own spiritual salvation. So he took three dips.

In the early morning the first person he would see in his *kutir* was a sweeper, and he would place some flowers on the head of the sweeper. Every day he would do that. Multifaceted is God – multi-headed, multi-eyed, and so on. “One of the heads of this Infinite Being has come.” He would place a flower on his head. Then after that there will be sweeping of the *kutir*. Then he will go for his bath in the Ganga and take three dips, as I mentioned.

He will write from 3 o’clock in the morning till 8 o’clock in the morning in a notebook, with his own handwriting. After that, he will take a little breakfast. Then he will come to see people who are waiting to see him to have darshan. Some signatures he will put, as I did just now – some official correspondence, official papers, letters from people outside, queries, questions, and all that. He will attend to all these things. Then he will go back to his *kutir*.

He never changed his *kutir*. From beginning to end, he would stick to that only. The *kutir* in which he was staying does not belong to the Ashram, The Divine Life Society. It is a property of the other side of the Ganga, Swargashram, and people used to say, “Why are you living in a *kutir* belonging to someone else? You have got your own ashram. Why don’t you come?” Swamiji replied, “No, I’m satisfied here because I can see Ganga from that little window in the *kutir*. I don’t want any other *kutir*.” He would take a little lunch, and

take rest, and about 3 o'clock in the afternoon again start writing. Then after one hour or one-and-a-half hours of writing, again he will come a second time to see people in a little office which is now the Post Office. That room in which the Post Office is located was the office of Swami Sivananda. There was no other room. Then in the evening he will go back and take a little fruit or milk, whatever it is.

Then in the night there will be *satsang*. That *satsang* was held on the veranda of the *kutir*. It was not roofed at that time. Now you see a roof. There was no such thing. It was open, perfectly open, and part of it was a tin shed. I was one of the people directly connected with holding *satsanga*. I am speaking about things so many years back, when I was about twenty-two years of age. I came to the Ashram when I was twenty-two years old. Now I am past seventy, so you can imagine how many years I stayed here continuously, without moving anywhere. Swami Sivanandaji used to say stickability is a good virtue, so we are stickable. We will not go anywhere in search of anything.

At 6 o'clock in the evening I will go to the *kutir*, spread the carpet, put the portrait of a divinity, light the lamp, give the books for study, and start the *kirtan* and *bhajan*. Then others come. There will be *kirtan* and *bhajan*, reading of the Srimad Bhagavata or any scripture, then chanting of the Vishnu Sahasranama Stotra, and each one will sing some mantra, some prayer, some *kirtan*. This will go on for about an hour and a half, or a little more. Then finally Swami Sivananda himself will conclude the *satsanga* with a prayer and a *sankirtan*. Then there will be an *arati*. There will be a little bit of *prasad* to all people. Then all disperse. By that time it was about 11 o'clock.

At 4 o'clock in the morning he will come and tap at my door: "Are you sleeping?" I would expect him every day. So he will bring a manuscript at about 4:00 or 4:30 in the morning, and he will say, "Please type it. It must be ready by 8 o'clock." And after 8 o'clock he will bring another bunch of manuscripts.

And I was in charge of many departments in the Ashram: temple, office, membership, *satsang*, correspondence, and even writing articles, etc. Very tiring. I had to work for about fourteen hours a day, almost backbreaking. It was going on. Sometimes I

used to feel fed up. The body will not tolerate the stress and strain of work, and I felt like running away from this place. Yet the power that be, whether it is Guru's power or God's power, kept us happy and healthy, and, I should say, very blessed. Thus we are here in this Ashram, blessed as we are under the umbrella of God Almighty and Swami Sivananda Maharaj. And everything is all right. All is well.

THE REAL PURPOSE OF LIFE

A visitor: I was wondering how you felt about fate.

Swamiji: There is no such thing. It is only a reaction to action. People call it fate. You deserve what you have done. If you have done something, that action which you are performing will so intensely act upon the whole atmosphere of the universe that it will produce a reaction corresponding to the nature of your action, and that reaction may follow either in this life or the next life. When in the next life something comes, you may say it is fate. That word is not appropriate. It is a very justified reaction set up by the nature of what you do as an action, a purely scientific fact. Action produces reaction. Its force is equal and opposite, like gravitation.

You should not use such inappropriate words like 'fate'. Rather, it is a scientific, systematic operation of the universe, like a mathematical organism. What you think you are, that you are, and what you do, that you will get back. That is the law of retribution, and when the retribution comes upon you in the next life, you do not know why it has come so you complain that it is fate.

Do you understand? When the fate comes, you do not know the cause of it because the cause belongs to the previous life; the effect comes in this life, so you are unable to connect these two. Hence, you complain that God is very unkind and fate is very cruel.

Visitor: And what about when extraordinary things happen?

Swamiji: There is no extraordinary thing in the world. Everything is normal, natural. Nothing extraordinary can take place. Yesterday it was hot. Today it is raining. Now, can you call this rain as an extraordinary thing that is taking place? It is a perfectly ordained systematic action of nature with a proper cause and proper effect. If you know the whole phenomena scientifically, you will not say anything has come suddenly or unexpectedly. Nothing anywhere happens unexpectedly. There is no such thing as an accident. It is a cause-and-effect relationship of which one is totally unaware. Because you don't know the cause of an incident, you call it an accident. Everything is systematic, perfect, judicious in the structure

of the universe, but nobody can know it because of the attachment to the individual body and a total ignorance about the natural setup of the universe.

Another visitor: How does the heart open, the heart of a spiritual aspirant? What opens the heart?

Swamiji: It opens by the deep acceptance of there being such a thing called a Supreme Eternal Being transcendent to the whole universe. If this acceptance enters your heart, it has already opened.

Visitor: How do we keep it open?

Swamiji: By intense affirmation of it again and again every day. You should not forget it, because it is a very important thing. You are a valuable entity. There is a great value in what you are, and similar is the value that you have to see in others.

There was a great philosopher in Germany. He was Immanuel Kant, a very profound thinker. From the point of view of what I have said, it would mean that every person is an end in himself. There is no one who is a means to somebody else. There is cooperation in the sense of achieving a purpose which is the common purpose of everybody. Everybody wants to live, everybody wants to live as comfortably as possible, and everyone would also like to live as long as possible. As it is true that we would all like to live as long as possible, we would also like to have as much as possible.

There are two great principles which, many a time, elude our grasp. There is no end for the desire to live. It is not that you would like to live only for three hundred years. Suppose you feel that three hundred years is a good thing: Let me live for three hundred years. When two hundred and ninety-nine years are over, there will be a fear: I am going away. So three hundred years are not sufficient. Even if it is a blessing to live one thousand years, when nine hundred and ninety-nine years are over there will be the same fear as the common fear of everybody that one day we will go.

That is to say, deeply think over this matter. The desire to live long is actually to defy time. There is no such thing as long life because even the longest life is short when it comes to an end. So there is no such thing as long life. It is only a peculiar conceptual blunder. Ask any person, "How long would you like to live?" The

fright of death will catch hold of a person even after one thousand years of living. That fright which is to come after one thousand years, the very same fright is now because there are only a few years more.

Hence, to come to the point, the real purpose of life is not to lengthen the duration of one's immortal existence empirically, but to go beyond the tantalising process of time itself. You would like to be always. Inasmuch as nothing in the world can be always, there is a contradiction between your aspiration to live always and the things as they behave in the world. There is nothing in the world anywhere which can live always, but why is there the desire to live always when it is contradicting the actual operations in life? That is to say, there is something in you which is not destructible. If that desire to be imperishable were not there, the desire to be completely free from death and to live as long as possible would not be there. If perishability is the real nature of a person, there would not be a fear of perishability, because perishability itself will not be afraid of perishability. So there is something imperishable in every person, and it dreads perishability. Our involvement in the time process confines us to the fleeting life of perishability, but there is something in us which is above time. Eternity is masquerading through this particular individuality, and we are asking for eternity, endless existence. Limited existence cannot satisfy us. Nothing that is limited can satisfy us.

Similarly, on the other side, you would like to have as much as possible, as wide a dimension as possible in your life. You do not like to be limited in any way. You want to be a big person, a vast person, an extended person, and have as many treasures of life as possible. It would be good if you could have the whole Earth for yourself. If that is a possibility, you will say, "Why not? Let me have the whole Earth." But even the Earth will not satisfy you because there are the skies over which you have no control. You will be wondering, "What is the use of this limitation to the Earth? I want to conquer the skies." People go to the stars and to the planets. They are not satisfied with life in this world.

But there is no such thing as endless possession. You cannot find the limit of the sky. It is endless. To pursue an endless thing is to pursue a will-o'-the-wisp, so you will never have it. The desire

to possess infinitely will have no meaning. It will be defeated. The desire to live the longest life also will be defeated.

But there is a hidden meaning behind this longing. Why is the person pursuing some impossible thing – the path of having endless possessions and living endlessly in time, which are purely contradictory situations? Why are they enshrined in the heart of a person? That is because you belong to two worlds. You belong to the world of time and space, and you also belong to the world of infinity and eternity. It is impossible to conceive of eternity and infinity, because infinity is not vast expanse. Vast expanse is the quality of space only, and infinite existence is spacelessness.

It is difficult to conceive all these things because if you are within space you will be pursuing an endless phantasmagoria, as you see the horizon and try to go near it, to touch it. The farther you go towards the horizon, the more you will find it receding. There is no such thing as endlessness in the world. It is like the endlessness of the horizon. Similar is the endlessness of time. That also is not possible. If that is not possible, why is this desire in the mind of a person? It is God speaking inside. What you call infinity and eternity is another name for Absolute perfection, which is the creative power of the universe.

You cannot easily imagine what this creative power is. If the universe is indescribably vast, beyond the concept or calculation by the human mind, That which has created it must be vaster still. The vastest space and time complex is little when compared to the vaster-still existence of what you call the Creator of the universe. And you are included inside that. You are within space, within time, inside the world, so you cannot stand outside the world, outside space, outside time.

Now, if this is the case, you are involved in the whole spatiotemporal complex. You are involved in the entire creative activity of the cosmos because if you say that you are separately sitting somewhere, you will be outside the space-time world, which is not possible. The very cells of your body are made up of the space-time complex. The particles of nature are operating through the body of every person so that there is nothing in a person totally independent of natural forces and cosmic existence.

Hence, you are basically, potentially, a citizen of the cosmos. Not merely a citizen in the sense of an individual outside the country, you are organically connected with it because of the fact you cannot stand outside it. Can you conceive this state of affairs where you are cosmically involved, and you are existing as a whole total energy of the cosmos, and you are not a person – not a man, not a woman, not anything? Can you imagine this condition? This is the beginning of philosophical thinking.

This is a seed I am sowing for deep, profound, valuable thinking in the direction of the knowledge of what the purpose of life is. The purpose of life is to finally attain deathlessness and to overcome the limitations of space. You do not like to be cooped up in one little place. You travel all over the world. You would like to be as big as possible. Otherwise, why should you not stay in your room? Why do you travel? Limitation is anathema to the inner asking of wider dimensions. That is why people go, go, go, go, to touch everything. They would like to touch the stars also. That is the inner longing to be endless infinitude. And, at the same time, there is a desire to be existing always. Even if you are an emperor of the whole world but life is only for three minutes, that emperorship has no meaning; and even if the life is very long but it is utter poverty, that also is no good. So two things should combine in the person: the endlessness of spatial expanse and the endlessness of the time process, which is not possible practically on account of the perishability of the limitations of space and the limitations of time.

So you must be cautious enough to realise what it is that you are wanting. You do not exist at all as a so-called you because of your participation in the cosmic process. The whole universe is existing, and everything inside it is like a cell in the organism of the universe. As the cell is not outside the body, none of us is outside the universe. Then when you think, you must think like the universe. This is actually, veritably, to think as God Himself thinks. If you can think like this perpetually, you have performed the greatest worship and the greatest service to everybody, and blessed thou art. Then no hair of your body can be shaken by anybody. The forces in the universe will protect you for all time, and make you the most blessed of individuals, because you are no more an individual.

FREEDOM FROM LIMITATION

A visitor: Liberation means that we are liberated from the mind, but does it also mean that the mind itself is liberated?

Swamiji: Liberated from what? Liberation means freedom from something, but what is that something from which you want freedom?

Visitor: From limitation.

Swamiji: What kind of limitation? Tell me. Physical, sociological, psychological, financial, political – what kind of freedom do you want?

Visitor: Freedom from the psychological, mostly.

Swamiji: By psychological, you mean freedom from the mind itself? This is what you mean?

Visitor: Yes, I think so. Yes.

Swamiji: If the mind is eliminated completely, then what remains in you? You are thinking that you are existing because of the mind operating, so if the mind is eliminated completely, then what exists afterwards? You cannot say that you are existing, because the mind has gone; therefore, it is that you are virtually not existing. Hence, can you consider it as freedom when you are yourself abolished completely and don't exist because the mind has gone? Any person whose mind has gone doesn't exist practically, so are you thinking that kind of thing?

Visitor: When you put it like that, it would make no sense to be free...

Swamiji: So that is meaningless. It is not freedom from the mind that you are wanting. You want freedom from limitation, you said. The existence of other people, the existence of the world outside, is a limitation on your freedom. The world sits on your head and has such an impact upon you that it will not allow you to do whatever you like. If you walk over the water, it will drown you, if you touch fire it will burn you, if the wind blows you will go up, so you have

no freedom from any of these things. And you also cannot have full freedom in society because other people are there who will restrict your freedom. That is to say, no freedom is possible in this world as long as other things are there. The existence of another is the cause of limitation. You don't like another sitting near you because that person limits your existence. So you want freedom from limitation in the sense of not being limited by anything outside you. There should not be anything outside you at all. Then only you are free.

Now, how will you achieve this condition where there is nothing outside you? What did your Guru tell you in answer to this question?

Visitor: Well, I think, by understanding his teachings, that liberation is not drawing any conclusions about oneself by what we think and what we feel.

Swamiji: Okay. You have come to a point where you want freedom and liberation but you are caught in a mess when I ask you: "Freedom from what?" You can't answer this question.

Visitor: Yes. [laughs]

Swamiji: You cannot have freedom in the sense of there being nothing outside, limiting you. If nothing outside exists, even the world does not exist, people don't exist, and the sun, moon and stars don't exist. Then you are free. But that is not possible. You cannot say that people should not exist, and the world should not exist, the sun, moon and stars should not exist. But you can find out the way of being free from the limitations imposed on you by these things by becoming identical with them. You become identical with everybody, the whole world, the sun, moon, stars, space, time, and then the whole universe. This is liberation, sir. Don't forget this point.

Visitor: I will try not to forget.

Another visitor: How can we win the war against the ego?

Swamiji: I have told you the same thing. When you become everything, the so-called individuality vanishes. You become the Universal I, and the Universal I cannot be called an ego because an ego is that affirmation which excludes others from itself. That is ego. But when you have become all the egos, then you are a kind of

Universal ego. So your question is answered.

Another visitor: Swamiji, yesterday you pointed out that we must be one with everything and with everybody. This is my weakness, about which I have been thinking for the last ten years. I have changed my outward life, made my words and actions different, but inside there is no change. It is getting worse because I go to the other extreme. I don't like to talk; I don't like to see people. If I speak, I speak too much. If I see people, I see too many people.

Swamiji: I was speaking just now, and you are repeating the same thing in another way. "I don't like to see people." That is what you said. But you have to be one with people. Now, this is like a contradiction. When you become one with people, you do not see people, so that is the contradiction. When you see people, you are not one with them.

Visitor: How can I get to that stage where I don't see people anymore?

Swamiji: When you are the people, you will not see the people. When you see the people, you are not the people. It is simple to understand. You cannot see a thing which you yourself are; but when you are not that, you can see them. It is a simple thing that I am saying; the only thing is you have to affirm it in meditation. There is a person sitting near you, whom you are seeing. But if you yourself are that person, you will not see them. This logic will extend to everything, even to the trees and the mountains, and the sun, moon and stars. You cannot see them because you yourself are that. You don't like to see your own self. You see another thing, other than you. This requires deep affirmation and meditation. There is no contradiction. Only you have to reverse your process of thinking.

Therefore, your liking or not liking has no meaning; you are not supposed to like or not like others because in meditation they are only yourself, so you cannot say you like or don't like them. Both these statements are not correct. When you like them, they are outside you. When you dislike them, they are outside you. But when they are you yourself, there is no question of liking or not liking them. That is the real, profound condition, into which you have to enter by deep meditation. The question of liking or not liking does not arise because that is a kind of relationship that you are

establishing positively or negatively in respect of another, which you consider as outside you. But when you yourself are them, then what is the problem? Then you will see a great miracle take place in your life.

THE HANUMAN CHALISA

A visitor: Yesterday I read an English translation of the Hanuman Chalisa, and there was a passage where it said that no one can pass to Rama except through Hanuman – that Hanuman is the gatekeeper, and no one can pass to Rama except through Hanuman. And then I remembered what Jesus said.

Swamiji: I know what Jesus said: “No one can reach the Father except through me.” Correct.

Visitor: Yes, and I always wondered about that statement.

Swamiji: Why should you wonder? You cannot reach God except through the world. All these statements mean finally that you cannot reach God except through the world, that’s all. The answer is simple.

Visitor: Also maybe through their examples, the examples of Hanuman and the examples of Jesus, the way they lived.

Swamiji: That is a secondary matter. The hidden meaning is this only: You cannot reach the invisible except through the visible. Rama is invisible, and Hanuman is visible. The Father in heaven is invisible, Christ is visible. The Almighty is invisible, the world is visible. Without passing through the lower, you cannot reach the higher.

Visitor: Many people say that the Hanuman Chalisa is very good, a very nice text, and it’s very important. What’s so special about this Hanuman Chalisa? What makes it more special than some other texts?

Swamiji: Hanuman symbolises inordinate strength and power, humanly inconceivable – superhuman power. When you take the name of something which has superhuman power, a part of that superhuman power enters into you also, such power that the Earth cannot conceive. It is a centralisation of infinite strength. Even when you hear these words that I am speaking, you will feel some change taking place in your mind. You go on thinking of that person who has indomitable strength, the capacity to face anything, and the speciality of this chant on Hanuman is the power that this mantra has

got to destroy any kind of evil influence. It destroys anything that is negative, and protects you immensely, for ever and ever, having the power even to cure diseases. It makes you hale and hearty, strong and safe. It gives you security. It is divinity itself, divinity.

When you go on thinking of something that is infinitely powerful, positive and divine, when you go on thinking that again and again – infinitely powerful, divine; infinitely powerful, divine; infinitely powerful, divine; tremendously magnificent, powerful; nothing can face it – you will become like that to some extent, and miracles can take place, miracles. So it is beautiful. It is good to recite it. Okay?

Visitor: Yes, thank you.

Another visitor: People talk about raising their kundalini.

Swamiji: Nothing can make the kundalini rise as long as man is foolish, idiotic in his thinking, full of blunderous desires, egoism, and has a fighting nature. How can kundalini rise in such people? Let people become at least good in their nature; let them be good, become really good persons, then let us think of kundalini. With all sorts of undesirable potentialities – greed, anger, jealousy – how will kundalini rise? The first thing is to be good, really good, in your nature. People should know that here is a good person, a very good person.

Another visitor: What is the language of God?

Swamiji: God has no language. It is the language of Pure Being. What is the language of the sun? God is like the sun shining in the sky. Now, what is the language of the sun? You tell me. The sun does a lot of work, takes care of the whole world, gives energy and life and prana to everybody; you cannot say that he has no language, but what is the language of the sun? That is the language of God also.

Visitor: “Be still, and know that I am God,” is said in the Bible.

Swamiji: That is only a symbolic way of talking. He inspires you to feel like that, but he doesn’t literally speak in the English or the Hebrew language. Do you think God speaks Hebrew? No. That is only a symbolic expression of the illumination that he had at that time.

They say the Vedas are God’s language. It doesn’t mean that God

is speaking Sanskrit. It is a spiritual inspiration which manifests itself in the language of the people who were inspired, and those people who were so inspired happen to be Sanskrit-knowing people. So the inspiration came out and manifested itself in that language, which is Sanskrit. If the inspiration comes to a person who speaks Hebrew, the inspiration will get materialised in the Hebrew language. If it is Karnataka, it will be in the Karnataka language. God is an impersonal influence, like sunlight, but that influence can be manifest through the individuality of a person who speaks a particular language; he expresses it in his language, and he imagines that it is God's language. Any language is God's language – any language. And you cannot say God is sitting silent. He is doing tremendous work. He created the whole world, and every minute He is busy. How can you say God is silent? Of course, God is silent in another sense, namely, that He does not speak in the tongue of human beings.

You have got the tongue to speak. God has not got that tongue. God's tongue is only His being, like the sun. His existence itself is the language. What emanates as energy and influence and power and magnificence, that itself is language in a highly spiritual sense. It is not language in the sense of a dictionary word. It is not that kind of language. That which is, and That which alone is, need not have to speak, because if it has to speak, it speaks only to itself, and so how will it speak to itself? In what language?

Pure Being is the language of God, and you may call it silence if you like.

Another visitor: I started doing meditation two or three years ago, and since then I've been living in South America, in the mountains. When I close my eyes, I immediately begin to experience sound. Sometimes the sound becomes very powerful and my body begins to shake, and sometimes it becomes very spontaneously strong and I experienced powerful moments of... It's hard for me to put in words – perhaps peace, perhaps stillness, no more thoughts.

Swamiji: Who has initiated you into the art of meditation?

Visitor: I do Vipassana. I was initiated five years ago in France. I focus on my breath, but when the sound begins I let go and I observe the sound.

Swamiji: From where does the sound come? Does it come through the ears or through the stomach, or where??

Visitor: Perhaps through the ears, perhaps through the bones, but it's an inside sound, not an outside sound.

Swamiji: What kind of sound does it make?

Visitor: A sort of buzzing sound, very, very light.

Swamiji: Are you disturbed by this sound?

Visitor: Oh no. All the experiences I observe as a witness, that's all. I don't put any value on it.

Swamiji: Do you feel happy when the sound comes?

Visitor: Neither happy nor unhappy.

Swamiji: Is the sound causing you any difficulty?

Visitor: On the contrary, it's very interesting.

Swamiji: So there is no problem at all.

Visitor: No problem. I wanted to ask you if I should correct my practice. Is it all right?

Swamiji: Correcting becomes necessary only when you have got some trouble. If you have no trouble, if you are well off in every way, there is no necessity to make any change in it. If you have got any problem, then only the question comes.

What is the purpose of your doing Vipassana meditation?

Visitor: For compassion.

Swamiji: What is compassion? Compassion for human beings?

Visitor: Not only human beings. I think I have more compassion for animals and plants. Human beings are a little more difficult.

Swamiji: Now, finally, what comes out is that you are practising this meditation for the purpose of developing compassion for living beings?

Visitor: And for myself. Sometimes I am very hard on myself. I become frustrated.

Swamiji: Frustration means you are having some trouble caused by not getting what you want. That is the frustration?

Visitor: Yes. It's not so strong now. It used to be strong before.

Swamiji: Are you thinking that you want something and you are unable to get it; therefore, there is frustration?

Visitor: I think that when I am not compassionate with people, I get mad at myself.

Swamiji: Who asked you not to be compassionate? Be compassionate.

Visitor: Sometimes I become angry spontaneously. They don't even have to have a name. I can become universal in my anger.

Swamiji: Suppose you manifest your anger to the universe; what consequence follows?

Visitor: I don't get angry at the universe. My anger becomes very personal, towards people.

Swamiji: You have got some personal difficulty, by what you are saying. It amounts to this.

Visitor: I am very arrogant. I know that.

Swamiji: Then you are not compassionate. There is some trouble with you.

Have you got any personal profession or career?

Visitor: I am a psychologist. Psychologists always have big problems.

Swamiji: Are you instructing people in psychology?

Visitor: Well, I stopped because I feel if I am not compassionate, I shouldn't instruct people. But sometimes, yes. I give classes to people. But sometimes I get upset with myself.

Swamiji: I would like you not to get upset. Be happy inside. Under any circumstance, try to learn the art of being composed, calm and happy in your own self. That is the best way of living, and everything follows afterwards. If you are a happy person, you can make others also happy. If you are not happy, then no happiness can go from you to other people. So first of all, try to always be satisfied with

your circumstances and be perfectly all right in your mind, body and spirit. Okay? This is what I have to tell you. I cannot give you further instruction because there is actually nothing that is needed for you. This is quite sufficient. Be happy under any circumstance, and that answers all questions.

Visitor: Thank you.

Another visitor: This man said that in his meditation he was experiencing a sound, and you asked from where that sound comes.

Swamiji: It comes from his whole person, the whole mind-body complex. That's why the sound comes. Otherwise, sound is not supposed to come at all. When you do meditation, it is not necessary that sound should come unless you are deliberately creating a sound inside and concentrating on it; then it enlarges itself and becomes a large sound. This is one kind of yoga, called sound yoga. It is called Nada yoga. But what he does is not Nada yoga or anything. He has no clear objective or aim in doing this practice, and it is a big complex that he has created of varieties of ideas which have not concentrated themselves into a single focus, and that's why these difficulties have arisen. There is no single focus of attention on any permanent object. It is varying from moment to moment. "Sometimes I'm like this; sometimes the other people are like this. Sometimes I want this, and sometimes I don't want it." It is a chaotic mixture of ideas and feelings which manifests itself as different kinds of experiences, not necessarily as a sound but in different kinds of feelings towards oneself and also others. The aim is not clear. It is like moving without knowing where you have to move. If you do not know where to move, and yet you go on moving, what will you reach, finally? You will be just going anywhere afterwards. That is what is happening. Now, what is your question?

Visitor: My aim is towards Brahman.

Swamiji: If you meditate on Brahman, you will not get any sound. You will not feel it at all.

Visitor: But how to meditate on Brahman, Swamiji?

Swamiji: Brahman is Absolute Universal Existence, in which you are also included, so when you are meditating on the Supreme

Absolute, you cease to be existing. You don't exist there because you have gone inside it, and so at that time it looks like the Absolute itself is meditating on itself. Do you understand me? When you meditate on the Supreme Brahman or Absolute, you do not exist afterwards because you have gone inside it, because you are a part of the universal Absolute. So the consciousness gets switched off from your personal consciousness to the universal consciousness, and it is as if the whole universe is contemplating itself. That is the Absolute.

ONE COSMIC DREAM

A visitor: In meditation, earth is dissolved by water, water by fire...

Swamiji: That is one kind of meditation. I don't say that is the only way. From the universal existence came space. From space or sky, as they call it, came air. After air came fire. After fire came water. After water came earth. From the earth, plants and trees and all things conceivable grew, and your body is nothing but a conglomeration of the consumable articles that are arising from the earth. The body is made up of foodstuff. When you return, the physical elements in your body will return to the earth, the earth will dissolve in water, water in fire, fire in air, air in space, and space in the universal existence. That is how you have to meditate. That is one method. There are many other methods of meditation also.

Another visitor: When I have a dream, everything is taking place; this whole universe is taking place in something smaller than a pinhead. And in this waking, there is no size. There is no infinitely big or infinitely small. It must be just the same. In the dream, the whole of existence is taking place inside my mind.

Swamiji: Even now, whatever is taking place in the world is taking place within the Cosmic Mind. So this is only a long dream. Then what is your problem?

Visitor: So this long dream is just all one manifestation, just the one manifestation?

Swamiji: There is one dream only, finally, and of One Person.

Visitor: Just the capital One.

Swamiji: Right. That is correct.

Visitor: And here is just some other world. Is it so, that there is some other world?

Swamiji: What is the meaning of 'some other world'? This world is there. It is inside the dream of the Cosmic Mind. I don't understand what you are asking.

Visitor: There are some other planes of existence – my astral body...?

Swamiji: Seven planes are there. All the seven planes are included within this cosmic dream. In what way are you better now by hearing all this? You are the same person. Why did you ask a question which doesn't benefit you?

Visitor: To clarify my understanding. Do I need to be concerned about these other seven planes?

Swamiji: You are going to be no better by hearing this.

Another visitor: If everything is available in the supermarket, then why does one go astray? Is the truth not that strong? Why doesn't it get absorbed into the system?

Swamiji: The heart of the person has not fully appreciated the fact that the supermarket contains everything. It has a doubt that perhaps the supermarket does not contain everything. The lesser market also has valuables, so why not have the benefit of the earthly market also? Evidently, some of the benefits of the earthly market, you may not find in the supermarket. This the heart says, though the intellect may accept that the supermarket may include everything that is in the lesser market. So there is a clash between the feeling and the understanding. The intellect clashes with the heart. It is like a clash between husband and wife. Whose word will you take, the husband's word or the wife's word? This causes unhappiness in the family. The wife will insist, and the husband also has got his own way of talking. So the whole family is in confusion. They never agree. But if they by chance agree, then wonders will take place.

Visitor: How will they agree?

Swamiji: The feeling is the troublemaker. It will never allow you to keep quiet. So tell the feeling: "Deeply think over this matter. Do you understand that in that supermarket you have everything?" Naturally the heart will say, "Yes, I agree." "Do you agree really?" Tell the heart that it contains everything that the world has. Are you able to understand this point? Do you know that whatever you have in this world is also there, so there is no need of going to two places? Or are you thinking that they are different markets – one market is here, one market is there, and you have a choice between the two?

But listen, there are no two markets. This so-called visible market

is a reflection of that market. What you are seeing here is also that, only in a distorted form through the sense organs. So whatever you are seeing here is that which you are also seeing, as in a mirror. Go on telling this again and again every day, a hundred times. What you are seeing is not different from that, so there is no choice between this and that. “Let me have this, let me have that” – there is no such question at all. What you are seeing is a reflection of that. Do you want the reflection, and also the original separately? Do you understand me? Go on telling like that a hundred times, a hundred times, a hundred times. Then the heart will join with the mind, and there will be wonder afterwards. This is a simple answer to you. What I am telling you is nothing but meditation.

You can qualify what I have said by another method. Be intact in yourself. Don’t be afraid of losing yourself in God, but think deeply that this whole universe has been created by a mighty, all-pervading force. You are seeing it, you are visualising it; you are happy to see it because it is like your father and mother.

Visitor: I am feeling lost in it, sometimes.

Swamiji: No, you cannot get lost. Your problem is, you don’t want to get lost, isn’t it? You want to maintain your individuality. I am saying that it is quite all right; you maintain your individuality, but consider yourself as the son of this great Almighty Creator of the universe. With millions of eyes He is looking at you and He is sending you rays of benediction, protection, and all that is blessed for you. Assert: “The Almighty Creator of the universe is looking at me; I am basking under the worth of His great brilliance, and I have no fear whatsoever. I am under the guardianship and protection of this mighty Creator.” There is no question of losing yourself. This is a conditioned form of meditation. You can continue like that. Don’t think of losing yourself. This is a qualified form of meditation. The other one, which I mentioned, is unqualified, so that is causing some difficulty. You can qualify it with this more pleasant, comfortable and happy envisaging of the master creative power of this whole universe. Continue like that. Then there is no you, yourself. It is quite all right.

Another visitor: I want to know the difference between the working

mind and the thinking mind.

Swamiji: When you think, you are working. The thinking process itself is the kind of work the mind is undertaking. There is no difference between them. Thinking is action. They are identical, unless you have some other idea of working.

Visitor: I spoke to another swamiji who said that the working mind is, as I understood it at that time, pure action, without premeditated thought, without thinking beforehand.

Swamiji: There is no action without thought. How will you act without thinking?

Visitor: What about response – responding to something that comes to you.

Swamiji: That is also a mental action, so what is your problem now?

Visitor: I saw a difference between the thinking mind and the working mind.

Swamiji: This is a theoretical matter. But what is troubling you now? What is the reason for asking this question?

Visitor: Since we spoke about it, it's been on my mind and I wanted to just ask you about it.

Swamiji: No action is possible unless the mind is moving, so mental action is real action. If the mind is dissociated from the body, bodily action has no meaning. The movement of a corpse cannot be called action because there is no mind. This means to say that action is mental action only. What you think is what you're doing.

THE NEED FOR A GURU

A visitor: I wanted to know, is it important for one who is beginning the spiritual path, or looking for the inner truth, to have a Guru? Do you need a Guru?

Swamiji: It is very, very good if you have one because spiritual life is like walking in the wilderness, at least in the earlier stages. You will lose yourself in a vast forest of possibility, and you will not know in which direction to move. Just sit quiet, and with your own feelings you just offer a prayer to God: “God Almighty, bless me.” If this is the only thing that you are able to do in your pursuit of spiritual living, go ahead.

Actually, when you say you want to live a spiritual life, what exactly do you mean? What kind of change do you want to introduce into your life?

Visitor: To search for the Self, to find out what is beyond the existence which I seem to live as a body.

Swamiji: You are wanting to search for the Self? Do you think the Self is something different from what you yourself are now?

Visitor: No, but to realise it is something which is difficult.

Swamiji: If the Self is something different from you now, then you have to search for it. But if you yourself are the Self, then for what are you going to search?

Visitor: Well, it sounds confusing.

Swamiji: What kind of practice have you been doing up to this time?

Visitor: I have been doing Vipassana meditation in Bodh Gaya, but since leaving there some teachers have said that one is already free. One need not search for freedom because one is already free. It is just the realisation of that which is...

Swamiji: Are you going to realise the Self through Vipassana?

Visitor: I'm not sure anymore. I'm not sure whether the practice of meditation or the practice of looking in and being aware – or whether, as some people say, God – is already in you so you have

just to realise it. So I am at two places at once, and I'm not sure.

Swamiji: This is a lifelong adventure. It is not a question of a few days or a few months of practice. The whole life you must be engaged in this work of finding the truth of yourself. It is not one of the businesses that you are conducting in life; it is the ultimate meaning of your existence. All things that you do here or learn from people, everything, is a secondary support to the main objective of your life: knowing the Self, as you have put it. It is not one of the activities of life; it is the principal objective of life, for which people are existing. Every other business of life is only a contributory factor to this principle aim.

Visitor: My question was, I am not sure whether I need a Guru or whether I can do it through...

Swamiji: You don't require a Guru, but you require somebody who will bring peace to your mind. That is the Guru. It may be anything; it may be a cat or a dog, it doesn't matter. If it can satisfy you and make your emotions calm and happy, that is a Guru. A Guru is not a person with four eyes and ten heads, and so on. He is like anybody else, but he has the capacity to understand your requirements and deal with you in that capacity, like a physician understanding a patient. The Guru is like a physician. He knows the sickness of the person, and that particular illness is treated with a particular technique of medicine.

Are you searching for God, or are you hesitating?

Visitor: I am hesitating because I am not sure...

Swamiji: Do you believe that there is a vast cosmic controlling power in the whole universe which keeps everything in perfect order, allows the sun and moon to rise, allows you to sit on the ground and keeps you perfectly in order in this world, and keeps everything methodically going on? The seasons are working beautifully, the sun and moon and stars are all shining systematically; do you believe that this kind of activity requires a controlling power above? Do you believe it, or is it absurd? Do you think the universe is a haphazard activity, or is it systematic?

It is a highly scientific procedure, the entire working of the

universe, isn't it? And do you believe that there should be no one to create this system? Automatically the world cannot become a systematic order. A machine requires a maker of the machine. There is some power which sees to it that the whole universe goes on in a perfectly ordered fashion. That, people say, is the Creator of the universe. People say it is God Almighty. Some people say it is the Father in heaven. Some people say it is the Absolute Reality. Some people say it is the universal Self. Some people say it is the Immortal Being. Some people say it is Eternity. Some people call it Infinity. What do you say? Are you feeling happy to hear all this? I am trying to make you happy, my dear boy. Be happy. You will get what you want.

I am giving you one technique of meditation. There are many methods. I am introducing you to one only, which is good enough for you. Sit quietly. Close your eyes. Breathe slowly, not in a hurried manner – calmly, restfully, peacefully, without any worry in the mind, without any kind of occupation or commitment: “I am resting. Where am I sitting now? I am sitting now in a place called Rishikesh. But where is Rishikesh? It is on the surface of this Earth. Where is the Earth? It is a large mass of matter which is revolving around the solar orb. The Sun is the centre. As the nucleus of this huge atom of solar system, it is controlling everything. And I am also controlled by this great solar system. The solar system is only one tiny system in the larger body of operation called the Milky Way. Millions and millions of solar systems are whirling in this vast, wonderful arrangement in the skies called the Milky Way. Where am I sitting? I am not sitting in Rishikesh. I am not sitting on the surface of the Earth. I am sitting in the middle of the solar system. The mighty Sun is looking at me and controlling my breath, even. I am not in the solar system. I am in the Milky Way.”

You are really in the Milky Way just now, and the Milky Way is rushing with great speed towards its destination, towards other realities of that kind. There are infinite, endless, countless Milky Ways out there. They are all rotating under the space-time complex, a huge complex called space and time – endless, endless, endless. Where are you sitting? Put the question to yourself: I am in space-time. I am not in America, I am not in New Zealand, I am not in

Rishikesh, I am not on the Earth, I am not in the solar system, I am not in the Milky Way. I am sitting in the universal space-time complex. But are you outside the space-time complex? You cannot be outside it. You are in it, inextricably woven into the fabric of this wonderful presentation called space-time. You are yourself space-time. Tell yourself: "I cannot stand outside it. Where is space-time? Everywhere. Where am I? Everywhere. What do I want? I want nothing, because the whole thing has gone into this structure to which I also belong. I am filled with this entire creation of power inside me, and this universal magnificent framework is controlled by its own creator – call it God, call it by whatever name – so I cannot stand outside that. Where am I then? I am in the centre of the whole universe. What do I want? I want nothing. Everything is there because I am in the middle of the entire cosmos whose resources are with me, in me, outside me, everywhere. What do I want now? I want nothing. I am a blessed man." Are you happy? Don't forget what I have told you.

Visitor: Thank you.

Another visitor: What is evil, Swamiji?

Swamiji: Evil is that power which prevents you from thinking along the line I mentioned. It is inside your mind only, the evil force that is preventing you from thinking like this. Dr. Jekyll is inside; Mr. Hyde also is there. It is Hyde that is troubling you. Be Dr. Jekyll. Never condemn. Never say 'evil'. These words irritate the whole mind. If a good word purifies the tongue, a bad word pollutes the tongue. If a good thing that you utter makes the tongue very blissful, a negative thing does the opposite. There are no negative forces. They don't exist at all. They are only the misplacement of universal forces in a wrong context.

Cow dung is a very nice thing in a field where people are tilling the land for harvest. Is cow dung in the field a good thing or not? It is a very good thing. But if I bring a large bucket of cow dung and throw it on your dining table, is it a good thing or a bad thing? How has the good thing become a bad thing? Evil is that which is placed out of context. If everything is in its own place, it is very wonderful.

Even if you hear all these things a hundred times, unless you

practise meditation it is of no use. What is the use of talking? You practise. Then all this evil and darkness will vanish.

Never think anything negative. Give up this idea. God is in heaven, and all is well with the world. Say that. If you say God has created the world and there are evil forces, you are impliedly saying that God has created the evil forces, isn't it? You are telling this to God: "You have created evil forces." Would you like to say that to God? "You have created all thorns and mosquitoes, scorpions and evil things." Will you say that to God? He has not created such things, as you are thinking in your mind. You are not putting things in the proper place. You are seeing them in the wrong place.

GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

Swamiji: As the Lord Christ has said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will come to you automatically.” This thing that I uttered is a very famous statement of immortal meaning, immortal value. If the universal creative God is implanted in your heart, you will always do righteousness only because God does not do anything unrighteous. So when this vast universal God is implanted in your heart, you also become so big as He, and so your heart becomes as large as His, and whatever you want will come automatically because God lacks nothing. If God says, “Come, mountain,” then the mountain comes. The whole of yoga, spirituality, religion is in this one sentence. You need not read any book afterwards. Centralise the universal Creator in your heart, and think as He thinks, and then see what miracle will take place. This is my message to you.

A visitor: You say to put the universal Almighty in your heart, as I just heard. Then first I have to know it, then afterwards I can act in this way.

Swamiji: You are not acting according to God’s will. God Himself is acting, so you are not acting. God’s will itself is operating through you, and it is acting. You are not acting. If this consciousness of your unity with that Being is permanently stationed in your heart, you will not feel that you are doing anything. A great force is working behind you. That force is pulling you, pushing you, so it will be responsible for everything, and you will never do a wrong thing because God does not do a wrong thing, so anything done with that impulsion will always be righteous. Do you understand?

Visitor: Yes.

Another visitor: We go out of our self instead of staying in our self, and then I was reminded of an Indian story in which somebody said that instead of dressing the whole world in leather, you put on leather shoes.

Swamiji: I will tell you another story. Two mountaineers climbed the Alps. After they climbed very high, it was so vast – everywhere

mountains, mountains – they did not know where they were actually located, on what part of this mountain range. So one of them looked at a map to find out where they were, on which mountain peak they were sitting. He went on seeing, seeing, seeing. “Oh, now I know where we are,” he told his friend. “Do you see the peak over there? There we are sitting.” He was on one peak, and he said that geographically they were sitting over there, on another peak. This is exactly what your self is doing, what consciousness is doing. You are here, but actually you are there where you are thinking of, like the mountaineers. You are actually not here, though you appear to be here. You are there where the mind is thinking of. If you are thinking intensely on something which is in London, you are actually not here. You are in London only, even now, because the body is not you; the mind is you, and if the mind is thinking of an object outside, you have gone there. If you have gone there, you have lost yourself, so nothing can be a greater tragedy than that. This is the fate of all people, of which you must beware. That is a simple technique of yoga, to become yourself and not to become somebody else which you are thinking of in your mind. This is a very simple tool for yoga practice. Don’t be other than what you are. Be what you are.

Another visitor: What is it that makes a person holy or peaceful?

Swamiji: To the extent that God’s power is charged in that person or that place, to that extent it is holy. Whether it is a person or place, God’s power is charged upon it. If the power of God is vibrating in that place or in that person, then it is holy. That is all.

Visitor: So now I’m feeling dependent on that charge here as a reminder of God’s power.

Swamiji: Who asked you not to remember God? What is your difficulty?

Visitor: My difficulty is after some time I have to go from here.

Swamiji: You have to go to your country, the United States. You cannot think of God in the United States?

Visitor: I can think, but it’s not as powerful.

Swamiji: If your heart is pure and the mind is strong, you can think

of God anywhere.

Another visitor: When I meditate, I just sit quietly.

Swamiji: Meditation does not mean just sitting quietly. It is an intense concentration of the mind on something. The mind is intensely concentrating on something in meditation. Sitting quiet is not meditation, because if you sit quiet the mind also sits quiet, and then what kind of meditation is it? There is no sitting quiet in meditation. It is an intense activity of the mind in the direction of one thing which it is wanting, and you must decide what it is that you want. First of all, you have to decide what you want, and on that you concentrate. Merely sitting quiet, you get nothing. Nothing comes. Your mind should deeply want something, and that will come, if the mind really wants and intensely concentrates itself on that. Did you catch what I said?

Visitor: Then you are saying that I must use effort.

Swamiji: Concentration is the same as effort.

Visitor: Yes, okay.

Swamiji: So where do you stand now, after hearing this?

Visitor: I think I will look into my reasons for seeking.

Swamiji: Very good. Look into your reason for it. You will not do something unnecessarily. Find out the reason.

Another visitor: How to come closer to knowing God in the busyness of everyday life? It's easy for us in Rishikesh, sitting here with you, to have God in our thoughts, but when we go back to the everyday life which is very busy and...

Swamiji: Yes, you are perfectly right. In Rishikesh it is much easier because there is no external disturbance, and in your place there will be a lot of trouble from all sides, and it will be difficult to think and contemplate. You are perfectly right. But my suggestion is, there are twenty-four hours of the day. Eight hours go for work, and the balance of sixteen hours, how do you utilise them? Eating, sleeping, bathing, cleaning – how many hours does it take? Finally, how much time is left for you to be alone to yourself? Take one hour for

you only, and at that time there is no disturbance. At least for one hour there is no disturbance. At that time you keep quiet, and rouse your spirit at the altar of God Almighty, and feel His presence, the Almighty presence, and pray for His grace deeply, from the heart. If you do it for one hour every day, it is sufficient for you. God will be pleased with that.

THE ETERNAL ONTOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE

A visitor: How do we know that God is everywhere?

Swamiji: You must have a clear idea of your concept of the world. What do you mean by 'the world'? All ethics follow from metaphysics. The ontological principle must be established first. Something is. Can you say nothing is, or something is? If this question is not clear, no question arising from it will be clear. You should not have doubts about what exists at all, finally. Anything that gets transformed into something else, anything that evolves into another thing, anything that is in a state of transition cannot be said to be existing. It is moving. So have you seen or heard of anything anywhere in the world which is not moving, which is not transitory, which is not evolving? Is there any such thing?

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: Then there is no such thing as existence in this world. Nothing is. Everything moves; it looks like that. Even our growth is a movement. Our birth and death also are movement. Historical movement also is a transition. Nothing is in a static form, so you cannot say that anything is. It is a very serious matter. If nothing is, if everything moves, there is no such thing as the Ultimate Reality; there is only phenomena. Can there be only phenomena without Reality behind it? A thing cannot move erratically, without any target. We do not want to concern ourselves with the passing phenomena. That brings us nothing because we also seem to be only part of that phenomena. We are growing, and becoming old and perishing. Now, what is the good of it? If we grow and become old and perish, what is the great point about it? What have we to gain by this process? Why should we be born, and then grow old and die? We are all involved in this process. What have we to gain by this involvement of being born and then becoming old and then dying? Logically speaking, we cannot give an answer to this question, but yet the heart says there is a great meaning. We cannot say life is meaningless. If you consider that everything is moving, nothing that moves can be said to have any permanent meaning, and yet the heart

says there must be something which has a permanent meaning. This is the ontological question, as they call it in philosophy.

There is one thing which is ontologically perfect. It does not move, and it has no necessity to transform itself into something else. There is something which is other than this world phenomena. That something cannot be totally disassociated from phenomena. Because we are involved in phenomena, we are able to see the presence of such a thing. That we are involved in phenomena and yet are able to conceive the necessity of an ontological existence shows that we have some connection with that. So we are ontologically involved in something which is indescribable, unthinkable and undefinable. This is a great satisfaction to know that. We have an ontological being, in spite of all the transition that takes place throughout our body and society outside, and everywhere.

The fact that we are able to conceive of the ontological existence even in the midst of phenomena shows this ontological existence is pervading all phenomena. So there is eternity and temporality working together simultaneously everywhere. The temporality is the time process, which makes everything move and transform into new forms. But the ontological existence is at the back of all this movement of phenomena, which perhaps is the thing towards which everything moves because ontological existence cannot move. Everything moves towards That.

So our purpose of life seems to be an evolutionary process towards ontological existence, and there is no question of knowing where it is because it is pervading the whole of phenomena. Therefore, the ontological existence is everywhere. This is the meaning of saying God is everywhere. I have come to that point.

Visitor: But we have still a responsibility.

Swamiji: You have a responsibility, but it should be in terms of that Eternal Being; otherwise, whatever you do shall be perishable. In order that your work be enduring, the ontological Being should permeate your action, but you should not think that only you are doing everything. There is some hand working behind you which determines the process of your working, and even the intention of your working. That is how they say, in practical language, contemplation and action should go together. You must exist first in order that

you may do something. If you yourself are the phenomenon, then you are not existing; therefore, there is no use of doing anything because your doing goes with the perishability of your nature. If there is anything worthwhile, any meaning anywhere, it is due to the infusion of the eternal in the temporal process. This is a little bit of spiritual doctrine in a way, and that decides everything you do.

With this knowledge, do anything that you like, and it will not perish. Anything that is infused with eternity cannot perish. The body may perish, but the soul cannot perish. The body is the phenomenon; the soul is the eternal. This is a great contemplation in the mind. It is a self-adjustment of the total personality, individually as well as socially, and even cosmically. You are thinking like a universal man when you think like this. A universal man is thinking universal activity of a universal value. With this knowledge do your work, and it will not perish. It is like a Godman working, and his activity will not perish. Even if he perishes, the work will not perish because that work has been charged with the eternal ontological principle behind it. If God does the work, it won't perish. If man does the work, it perishes. But man, so-called, is a phenomena that cannot be having any value until the ontological existence is behind it, charging it; this is called the soul. Generally we say there is a soul inside the body. This is another way of saying there is eternity behind the time process. The whole Bhagavadgita doctrine is this much only.

PRAYER

A visitor: You said yesterday that God is in everything, that God is in us.

Swamiji: What I meant is that a permanent something is at the back of everything that isn't permanent; otherwise, even the consciousness of impermanence cannot be there. The impermanent thing cannot know that it is impermanent, so there must be some permanent thing which is responsible for the knowledge, or awareness, that the impermanence is going on. So if all of us are involved in the impermanent phenomena, who is going to know that such a thing is taking place? That is why I said there is an ontological Being behind all the processes of transformation. You may call it God, if you like – the Absolute, or Brahman.

Visitor: I asked myself how and why to pray because it is to something outside us, which is also inside us.

Swamiji: Prayer is a very important matter. I will tell you what it is, to my knowledge. The ontological Universal Being is caught up in the fluctuation of phenomena. These fluctuations are made up of different types of ripples. As when a river flows there are ripples, there is a flow which is constituted of little apparent ripples which make it appear that even the continuous flow is made up of different parts. It is a very serious involvement. It is very difficult to explain it. This so-called universal ontological Being charges itself as the background of every little ripple of the phenomena, and identifies itself with it, and each ripple feels that it is an independent thing – yourself, myself, everybody.

Now, this so-called eternity which is caught up in the little ripple of fluctuation feels a necessity to rise above this limitation, and its yearning for transcending this limitation is actually the prayer to That which is not limited. Do you understand me? It is the finite praying for the Infinite. The Infinite caught up in the fluctuation of things looks like a finite thing, and the finite thing does not want to be finite, so it is inwardly allowing itself to go above itself in the direction of That which is the non-finite. That is your consciousness,

which is actually what you call prayer. You may offer the prayer by word of mouth, or even internally you can feel it, and it will come.

Actually, prayer is the surge of soul. It is the rise of your consciousness to the point of its own expansion, and it can be expressed by words, by prayer, by chanting the mantra, whatever it is. It is only an accompaniment to allow the consciousness to rise above itself. Prayer is an act of the soul; it is not merely words that you utter. You can pray with music, you can pray with formulas, you can pray in any way you like. You can even pray through dance. People do that because of the uncontrollable joy that they feel at the prospect of contacting the Infinite. People doing kirtan, etc., sometimes jump. It is not a formality; it is a feeling that is overcoming the limitation, and they want to contact that Infinite.

This is a question of actual meditation by yourself. It is not a question of hearing something that is told, not a question of reading. You yourself are involved in this great adventure of the cosmos. Then you see that help comes from everywhere, not from one side.

Visitor: It remains an outsider.

Swamiji: It looks as if it is outside, and that is what you call the opposites. The finite thinks that the infinite is outside, just as we think that space is outside us, but space is not outside us. Space is everywhere; how can you call it outside? And when you look at the sky, you look upwards. "I am looking at the sky." There is no need of looking at the sky; you are in the middle of the sky only. Like that it is a kind of contortion of feeling, which is actually not necessary because you cannot escape the limitations of spatial contact, so when you pray to God you look up as if He is above the sky. Even if He is above the sky, the sky is not here. Everywhere is the sky only, so when you say God is above the sky, you must know what you are actually meaning by that. It is a transcendental height, not a merely measurable, geometrical height. You cannot measure the distance by a yardstick. It is a consciousness travel, logical travel.

It is a question of pure internal personal practice. It is not a question of telling somebody or hearing from somebody. You yourself must well up into that necessity of expanding your consciousness. You are actually trying to rise above yourself to your own larger dimension. It is the lower self moving to the higher self,

the finite moving to the infinite, the God in you trying to contact the God everywhere. Am I clear?

Visitor: Yes, absolutely. Thank you.

Swamiji: I will make you a saint before going from here. You are moving in that direction. Do you feel that you are moving in the direction of a saint?

Visitor: I am not a saint. [Laughter]

Swamiji: Don't doubt it. I think you are getting transformed every day, little by little. If you stay here for some time, to that extent you will become a saint. Not a saint – a Godman you will become, provided you listen to my advice and do as I say. Then you will have no problem.

You have to trust in the power of your own soul. The soul is not a poor thing. It has the power of contacting the Infinite, so can you say it is a poor thing? You are a great infinite potentiality inside yourself. It is for the achievement and the actualisation of this potentiality that we are existing in this world. It is a part of the cosmic evolutionary process towards the Absolute.

A little bit of a saint you have become already. Yes, don't doubt it. I am glad. I have done a little service to you at least. God will bless everybody.

PERSONAL FREEDOM

A visitor: I want to define the difference between personal freedom on one side and the rule of the government on the other side.

Swamiji: You said 'personal freedom'. There is no such thing as that. There is no personal freedom possible. Everybody is conditioned by everybody else, and only a total freedom is possible. Every human being, every insect, everything – wind, air, everything – one is conditioning the other. An individual cannot stand isolatedly in the cosmos, just as a limb of your body cannot stand outside, so there is no such thing as personal freedom. It is total freedom only, and the more you move in the direction of that totality, the greater is the sense of your freedom. But it is not individual freedom; it is wider than individual freedom. You become one with That which conditions your freedom.

Visitor: But still there are differences between states who guarantee certain personal freedom.

Swamiji: There is no such thing. I cannot believe it because if everybody asserts personal freedom, there will be a clash of purposes. I want 100% freedom, and you also want 100% freedom, so where is the possibility? There is a mutual sacrifice involved in the asking for freedom. I can be free only to the extent I am able to give you equal freedom also. If I want everything for myself, then everybody will say that, and then there is no freedom for anybody. There is warfare. The asking for freedom also involves some sacrifice. Without sacrifice, there is no freedom. So entirely 100% freedom is not...

Visitor: 100% freedom is not possible. But there is a difference between guaranteed freedom by legal work and...

Swamiji: Legal freedom is dependent upon natural freedom. You cannot manufacture a legal freedom separately which is contradictory to the natural freedom available to you. You have got some freedom in the sense that you want to exist comfortably, and that freedom is conditioned by the fact that others also want to exist comfortably. So there is a mutual sacrifice and mutual freedom. You are free

and also bound, both the same time. You are free because you have got a status of your own; therefore, you are free. But that status is conditioned by the status of other people also, so to that extent there is limitation. It is a cooperative freedom, you can say.

Visitor: But we have had, for instance, dictatorship of some political leaders or of churches, and so on, in a mental way, a mental dictatorship, and we have a free development of spiritual and mental work.

Swamiji: These things are not isolated from one another. They are mutually connected. Religious freedom, church freedom, spiritual freedom, saintly freedom, political freedom – they cannot be separated. They are all manifestations of one principle only, which conditions every kind of freedom. We do not have religious freedom. There is no such thing as that. It is a freedom of existence itself. You may call it religious or political or legal; they are all manifestations of one principle of freedom which, individually, is not 100% possible. But the more you are cooperative with other people and other things in the world, to that extent you are granted more freedom. It expands itself cooperatively. A person who is of a cooperative nature has greater freedom than one who asserts himself independently. Absolute freedom is not possible in the world. It is not possible.

Visitor: I am only saying that there are differences in development, inner and external development.

Swamiji: What I want to know is, what is the question that you are raising, basically?

Visitor: Ethical response on the continuous economic growth, whatever it is. I mean, we have to stop somewhere in between.

Swamiji: You mean to say that economic growth should go hand in hand with ethical growth?

Visitor: Yes, or the one should stop the other.

Swamiji: It is true that those should go together, but insistence on economic growth only may also breed greed, and then there will be no question of ethics at that time. A greedy man has no ethics. People

become richer and richer financially, but they can do it without ethics behind it. It is necessary to combine both things. When it is accepted that economic growth is intended for the welfare of people, then the ethics comes in. Ethics is any attitude which is necessary for the welfare of everybody. That is ethics. And it can go with economics.

In our Indian tradition, there were four principles accepted: material welfare, ethical welfare, vital or ascetic welfare, and spiritual welfare. All four things are combined in four words: dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Economic welfare is absolutely necessary, but it cannot isolate itself from the law that governs the universe. That law is the ethical principle. We have emotional longings, material needs, and insistence on righteousness. All things must go together. We cannot be unrighteously happy. That is not possible. We cannot be unrighteously rich. So the righteous aspect is behind even the asking for wealth and any other thing that we need. In Sanskrit we call it dharma. Dharma is the law that determines the solidarity of everything.

There is a cohesive force in our personality which makes us feel that we are one integrated individual. There is a cohesive force in the family which makes all the isolated members feel that they are one whole. There is a cohesive force in a nation which makes it feel that it is one. Similarly, you have got an international setup like the United Nations, etc., which is a cohesive force working for the entire humanity. Finally, there is a cohesive force in the whole cosmos which keeps everything perfectly neat and clean. The whole universe is working perfectly, systematically, mathematically, without any kind of erroneous movement.

So there are layers and layers of cohesive force which prevent the disintegration of the parts. If the cohesive force in our personality were not there, we would have disintegrated into little, little bits of cellular objects. Dharma is a law that keeps everything in its particular place, in its particular context, and for a particular purpose, ultimately aiming at the total cohesiveness of the whole cosmos, of which we are integral parts.

Finally, there is only one freedom, one welfare, which is universal welfare, which includes my welfare, yours, everybody's. There is no necessity to search for individual welfare or prosperity. They

will automatically follow when you are concentrated on universal righteousness. We have only duties and not rights, actually speaking. The rights will automatically follow when the duties are performed. The individual has a right to exist, but for that purpose the parts of the body should perform their duties properly – the brain, the heart, the bloodstream, etc.

The obligation that the finite has in respect of the larger whole, which is the Infinite, is what we call duty. The duty is the obligation that the lower owes to the higher, the finite owes to the infinite, the individual owes to the universal. If this duty is consciously performed, all that is necessary by way of our needs will be provided. There is no such thing as rights. You should not use that word. Everywhere people are asking for their rights, but they want no duties. That is not possible. You cannot have rights without duties. When your duty is performed, nature itself will work in such a harmonious manner that whatever you need will be given to you. Nature will not deny anything to anybody. Everything is in abundance. The whole universe is very rich, and abundance is there everywhere, but only we have to draw sustenance from it so that there is not too much insisting on individual wealth. I never believe in individual welfare. It doesn't exist at all. It is possible only to the extent you are cooperating with other people, and finally cooperating with the cosmos itself. If you are a friend of the cosmos, you have done your duty, and then you will find all the rights will follow automatically. This is exactly the meaning of that great sentence of Christ: Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things, economic, everything, will come.

We are thinking too much of effects without thinking of the causes. If you catch hold of the cause, the effect will follow automatically. But we cannot see the cause because we are blinded by sense perception. The senses tell you only what they can see as an operating medium, but why it is operating like that, nobody knows. We know the how of things, but we do not know the why of things. That is necessary. Even that must be known.

You do not merely belong to the universe, but you are integrally inseparable from the universe. Your existence is cosmic existence. Nobody exists as an individual. Individuals don't exist at all, but it

appears as everyone is existing separately due to the operation of the sense organs which always externalise, spatialise and temporalise the Universal. We have to go inside us, and not outside us. The more we go outside through the sense organs, the more we move away from ourselves. The more you look at things, the more you want outside things; the more you are externalising your consciousness, you cease to be yourself to that extent. When the object takes possession of us, the subject vanishes completely. It sleeps. Whoever has greed for external things and longs for only that which is visible sensorily gradually loses one's personality; the subjectivity goes, and the objectivity reigns supreme. Machines rule; man comes afterwards. The vanishing of humanity and the rising of industrial mechanisms, etc., is the reign of objects to the destruction of the subject.

ONE MIND INFLUENCING ANOTHER MIND

A visitor: Yesterday you concluded the darshan by saying, “Enter into the soul of the object, and then it will do what you want.” But you never elaborated. That was the last thing you said. And what’s been on my mind for some while is to what extent we can even think that we have a thought that’s ours.

Swamiji: If it is not your thought, and then whose thought is it?

Visitor: That’s the point that I’m wondering because...

Swamiji: Do you think that you are thinking somebody else’s thought?

Visitor: Yes, I’m thinking that it’s possible.

Swamiji: Then you are not in yourself. You are out of yourself.

Visitor: But you are saying we enter into the soul of the object and it will do what we want. You are implying that...

Swamiji: You are also an object only. You are also one of the objects.

Visitor: To you I’m an object.

Swamiji: No, everybody’s an object when he is looked at. Anything that is visible is the object. You are also an object only. The soul is the self-assertive consciousness: I am. And everybody feels ‘I am’, even a tree and a mountain and a star, and every little thing. If you can conceive everything as a subject and not an object...

Now you don’t think you are an object. You are always thinking you are a subject. Transfer your consciousness to another person or to anything, and enter into that consciousness, and think as that person thinks. You should not think as you are thinking. You have ceased to exist. Your consciousness has transferred to something else. That consciousness feels that it is the subject. Like that, you transfer it to anything in the world so that it is the total subject that comes up. The universal subject crops up immediately. All the objects cease because if you look at the objects, only then does the idea of an object arise. You transfer your consciousness from this, from everyone. Let all the objectivity cease by a total subjectivity,

because everybody is a subject only. Nobody is an object, really speaking. I am what I am, you are what you are, everybody is what everybody is.

So in that sense, feel you are the very thing which you are thinking of. You are not thinking of any object; you are yourself the thing which you are thinking. Carry on this program of concentration with everything in the world. Whatever comes to your mind is yourself only, so that your mind is not thinking of the object. You yourself are the object, so that there is no interaction between you and another thing. The interaction ceases.

Visitor: What you're saying is you do that, and then they'll do what you want.

Swamiji: Then you will work as God works. You will not work like a human being at that time.

Visitor: My question is, if you put it in reverse, it may mean that someone else – if there is a someone else – enters into me and I do what they want.

Swamiji: That person cannot enter into you because that person becomes you only; it is not another person because one soul is not different from another soul. They are identical. One soul communes itself with another soul, and it becomes a wider soul. It is not a double soul. It is like two drops of water mixing. Two drops become one drop only.

Visitor: What I'm concerned with is, to what extent someone else can influence my thought so that what I think is my thought is not my thought; it is someone else's thought.

Swamiji: No, it is not influencing. That person's mind merges with your mind so that it becomes a larger mind, so that it's a cosmic mind. You cannot influence by merely thinking the object. That person should cease to be an object, and that consciousness should merge with you so that two consciousnesses become one consciousness only.

Visitor: You are speaking only in the most ideal sense, but what I'm thinking of is, for example, there is a book about thought forms by Annie Besant, these old Theosophical people. They say that there is

thought transference. They talk about thought transference, actually a form. I as a mother think of my child...

Swamiji: This is not thought transference. This is not a psychological function. This is the soul entering the soul. It is not the mind going to the mind, it is the soul entering the soul so that there is only consciousness of one soul at that time, inclusive of all the souls in the world. It is not a multiplicity of souls.

Visitor: I understand what you're saying, but that is the highest level. I'm talking about in this waking state, does one mind influence another?

Swamiji: You cannot influence like that if you stand outside it.

Visitor: So whatever thoughts I have in my mind, I can say they are my thoughts, they're not someone else's thought impinging on my mind?

Swamiji: If you are working only on a psychological level, that influence is not possible because each one asserts his own mind, so one mind cannot become another mind. It won't succeed at all. If the two minds are different from each other, one cannot influence the other. It is not possible. There must be some empathy between the two thoughts; then only an influence is possible.

Visitor: So it is possible. Given certain things, it is possible.

Swamiji: Ordinarily it is not possible because the other person also thinks independently, so there is a clash of two purposes. They won't come together. Unless there is some common ground between the two, the union cannot take place. The common ground is the Universal Soul only. Ordinarily, it won't take place. However much you may think a tree, the tree will not know that you are thinking.

Visitor: Okay, not a tree, but another person.

Swamiji: They are all the same thing. There is no difference between a tree and the human being as far as existence is concerned.

Visitor: What is telepathy?

Swamiji: That is psychological action for a particular purpose, but meditation is not telepathy.

Visitor: No, but telepathy does exist. That's what I'm trying to understand, not the meditation side.

Swamiji: I would not like anybody to practise telepathy. It is not good because there will be mutual action and reaction. That is a mistake in psychoanalysis. The psychoanalyst himself becomes the patient afterwards, if he goes on thinking of the other person. It is not a mental operation, it is something beyond the mind. It is the cosmic mind operating that is called meditation. Otherwise, if you try to reach another person, or to influence another person through your mind, there will be a reaction from the other mind also, and then you will not be benefited by that. It should not be practised at all. What I am saying is not telecommunication; it is a merging of soul with soul. And there are no two souls; only one soul is there. Telepathy is quite different from the soul entering the soul.

Visitor: Swamiji, I'm not talking about in the meditation sense. I'm talking about in an everyday sense of other people's thoughts influencing one's thoughts.

Swamiji: No, it is not possible. They cannot influence like that because each one is totally asserting himself or herself as myself only. Each one is so very adamantly asserting one's individuality that influence is not possible. They will only act and react, and conflict will be there. It is not possible for one to influence another like that if the minds are two different things. If they are having some similarity between them, then they act and react; but if I assert myself very vehemently, you assert yourself vehemently, and then there will be no communication between the two. Even in psychoanalytic communication, the mind of the person who acts like a psychoanalyst thinks like the person whom he wants to influence. He thinks like the other person whom he wants to influence, and he assumes even the shape, form, and psychological pattern of that person; then only the influence takes place. But doing it is not a good thing because the psychoanalyst himself will get a disease afterwards. He will get the trouble. The psychoanalyst himself can become a patient.

Visitor: That can happen between people who are not psychoanalysts as well. Between just regular people that same thing can happen.

Swamiji: Yes, the same thing. It happens to anybody, whether it is a psychoanalyst or anybody else, who thinks in that manner either for benefiting a person or for harming a person. Either way, it will end in trouble to the very same person who practises it. People pass hands over sick people. That is not a good practice, though they think they are doing a great social service. That person will get some reaction from that illness.

Visitor: So is there protection that one can have against this happening to oneself?

Swamiji: Nothing will happen to you if your mind is thinking like a universal mind. You should not think like an individual thinking. There is no individual here. It is only a wave of the cosmic mind that is operating, and you are one of the waves. Nobody can influence you if you are thinking as a universal mind. If all the minds are included in that universal mind, who will influence you? Nothing is possible. The question itself ceases. There are no other people. Only one mind is there. On that you meditate.

RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND MEDITATION

Swamiji: What is religion? It is not an academic career. Religion does not mean becoming a professor and a scientist. Economically it may benefit you, but religion is not economics. When a person says I am a Hindu, Christian, Muslim, etc., they defined themselves in terms of a religious ideal. If that ideal is missing, they are neither Muslims nor Christians nor Hindus.

A Christian visitor: Religion means doing service to people.

Swamiji: This question raises also the other question: What do you mean by service? If you don't know what is service, the way of rendering service also... What impels you to do service? Who told you that you should do service? There is an impulsion inside, the source of which also has to be understood because you will never do any service if it is contradictory to your own welfare. So you have to do service to yourself first so that you may be hale and hearty. But why do you put this question to me? You are already doing service, so why are you putting this question now?

First you must serve God. After that you may serve the world, because the world came afterwards, God was first. When you say you have to serve the world, it implies you have to serve God also. You know how to serve humanity. Now I will ask you, how do you serve the cause of humanity itself? How will you serve? What is the way of serving the very cause of the whole world? What method are you adopting, because external service will not work. Minus the cause, the effect is nil and void. So you don't want to convert your services into a vacuum. Your service must be filled with the cause that is behind all this activity. You go on serving according to your own understanding. How are you going to serve the world? What is the way you are adopting? God is a universal being, humanity is an external phenomenon, so the externality cannot stand without the universality behind it. Are you finding it difficult to make any sense out of universality?

I have put a question, but you are not answering. Does anybody else want to talk to me?

Another visitor: Swamiji, at one point you mentioned that thought should think itself, and not something else.

Swamiji: There is a philosophical saying of Aristotle: “Thought thinking another is human. Thought thinking itself is divine.” But no thought can think itself. It is only a proposition. It won’t work. Thought can think itself and be satisfied with it provided that thought is self-complete. Why does the thought go to some outside things? Because it feels it itself is not complete. It wants to fill the gap of finitude and limitation in itself by adding qualities, adjectives, from outside things. What the mind lacks, that it thinks outside. But if the thought is complete, is not an individual thought afterwards. It will be a universal thought. That is called divine. But usually the thought thinks another thing. That is mortal. So if the thought thinks itself, it will cease to be a thought. It will merge into Pure Consciousness. Though that is a very remote possibility in ordinary conditions, if that is possible, then the Universal consciousness, Vaishvanara, will absorb this thought which is thinking itself as self-complete. Vaishvanara is the Universal Being, which is self-complete, so self-complete thought only can enter the self-complete Being. A finite mind cannot reach the Absolute. This is understanding a subtle technique. If you are completely satisfied with whatever you are thinking and don’t want to think anything else outside, then only are you fit to meditate like that. But if you feel your thoughts are incomplete, you want to get something from outside. There is nothing outside the Vaishvanara. It is self-complete. It is universal comprehensiveness. If your thought also is comprehensive, it is a total integrated entity and doesn’t want anything from outside, then it will fly. Like a bird, it will fly to the Absolute. But it requires great training. So this is the essence of it. You must be the total being. A fractional mind cannot reach the Infinite; it can reach only other finites. It is only a suggestion to you that such great things do exist in the world, beyond human comprehension.

A visitor: What do I need to do to improve my spirituality?

Swamiji: The awareness of God’s presence is called spirituality. To the extent you are aware that God is, to that extent you are spiritual. If you are doubtful of the existence of God, you are living a doubtful

spiritual life. Spirituality is the characteristic of making God one's own. The entry of God into the mind of a person is the nature of spirituality. If God has not entered one's heart, that person cannot be called spiritual. If God has entered your heart 50%, then you are 50% spiritual. Your consciousness of God's existence is your spirituality. Are you conscious that God exists, or are you doubting it? Here is a moot point. Are you having any doubt that God exists?

Visitor: No, I don't have.

Swamiji: If you have no doubt that God exists, then another question comes: Where is God? You are believing that God exists, but where is God according to your feeling?

Visitor: Everywhere.

Swamiji: The consciousness that God is everywhere – and therefore, that God alone is – that is spirituality because if a thing is everywhere, that alone can exist. Nothing else can exist. If there is something else outside it, it cannot be everywhere. So the deep conviction and feeling in your heart that God is everywhere and, therefore, that God is everything – all in all – that is the final word. That is the only thing that you want. If that conviction has entered your heart, to that extent you are spiritual. It requires meditation. Spirituality is mainly deep meditation on this Great Being which you said is everywhere, a perpetual consciousness of the all-pervading presence at the background of your thought and actions, and wanting nothing else because it is everything. When that which is everything is in you, you do not want anything else. So desires cease in one second when that which is capable of fulfilling all your desires is made a part of your own being. Do you understand what I say? What else do you want to ask?

Visitor: The second question is, I so frequently wish to have a deep meditation, but I don't know how to get this deep meditation.

Swamiji: How are you meditating? What do you do in meditation?

Visitor: I try to put my consciousness between you and I.

Swamiji: What is that 'you'? What do you mean by 'you'?

Visitor: My Guru, my God, or you maybe. I would like to have a

deep meditation.

Swamiji: When something is very valuable, you will certainly think of it. If something is not valuable, your mind cannot think it. Now, do you mean that God is valuable?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Is there anything more valuable than that?

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: Then what is the difficulty in thinking that? That is meditation. If it is the most valuable thing for you, can you think anything else other than that? Already you have concluded that it is the most valuable thing, so how can the mind go here and there? It must go to that because it is the best thing, the most wonderful thing, and nothing is equal to it. How will the mind go here and there? It must be on God only because there is nothing equal to it. The mind is not such a foolish thing. It can understand. It knows what is good for it. And here you are, facing the most wonderful thing. How could the mind not concentrate? How should it not? What do you say?

Visitor: Sometimes it goes away.

Swamiji: It goes away because you are not believing fully that God is everywhere. You have got doubt. You are thinking the buildings also are there, the trees are there, people are sitting here, and that is why the mind goes here and there. But you are contradicted by the feeling that God is everything. If God is everything, these people also are included in that. They don't exist at all. They are all ripples in that vast ocean. But still the mind says, "No, it is not like that; there is a table, there are people sitting here." Therefore, the mind goes here and there. There are no people sitting anywhere. They are all included in that vast ocean of God-existence. This is the point, and you have understood it. The only thing is, you are not continuously thinking of it. Your mind goes here and there because it is not able to find time to think deeply over that again and again. Every day you should sit and think deeply, again and again, again and again. Then the mind will not wander. Why should it wander when it has before it everything that it wants? What is the purpose of wandering? You are in the middle of the ocean and searching for water. Will anybody

do that? You are in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and saying, “I want water.” There is no meaning in it. Think over this.

AVATARA

A visitor: Adi Sankaracharya, in one of his books, quotes a passage where Vasishtha tells Rama, “You are not the son of Dasharatha.” And it seemed as if the consciousness of the Avatara could become clouded, that it became clouded for a moment, that he forgot who he was.

Swamiji: These are some theories. You may take them for what they are; for different purposes different things are told about one and the same thing. If Rama is an Avatar, you may also be an Avatar but for some reason you do not think you are an Avatar. Do you know the difference between you and Rama? What is the difference? He is the son of somebody; you are also the son of somebody. You are a human being; he was also looking like a human being. You call him Avatara, but you are not Avatara. Why are you not? Tell me the reason.

Visitor: Identity with my parents.

Swamiji: Rama had no identity with parents? Why are you bringing this point of parents? Well, he also had parents. He was as much conscious of his parents as you are or anybody else is. Now, how does this explain the difference between an Avatara and an ordinary person? Because he is conscious of things in the same way as you are conscious of things, what is the difference between an Avatara and an ordinary human being?

Visitor: He doesn't forget being the Avatara.

Swamiji: Why are you forgetting? What have you gained by forgetting?

Visitor: I have lost by forgetting.

Swamiji: Now you get it back. Why not? If you are confident, it will come. Now what does Vasishtha say to Rama?

Visitor: “You are not the son of Dasharatha.”

Swamiji: “You are a descendent of God.” Right.

Visitor: So it seemed as though Rama had forgotten.

Swamiji: Everything in the world has an empirical face and also a transcendent face. It is there in every person, even in an atom, even in a tree, even in a mountain. Everything is partially ephemeral and empirical, transient, but at the same time there is a transcendent imperishable element in all things, not only in human beings but everywhere. The phenomenal side, the empirical side, involves the whole of the body and the mind, the body-mind complex, which is a person entirely involved in the phenomenal process, just as a person can be caught by a rapidly moving river and can think only one direction. The phenomenality and the power of externality involved in phenomenality compels everybody, every person, everything, to look outward and never look inside because the eternity is an inward reality, and the perception is an outward phenomenon. The power of phenomenality, which you may call centrifugal, compels you to look outside, and you will never look inside. This is the reason why people and things sometimes look phenomenally involved, and sometimes they are able to overcome the pull of phenomenality and manifest eternity. These people who are able to overcome the pull of phenomenality and act in the light of the eternal principle inside are the Avatars. They are Godmen. Those who are unable to bring the eternal principle into harmony with the phenomenal movement, they become busy people. They are industrialists and workers, this, that, family people involved in all sorts of problems.

There is nothing wrong in perceiving the world, but you must perceive it in the light of the eternity that is at the back. The noumenal principle, which is the transcendent, determines even the perception outside. But, as I mentioned, the force of perception in an external fashion of space and time is so strong that it will not allow you to turn back to visualise the eternity that is in you. To the extent you are able to turn back the force of externality in the direction of the eternity in you, you are a Godman in that percentage. To the extent it is not possible, you are a worldly man. This applies to Rama and Krishna, and even to yourself, myself, everybody.

Visitor: Thank you.

Swamiji: When you are in Paramtma, you should know that you are in Paramatma. Who will know?

An ashramite: Why should we know?

Swamiji: Then what is the good of your going there when you don't know anything. You can be here itself. When you don't know you are rich, you are not rich, really speaking. Suppose you are rich but don't know that you are rich, can you call yourself a rich man? Everything is conditioned by knowledge. If you have entered God, but don't know you have entered God, then you have not entered God. I asked you a simple question but you are not able to answer it. If you have entered God, you have vanished. If you have vanished, who will know that you have entered God. If you don't know anything, then what's the good of going there? It is like an idiotic man having nothing and imagining that he is a wealthy man. He may be a millionaire, but his brain is idiotic. He doesn't know he is a millionaire. If that is the case, you cannot call him a rich man. In the same way, if you don't know where you are, you are nowhere, really speaking.

This question arises because the mind is not purified completely. You cannot forget that you are a retired colonel. You are a big man. No big man can go to God. This is a very important thing. If you say you are not a big man, that you are a very small fry whose personality is completely annihilated, you don't exist at all in the eyes of people, then there is a chance, because two big people cannot exist in the world. God is also a big man, and you are also a big man, so they cannot stick together. Two bigs cannot stick. At least one man should be a little less.

Great *chitta shuddhi* is necessary. If it was such a simple matter, why did Lord Yama refuse to answer Nachiketas' question? It is because the mind cannot receive it. No philosopher can understand what happens to him when he enters God.

You are an important person, not an ordinary fry. The idea that you are an important person must go, and you must be very humble, like a blade of grass. People may tread over you, and still you don't say anything about it. If you don't exist at all, God will take care of you. But if you exist, there is a contradiction between your existence and His existence. Your personality should go away. You are like an automaton, and for practical purposes you are existing, but in your mind you are not existing at all. If this confirmation is acceptable to

you, I think one day or the other God will bless you.

BECOMING THE COSMIC MIND

A visitor: We have so many desires, and if we become desireless we can achieve Brahman.

Swamiji: Actually, it is not that you achieve desirelessness first and then reach Brahman. You reach Brahman first, and then the desires go away. It is like saying you remove the darkness of the night first, and then the sun will rise. When the sun rises, darkness goes away. Why are you worrying about desires?

Visitor: But it is said that every desire of man must be fulfilled.

Swamiji: Desires of man are as many as all the leaves in all the forests the world. Can you fulfil them? There is only one way. Suppose in the dream world, you are dreaming that you are living a family life or a business life or a factory life full of desires. How will you fulfil those desires? There is only one way: Wake up from dream. So waking up is the fulfilment, and not fulfilment in the practical sense. When you rise to the consciousness of completeness, which is called Brahman, the meaning of desire vanishes. It cannot exist at all, like mist before the sun.

Another visitor: You have mentioned that you bring the consciousness between yourself and the person you're talking to.

Swamiji: This is a point on which many people were raising a question. That people have found it necessary to understand it is also a great blessing. It has not escaped the notice or attention of people because I have repeated it again and again with such emphasis that it has gone into the minds of people, though they find it difficult to understand what this mystery between one thing and another thing is.

There is a consciousness which is operating as an undercurrent unknown to this person and that person because the consciousness of this person is limited to the operation of the mental psyche. So is the case with the other. The general consciousness, which is pervading inside the mind here, inside the mind there, and between them also, cannot be known to exist by either this mind or that mind because it is limited to the operation of a little action taking place within the

skull of a person. If you liberate this confinement of consciousness in the psychic operation, you will find streams of consciousness flowing from here to there; if it is to flow from here to there, it must be in the middle also, so it is there permanently. Since consciousness is the only thing that is of any value, there is no other thing which can be considered as valuable in the world.

This consciousness is not a mental operation. It is a solid substance, you may say. It is the mind of God that is operating, to make it more clear: the Cosmic mind. The Cosmic mind is the mother and father of your mind, my mind, everybody's mind, so that Cosmic mind is working everywhere; hence, it is working between the two also, so it is more important than the mind here and the mind there. If you can appreciate that, you will deeply contemplate on that 'between' rather than this side or that side, so you will be very happy because you are not connected with this side or that side. You can understand the joy of a person who is neither belonging to this side or that side. He is like an umpire. If you can become an umpire between two things, and between any two things – between inside and outside also – then you will see it is a wonder. You cannot contain that. The whole flood of the Cosmic mind will enter you, a flood which you cannot contain.

Visitor: Swamiji, the first thing that was mentioned, about intellectual meaning, it comes up to here. How does it go beyond so that it becomes part and parcel of you?

Swamiji: It cannot go inside the skin because you have got a prejudice. Everybody has a prejudice which makes one feel confirmed always: What my mind thinks is correct, and it cannot be that the thought of another mind is also correct. My mind is correct; it is telling the truth, and it cannot be anything else. If that is the case, no other truth can enter it. The idea that this little mind is telling the entire truth will prevent a larger truth from entering into it.

A person who is so much attached to his family thinks, "The welfare of my family is all in all, and others are not of any consideration." He forgets the fact that if the whole nation is in trouble, his family cannot exist. This is the same thing. This universal Consciousness, or the Cosmic mind, is the national consciousness of the universe, you may say, but when a person is clinging to his

family...

You are having a family inside the body. You don't want anything to happen to these members of the family. Let anything happen that side. This is a very strange attitude, not knowing that the general consciousness determines even the welfare of the particular consciousness of the family. But this prejudice is in every person, so that is why the general consciousness enters only to the skin. The ego inside says, "I don't want." Personal assertion, the conviction that I am always right and you need not actually be right, will prevent the actual truth from entering into you. As every human being has this trait, no one can fully understand this greatness, this mystery.

Another visitor: Swamiji, the main problem is every person thinks of himself, and does not think of the consciousness here and there.

Swamiji: No human being can believe that this is the case because this is something always eluding the grasp. No one can understand this point because it is not visible to the eyes.

Visitor: Then Swamiji, who experiences it? You don't experience it at all then. You just have to develop it; you just get rid of this feeling that you are always right.

Swamiji: If you have not got an experience of it, you will not talk about it. Something has already entered you. Any conviction, especially a conviction of this kind, is based upon an intuition that has suddenly arisen. Therefore, it so vehemently pursues itself and says you are making a mistake every minute thinking this side and that side, but not thinking that which gives life to both the sides.

Visitor: Swamiji, this is why I have come here, to ask this question.

Swamiji: My dear friend, people require a new education. Whatever you have studied is no education because a person does not know how to live in the world, but he knows other things. He knows physics and the moon, and all that, everything, but how to live in the world he doesn't know. It is a question of your ability to accept that this truth is the final thing and allowing it to sink into your feelings so that it may never leave you afterwards.

Visitor: But Swamiji, as you rightly said, for fifty years I have been telling my mind, my family that whatever I think is not correct. My

buddhi says, “I know it is not correct...”

Swamiji: What you say may be relatively correct, but you must accept there is an Absolute correctness. There is another, larger correctness, in the light of which you must be subordinated. That you should save yourself is correct, but that you should save the nation is more correct. It includes this correctness. You don't move from untruth to truth, but from lesser truth to higher truth.

Another visitor: The work I'm doing is a disturbance to me. I want to remove that disturbance and be a universal man.

Swamiji: If you consider that work is to be removed from your mind, and incidentally you need not work, then it is in your hand. But if you are working because it is necessary for you, you cannot remove it from your mind. When you want a thing, how will you remove it from the mind? If you don't want it, you can remove it.

Visitor: But it is a problem.

Swamiji: It is not a problem. You are unnecessarily confusing yourself by saying two things. You want to work, and at the same time you say you don't want to work.

Visitor: I want to work, but then it is difficult to do sadhana.

Swamiji: Why are you saying work is against sadhana? You cannot have a divided personality: work there, meditation here. Then during meditation, work will enter the mind unless you are able to convince yourself that work also is meditation; that is called karma yoga. Any karma that is opposed to the meditation is not going to help you. What does the Bhagavadgita say? The work is a divine action taking place through you; therefore, it cannot bind you, so it cannot be outside the purview of meditation. The work also is a meditation only because meditation is a cosmic process. It is not something individually taking place. You are thinking meditation is something individually taking place, and work is outside. No, it is not so. There's no such thing as individual meditation because you are connected with the whole universe, and the total mind should think. You have to think like the total mind of the whole world, not like an individual. You are not an individual at all. An individual cannot meditate because the individual is opposed to the external world.

You must make friendship with the external world in such a way that it merges into you. You become one integrated being where the world and yourself join together, and somebody else meditates, not you. That consciousness which is the consequence of the combining of the individuality and the outsideness is the meditation. You are not meditating as an individual. The individual idea must go away. It is a blend of the outside and the inside that meditates; otherwise, what is the good of meditating inside if you are opposed to the whole world? This is a subtle matter. External things and internal things must blend together and form a total transcendent perception. This requires great training.

Visitor: What about the ego and self-respect?

Swamiji: All the ego and self-respect vanish in one minute if you do this exercise of combining the external and the internal because we generally throw emphasis on externality. I told you the externality must blend with you; then who is going to trouble you? The trouble comes from your idea that the troublemaker is outside, but it is not so. It is a nonalignment of your personality with the external atmosphere, and hence, a psychological rift between you and something else. But in meditation, at least practically, you cannot do that. In meditation at least you combine the area occupied by the whole external world, and the area of your mind, so that it becomes one Cosmic mind meditating. This deep meditation, carried on for a long time, will automatically reveal to you an answer to your question. The answer comes from inside. It doesn't come from outside, from the marketplace. It requires deep exercise.

Another visitor: Yesterday Swamiji was mentioning the clay and the pot are the same. It becomes a little bit to what Swamiji just said. Who was witnessing this?

Swamiji: There is nobody to witness.

Visitor: But who is saying this?

Swamiji: The saying itself is the error. You should not say it because you are the pot and the clay combined, so the pot cannot speak, and the clay also cannot speak. But you have a wrong notion that you are outside the clay. You yourself are made of the same clay of which

the whole world is made.

Visitor: Swamiji, who is witnessing this?

Swamiji: There is no witness. The consciousness that is above yourself and the world, that witnesses. There is something connecting both you and the world; otherwise, you cannot know that there is a world. If the world is totally outside you, what is the connection between you and that? You will not even know that it exists. But there is a transcendent consciousness which connects your mind and the world consciousness, and then it operates through you, as it were, but actually it is a transcendental operation. Somebody else knows the whole thing. You are not knowing. You are only an instrument through which the whole consciousness is working, and that connects you to the whole world. If the connection were not taking place, you would not even know that the whole world exists. You would be locked up inside yourself. I'm saying the same thing, in another way. It is not in you, it is not outside you, it only is.

Visitor: Swamiji, you said it seems to be above.

Swamiji: 'Above' means that which connects you both. The seer and the seen are connected by a transcendent witness. It is God who sees through you, and God who sees the world and makes you feel that you are looking at the world.

KARMA AND REBIRTH

A visitor: It is said that the reincarnation depends on the karmas, good or bad. Now, when the Aatma leaves the body...

Swamiji: The Aatma doesn't leave the body. It is the mind that leaves. The Aatma is all-pervading.

Visitor: Then does it go to a human form or a subhuman form?

Swamiji: It can go to either. It depends upon what that person was thinking their whole life.

Visitor: Suppose he has done a very bad karma?

Swamiji: Then he will become worse than a human being.

Visitor: A subhuman level like the animal level?

Swamiji: Yes. If it is a very good karma, he may go to heaven. If it is an ordinary mixed karma, he will come to the human level, but if it is very bad, he will go to the animal kingdom. He can become even a tree. It depends upon what he has done.

Visitor: But once he has become a tree, suppose, how will he come up then?

Swamiji: When the effect of that old karma which made him a tree is exhausted, he will revert to another condition, which is determined by another karma. People don't do only one karma. They do many karmas, and there are layers of these karmas. Some are very powerful, some are mild, some are very weak. The very powerful karmas take effect first, and then the mild ones.

Visitor: Then when the karmas are exhausted, he will come back to the...

Swamiji: *Prarabdha* karma cannot be entirely exhausted, only a part of it. One segment of it will be exhausted, and whatever is determined by the remaining karmas, he will become that. But if it is completely exhausted, he will reach the Supreme Being. He will not take birth at all.

Visitor: So the lowest level is the plant kingdom?

Swamiji: It can be a stone also. It can be mineral, it can be vegetable, it can be animal, it can be man, it can be a divine angel. Anything is possible.

Visitor: From matter to spirit.

Swamiji: Right. He can find himself at any level, according to the nature of his thought, feeling and action. And it is not difficult to find out. Everybody knows what they are thinking and feeling. What you are thinking and feeling the whole day, that will tell you what you are going to become. You yourself can know that; you need not consult any astrologer. Your feelings will tell what will be because what you are now will be continued in the next birth. It cannot be a different thing altogether. Whatever you have been thinking and feeling will materialise itself into a form or a body which is the thing into which the soul enters.

Visitor: But this reverse process from matter to spirit, how it happens?

Swamiji: It automatically takes place. When the pressure exerted by one karma is lifted because of the experience of it, then he reverts to the other one.

Visitor: Then from stone, or matter, he comes to the plant kingdom, and then from plant kingdom to the animal kingdom...

Swamiji: No, not necessarily. It depends upon what the person will become. He may not become a stone always. He may become an animal if the karma is not so bad as to make him a stone. It depends upon what level he is. From animal he may revert to man, provided the karma which made him an animal is exhausted by experience. It takes place automatically.

Visitor: This process continues from ages to ages, depending on the karmas?

Swamiji: The cycle will stop when all the karmas are exhausted.

Visitor: But in the initial condition of the universe, when matter and spirit are one, what are the initial conditions?

Swamiji: These are all cosmological issues. Unnecessarily you are taking me to cosmology. You yourself have read philosophy. Tell me

how the world was created.

Visitor: There is no proper answer for that.

Swamiji: If there is no proper answer for that, there is no proper answer for anything that follows from creation. Actually, it is told to us in the Upanishads, etc., that the Universal Being, for reasons which no human being can understand, multiplied itself as the cosmic variety. That is what is called God's Cosmic Form. You must have read the Bhagavadgita where Sri Krishna is showing his Cosmic Form. It is a unified Absolute consciousness appearing as a vast multiplicity, but it is a multiplicity something like the multiplicity of the limbs of your body. You have got nose, ears, eyes, legs, hands. This is a multiplicity, but they are unified by a consciousness of your individuality. You don't feel that you have got an ear here, a nose here, and so on. It is one integrated body. So that Cosmic Form, for the purpose of explanation, is a multiplicity, just as your body is a multiplicity of limbs but actually it is one integrated experience. That is the Visvarupa, as they call it, the Cosmic Form.

You are thinking that you are isolated from the universe, and you are considering the universe as an outside body, but it is not outside. You have come from that. The universe is the cause and you are the effect, so it is futile for any individual to think that the world is outside; but you are persisting in that, and this wrong perception creates a clash between the world and yourself. You are in conflict perpetually between the outer and the inner, while really there is no difference between the outer and inner. It is the total whole which is creation. This is how the individuality started, and what you call karma is nothing but the action and reaction arising out of this wrong individual assertion, which is the whole of cosmology. Now your duty is not to worry about this but to see how you go back, a reverse process.

Visitor: Now the second point, we say the Aatma is in *pancha bhuta*...

Swamiji: Listen, this so-called *pancha bhuta* you are mentioning is the individual consciousness getting concretised into a physical form for the purpose of making itself a kind of self-complete infinite. Everybody is finite only, but each one feels he is complete in himself.

Nobody says he is a little fragment. If you feel you are a fragment of the whole, you will be utterly miserable. You cannot exist for three days. So this kind of assertion of individuality is associated with the wrong notion of an infinitude of one's own self. The finite thinks that it is infinite. Some people say, "I am everything. Who are you to talk to me? I am everything, I know everything. Don't talk to me." This is the assertion of the individuality, which wrongly assumes an infinitude and power though it is a little finite thing. This kind of thing is to be reversed by a process of returning to the original whole gradually, from the effects to the cause. So many effects are there, and so many causes. There is a gradual descent, so there will be a gradual ascent also.

Visitor: What is the location of the Self in our body?

Swamiji: The Self is not located anywhere. This isolated fragment of consciousness to which I made reference just now asserts itself as an individual and, firstly, it is in a state of unconsciousness from the shock it received due to the fall from the Universal Whole. That unconscious condition is what we call the causal body. One cannot exist in a state of shock always, so the consciousness, in a very wrong way, projects itself through the unconscious level, and it is seen shining out like a little ray of the sun beaming through the clouds. You are very blessed. There is nothing tragic about it. Just as the waking consciousness multiplies itself into the variety of dream and imagines that there is a vast world of dream, and the whole variety melts into a single comprehensive consciousness of waking, and all the problems of dream are solved in one minute of waking, all this tragic thing that you are seeing in the world will melt down like mist when your consciousness rises to the Universal Being. This is called liberation. For that, deep meditation is necessary.

Visitor: This is true, but when you say the Aatma is beyond the three bodies, beyond the mind and...

Swamiji: It is not beyond the three bodies; it is itself the three bodies. It has got concretised into this body, as water becomes ice. You cannot say the water is outside the ice. The water itself is the ice. This consciousness, which has individualised itself, concretises itself into the causal body, the subtle body and the physical body, so

it is not inside-outside. It itself is this solid thing. They are not two different things.

Visitor: No, just like the body is the outer, and the inner is the mind...

Swamiji: There is no outer or inner. It is the degree of water forming itself into ice. In the lower part it will be liquid, then semi-liquid, then finally at the top it is very hard. All this is water only, so there are no inside and outside for that. It is the water itself congealed into this form gradually, and this is the five *koshas*.

Visitor: So we want to remain in the consciousness.

Swamiji: For that you must revert your consciousness to the Universal, and withdraw your individual consciousness. This is called meditation. Meditation is a technique which you have to learn from a competent person.

Visitor: It means our consciousness should not be identified with the body.

Swamiji: It should not identify itself with anything except the Universal.

Visitor: It should not be identified either with the mind or the body.

Swamiji: There is no mind, body, etc.

Visitor: It is the consciousness operating everything.

Swamiji: Finally, Consciousness alone exists, and nothing else. You must meditate on that.

Visitor: Can you explain when it is said *aham brahmasmi*?

Swamiji: When I have told everything to you, why are you repeating some unnecessary thing now? If you go on saying 'I am an emperor', you don't become an emperor unless there is the potentiality of becoming an emperor. So you should not use these words *aham brahmasmi* and so on.

Actually, what this formula means is, this consciousness which appears to be concretised in the form of this body is actually the original Universal Consciousness. That is the meaning of *aham brahmasmi*: the individual asserting itself as the original Universal,

which wrongly thinks it has become the individual. Merely uttering something, it will not come. The feeling must be there, "I am the Infinite."

WOMEN IN INDIA

A visitor: An Indian woman must always be prepared to sacrifice her own welfare for her husband, her children and her in-laws.

Swamiji: Do you mean to say that Indian women will not be blessed if they don't marry?

Visitor: No, I mean that even marriage is a similar form of sadhana as...

Swamiji: Now you are saying another thing. Firstly you said it is a kind of sacrifice of personal independence, which is not a good thing. But you say if it is a sadhana, it is up to each woman to find out why it is a sadhana. Why?

Visitor: Because renunciation is also a form of sacrifice.

Swamiji: What is she renouncing? Renouncing what?

Visitor: Her own desire or her own ego.

Swamiji: No, she cannot renounce her desire. It is not possible. Every woman has desires.

Visitor: She does not renounce it, but she must moderate.

Swamiji: How? What is the method?

Visitor: In marriage a woman must be serving always. She must serve her husband as a god.

Swamiji: Do you think that a woman who serves her husband has made a spiritual renunciation? Do you think like that?

Visitor: It is part of the path.

Swamiji: No, she is not considering it as a spiritual sadhana. I don't think any woman will say that. She is obliged by certain...

Visitor: No, I disagree.

Swamiji: There is no freedom for the married woman. She is bound by the rules of married life. It is so in India. It may not be like that in Europe. In Europe, no lady considers herself... There may be

some people, of course, who follow the ancient tradition. In modern times women do not consider their husband as a god under any condition. Such people are very rare. There are some primitive types, uneducated, who may consider their husband... They are taught by their family that they must consider the husband as a god. If that concept is going to bless her and she feels satisfied, you cannot say anything about her because her happiness is the primary concern. And if she says she is bound, then it is not sadhana. But if she feels, "I am perfectly free, I am okay," then of course it is sadhana. The condition is that she must feel happy. You cannot impose some idea on her. Does she feel happy and liberated? "Oh, I am doing a wonderful thing. I am blessed."

Visitor: Liberation is not always an immediate thing. It is a process.

Swamiji: No, the moment a woman marries, her husband is a god, so why are you wanting another freedom? How is it possible? What is the freedom beyond serving her husband?

Visitor: You may consciously, or maybe from reading or maybe from teaching, have learned that the husband is a god...

Swamiji: I am not saying that. You are telling that it is right from the beginning. If you say he is not a god, then see what the reaction is. If you tell the wife her husband is not a god, then what will happen to her? She will feel miserable. So you mean to say that marriage makes a person miserable?

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: Then what? Then why should she marry? You keep quiet, without marrying. There is one thing there which pulls you in one direction, and another thing pulls you in another direction, so married life is always a conflict, though it need not be. Nobody understands the situation so intelligently and logically as to make a clear distinction between bondage in one thing and liberation in the same thing. Ask any woman, "Are you a free soul?" Instead of asking me, ask any woman, "Are you a free and happy person?" She will cry before you, "No, I am not. Many problems I have got."

Visitor: When you ask somebody who has taken renunciation and you say...

Swamiji: I am not a woman. Why are you asking me this question? You ask a woman.

Visitor: You said yesterday that people who wear orange cloth are renunciates.

Swamiji: This cloth has no benefit unless your mind is already mature. Anybody can put on a cloth, but renunciation is a mental operation; it is not in the cloth. This cloth is only an indication that the mental operation has taken place. But it is not obligatory. You can be a great genius of spiritual life minus this cloth. The cloth is not a necessity; it is only a kind of indication, like a policeman putting on a badge, because if the cloth of policeman is not there, nobody can recognise that he is a policeman. So in order to make people know that he is a renunciate and may not get mixed up with the ordinary public, they put on the cloth. Spiritually speaking, this cloth has no significance, but socially it has a significance because it demarcates the person from the ordinary crowd. So it has some meaning in one sense.

Visitor: What does it demarcate the person as?

Swamiji: He is distinguished from the ordinary public.

Visitor: And what is the difference?

Swamiji: The difference is, the others have not renounced, but he has renounced.

Visitor: They have renounced householder life; this is what it is signifying?

Swamiji: Mostly they have renounced nothing. Merely renouncing some mountain or a building does not mean renunciation. Actually, spiritual renunciation means the renunciation of the concept of there being anything outside Consciousness. That cannot be achieved ordinarily. It is not a renunciation of things. It is the renunciation of the idea that there is something external to Consciousness. Consciousness is universal, and we cannot have anything external to it. So the purpose is that the idea of there being some physical thing external to Consciousness is a bondage. If that limitation can be removed and if you feel the Absolute Being everywhere, you

are liberated. But if that is not possible, you put on a cloth. It is a satisfaction socially, but spiritually it means not much. Each one's heart will say what it is.

This problem is not of women; it is of men also, because they are also human beings like women. So in spirituality there is no distinction between a man and a woman. They think in the same way.

Visitor: Why in the scriptures are usually women and gold reviled as being negative?

Swamiji: This is something said by a man. What can I do? If it is a woman writing the scripture, she will say the man is a bondage.

Visitor: In Anandamayi's ashram, if there was some problem between a man and a woman, she would send away the woman; she would not send away the man.

Swamiji: Why should she send anyone away? What is the objection? They are not doing harm to anybody.

Visitor: Sometimes in the ashram there would be problems between men and women, misconduct.

Swamiji: If you believe that men and women sitting together will cause problems, then your answer is in your own hands. Then how will you live in the world? You can have one world for men, and another world for women. God has created both. It doesn't mean that one should be in America and the other one in India. All the Americans are men, and the Indians are women [laughter]. You must understand the situations prevailing in the universe and adjust yourself with existing conditions.

Visitor: So why did Sankaracharya say that women should not take sannyas?

Swamiji: I don't agree with him.

A visitor: In India, men can become sadhus but women cannot become sadhus.

Swamiji: There was a lady sannyasin in ancient times who was greater than a highly realised king. I will tell you the story. There was a great,

saintly king called Janaka. The name comes in the Mahabharata, a great scripture of India. He was Self-realised. One lady sannyasin came to him with shaven head. She was called Sulabha. This king was not willing to talk to her. He didn't say anything. What she did was, with her concentration of mind, she entered him. Her mind entered him so that he may give up that feeling of not wanting to talk to her. But as he was also a great man, he understood this. He said, "You are a woman. Is it proper for you to enter me?" Then she said, "I never knew that you are a man. I thought you are a Self-realised, Universal Being. If you are a man, I will not talk to you. I am going." This lady was superior to Janaka. Then he said, "Please sit down." Then there was a long conversation between them. She said, "You are a man, so I don't want to talk to you. I thought you are a Universal Being. A Universal Being is not a man, not a woman, and you are saying that a woman entered you. How has this idea come to you? No. I am going." He was humiliated, and then there was a long conversation on Self-realisation.

There was another lady during Upanishadic times. She was a wife of a great master called Yajnavalkya. Her name was Maitreyi. He had two wives. One was spiritually inclined; the other was an ordinary lady. He said, "Now I am retiring. I divide my wealth between both of you. Be comfortable." Maitreyi said, "You are giving me your wealth? Please tell me if the wealth that you are giving me will make me immortal." "Never," he said. "Wealth cannot make you immortal." "Tell me then that thing which will make me immortal." Then he gave a long discourse, which I cannot repeat here. You must read it in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. It is a marvellous talk.

A third great lady was a queen called Madalasa. Her name comes in the Markandeya Purana. She was born a Self-realised person. She had some children. Whenever a child was born, she kept it in the cradle and sang to it. She sang the song of the Absolute. She did not say anything else. "Thou art the immortal Universal, my child. You are the Immortal, Deathless Being." She would go on telling like this, and finally it entered the child so much that the child also became a great saint. Every child she converted like that. Then she converted the husband also, by her power.

So there were some great ladies, but you cannot see them unless you enter the higher realm and see them there. Can you enter that? Try. It is possible. You can also do it. What is possible for one is possible for another also, provided you pass through the same discipline. So I'm giving good news to you.

GOING BEYOND THE FINITE

A visitor: I am an engineer, but now I am retired. What is the utility of whatever we do?

Swamiji: You are asking what is the utility of your being an official?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Then why did you go there? You could have kept quiet.

Visitor: One wants to be something.

Swamiji: I am asking you, why did you do any work? What is the purpose?

Visitor: At that time we never thought of that question.

Swamiji: It is not like that. You understood very well. You wanted to earn salary and maintain your family, so the utility is very clear.

Visitor: At that time, yes.

Swamiji: Even now it is the same thing.

Visitor: Now I am retired.

Swamiji: Even if you are retired, you are not retired from this body, so you have to take care of it. That is also a duty. So what is your problem?

Visitor: The problem is this question of various religions...

Swamiji: Don't talk to me about religion. First solve this problem. You have not renounced anything because your body is clinging to you, and as long as this body is there, it is a big object before you. So as you have been taking care of other family members, this is also one of the members. As long as you are alive in this world, you have a duty to take care of it. So what is the utility? It is like asking what is the utility of living at all. Why do you want to live at all?

Visitor: That is exactly the question I'm asking.

Swamiji: Do you want to abolish yourself?

Visitor: If there is no purpose in living, probably yes. If I am

convinced, yes. This is only an animal instinct that one wants to live at this stage. I do not know. I am asking.

Swamiji: Listen. If it is an animal instinct, it is not worth having.

Visitor: Exactly.

Swamiji: Then cancel it.

Visitor: This is what I want to know. Is there anything beyond?

Swamiji: There is nothing beyond. An animal has nothing beyond.

Visitor: I'm not talking about an animal, I'm talking about...

Swamiji: Are you an animal?

Visitor: Partly, perhaps.

Swamiji: Then partly you have a responsibility to take care of the body, and partly perhaps there is something beyond. What have you read up to this time?

Visitor: I have read a fair amount of Upanishads and Gita.

Swamiji: What have you found in them?

Visitor: They say, for example, Sat-Chit-Ananda is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

Swamiji: Now, what is the meaning you make out of it?

Visitor: I want to ask you.

Swamiji: I cannot tell you anything unless you ask me a question. You are adamantly asserting some very foolish point of view, so how can I answer?

Visitor: I want your blessings so that my foolishness will go away. That is all I am asking.

Swamiji: You have to take several births. You must be prepared for that. So now do whatever you are doing, and don't change your attitude. Whatever you are doing, continue, and there is no need of changing anything. Only when you find that whatever you are doing is meaningless, then you ask me: "I have found all life is meaningless." But I don't think it is so. Otherwise, you would not

have come here.

Visitor: I feel there is something.

Swamiji: What is this 'something' you are thinking of?

Visitor: From what I have read, I can only say that life is pure bliss.

Swamiji: Where is that bliss?

Visitor: I do not know. This is what I am searching for.

Swamiji: You should not agree to anything that somebody has said. What do *you* say?

Visitor: I have not had any experience of pure bliss.

Swamiji: Do you believe that you are a limited, finite individual? Are you an infinite man or a finite man?

Visitor: I am very finite.

Swamiji: How do you know that you are finite unless you have an idea of something beyond you? Unless you have an inkling of something beyond you, you cannot know that you are limited, so this inference itself is an indication to you that there is something beyond you. Okay? This is the first step you have taken. There is something beyond you; otherwise, you cannot know you are a limited person. You will feel that you are the whole universe.

You are asking me what your duty is. Your duty is to transform your individual personality, by deep meditation, in the direction of that which is called the unending Infinite, Sat-Chit-Ananda. There is no need of reading many books. There is a potential indication within your own personality that the finite is indicative of an infinite. No one can know one is finite unless there is a consciousness that there is something more. So you don't have to go into complicated things. You do meditation on the unending Reality which is summoning you and making you feel very miserable because of your limitedness.

Actually, the whole of spiritual life is nothing but meditation on the Infinite. And for that you have to be trained. Your mind has to be pure. There should not be emotional tension, and you must be satisfied with everything. You should not have problems of economic life, political life, social life and moral life. Until these problems are

solved personally, the concept of the Infinite will not arise. If you tell me that you have no such problems – you are morally all right, politically all right, socially all right, financially all right, there is nothing to pinch you, and you are a comfortable man, very happy – then it is up to you to deeply contemplate beyond whatever is finite, because every person in the world is finite. Even the sun and the moon are finite. Space and time are finite. But the idea that space and time are finite arises on account of something implanted in you. That something is beyond space and time. Do you understand me?

By inferential experience, you will know that you are not a complete person. A completeness is there only when you reach a point where outside you nothing exists. Limitation, bondage, finitude imply the acceptance of the fact that there is something outside you. But infinitude has nothing outside it. You must reach a state where everything is complete to such an extent that nothing is outside it. The consciousness that is operating through your body is actually an endless operation taking place. This endlessness, beyond the concept of any kind of limitation, physical or psychological, is the object of one's meditation. You should know nothing except meditation. This will purify you completely and give you strength, because when the larger inundation of strength and power enters you, you will feel happy. This is what we call bliss.

The whole of life is intended to transmute the finite into the infinite. Once the infinite is reached, there is no birth and death because birth and death are nothing but transformation processes, change. No change can take place unless there is something external; but in the Infinite, there is nothing external. So the Infinite is not born. It is endless, which is why we call it eternal existence. That is called Sat-chit-ananda. Your duty is only this. Every other thing that you have done or are proposing to do is also part and parcel of this major duty of your dissolving your finitude in the infinite consciousness. For that, deep meditation is necessary under the guidance of a competent person who can instruct you and be a guide for you. There is nothing but meditation, finally. I am not going to tell you much, but I have awakened your mind to the fact of there being something endless and absolute, beyond the limitations of yourself. Pursue it, pray for it, meditate on it, and be sure that you

are going to get it.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

A visitor: This love that just keeps spilling out and overflowing, how can it be limited in any way? And how can any kind of conditions be put on it?

Swamiji: If you want to put conditions, you can, but if you don't want to put conditions, it need not be conditioned. It depends upon your will. If you want to love only certain things and not all things, it is conditioned love; but if you can love everything equally, that is unconditional love. It is up to you to decide.

Visitor: I go with unconditional love.

Swamiji: Think over it properly. Can you love God and the devil equally?

Visitor: There is no devil.

Swamiji: The very idea that you are existing is contrary to the Ultimate Reality. Who told you that you are existing separately? That itself is the beginning of the problem. You may not call it the devil, but it is something contrary to God's existence. You are not thinking that only one thing exists. You are also thinking that you are existing, and you are making a statement about something else; that creates duality. When you speak, you are not speaking about yourself, you are speaking about something. That 'something' and yourself creates a duality.

We have to be very cautious in the conducting of our thoughts. At different times, we feel different things. At different stages of evolution, we have different types of experience. Sometimes we feel everything can be done by us, that we don't require anybody's help. Sometimes we feel that nothing can be done by us, that everything is spontaneously taking place. Both these feelings will arise in our mind at different times.

There are people who sometimes feel that everything is hopeless, that we can't do anything in this world. That dejected despondency can also arise in certain conditions of mind. It is not that everybody will feel like that. There are conditions, circumstances, which may create such feelings. Those who have lost everything – all relations

have died, their own life is at stake – what do they feel at that time? You ask that person. They will feel something else. They will not even believe that there is such a thing called justice in the world. Though they may not be right in thinking like that, the tragedy in which they are placed will make them feel like that. They curse God Himself: “Such a God exists that everything has gone from me, and I myself am not secure.”

Does God exist? Draupadi in the Mahabharata puts such questions. I don’t know if you know Draupadi’s story. The Mahabharata is an interesting epic of India. She cursed God Himself. “I don’t know whether such a God exists who has put us in this tragedy,” she said. That is the condition where the mind breaks, and cannot tolerate the experiences through which it is passing. There are experiences which are intolerable, and many people pass through it.

Everybody is not born with a silver spoon in the mouth. There are different experiences which anyone can expect. Great kings have been pounded to dust, empires have become one with the earth. Great potentates who ruled the earth, and thought that they were masters of all things, have gone into thin air. Why do things happen like that? Is it not a tragedy?

People cannot swallow all these things. They don’t know what is happening. Then war takes place, and nobody knows what will happen as a consequence. Who goes? Who comes? Nobody knows. Now, who is doing all this?

Only a person who is involved in it will know what feeling will arise at that time. You must be in the thick of a tragic war, and then you will see what you feel at that time. When you are far away from it, your thought is different.

Suppose a person is a prisoner of war and is thrown in a concentration camp. What will he feel at that time? Will he believe in God at that time? He may or may not. It shows the conditions through which the mind has to pass, and it cannot swallow every condition. Certain things it can swallow, certain things it cannot; it breaks.

It is a very great thing for a person to expect anything in the world; even the worst you have to expect, so that when it comes you are not surprised. You should not say, “Oh, this I never expected.”

There is nothing which you cannot expect, even the worst hell itself; let it come. Even that you are expecting. Because you are expecting it already, you can face it. But if it comes as a surprise, then you don't know how to handle it.

As we are not omniscient, as our personality is not connected to every event in the whole cosmos, we cannot know what will happen at what time. The reason is, we are outside the operating medium.

We many a time feel that certain things should happen; also, simultaneously, we feel that certain things should not happen. Now we have got dual feelings there, also. Why should we say that certain things should not happen? We have created a duality in creation itself, because those things which we do not want to happen are unpalatable, and even destructive to our egoistic personality, our individuality, our so-called dear body and mind. There are things which are contrary to its welfare, and they are called bad things, and those which are contributory to its welfare, we call good things. So, our idea of good and bad is connected with our personality's reception of it – how we receive it.

All people cannot happily pass through the various tests which perhaps God will inflict upon us one day or the other, as a punishment to the ego, which is asserting itself. Our ego is the demon. It is the Lucifer, if at all there is any such thing as that. The affirmation of individuality is a Lucifer, and God has thrown him down, upside down, with head down and legs up; that is how we are seeing – upside down. We see the outside as inside, inside as outside. This is what has happened to every one of us.

The world is not outside us; yet, we are seeing it as outside. This is the punishment that is meted out to us by God: “You will see everything topsy-turvy, you fellows, because you have asserted yourself as independent of Me. Go! I will put a flaming sword in heaven, so that you cannot enter.” These stories in the Bible are not mere jokes; they are all symbolic.

Another visitor: After passing away and leaving the physical body.

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Swamiji: You will be reborn – take another birth – to fulfil all the desires.

Visitor: Do you only go to the so-called astral plane, or it depends upon the individual?

Swamiji: The mind, which is the psyche, which dissociates itself from the physical body at the time of death, creates around itself an atmosphere of physicality by intensely thinking the desires that it could not fulfil in the previous birth. Rebirth is nothing but the condensation of thought and the manufacture by the mind of an instrument suitable for the purpose of fulfilling only those desires which it could not fulfil in the previous incarnation, which is the body.

Only one set of desires can be fulfilled through that newly formed body, not all the desires. So again, when it finds that body is inadequate for the fulfilment of other desires, the body is cast off. Again it takes another birth for the fulfilment of another set of desires. Desires being endless, this series will not end until enlightenment takes place.

This psyche, this mind, this consciousness of individuality realises its folly in thinking in this manner, and unites itself with nature and the Cosmic Being, God Almighty. Until that time, this process will go on. Then, there is no rebirth afterwards. When you identify yourself with the Cosmic Existence, rebirth stops. There is no further birth.

ARE DREAMS REAL?

Swamiji: The senses have to be immersed in the mind; the mind must be concentrated in the intellect; the intellect must be concentrated in the cosmic intellect, and the cosmic intellect in the Absolute. Thus, the mind has to be gradually withdrawn from its outside entanglements and involvements to the inward and Universal Reality, in a gradual ascent of consciousness. It is the essence of yoga practice.

A visitor: How should we proceed from the intellect to the cosmic intellect?

Swamiji: You have to withdraw your mind from objects, and have no desire for things; then the mind will immediately go to the cosmic intellect. The finite should not go to the finite; the finite has to move to the Infinite. So, you have put the same thing in a different way. Instead of moving horizontally, you move vertically.

Visitor: Is the dream condition considered to be sadhana?

Swamiji: If you do sadhana in dream, it is good, but you should not do anything else. In dream also you can do sadhana if your mind is purified. Is the mind thinking of God in dream? Then it is sadhana only. But you should not dream something else.

Visitor: But are the experiences in dream true?

Swamiji: Everything is true. If it is not true, you cannot experience it. It looks like it's not true only because you compare it to something else, so don't compare. Each one is true in its own place. It is like saying a rich man is better than a poor man, which is not a correct definition. Don't compare anything. Each experience is real by itself. Only if you contrast and compare, then something looks better or worse than the other.

Whatever you experience is real. If you don't experience it, then you cannot call it real. Whatever your consciousness feels is okay is real for you; otherwise, you will not experience it. Every experience is a contact with a reality of some degree. If it is not at all real, even its presence cannot be felt. So, there are no untruths in the world; there are only lesser truths. If something is entirely a falsehood, it

cannot exist. It is not possible. Every experience is one degree of reality.

Another visitor [a doctor]: *Prarabdha* karma must be responsible for people falling sick; otherwise, why should one person get disease and another not get it? This is in the back of the mind of a doctor, and it affects his practice.

Swamiji: Doctors should not think of negative things. This is a negative thought. All thought should be positive. It is a foolish thought, actually. You are thinking that somebody is controlling you and doing something, but it is not so. Your consciousness that you are Dr. so-and-so contradicts the other thought that somebody is compelling you to do something. Is something compelling you to feel that you are Dr. so-and-so, or are you deliberately feeling it? You cannot say that somebody is forcing you, so you should not use the word *prarabdha*.

Prarabdha is a force exerted upon you. If you are consciously doing it, then your action is your action. If action is taking place because of some pressure exerted upon you, and not due to your deliberate will, you are not responsible for it. So, you should not use that word without properly knowing what it means. *Prarabdha* is the force of your previous actions, which is not always bad. It is good also.

We always use that term in a bad sense, as if the *prarabdha* will do only bad things. It is not like that, but the word has been misused and so it has to be clarified first before you use it. It means a force exerted upon you against your conscious will. But still, whenever you feel that you are doing something consciously, you will be responsible for it, though at the back of it there is the *prarabdha*. At the back of it the *prarabdha* is there, but you don't feel like that. You feel that you are doing it. Your feeling is your bondage, whatever be the real truth about it.

Visitor: It is his *prarabdha* to be suffering and my *prarabdha* to cure him.

Swamiji: Yes. The whole world is interconnected. There is not one individual isolated from the other. Everything touches everything else; everything is interwoven. Every action is all action, finally.

Another visitor: How do I find my Guru?

Swamiji: Generally, it is believed that when you are sufficiently mature in your spiritual aspiration, the Guru himself comes; somehow you will come in contact with the Guru, by some chance. Actually, it is not by chance. It is the working of God Himself. The Guru will find you. Your relationship to the Guru is something like your relationship to God Himself.

Visitor: Yes, particularly with reference to the balance between losing oneself and finding oneself – what you perceive to be your personality.

Swamiji: You cannot call it losing. If a person has some illness, and afterwards he is cured of that illness and becomes very healthy, can you say that the healthy person has lost something because he has lost his illness? Will the person cry, “Oh God! I have lost my illness!” Will anyone say that he has lost his illness because he has become healthy?

In spiritual progress there is no such thing as losing. It is only gaining, always. You lose nothing. If you lose anything, you are losing only your foolishness, idiosyncrasy and illness, and you cannot call it losing. You are gaining. In spiritual life, it is always gaining only. It is movement from one truth to another truth – from lesser truth to higher truth, from one gain to another gain. It is a complete blessedness. That is spiritual life. You lose nothing, so don't think that anything is lost. It is only gaining.

Swamiji [to a physicist]: Every event in the world appears to be taking place in space, but physics says that events neither take place in space nor in time. They take place in a space-time continuum, so it is a transcendental thing. If that is true, events do not take place at all. That means there is no such thing as history. It is a serious blow to the very existence of a thing called life in the world. Life itself is annulled in one second by this statement that events do not take place in space. It is another way of saying that events do not take place. It means that nothing happens.

This is what Vedanta philosophy tells us, finally: Nothing happens. Everything is what it is. I am what I am; you are what you are. It is a very serious matter, sir. If events do not take place in

space, then where do they take place? They take place in eternity, in the Absolute.

Visitor: Physicists are also teaching that if anything goes with a velocity greater than the speed of light, it will arrive before it starts. Time becomes negated.

Swamiji: That means that nothing happens. Do the newspapers say nothing happens? Everywhere something happens; horrible things happen, but Vedanta and physics say that nothing happens. In the newspaper they can print only one line: Nothing Happens. You can purchase that newspaper only to read that one sentence!

It is a very serious matter. It is not a joke or something you can laugh at. It tells us how stupid we are. We are living totally contrary to reality. Everything is opposite to reality. This is our life. No wonder there is suffering! How will you set matters right? Is it possible to live in the world in harmony with this statement that you have made?

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: Then what is the use of studying relativity? How will you benefit? Visitors are listening to all these things: History never took place. Nobody was born, nobody died; nothing happened. This is called history.

Bhagvan Sri Krishna is telling the same thing in the Bhagavadgita: “I have already done the work, though the work has not started.” Before the work started, he said that he has already done it. He is also a relativity professor!

The Bhagavadgita is also a great relativity text. Quantum, everything is inside it. You can't understand what it means. It is also a great literature; it is poetry, philosophy, metaphysics – everything is inside it. It is a masterpiece.

A wonder is this to hear, a wonder is this to speak! After having heard it so many times, still nobody understands what it actually is.

COSMIC UNITY

A visitor: Do the waves of the ocean feel that they are separate from each other?

Swamiji: They cannot feel that they are separate from each other, as the right hand cannot feel that it is separate from the left hand; they are one body only. Human beings are not conscious of the ocean; therefore, they feel separate. The waves are one with the ocean. If each wave has a separate consciousness, then it will feel that it is separate; but they have no separate consciousness. It is one consciousness only.

Visitor: What about animals?

Swamiji: Animals and even insects are like human beings. They think in the same way as man thinks. They are all uniformly bound by separateness-consciousness. Even a tree can't think of unity. It is only in human beings that the idea of unity has arisen. In all lower levels, the idea of separateness, isolatedness, continues.

Only human beings can logically argue. Others cannot logically argue; they instinctively react. Humans also instinctively act, but we have also a rational capacity by which we can infer things. The consciousness of your being finite will tell you that there is something more than the finite. But animals will not think like that; finite is finite only, and the matter is closed. Only human beings have the rationality to reach the consciousness of unity. Only by meditation is it possible to reach the consciousness of unity.

In the atlas, all countries look beautiful, green and soft. Have you seen the globe of the Earth? How beautiful and attractive it looks! We like to go on looking at it, but if we actually walk on it, it's a different thing.

The world is not actually a reflection. The object is not a reflection of the Self; it is something different, which is difficult to explain. The whole world is one large mass of matter, and there are no good things and bad things. Just as in the ocean you cannot say which is good water or bad water because any place in the ocean is the same, likewise, things are uniform everywhere in the whole of

creation. There is no good and bad, etc.

There are also no objects, really, just as one bucketful of water in the middle of the ocean cannot be regarded as an object taken out from the ocean. When you remove a bucket of water from the ocean and the water looks like it is contained in a bucket, it may look like an object because you have separated it from the mass. Likewise, these objects are only imagined isolated parts of the universal mass; otherwise, if you don't conceive them as isolated from the mass, they would look like one vast ocean. In the ocean, which part is beautiful and which is ugly? The very concept of beauty and ugliness is a contortion in the process of perception.

You are not seeing things properly. An object is not actually a reflection; it is wrong perception. Distorted perception makes it look like an object, when actually there are no objects. They are not objects at all; they are only projections of one mass, which we call the whole creation. We are also included in that mass, so our seeing it as something outside is uncalled for. The greatest mistake is to see it at all. A great blunder is involved in the very process of seeing; because everything is dependent on how we see it, it looks like all of life is a big mass of blunder.

A great mistake is involved in everything that we see or contact by the sense organs. A great chaos is created before us. Everything is a restlessness and a misery from moment to moment, which we want to avoid by scratching our skin now and then in the form of sense contact.

When you scratch your skin, you feel a little pleasure; every sense contact is only a scratching of the skin, which actually is not a good thing. Unless you have an itching, why should you scratch the skin? Because there is a disease, only then the pleasantness comes. Hence, the joys of life are only reactions of some illness, psychologically created by erroneous perception. So much credit for the wisdom of man!

Everything is a chaos and confusion, to get out of which is a herculean task. A few minutes of thinking rightly is not enough; it requires ages of preparation. All our activities, projects, and running about are within the realm of foolishness, finally. Within the realm of foolishness, everything looks fine. One foolish man is talking to

another foolish man; both are friends, and they are doing great deeds which cannot be outside this foolishness. Building an empire in the dream world or a house on quicksand or a palace in the middle of the ocean – all these examples show in what direction we are moving.

Every minute we have to be cautious, lest we slip down and fall somewhere. They say there is a pit that may take you to hell, even at the entrance to heaven. The boat can sink, even at the other side of the river. It is not that it will sink in the middle only; it can sink at the other side also, when you are about to reach the shore. Day in and day out you have to be pondering over this. Nothing that you do is of any worth, finally. Whatever you are is of worth, so you should deeply think over what you are. If you have no value in yourself, and therefore you go outside to see beautiful things, what more comment do you want about yourself?

You cannot go to God by doing anything. You can go only by being. Any amount of doing will not take you there because doing is possible only while there is space and time, but God is not in space and time. So, anything that you do within space and time will not touch Him.

Another visitor: How is it possible to overcome space and time?

Swamiji: When there is this meditation, there is no space and time because if you bring space and time, the Atman will not be everywhere. When you say the Atman is everywhere, where is space and time? Space and time has gone inside It. Just as you have gone inside It, space and time also go inside It. They don't exist outside because the Atman is everywhere, and therefore space is covered by it. And the Atman is all times; therefore, time is also included. So there will be no space-time then.

Another visitor: What happens to the mind in Total Thought?

Swamiji: Mental forces, when they are cosmically expanded, cease to be mental forces. They will destroy themselves. When the mind thinks in a cosmic form, the mind will cease to operate, and will not exist afterwards. The mind continues to work as long as it thinks that anything is outside it. Cosmic thought is not external thought, and therefore meditations of that kind will destroy the mind itself. So through the mind you can go beyond the mind, provided you operate

it in a cosmic fashion. But if you externalise it, it will not die. It will always be there.

When the mind cannot think of any external object, it cannot continue to exist. It will dissolve itself into Pure Being. The moment you think of something outside, the mind will continue to exist. Pure Being is not something outside; therefore, the mind will not operate. It will dissolve itself.

Another visitor: On the one hand, I think I have some faith; on the other hand, there is this desire for it all to be reasonable and logical. Faith and reason seem not to be able to meet.

Swamiji: Do you mean to say that reason is against faith, and faith is against reason?

Visitor: It seems to me that when I look at the world, faith in a power that is greater than us seems to be unreasonable because there is so much suffering and injustice.

Swamiji: Is suffering unreasonable? If somebody is suffering, can you say that he is unreasonably suffering?

Visitor: Yes, it is unreasonable. Why should people suffer?

Swamiji: Why should they not suffer? They will suffer because of the wrong actions that they are doing – wrong thinking and wrong deeds. Neither God nor nature are unjust.

Visitor: What about children, Swamiji?

Swamiji: There are no children in the universe. There are only cosmic forces. There are no children. Nature has no concern with human beings. It doesn't care for emperors or for the Roman Empire. It simply puts them down in one second when the curtain falls.

If a very good actor is in a drama in a theatre, do you want him to be just standing there from beginning to end or do you want the drama to be going on? So, this is the cosmic drama. It may be anybody, even the greatest man in the world, but nobody can continuously be the greatest.

The universal forces care nothing for individuals. Individuals are nothing; they do not exist at all. They are only appearances of the pressure-point of cosmic forces. You think that you are so-and-

so, and I am thinking that I am so-and-so, but it is a total blunder. We are ignoramuses in the basic principles of life. We understand nothing of nature or God, though we think we are very learned and educated. So your questions have no meaning from the point of view of nature. It will laugh at you.

The body has a consciousness of a vital organism. It is not conscious of hands, fingers and so on; it is conscious of Being itself. So, the universe is operating as a whole, single, integrated organism, in which you are included. For it, there are no individuals. It is one single thing operating. But you think that you are doing the work – that you are thinking. There is no you, I, he, she, it, etc., in nature. You have to transfer your consciousness of this individual to the ocean of that force, of which you are an integral part, and think only in that fashion. If this could be done, you have understood God, nature, spirituality, everything. Otherwise, you will be unnecessarily pursuing a will o' the wisp.

This requires deep meditation. This kind of thinking should be made a part of your life; finally, it should be impossible for you to think in any other manner. Just as you now have a habit of thinking in one way, create another habit of thinking in another way. Go on hammering this idea again and again; then you will be thinking in no other way than in the manner I suggested. Things will set themselves right automatically.

RELIGION IS A THREEFOLD RELATIONSHIP

A visitor: Why is it that sometimes people develop psychological problems after they begin the practice of yoga?

Swamiji: You mean to say, when they go back home, they become different people?

Visitor: Not at all. Sometimes it is problematic because their psychological condition is very unstable. They lose their balance sometimes.

Swamiji: I don't understand what you are saying. When they go back home, their balance is disturbed? Why should their balance be disturbed?

Visitor: Not everyone.

Swamiji: Even if it is one person, why does it happen?

Visitor: He went to Rajneesh Ashram.

Swamiji: Let him go to any place. Why did his balance get disturbed?

Visitor: It was disturbed because he didn't want to speak with his family. He has broken off the contact, and this was a problem for the family.

Swamiji: You mean to say that if a person becomes religious in the true sense of the term, he will not talk to the family afterwards?

Visitor: Not in this way.

Swamiji: Why does it happen? Does it mean that religion breaks family relations?

Visitor: No, not at all.

Swamiji: The instance that you have cited shows that it happens.

Visitor: It can happen, and I don't know what is the difference between the serious Guru or the unserious Guru. I think there is a lot of difference.

Swamiji: No, there are no serious and unserious Gurus. He doesn't

understand what religion is. You may go to twenty institutions, and yet you may be bankrupt in the knowledge of religion. You may go to any institution, but you will never get a correct idea of what religion is. That is why there is imbalance in the psyche, and it creates a repercussion in human social relations, also. Now, what is your definition of religion?

Visitor: It is to believe in transcendence, to believe in God, and to have some rituals to show this.

Swamiji: You have uttered the word 'transcendent', which in religion means God is transcendent. You imply, thereby, that He has no connection with that which is not transcendent.

Visitor: Of course, He must have it.

Swamiji: Then immediately that person will cut off connection from the family, because it is not transcendent. So you mean to say, religion adversely affects family relations. Your definition is not correct. It is not like that. You mean to say that God is transcendent. That is what you are saying; therefore, religion also must be transcendent. This is not the whole truth. Fifty percent you are right, but fifty percent you are wrong. That fifty percent error is the cause of disruption of family relations, and the fifty percent that is right is the reason why one becomes a lover of God.

God does not hate the world, and therefore a lover of God also cannot hate the world. So, there is a mistake in the very understanding of the meaning of 'transcendent'. That which is transcendent is, at the same time, immanent. So the very fact that it is immanent shows that it is present in the family also. So, how will you disrupt the family? The man has not caught the point properly. It is the mistake of the teacher of religion, not the student.

Visitor: That's it. I think so.

Swamiji: The student is all right; the teacher is not all right. He misguides the whole thing. Now don't get misguided. I won't misguide you; I only probe a little bit. Now, what do you want from me?

Visitor: Teachers are very different; it depends if the teacher is a good teacher or not, and we have a lot of different teachers now.

Swamiji: You can have a hundred teachers, there is no objection, but there should be no imbalance of mind, distress in the mind, sorrow in the emotions or any kind of social disharmony. If this can be assured, you can go to any Guru, but if you say that they are disturbing your relations, there is something wrong in the teaching.

Visitor: And can you say something about, for example, Rajneesh Ashram?

Swamiji: I am not concerned with any ashram. I am not talking of any Guru or ashram. I am talking only of a principle. You can go to a thousand Gurus, but you must see that you are not put out of gear and made worse than what you were already. Sometimes people go to religion and become worse than what they were earlier. So, the understanding of religion is more important than the understanding of a Guru. It is very important. You must know what you are seeking. What are you wanting finally from the Guru, or whoever he is? If your quest is not clear in your mind, you will not get anything out of it.

Visitor: Yes, of course.

Swamiji: Are you a religious teacher or student, or what are you?

Visitor: Yes, I am a religious teacher.

Swamiji: What do you teach?

Visitor: The Christian religion.

Swamiji: Does the Christian religion differ from any other religion?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: In what way?

Visitor: We believe in Christ.

Swamiji: Suppose I believe in the divinity of Christ, do I become a Christian?

Visitor: I think there is a different view and a different faith.

Swamiji: No, I wholeheartedly believe in the divinity of Christ as an incarnation of God. Do I become a Christian?

Visitor: I can't decide it.

Swamiji: Then how do you decide? What makes a person Christian?

Visitor: I think it is his faith.

Swamiji: Suppose I have got faith.

Visitor: We say it is first to baptise somebody into the religion.

Swamiji: No, listen. Suppose I go to the church and observe mass, and believe in the divinity of Christ; still I may not be a Christian for other reasons. You must be clear first what Christianity means. Christianity does not mean merely believing in Christ. It does not mean going to church. It is not following a ritual. It is not attending mass. Even with all these things, a person may not be Christian, because I can myself do all these things, and I will still not be changed one whit from what I am. Religion is not what one does, but what one is, and all these things you have told me are what one does. One can do a million things without changing one's heart even for one second.

Hence, religion is a change of heart, and not what one does. Going to temples, going to churches, going to Gurus does not make religion, because they are all doings. You call God the Supreme Being, and anyone who moves in the direction of God, the Supreme Being, also gets transformed in being, and not necessarily in doing. God does not seem to be doing anything. He is only being. We call God 'Supreme Being'. We don't say 'Supreme Doing'. Do you call God 'Supreme Doing'?

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: Then why are you worried about doings? The more you move towards God, the less and less there is of doing, and there is more and more of enlarged, expanded being. What else I can tell you? I have told you what I feel.

Visitor: I want to have a dialogue with other religions to promote understanding.

Swamiji: Whatever is the dialogue that you have with another religion, that religion will always remain as another religion. It won't become your religion. I may like your religion very much,

without actually becoming that religion. So what is the purpose of the dialogue? There must be some intention behind it. It cannot become that thing which it is not. So, what benefit comes from that dialogue?

Visitor: We are living together.

Swamiji: One religion will say, “I agree with everything that you say, but I will stick to my religion.” This is what one will say. So how are you benefitted by this dialogue? Respecting all other religions is a simple matter. Any good man will respect everybody else, but still, he doesn’t become somebody else. So, what is the final purpose of the dialogue?

Visitor: Trying to live together in a peaceful way.

Swamiji: That is a social phenomenon. Socially you will be happy, but religiously you will be different.

Visitor: I think the first step is to learn something about the others, and to respect them, and not to see if anything is the same – at first to learn something about it.

Swamiji: OK. Yes. There are some religions which will not yield even one inch of land from their territory; they will have a round-table conference with you, but they will stick to their own traditional fundamentalism. There are some such religions in the world, even today. There are some very malleable, flexible religions; there are some very hard-core religions. They won’t yield. They are fanatical and you cannot have anything from them, even after dialogue, though socially, for purpose of convenience, they will sit around a table and drink tea with you. That is all. Now what is the final word from you? What do you want to tell me?

Visitor: I want to ask how to decide what is the wrong way and what is the right way to understand. There are a lot of different religious communities, and not all are serious.

Swamiji: All religions hinge on three great concepts. Due to the variations in these three concepts, they differ from one another. One is the relationship between God and the world. Another is the relationship between yourself and the world. The third is the

relationship between yourself and God. The concept of this threefold relation varies from one religion to another religion. The whole essence of religion is only this much. It is a threefold relationship, which has to be clear to one's mind. How are you connected to God? How are you connected to the world? How is God connected to the world? Let anybody answer these questions, and from the answer you can know what your religion is.

Visitor: Yes. Thank you very much.

Swamiji: Be happy. Anyway, you be happy.

LOVE AND HATRED

A visitor: Swamiji, once you said that when you love something, it is the Infinite calling the Infinite through the mental process. What about when you don't like something and you want to discard it?

Swamiji: That also is the same thing. Your dislike is also a like. It is a like of another kind: You wish that you don't want it. That is also a desire, so it is also a love; it is not something else. Love and hatred mean the same thing. You have a love not to love, which is the opposite of love, so they are not two things. When you love something, you have already done the opposite, simultaneously.

Visitor: But in love, you want to be united with one thing, and in hatred it is different.

Swamiji: No, when you dislike something, you want to be united with the negative aspect of it, the destruction of it. Your mind wants to unite itself with the destructive aspect of the object that you don't like. It is a very subtle trick that the mind is playing. It is a trick of the mind where neither will your love succeed, nor will your hatred succeed. You will fail in both. The mind's tricks are very suspicious. It is acting very surreptitiously against one's own welfare.

When you love something and simultaneously hate something, neither will you get the object of love, nor will you get any benefit out of the hatred. You will only ruin your mental peace. You have to study psychology to understand how the mind operates. It can act like a double-edged sword, cutting both ways.

The mind is not your friend. It will never tell you the right thing as long as it thinks of something outside, whether it is in the form of love or in the form of hatred. Both these activities of the mind are pernicious. Both love and hatred are indications of mental ill health, philosophically at least. Such people can never have peace of mind throughout their life.

Visitor: But is there also a love which transcends the opposites of love and hatred?

Swamiji: That is not love. It is Pure Being.

Visitor: Then why do they say that God is love?

Swamiji: You should not use the word 'love'. God is not love. God is Pure Being. If they say it, don't believe these people.

Visitor: In all the scriptures, they say so.

Swamiji: Don't believe these people who will misguide you. You don't want any scripture that misguides people. No scripture will tell you the ultimate truth because they always say that God created the world, which has never happened really. The other day I was saying that if God created the world, then He is outside the world. And if He is outside the world, then He is not everywhere. So which scripture is telling the truth?

Visitor: But Swamiji, we also say that God is perfection.

Swamiji: Just because God is perfection, it does not mean that He is not the creator of the world. So the moment He creates, He becomes imperfect because He separates Himself from the creation. The cause becomes different from the effect. Though there is some truth in what they say, it is misleading to non-initiates. You should never read a scripture without guidance. If God created the world, when did He create it? Transcendence and immanence are both merged together in universality. There is no creation; there is no love or hatred. It is Being as such – pure *sat-chit-ananda*.

Visitor: They say God created the world, and is also in the world.

Swamiji: God cannot be in the world. If God is in the world, then He is inside it, like water in a bucket. A thing that is inside something is different from that thing which contains it. So immediately you are bringing a distinction between God and the world when you say 'in'. He is not in, nor is He out. He is That Itself; therefore, words are not applicable here. Neither is God inside the world, nor is God outside it. Both statements are inadequate; God is the world itself.

The snake is neither inside the rope, nor outside the rope; it is the rope itself, so you should not use the words 'in' and 'out'. These are all preliminary exercises of religious preparation, but you cannot carry them so far. Every stage has its own value, but it will have to be transcended finally. The concept of the Universal includes both transcendence and immanence; otherwise, they will stand separate,

with one above and one below. The words 'in' and 'out' should not be used because that creates distinction.

Visitor: So Swamiji, there is no love?

Swamiji: There is no such thing as love, finally, nor is there hatred.

Visitor: And so what is devotion to God?

Swamiji: Devotion to God does not mean love as you think in your mind. Devotion is a complete transformation of human love into a concept of Being as such. It is a love of Being by Being. If you want to call it love, you may. It is the Self loving the Self.

Another visitor: Is there a distinction between devotees and philosophers? Do I have to choose between the two?

Swamiji: The devotee always sees God as being far away in the sky, but philosophers don't think like that. Devotees always look up to pray to God.

Visitor: No, I don't look up.

Swamiji: Well then, at least you don't look down! In religion, all concepts of God are preparatory stages for the final merging of consciousness in Being as such. They are preparatory stages. You cannot cling to the stages themselves as final.

Visitor: But the feelings and the emotional side cling to them, Swamiji.

Swamiji: You have to gradually go beyond them. Meditation on God does not mean emotion. It is something beyond emotion. Emotion is a mental act, a psychological function.

Visitor: But Swamiji, if I don't love God, what else can I love?

Swamiji: You need not love God. You must unite yourself with Him in your consciousness. You cannot love a thing which is yourself. The word 'love' is not suitable there. Your satisfaction about yourself cannot be regarded as love. It is more than love; it is Self-perfection.

Visitor: Then how do I handle my emotions?

Swamiji: The emotion is the mental movement of feeling in respect of something outside it. If the object is not outside, the feeling will

not be there.

Visitor: But Swamiji, I cannot ignore the emotions. How do I handle them?

Swamiji: As long as you cannot ignore them, you are not in a perfect condition. You may pass through that stage, but as long as you are in that stage, it is an imperfect condition.

Another visitor: Swamiji, what is transcendence?

Swamiji: Transcending happens only when you no longer need something. It's not thinking that something is valuable but you are not touching it. That is no good. Suppose you leave a lot of money in the bank and come here. If you want it and you don't have it, that is not transcendence. It becomes transcendence when you don't need it. There is a difference. It is a mistake people make with renunciation. You cannot renounce a thing which you think is valuable; you can only renounce a thing which has no value. Only then it is real renunciation; otherwise, it will cling to you. That is no good. It is everybody's mistake.

If you think that you have had enough of it and you want something higher, only then a question of transcendence comes. You cannot leave anything unless you have had enough of it, up to surfeit. When you have eaten up to the nose, then you will not eat a second time; that is called surfeit. Wealth, knowledge, power, authority, etc., you must have up to surfeit; then it will become nauseating and you don't want to think of it. But if it is not up to surfeit, then you will crave it. If you have eaten only until your stomach is half full, you will go unsatisfied. That is no good. You must eat until you are full. Then it is all right.

Visitor: Swamiji, what is destiny?

Swamiji: There is no such thing as destiny. It is only a name that we give to the impression created by your actions performed in previous births. That effect produced by your actions of the past looks like some controlling power, and we call it Providence, destiny, and so on. There is no destiny outside it. It is you, yourself. You create a cocoon around yourself in the form of actions performed, and they act either in this birth or in the next birth, as the case may be,

according to their intensity. If the karmas are very intense, they act now; but if they are very mild, they produce their effect in the next birth. Destiny is only a name we give to that force generated by our own actions. It is a very strong force. We are made up of that only. We are made of our own actions.

Visitor: Swamiji, what is intuition?

Swamiji: Intuition means all the sense organs melting together into a single focused attention. Intuition is not seeing, hearing, smelling, touching or tasting; all things are taking place at one stroke. Whatever all the five sense organs do, they get melted down into a single focus. It is a thrill of melting down of personality into what we may call a kind of liquified experience. You will be liquified and will not be existing as an individual anymore. Samadhi is the highest intuition. It is direct contact, direct perception. Intuition and samadhi ultimately mean the same thing.

To understand this subject requires great training of the mind. No book will enlighten you abruptly. Only contact with saints and sages for a long time may purify your mind. It requires a purified mind to understand this highly intricate, technical subject, so the mind has to be purified of all ordinary earthly concepts of reality. You have got concepts of reality based on worldly perceptions, sensory perceptions and psychological feelings, emotions, etc. All these have to be brushed aside.

Understanding this subject requires deep thought, long persistence, continued association with saints and sages, and meditation along these lines for as long a period as possible every day, adopting a technique which you have to learn from a competent person. It is not a question-and-answer method; it is a question of living. It all depends upon how you are living and conducting your daily existence.

MEDITATION ON GOD

A visitor: I want to learn meditation without religion.

Swamiji: Do you believe in God?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: What is your concept of God?

Visitor: I think of God as the creator of the world.

Swamiji: If God created this whole universe, He must be so much bigger than His creation. He must be omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Now, number one, go on telling this to the mind: There is a creator who is larger than the universe, more powerful than the universe.

Secondly, where is God? The universe is everywhere; wherever you go, you see the universe. The creator also, therefore, must be everywhere. This is a logical argument: If the effect that He has produced is everywhere, the cause also has to be everywhere.

So, number one, God is the greatest thing, nothing equal to Him. When you contact Him, you have got everything; there is nothing more that you want. Number two, He is everywhere; therefore, you need not run about from place to place to contact Him. To contact a thing that is everywhere, you can just sit anywhere and pull the switch of the heart.

Number three, you must have time to go on thinking like this. You should not be running about in so many places with no time to sit for a few minutes. I am not telling you any complicated method of meditation. For your spiritual benefit, I am introducing you to this concept of the Almighty Lord.

You also belong to some religion. You are Jewish, and it is a good religion. Concentrate your mind on this principle of the universality and all-pervading nature of that Cosmic Creator who is everywhere, inside and outside, flooding and inundating you, touching and feeling you. You are being in contact with Him perpetually, provided that your heart is open to it.

Can you have a feeling of this kind in your heart again and again? The more time you devote to it, the better for you. If your

intention is only contact with God in meditation, this little thing is sufficient for you.

Another visitor: In the mind of many Christians, there is the idea of original sin.

Swamiji: Who has committed the sin?

Visitor: Because of duality between good and evil, there is a sin.

Swamiji: Seeing duality is not a sin. Everybody is seeing duality in the world.

Visitor: But the sin belongs to the evil.

Swamiji: Where is the evil sitting?

Visitor: In the mind.

Swamiji: Whose mind?

Visitor: My mind.

Swamiji: Who created the evil in the mind?

Visitor: Always me. It comes from our education.

Swamiji: How did the evil come into the mind? From where has it come? It has to exist somewhere, in order that it could enter the mind. Where does it exist?

Visitor: I am asking you where it has come from.

Swamiji: I have never said that there is evil. You yourself are unnecessarily creating a problem. Evil cannot be there unless it has some place to exist. It cannot be the mind because it has entered the mind from somewhere. But where is that place?

This is a confusion of thought, so it is not good to go on thinking like that. This concept of original sin is a totally illogical concept. It has no foundation. Somebody has thrust it into your mind, and you are going on thinking about it. This is called religious brainwashing. You will become whatever you think you are, so if you think you are evil, you will get nothing out of it. But if you think you are pure, a ray of God, you will be blessed. You will become exactly as you are thinking.

Another visitor: Does free will exist?

Swamiji: Free will appears as if it is existing when the central will is operating through the ego of the human being. It appears to be existing because the egoism is appropriating it to itself. Really it is the cosmic will that is operating, but nobody will believe it because of the egoism.

Visitor: There was a sentence in your book: “Your free will is only to the extent you are united with the Total.”

Swamiji: When you are united with the Absolute, you are totally free. Now the feeling of free will is illusory; it is not real. You are not united with the universal will. You are united with the ego only; therefore, that egoistic free will is illusory. The real free will is union with the Absolute. There you are completely free. Nobody can control you afterwards.

Visitor: Free will means freedom to choose?

Swamiji: Freedom to do whatever you like. That can be done only when you are one with the Absolute. Until that time, it is only an illusory sense of freedom caused by the sense of egoism.

Visitor: In your book you said, “What about that friend’s mind who also saw a friend in the dream? Do you think he has no mind, or he may be dreaming that you are dreaming him?” Why did you say that?

Swamiji: It looks as if he has a mind. Your friend in the dream also has a mind; otherwise, how will he speak to you? But actually, it is only your mind operating, though it looks as if there is another mind. Similarly, it is here, also. It is the Cosmic Mind thinking, though it looks as if each individual has an independent mind. In the same way as one mind looks like many minds in the dream, here also, one mind looks like many minds.

Visitor: So Swamiji, there is just one dream.

Swamiji: It is a cosmic dream. What you call waking life is a cosmic dream where the cosmic thought operates through every individual, and it appears as if every individual has his own independent mind. In the dream, also, you will find the same thing. The people whom you

see in the dream are appearing to have their own minds; otherwise, how will you contact and talk with them? Their minds are illusory minds projected by your own personal mind. You have projected them. They don't exist really, yet it appears as if they are existing and that they have a mind also. You talk to them, have relationships with them; you have created a big drama there in the dream. That is exactly what is happening in waking life, also.

Another visitor: How do I know if I have done my best?

Swamiji: Your conscience will tell you. You are not a dull-wit. You can understand. Have you done your best? If you have done it reluctantly in a disinterested manner, then, of course, you have not done your best. But if your heart and soul are put into it in the best possible way, then you cannot go beyond that. No one can do more than their best. 'Best' is superlative. But if you have not done your best, and feel that you could have done it better, then, of course, you are responsible for it. If you have put your heart and soul into it, then you are not responsible. No man can work as God. Man can work as man only. If from within that capacity you have done your best, further responsibility is not yours.

Everybody has reason; nobody is without it. If you apply your reason, you will know where you stand. Also, there is something called conscience. Conscience is your guide. Nobody can thrust wisdom into your head. It has to come from inside only.

Another visitor: Is it true that all actions in the world originate from the will of God?

Swamiji: It is both true and not true because as long as you feel that it is not true, it is not true. Even if it is true, you are not going to be benefited by that because your heart is not accepting it. If you felt that God does everything, you would not speak to me at all. You would keep quiet. Everything would be fine.

Visitor: I kept quiet for two days, sir, and today I am leaving.

Swamiji: The third day it has become false. You tell God, "For two days I waited for You, and the third day I don't agree with You."

Everything is done by the will of God in a perfect manner. The whole cosmos is the body of God. Just as your body is a manifestation

of your soul, the entire universe is a manifestation of the Almighty Absolute consciousness; therefore, nothing can move without the central will operating. You cannot lift your finger, a hair cannot grow on your body, you cannot say anything, your breathing will stop, your heart cannot function, unless that will is there.

But – and the ‘but’ is the important thing – no individual in the world may feel that this is so. You said that you have come from Delhi; you didn’t say that God has come. The consciousness that you are a human being immediately creates other associations such as being a man or woman, doing this action, that action, etc. How can these ideas arise in the mind of a person when no such action is really taking place, and the whole universe is acting simultaneously? So, it is incomplete knowledge of the total comprehension of the cosmos that makes us feel that we are doing the action. If your mind is able to switch itself on to the cosmic setup, you will have no problem afterwards.

Visitor: If every action is the will of God directly or indirectly, and therefore manifests itself, then that doesn’t leave any room for free will of man.

Swamiji: Ultimately, what you call free will is nothing but the will of God operating.

Visitor: So how can you blame someone for his past *samskaras*?

Swamiji: He feels that he has done it. If you ask him, he will say that it is his cow, his land, his property. Is there anybody who will say that this building belongs to God? We are bound and we are free in accordance with the feeling that we have got in our hearts. If you say that you have done it, then you bear the consequences. But who will say that he has not done it? Every person who has body consciousness will feel that he has done it.

Your actions and your very existence are included in the cosmic action, so whatever you do is part of that. But don’t make the mistake of bringing your consciousness separately, as if you are doing it.

Visitor: But it affects me.

Swamiji: It affects you because your practical life is different from what you are saying with your mind.

Visitor: I can't help it.

Swamiji: Then there is no use of discussion. You should not talk on this subject, because practically it doesn't affect you. God cannot help you unless you believe in God entirely – not fifty percent.

You have to go slowly, step by step, by detachment, unselfishness, charitableness, non-interference, by goodness of feeling in your heart, and very ideal behaviour. That is the beginning of good conduct and the first step towards God. Then, afterwards, do a little contemplation and prayer on these things that we have been discussing. Later on, actual meditation will start. God will take care of you.

Visitor: If the aim of man is to realise God and finally be liberated, how does he explain this whole exercise – the cycle, the predestination of man?

Swamiji: The whole thing that you have mentioned is included in the cosmic setup, as all the waves and all the bubbles and ripples in the ocean are included in the ocean. You will find everything included in That, and you will not put a question afterwards. You will be merged in That, so who will put the question?

KNOWING CONSCIOUSNESS

A visitor: I want to know what consciousness is.

Swamiji: Suppose you know it. What happens to you afterwards? In what way will you be better after you know it? You will be the same person afterwards; the only difference is you will have the satisfaction that you know what consciousness is, but this may not make a difference in your life.

Visitor: The realisation of the identity with consciousness will be different.

Swamiji: Oh. Now you are going into deep waters, little by little. Have you studied Christian theology, or read any book on Christian mysticism?

Visitor: St. John of the Cross. The problem is that there is a little duality, if I am not mistaken.

Swamiji: Does St. John of the Cross mention duality?

Visitor: There is an intimacy, a closeness, but...

Swamiji: You don't want that duality? You would like to abolish it? I will give you another look which will tell you something about consciousness, but I will not give you the entire thing today. I will give you only a little. I should not let the cat out of the bag completely. Little by little I will tell you and when you go, you may have some idea about it.

Many people raise questions of this kind. Hundreds come here, and finally they get stuck when they encounter subjects like this. Everything is all right for some time, up to some limit; beyond that, it is a black curtain and a mountain in front. We can't go further because we are mostly accustomed to thinking in terms of psychology, sociology, political science, physics. This is the way in which we think. All our thought is conditioned by social relations, physical limitations, and psychological restrictions of various types. We are thinking only under the conditions in which the mind can work. The mind can work only under certain conditions; it cannot break the conditions. There are certain ways in which we do things,

and the mind cannot think in any other way. Certain philosophers have tried to analyse these limitations. They have also gone deep into the subject of why the mind can think only in some ways and cannot think in any other way.

For instance, everything that the mind thinks has some shape, some quantity, some dimension. The mind cannot think dimensionless things, so everything that the mind thinks has some quantum. That is one thing. And you cannot think of a quantity without some quality also attached to it. A qualityless, purely attributeless thing you cannot think; and also, you have the necessity to relate one thing to another thing.

You have come from Goa, you said. That is a relation you are establishing with the geographical unit called Goa. You may also be the son of a father, a brother of somebody, or a boss or subordinate of somebody. These are kinds of relationships. So firstly you think in terms of quantity, then you think in terms of quality, then you think in terms of relation, and then you think in terms of the condition in which you are. Everything is in some condition.

Generally it is said that all thoughts are related to circumstances of this type. You go on thinking, and whatever you think in the mind is within this fourfold structure. But who made this law that you should think only in this way? Nobody can put a question like that because the question itself is raised only under these conditions. Even the question of who made this law is made by the condition itself, which is like trying to climb on one's own shoulders. You cannot go beyond.

That is why they say that the mind cannot catch Reality. The intellect is a failure where it is a question of contacting Reality as it is in itself. You said you want to know what consciousness is. It is one name that we give to the Ultimate Reality. We shall not go into that subject now. I will leave it at that. I am just mentioning the difficulty the mind faces in contacting such things which cannot be called a quantity.

For instance, you mentioned the name of God. We are aspiring for God, but He is not a substance, not a kind of quantity or a huge body. Sometimes we think that God, the Supreme Being, is like a huge human being. This is the compulsion of the mind to think in

terms of quantity. We expand the quantity to the dimension of space so that He may look a little attractive, like a huge human being, as big as space itself. We cannot think of God in any other way than as a human being, because we are conditioned by the human way of thinking. We cannot think like a frog or like any animal; we think like human beings. Hence, our God is a human being only, and He is mostly male. See how many limitations we have got? Sometimes people have tried to think of God as a woman also; Devi worship is an attempt to overcome this male obsession, but we can't get over it.

So our mind is limited, but why has this problem arisen? It has arisen because we think in terms of four restricting factors. Also we think in terms of sense organs. We think in terms of what we see, hear, smell, touch, and taste. Can you think anything which you cannot see, hear, smell, touch or taste? This is also a limitation. Our thought is sensorially conditioned. Actually, the mind is a slave of the sense organs, inasmuch as it is receiving information only through the sense organs and it has to accept what the sense organs provide. It cannot think independently.

Some philosophers came to the conclusion that it is impossible under the existing conditions to contact Reality. If you try to understand Reality, you are understanding through the intellect, the mind, which is subservient to the reports of the sense organs, and inasmuch as sense information cannot be regarded as adequate to define Reality, no man can contact it, ordinarily speaking. But there are extraordinary conditions under which contact can be established. That is why people go to Gurus, Masters, etc. They can tell you the extraordinary conditions where the human has to cease to be human for the time being. Your thought of God should not merely be a psychological interpretation, and it should not be socially conditioned, politically interpreted, and so on. You don't want an economical God or a political God, and so on. You want God as He is. How will you think of God as He is?

For that, a great admonition of the yoga masters is sense control – the control of the sense organs. Our energy is moving in a direction of the objects of sense, and our thinking is so vehemently sensorially oriented that we think in terms of objects only. I mentioned to you quantity, quality, etc.; these are characteristics of objects, and we are

transporting the characteristics of objects to the Ultimate Reality, also. That is why there are differences in thinking religiously. We have got so many religions.

The sense organs become restrained if you can look without seeing, hear without listening, taste without enjoying, as it is said mystically. These are all very mystifying ways of expressing things. You can see things, but you need not be interested in them. It is your interest in what you see with the eyes or contact with the senses that draws the energy of the person in the direction of an object of sense. So spiritual seekers try to go inward, into the light that will be available within. That light is almost stifled because of the pressure of the sense organs.

By the practice of yoga, which is also known as spirituality, when you can think as God would think, you will be able to contact God. You have to think as God thinks. How will you think as God thinks? It requires a great sacrifice of the ego-ridden personality, the spirit of surrender of the psychophysical individuality, and a real asking for it. The ultimate requirement from you is a real asking for it. Your heart asks, and it is restless without it. It is searching for it wherever it goes, and it can think nothing but that; like a child who has lost its mother in a crowd, and so it yells and cries; like a calf who has lost its mother and goes here and there in the herd of cows; like a person who has lost his purse containing thousands of dollars and cannot sleep, who goes to bus stands and railway stations everywhere looking for his purse. These are all examples of restlessness because of the desire to have what you consider as most vital.

If you consider God as so vital that you can't live without Him, and the whole thing is misery without the contact with Him, that it is life and death for you – if an asking of that type arises from your heart of hearts, God Himself will see to it that the needful is done. God hears what we are saying now. He is not deaf. Even this conversation between us is heard by Him, and if He accepts your asking as sincerely arising from the bottom of your heart, He may bless you instantaneously. So be happy.

OUR POSITION IN THE UNIVERSE

Swamiji: In spite of there being endless varieties of things, from insects to Brahma, or God, from atoms to the stars, even then, in spite of so much of difference, as they call it, it is one undivided existence at the back of it. How would you reconcile this kind of imponderable contradiction, of every atom at the root of things, with that great principle that it is one thing? How? If you can reconcile this in your consciousness, you are in the state of meditation just now. Meditation is nothing but this only. It is an integration of particularity with integrality. If this is possible, you are immediately in the lap of God, you can say, in one minute. But you should not have any kind of doubt regarding how it is possible, or why, and so on. There is no why, when and how for that. It is just what it is.

It requires great willpower on one side, and the capacity to understand one's position in life – where you are actually situated. Are you in Delhi? Are you on the surface of this earth? Are you in the interstellar space? Are you in the solar system? Are you in the space-time complex? Where are you sitting just now? Can you tell me where you are? It is a difficult question. When you think of it, you will be simply stunned. There are cooperative forces working everywhere because you belong to the entire space-time complex. It is not far away from you. It is the stuff out of which everything is made. You think you are this man or that man, this person or that person, doing this work or that work, because you are unable to reconcile this utter difference and contradiction with that thing which seems to be defying all these contradictions.

A visitor: Intellectually perhaps we agree with that proposition.

Swamiji: Why should it not go into the heart?

Visitor: Though we try to agree with that proposition, its integration in our practical life...

Swamiji: That practical life is not outside this real life.

Visitor: It's not, but to live that principle in our life is where the reservations come about.

Swamiji: If the practical life is completely alienated from the true life, that practical life has no meaning.

Visitor: It is not. While on the intellectual plane it is valid as a universal proposition, in its application to oneself, we are not able to live up to that principle of indivisibility.

Swamiji: You have to use your strong imagination and transport yourself to the origin of things. From that point of view you are. You are not sitting in Delhi, you are sitting at the apex of creation and from that point of view, with that eye, you see your work, and how you will adjust yourself. Then you will have the strength to do it, and also the understanding of how to adjust yourself. You should not think that you are working inside a room. You are not inside the room. You are working in the apex, the centre of the world, that is controlling even the movement of your fingers. You cannot forget that. You should not think that you are doing everything. How can you do that unless there is an order from the centre? So I have told you a mouthful, and...

Visitor: That's the reason why I keep coming to you, spending some time at least with you. It makes me rejuvenated, as it is. When I go back, it keeps me charged for some time.

Swamiji: Either we go from this world leaving the whole thing to God, as people say – let Him keep it or not keep it – or we consider that there is some necessity to do something for the future stability of this world. There are two ways of thinking. Everything, let it go; that is one way. Otherwise, whatever is possible must be done. These are the two. The empirical and the transcendental are to come together somehow. That is left to you.

[To another visitor] Gravitation, relativity, mathematics, equations – this question was raised once. Then it will mean that the system called mathematics is foolishness, but it is not like that. One person has written a beautiful article that mathematical laws, gravitation and relativity apply not to the illusory part, but to the real part. The snake is not there, but the rope is there. You forget the point. The rope only looks like a snake, and so the illusion is something to be explained properly. 'Illusion' does not mean nothing is there. The rope is there, so you should not say nothing is

there. You are thinking 'illusion' means nothing is there. You are not properly seeing the thing that is there. So the laws of physics, etc., are perfectly valid because they apply to the rope, but you are not seeing the rope. You are saying the snake is there. The laws do not apply to the snake; they apply to the rope. What you are seeing as the whole world is not the snake, but the rope only. Hence, you may say it is there or it is not there, either way. You will say something is there, something is not there. The snake is not there, but by saying that, you cannot deny the rope. But we deny the rope also, and make a mistake. That's why people say the world isn't there. That is not true. It is like saying the snake isn't there, but you forget the rope is there. You bundle up the rope with the snake when you say it is not there. What you see is God only, the Almighty Being. It is not an illusion, because the rope is there. The rope is the God, and so any law applies to it. Laws that are valid apply to that which is valid, and the only thing that is valid is the rope. But it looks like a snake, and so you are getting confused. Every day you are seeing only God in front of you, and not the snake.

Visitor: It also is said, Swamiji, that we are always in the presence of God.

Swamiji: We are always on the lap of God.

Another visitor: Would it mean that the world may not be there, but maya is there?

Swamiji: Maya means the snake, but there is no snake. Unnecessarily you are bringing that. It doesn't exist there. It is the rope only. You are seeing the rope and calling it maya. It is a drama.

SURRENDER TO THE GURU

A visitor: ... of the darshan of the Guru and the relationship of the Guru to the *chela*, why is the Guru so important? In many religions the Guru...

Swamiji: Why is it necessary to bask in the sunlight? It is always said that people should bask in the sunlight. Why should they? They can sit in the cave inside. Why should they bask in the sunlight? It is because the energy of the sun enters this person. That is why you are sitting in the sun. So the Guru, as he is an established spiritual master, from his body some energy emanates which is a spiritual power, and people come near that person as much as possible so that they may be charged with that magnetic influence that is emanating from that person; otherwise, there is no purpose. Just as when you sit in the sun you get the warmth, you sit near the spiritual hero and his potential energy travels some distance from his body. How far it travels depends upon the quantum of energy that he has got. It will be 3 feet, 4 feet, 10 feet, half a kilometre, one kilometre, whatever it is. Sometimes it can be several kilometres also, if the person is very powerful. So that is the purpose. You are basking in the warmth of the magnetic force generated by the personality of the great spiritual master. Now what else do you want to ask?

Visitor: Is it important to completely submit to the Guru?

Swamiji: No, there is no need of submitting. You have to submit to that which has given the strength to the Guru, because a wrong notion can enter the mind, thinking that the physical appearance of the Guru is the Guru. This idea may enter the disciple, and they will start clinging to the Guru's body. Then the spiritual becomes unspiritual immediately. The Guru is the medium through which the energy is flowing. The energy is the important thing, not the body through which it is flowing. So if the person dies, people feel shattered: "My Guru has gone." That means their understanding of the Guru is poor. That which has gone away was not the Guru. The Guru is that energy that permeated and entered that personality. The force is the Guru, the energy is the Guru, the spiritual impulse that was inside is the

Guru, not the physical body; but nobody can easily understand. Human sentiment is so crude, it clings to anything. Clinging is the habit of every human being. You have to cling to something, and they cling to an image, an idol, a Guru, whatever it is.

So in order that this sorrow consequent upon the physical death of the Guru may not upset the mind of the disciple, the disciple should be equally enlightened. Only a powerful tungsten wire can draw the electricity and give you light. If you tie a rope inside, it won't draw the energy of the power. So if the disciple is like a rope, the energy will not flow through that person. It is not enough if the Guru is great. The disciple also has to be great; otherwise, there will be no en rapport between the two. Just as high-frequency energy that is flowing everywhere cannot be caught by the ears or the eyes, and you can catch it through a television set or a radio set because of its high-frequency mechanism, likewise, if the disciple is a low-frequency individual, even if God is sitting there, he won't understand that God is there. Because it is so high potential, His presence is not felt by him. Even if a Godman is sitting, you cannot recognise him because the receiver is very poor.

So surrender has no meaning. It is the understanding that is important. You have to surrender to that universal force which permeates through the personality of that spiritual hero. Clinging to the body of a person is not good; otherwise, you will suffer afterwards because that to which you cling goes away one day, and then you will be in misery. Everything perishes, and the body of the Guru also will perish. Even Incarnations perish, so why do you cling to anybody? You must use the power of discrimination and understanding so that gain or loss will not make any difference as far as the physical perception of the eye is concerned.

So I do not use that word 'surrender', and all that. It is a common glib word that untutored disciples use. "I surrendered to the Guru and suffered afterwards." This is no good. Anything that brings suffering has a sting of error behind it. Always you must see the consequence of an action. The consequence of an action will decide the usefulness and the correctness of the action. That which is immediately pleasant need not necessarily be a good thing. Don't

surrender yourself to anybody except the Almighty Lord.

There are Gurus who are very eager to have disciples surrender to them, many in the world. Those Gurus who say, “Come, come, come, I will enlighten you,” you must dread them and run away from that place. There are Gurus like that. “Come, I will give you samadhi. Come, you will reach God.” You leave that place and go away immediately. Don’t sit there because it is a terrible thing to say like that. Nobody should say like that: “I will give you samadhi and take you to God.” Whoever says that is misguiding the person. It is better to be humble always, efface yourself, be a nothing; then everything will enter.

I am a self-effacing seeker, that’s all. I want nothing, not even disciples, not money, not property, not friends. I want nothing. That position that I am maintaining makes me happy. The last will be the first in heaven. He who is first here will be the last in heaven. So don’t be too eager to be important in this world. God will see to it that you are thrown out in the dustbin. He who has already received the blessing of this world need not ask for blessing from God afterwards because God will say, “Already you have got the blessing of humanity; why do you come to Me?”

If the world has rejected you, then God will take you, but this is a very painful thing to hear. Why should you be rejected by the world? That means the world cannot see properly what is there. It sees only what is not there. The world does not exist at all. It is only a vibratory movement of some energy quantum which looks like concentrated objects. There are people who say the world does not exist, and you must understand why they say that. There are only waves of energy – as people say, quanta of energy, waves everywhere, vibrations, fluxations – and nothing exists really, solidly. So neither the Guru exists nor the disciple exists. Only that One thing exists. If the mind can accept this, you are free, and nobody can harm you afterwards. All attachment will cease. We are clinging to forms which are not really existing. Forms do not exist. There are only conglomerations of electric energy deludingly appearing as solid objects. Do you understand me? So don’t be caught by Gurus and all that. We don’t want it.

WE ARE ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Swamiji: We are only lines and points. The contour of a person is nothing but the shape of the lines, which are nothing but dots, and they have no space; therefore, we are not in space, which means we are not existing. It is a very good conclusion for all people: We don't exist. We are Alice in Wonderland. We are like Alice, and we are living in the Wonderland.

A visitor: But it is the most wonderful thing, Swamiji.

Swamiji: We can go on thinking this every day, and some good thing will happen. The thing is, we cannot think it always. We cannot always think like that. These ideas cannot enter the mind always. Very rarely, when we are discussing like this, it comes. In *satsanga* some good thoughts come; otherwise, when we live a humdrum life it will not enter the mind. We are the same old persons drudging everywhere.

These thoughts we are discussing have a great liberating power. They disentangle the personality and, to some extent, melt down the ego. We become much better even by hearing all these things. We tend towards becoming wider in our dimensions, and perhaps we are moving towards universality rather than particularity even by thoughts of this kind, though these thoughts occur only for two seconds when we are discussing.

Swamiji: [to another visitor] ...we call evolution. But there are many hurdles on the way. It is not a beaten track that one has to follow and simply go. It is not like that. When the next stage in evolution is about to be reached, or is actually reached, the hangover of the lower category of the preceding stage will also be pursuing, like a man being pursued by his own shadow wherever he goes. So at every stage there is a hangover of the preceding stage, which is the obstacle.

Now, for instance, as human beings we have come from lower stages, but we have all the characteristics of the lower stages. We can sleep like a stone, we can be hungry and appetitive like a vegetable, we can be ferocious like an animal, and we can be selfish like a human

being, yet we have a pointer to the existence above human beings, which is called the higher reason. So what is called human beings is a big confusion, actually, but a systematically arranged confusion. We have everything that is above us and we have everything that is below us, and we are hanging in the middle.

Another visitor: In meditation, am I going out of myself?

Swamiji: How can you go out of yourself? There is an explanation of quantum mechanics especially as propounded by one very famous John Bell. It is called Bell's Theorem. It is the most famous theorem, called Bell's Theorem, which propounds great truths that anything that happens anywhere happens everywhere. Can you imagine? Anything that exists anywhere exists everywhere. Now, what is the consequence of this proposition? If that is the case, what do you think in your mind? Accepting this proposition as the absolutely true fact, if you have taken it seriously, what will you think at that time in your mind? What will you think?

Visitor: I am everywhere.

Swamiji: It is a modern mathematical Upanishadic dictum. *Sarvam khalvidam brahma*: All this is the Absolute. But the moment you utter this sentence, your mind, which is a rogue, will immediately tell you the Absolute is somewhere far away and you have to struggle hard to know it. This mind is a rogue. It will never allow you to do any right thing. You are saying that the Absolute alone is there; okay, but it is not here. It is there, somewhere beyond the stars. You have cut the ground from under your feet even after accepting this.

As you are included in that which you are seeing, what is your position? You cannot see anything at that time. The thing which you are seeing is that in which you yourself are included. If you go to a picture house where there is a moving picture, if you yourself are one of the actors in that movie, you cannot see the movie. Only somebody outside the movie can see it. So a thing in which you yourself are involved cannot be seen. You cannot even think it. The mind cannot operate when the very basis of its thinking is incomprehensible to it. Meditation does not mean thinking in the mind. It is the transformation of your being itself. It is the being that transforms.

Close your eyes. Exert a great power of will. You have entered into the very thing which you are looking at. This is called samadhi. People talk about samadhi using big, big words. It is nothing but your entry into that thing which you are seeing with your eyes so that your seeing with your eyes has stopped. The thing that you are seeing becomes yourself. Then whom are you going to see? This principle should be applied to anything in the world, and you can apply it to the whole world also, the whole cosmos, so that you cannot look at it. Meditation, basically, is a kind of samadhi only. It may be a lower type or a higher type; that is a different matter. There are many varieties of samadhi. Patanjali mentions five or six varieties, but actually there are much more than that. Any attempt on your part to include yourself in that which you are seeing is samadhi itself, though it is an initial step. But if you want to see a thing, then it is not meditation. In meditation you don't see anything; you *be* that thing. Meditation is a state of being, and not perceiving, not cognition, not thinking, not willing, not feeling – nothing of the kind. As human nature is not accustomed to this way of comprehension of things, we are born with an erroneous psychological apparatus due to which, right from childhood we are seeing something outside. We want it or we are afraid of it. A child cries when it is born because it sees something outside. When right from childhood you are initiated into a psychobiological erroneous perception, how will you suddenly change that perception into a kind of integrated beingness? There are no words for explaining all this, so I'm coining a word: 'beingness'.

Visitor: Swamiji, in between the two thoughts there is the Truth, isn't it?

Swamiji: Why are you worried about two thoughts? The thoughts should not be there at all. When you are aware of the two thoughts, you are not aware of that which is between the two. You are saying that you are thinking of that which is between the two thoughts. That is not possible because already you have decided that there are two thoughts, so the mind is thinking of the two thoughts and the third thing also. It is thinking three things at the same time. It is a very tricky matter. You cannot think the third thing unless you are aware of the other two also. There are two people sitting here, and if I want

to be aware of the connection between the two, which is neither this nor that – the connection is an independent thing – I cannot see it unless I first accept that there are two things. So meditation is not trying to think that which is between two thoughts; it is the cessation of thought itself, and the absorption of thought into the being of it.

JUDAISM AND HINDUISM

Swamiji: An ashram is not a set of buildings. It is an atmosphere created by a person who is having company with Sat. That person may sit under a tree; even then, it is an ashram only. An ashram doesn't require buildings. You may sit on the bank of the Ganga or on the roadside; it doesn't matter. It becomes an ashram the moment the person who sits there is in communion with Sat.

There was a great saint called Nimkaroli Baba. He had no ashram. Wherever he sat, it was an ashram only. He may sit on the culvert, he may sit on the road, he may sit anywhere. People will run after him. There is no ashram. He himself is the ashram.

A visitor: Can you tell me your idea about connection, relations, attitude between Judaism and Hinduism?

Swamiji: Hindus are friends of Jews, but I do not know if Jews are friends of Hindus. This is what I want to know. Hindus have no objection to anything concerning Jews. They are welcome to India, and they are staying in India also. What is it the other way round? Do Jews like Hindus or not? Now, this answer that will come from you will also be an answer to the question that you raised. If both people like each other, there is no problem.

Visitor: I don't speak about the people. I speak about the religions.

Swamiji: Without people, where is the religion? Can you have only religion without people? You see, every religion is different from every other religion on the surface manifestation of it. The basic ideals are the same. Rituals may be different, language may be different, ceremonies and celebrations may be different, but everybody loves God Almighty. Even Jews love God Almighty. Is it so? Or do they not love? You have got a doubt? Are you a Jew?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: You don't love God? You're hesitating. Do you love God?

Visitor: I try to.

Swamiji: Oh, what a difficulty you have got! Is there a doctrine in

Judaism that everybody should love God, or you may do it or not do it according to your convenience? Hinduism emphasises the supreme duty of love of God. Every other thing that the Hindus do is only a manifestation of the love of God. Religion is a meaningless, empty ritual minus love of God. The performances, worships, rituals, are like the outer form or the body of religion, whereas love of God is its soul. Nobody can be religious if one has no love for God. Hindus love God, Christians love God, Muslims love God, and I believe Jews also love God. Am I right?

Visitor: 100%.

Swamiji: Then your question is answered. There is a great similarity among these people, and they are friends and collaborators in a common purpose which is the achievement of the ultimate purpose of life, namely, the attainment of God. This is what I believe is the purpose of religion: freedom ultimate, eternal blessedness, immortality. This is what we are aiming at, every human being is aiming at, of this religion or that religion. What else you want to ask me?

Visitor: Jewish tradition has big problem with worship of idols and statues – in the Jewish tradition and even in Christianity and Islam.

Swamiji: Okay, they need not worship idols. Nobody is going to compel them. But they do not understand what the idol is. You must first of all define what an idol is. Any symbol that you are carrying with you is an idol. An idol is a representation of something which is hidden behind it. Do you take photographs of any person? Is it not an idol that you are carrying? The photograph is not the person, it is an idol. Do you carry currency notes in your pocket? It is an idol of money. Anyone who worships a photograph and a currency note is an idol worshipper, and if Jews are also doing that, Jews are also idol worshippers. So there is no use of simply talking meaningless things. What do you say? Let the Jew come, I will talk to him. And here is a Jew.

People have no understanding of the method of reaching God. The whole world is an idol because it represents something which is other than what it is. The whole universe is a symbol of God. In that sense, we may say the world is a symbol, an idol. If you love

the world, then you are loving a symbol, an idol, a large idol. If the world is an idol, then everything inside the world also is an idol. We have to be very scientific, impartial and profound in our judgment of anything. We should not go by tradition.

There is no use of saying Hindus don't like the Koran, Muslims don't like the Vedas. These are all useless talk, and will lead nowhere. If you want to set up a quarrel, there are one hundred ways of setting up a quarrel, but if you want to make friendship, also there are a hundred ways I can make friendship with you. In a hundred ways you can quarrel, and in a hundred ways you can become friends also. If you think friendship is better than quarrelling, then you do that; otherwise, you go on quarrelling and achieve nothing finally.

You are a child of God, okay? Why do you want to call yourself a Jew? When you reach God one day, you tell God, "I am a Jew that has come." God may not recognise you. He will say, "I have not created any Jew, I have not created any Hindu. I have created human beings." But if you say 'Jew', He will debar entry into the kingdom of heaven. He will say, "I don't know Jews. You go outside." But if you say, "I am a human being," He will say, "Yes, I have created you."

This is all you want to ask me, nothing more? Why have you come to India? What do you want from this country?

Visitor: I wasn't satisfied with everyone.

Swamiji: You are not satisfied? What will satisfy you?

Visitor: If I would know the answer, I wouldn't come.

Swamiji: If something cannot satisfy you, you also know what will satisfy you. It is not possible to have only a negative feeling. If you don't like something, you like the opposite of it. You find out what it is that you don't like. The opposite of it is what you like. There is no difficulty. If you don't like the hot sun, it means you like the cold wind.

TOTAL THINKING

Swamiji: You must be careful in thinking what is the soul of the universe. The soul is as large as the whole universe. It is not a tiny tot sitting somewhere inside. Your soul is not in one place. The entire body is charged with the soul. That's why you feel everything is I. This is me, this is me, this is me – everything is me only. Everything is me because the soul is charging every cell of my body. The whole thing is soul only. Like a wire being charged by electricity, the entire thing, every particle of wire is charged by electricity, and it becomes electricity only. So the soul of the universe is not sitting inside the universe. It is one with the universe. Unless it is one with the universe, it cannot know the universe. The thing that is totally outside the consciousness cannot be seen. There is no connecting link between them. The observer and the observed coalesce at that time, and coalesce in a very important sense because of the non-externality of that object, and so the soul is immanent and it is also non-external. It does not see something as we see. We see a wall, but the soul sees itself only. The whole cosmos is inundated by us, and we are the universe itself. We have merged into that all-comprehensive, perceptive consciousness.

We have to again be careful here. The moment we talk of perception, we think it is seeing something. That perception is not sensory perception, not even intellectual. It is being itself knowing being. The soul is being, it is not a thing. The world may look like a thing, but the soul is not a thing. Suddenly you feel like this by a force of imagination. You are rocketed up to the centre of the universe. Or, to give a more easy technique, the whole universe originated from some indescribable occurrence called the Big Bang. You feel that you are above that. You are sitting above that Big Bang, and what do you see at that time? You must be as large as what has taken place. You are not one individual looking at the whole universe. The idea of individuality and locality should be removed completely in meditation. You are not a localised individual, not even an individual at all.

Nowadays there are systems of physics which emphasise non-local existence. Things are not existing somewhere; they exist

everywhere because the universe is organic. It is like a living body. So you are not looking at the universe, you are the universe. Don't go on asserting that "I am meditating" and all that. It requires a little power of will. You are not meditating on that; the meditation has gone completely. You have become being itself. Being of what? Being of whatever is. You will feel a thrill inside at that time, a kind of something entering into you as if the whole sea is entering into you, the river feeling that the whole ocean has entered into it, or the whole world melting. It has melted down completely and it has gone inside. At that time you are not sitting and beholding it, you have also got melted down. When the world melts, you also melt. And what remains is for anyone to imagine.

And then you will feel a kind of freedom, a security and a filledness of existence, and a completeness, and a fearlessness, and an utter satisfaction that you have everything and nobody can take away what you have. This feeling will arise at that time even if it is a flash for a few seconds as it passes. Right thinking, even if it is entertained for a moment, will do good. The Bhagavadgita says that even a modicum of right thinking will protect you from great sorrow. It may be a modicum of right thinking – in one flash, in a second, you thought correctly – that will take care of you because in right thinking, you have touched God because God only can think rightly. Anyone who can think rightly in a cosmic sense touches an aspect of God, so immediately you are charged with that Being even if it is for a flash of a second. That is the meaning of the *shloka*. Even a little attempt to move towards it is a great achievement. You have not moved far; you are just attempting to move, but that is a blessing because immediately it will come in front of you.

It is wonderful to find time to think like this and to be feeling always secure and blissful. You are always blessed and secure. No difficulty can arise. You will always feel that you are filled with something. You will always feel the whole thing is filled inside. It is not empty. It is a solid mass of inclusiveness and filledness. This is my concept of meditation.

Visitor: I think this is, in concentrated form, the concept which you expose practically in all your works. Every page, I think, every sentence, you make this point, and as a student of your books I see

that written large on every page. Though it may look difficult, the central message, once you get it, you see that transparency in every word and every page, etc.

The problem, if I may take the liberty of mentioning to you, is that I am unable to put this into practice. I reflect upon it...

Swamiji: You have already put it into practice just now.

Visitor: I have been reflecting on this process as the only way of looking at things. I think it is very...

Swamiji: The only way of looking at things is to think all things at the same time. It should not be finite, partial thinking. You take into consideration everything at one stroke when you pass a judgment.

Visitor: Would it require a divine grace for you to get this ingrained in your system?

Swamiji: If divine grace has not been there, you would not even appreciate this idea. That you have the capacity to appreciate it shows...

Visitor: How do I intensify this struggle for...?

Swamiji: You must give it a little more time. Instead of getting up and going out, again you sit. You have taken lunch; don't get up and wash your hands and go away. After you have taken lunch, then sit. A few minutes is sufficient. You have taken your tea or coffee; don't run away from there. Sit. You have taken your dinner; don't get up. Sit there. Even one minute, even half a minute is sufficient to charge yourself.

It is difficult to contact untruth, but it is not difficult to contact truth. It doesn't require time because truth is timeless. It doesn't take time to contact truth, but you take years to contact untruth. Truth is your nature, so what is the difficulty in contacting it? You are contacting yourself only. It is your basic nature, and you don't require time for that. You don't require time to exist.

Visitor: Something more is to break the barrier. The reason why I persist in saying this, Swamiji, is not out of impertinence but the feeling that I think the thing you have now talked about, I think I can reproduce that word to word of what you said, intellectual talks,

and I see this as the essence of Advaita and the reading of this, and I do think about it every day some time, saying, “How do I achieve something now?”

Swamiji: Is there not at any time in the day, even a few minutes, that you will not be disturbed by any other thought? Are you always busy?

Visitor: Every day this thought occurs to me, and every day I reflect upon it. This is the point I’m making. In fact, there is not a single day that at some point or the other I’m not trying to think about this. I am constantly thinking of that. But somewhere, passing into that sort of phase, as it were, so that you sort of dwell deep into it, that is not coming about. Intellectually it appears convincing.

Swamiji: The intellect has to get identified with it. You are not the intellect. You are being.

Visitor: True. Now, from that stage, the transition period now, I do understand that all that has to be done.

Swamiji: You see, when you feel that you are existing, it doesn’t mean that an intellect is existing. You are something more than that.

Visitor: I think I have not communicated properly. I have understood. I think that you need to think in terms of oneness, you need to think in terms of raising the relationship between subject-object, etc., and you need to think of yourself being the whole thing. All that I do understand logically. Though people say it is through spiritual flights that one arrives at this, I think it is very logical to come to that conclusion. From one step to another step, it does lead to that necessarily because if you believe in a higher principle, everything else of what you said I think should necessarily follow from that principle. That part I know. But to erase the differences that one normally sees in things, you need something more.

Swamiji: What you see will become part of that which you are contemplating.

Visitor: How? What do I do? That is the reason why I am...

Swamiji: That which you are contemplating on includes that which you are thinking as some existing object. Even your office is inside

it.

Visitor: True. I realise that. Intellectually I said very convincingly, logically I believe it. What do I do to make it further...?

Swamiji: Your feeling should accept it, not merely your intellect.

Visitor: So what do I do to make that feeling accept this so that it will...?

Swamiji: You will treat everything as you are treating yourself. You will apply a law to anything in the world as you would apply...

Visitor: Something more I should do. That is the missing link and why I remain incomplete in the sense I am unable to get into that zone yet. Something is...

Swamiji: If you give a little time, you will go into it. You are not able to find time for it. You think for a few minutes, and then you go away for some other work. It needs a little more time. Though you may be sitting for five minutes, it must be done several times. Even in the office, put the pen down – what is there? You need not go on writing throughout. For one minute you put the pen down, take a breath, then start the work.

Another visitor: I do yoga, Swamiji, in the morning every day, and then I do meditation for five minutes. After that I feel much better. In the evenings also I do it with my father sometimes.

Swamiji: You feel secure.

Visitor: Yes, very much.

First visitor: I feel secure, but there is a higher principle.

Swamiji: You are always under the protection of something.

Visitor: So therefore, that feeling is there. I know that there is something higher, and therefore, I feel secure, and this is not disheartening. That much, I don't believe I have any...

Swamiji: If you are friendly with the security forces, they will protect you.

Visitor: That part I must honestly admit to. I feel totally secure, and I believe, I think it is something more than believe, that there is a

higher principle.

Swamiji: You see, throughout your career in this world you would have noticed you have received abundant blessing at every level of your life, if you carefully go through it.

Visitor: I am very conscious of this. I am very conscious of the divine grace.

Swamiji: At every level of your life, you have received blessing.

Visitor: The only thing is, how do I elevate myself further up? This is the only question that remains. I know that there is a divine grace, there is Guru's grace, there is grace of the... Therefore, what do I do further? I know that the divine grace is flowing through me and, therefore, whatever little I am able to do is on account of that. On that absolutely I have no... That brings me back to you, Swamiji. But there is something which I have still to do, and that is why my yearning to come to you and sit with you longer, spend more time with you, so that something...

Swamiji: If you are at it sincerely, it will come to you certainly. It is the only thing that will come to you quickly, and even a brother cannot come to you so quickly as this. Even your brother is far away, but this is not far away. It simply wants a summon, and it is there.

Visitor: I feel greatly reassured by these sessions, Swamiji. I do feel very close to the higher principle when I am with you.

Swamiji: This requires a little meditation. You have to find time to be yourself, and not always something other than what you are.

THE FEAR OF DEATH

A visitor: What is the meaning of death?

Swamiji: Birth involves death, and death involves birth. This is the process of evolution. Nothing can grow into a new, improved condition unless the previous, incomplete condition is cast off; otherwise, the incomplete condition will persist. A man who was a monkey, perhaps, once upon a time, will not continue to have a tail even after he becomes a professor in Harvard, so you drop the tail when the time comes.

Becoming a human being is not the final aim of life. There are an endless number of human beings. Everybody who walks with two feet and speaks some language is considered as a human being, but that is not so. There are cannibal human beings. They are also human beings, but they can behave like cannibals. There are others who are not cannibals, but very selfish people. They will see what is good for them, whether or not it is good for you. They are better than cannibals, but they will not care for you. There are still higher people who will do to tit for tat. Whatever you do to me, I will do to you. They are a little more improved type of people. They will not do you harm unnecessarily, unless you try to harm them. Then there are other people who will not do harm at all, even if you behave badly. After that is the saint, after that is the sage, after that is the Godman, after that is God Himself. I have told you everything. Be happy.

Visitor: I work with people with AIDS. Sometimes they are young people who are facing death, and they are very frightened. What is the mantra to remove the fear of death?

Swamiji: Frightened of what?

Visitor: Frightened of dying, Swamiji.

Swamiji: Nobody likes to die, and no mantra can prevent you from dying.

Visitor: Not from dying, Swamiji, but to relieve some of the anxiety.

Swamiji: You mean some mantra to keep your mind prepared for

that eventuality without taking it as a kind of surprise? Do you know that any day anyone can go? Do you believe that anyone can go any day?

Visitor: Yes, Swamiji.

Swamiji: No, you don't believe it; otherwise, you cannot sit quiet here for one minute because of the fright. Nobody will accept that today is their last day. Nobody will accept that. Why does this feeling of continuity – I will be here tomorrow or even for another fifty years – how does this idea persist in a person's mind in spite of it being contrary to fact? That persistence of the love for life and a so-called assurance that we are not going to die so easily arises on account of eternity masquerading in yourself. There is eternity working through you. It says you should not die. How can eternity die? What you call the soul or the Atman is another name for eternity. The eternity that is powerfully stationed in you makes you feel that you are not going to die like that. "I will not die for another twenty-five years. I am perfectly okay." Who tells you that? It is the eternity that tells you. But there is another side, which is your physical psychobiological personality, which tells you every day, "Be careful. So many have gone, and you are not going to be saved." This is the phenomenal side of your life. The noumenal, eternal side tells you, "Don't be worried about that. You are not going to die so easily. It will take many years. Be comfortable." But the phenomenal side, which is physical, psychological, says, "Every day people are going. My fate will also come." So there is a conflict of feeling operating in everyone: It is dangerous to believe we can live long, yet that belief that we shall live long continues. God is playing a magic trick with you by putting two contradictory ideas in your mind. He is a very good magician.

Anyway, if your mind is really, to an appreciable extent, united with God Almighty – I don't say 100%, that is very difficult – if to an appreciable extent at least your soul is really united with the Supreme Being, that great Presence will tell you inside that you are not going to be destroyed, that you are only going to be transformed into a better being. Death is a preparation for a better life. It is not a curse. It is an inviolable necessity of the process of the evolution of the universe, but because of a terrible attachment that the mind has

with this body, it believes that death is an annihilation of everything. Annihilation is the worst thing, but death is not an annihilation. It is a transformation, but nobody will accept it because so much of godliness cannot easily enter into people's minds, and perhaps even the so-called pain of death may be diminished to the extent your soul is in union with God; otherwise, it will be agony. People suffer when they die.

So it is incumbent on the part of every person to receive God at any moment of time, which means, in other words, to be prepared to leave this world at any time. The more you belong to God, the less you belong to this world. The more does God want you, the less the world wants you. This is a very important thing. The more the world wants you, perhaps the less God wants you. Be careful. This is a great philosophy, and a great religious and spiritual instruction, and if you are united in your heart of hearts with that universal heart of the whole cosmos, without which you could not even breathe, then it will free you from the fear of death. Okay?

Visitor: Thank you.

Another visitor: Someone lost his wife and child because of eating poisonous mushrooms, and it happened very suddenly. Now a lot of people advocate that one should forget, while in our thoughts we feel that forgetting such a powerful event would be...

Swamiji: You need not forget that powerful event, but you should take it philosophically. I don't say you can forget a thing that you have lost and cannot recover. You cannot forget it, but you should know how to take it. As a person who is well qualified and educated and wise in this world, how you will take it?

Whatever is in our hand, we have to do, and we have to do it to the best of our ability. The rest is left to God because you cannot do more than the best. If you are sure that you have done the best possible, beyond that best how can you do? So there are certain things that are beyond us, and they have to be taken philosophically, as they call it, trusting in the law of the universe. There is an Indian law, American law, social law, political law, all types of law. There is also a universal law. You don't believe in that. The entire history of humanity is controlled by another universal history, of which we

have no knowledge at all. The procession of events in the world, which we call human history, are processions of events in the cosmos. These processions in the cosmos sweep empires, and the whole of mankind can be swept by that process of universal procession. Centuries-old strong empires can go to dust in one minute if the wind of the cosmos blows in another direction.

In the Mahabharata there is a wise saying: Our relationships and our bereavement is something like two logs of wood meeting on the surface of the ocean. If the wind blows in one direction, two logs of wood meet together, and immediately they feel very happy; they are friends. They live together, but only on account of a wind that blows in one direction. The wind can blow in another direction and they will be separated, and then there is bereavement. So neither the coming nor the going is in your hand. It is the operation of the wind that blows from the cosmos, into which mystery we have to get initiated one day or the other.

It is not enough if you are a citizen of one country; you have to be a citizen of the whole universe, which is a greater fact than being a national of any particular country. The universe does not care for human nationality. It doesn't exist for it. It has got its own way of thinking. It decides what is to be done, and it will be done in the manner it has decided, whether you like it or not. It is up to you to keep cooperating with it, to understand its ways. It is the way of taking it philosophically; otherwise, it will be like crying over spilt milk. Milk has gone, and you are crying that it has gone. It is necessary that you should live like a world citizen. You are a citizen of the solar system. The sun is your father, the planets are your brothers.

Visitor: Swamiji, twenty years ago I had a very powerful experience, a near-death experience. I had no knowledge about reincarnation, and in that instant I started believing from my gut about what you have said.

Swamiji: You had some inspiration.

Visitor: I had some experience, and I was pushed into the inspiration.

Swamiji: Sometimes nature starts working suddenly, and enlightens you in her own way. If you do not voluntarily try to understand, you

will be forced to understand another way of thinking.

SOCIAL WORK

A visitor: How should I do social work?

Swamiji: Unless you are very clear about the mentality of people, you should not interfere with them. There are tribal people, tribals. They have their own traditions and beliefs. They have got their own gods, and you, as an educated young man, may think that they are stupid people worshipping stones and trees, pebbles and leaves, and all that, so you try to reform them into a better reasoning. Do you know what will happen to you if you do that? You will be finished totally. They will drive you out. They don't want your higher religion. They want the tree only.

There was a swami in a far off, remote village in Uttar Pradesh where only tribals stay. He wanted to do good to them, to reform them, but how do you reform a person who does not want your admonitions? So they killed that man.

Never open your mouth before any person until you know who that person is and what the requirement of that person is. You must speak only on that subject which is the actual requirement of that person in that condition. He may be sick, he may be having injury, he may be hungry, he may be having family problems. Each one is important, but you should not touch something else. You must be wise enough to touch only that subject which is according to their knowledge. Then you will succeed. But if you go too far, to the extreme of information, you will be crucified, as they did to Christ. So don't do too much social work. Be careful.

There are no people in the world who can tolerate everything. Everybody will tolerate something, but nobody can tolerate everything. Do you understand me? So be careful. Everybody has his own or her own prestige, self-respect. If you interfere with the prestige or self-respect of a person, you are done for at that moment. Your intention may be very good, and you may be a very highly qualified person, a great psychologist, psychoanalyst, and you want to improve the person, but that person does not want your interference under that condition.

A doctor should also be a good psychologist, and also he must

be a lover of God. You must first be a lover of God and a very good psychologist capable of understanding the minds of people; then you do service. Then people will bless you and God will bless you.

Another visitor: I want liberation.

Swamiji: What is liberation? What do you mean by that? This requires great education. Everybody here is educated, but this is all foolish education. It is enough to help you get your daily meal, get some salary, and so on, but such questions as what you want to do actually, you cannot answer. Not even the most learned man can answer these questions. He will fumble and talk nonsense finally. You said you want to liberate yourself. That means you want to be free from something. Free from what? What is it that is troubling you so that you want to be free from that?

Visitor: Birth.

Swamiji: In what way has birth caused you trouble? How has it caused you trouble? You are living a very happy family life, so how has birth caused trouble to you?

Visitor: That is not a permanent thing.

Swamiji: You want the same life again and again, permanently? Suppose it is assured that in every life you will get the same family. Can you call it permanent? Your ideas must be clear first. Simply you are using some words such as ‘permanent’, ‘freedom’, ‘bondage’, ‘liberation’, and so on, without knowing the meaning of these words.

You have asked me a question, “What happens after liberation?” This question will stun God Himself. God will be afraid to answer these questions. You are asking, “What happens after you come to me?” You are asking the question, “What happens to me when I reach God?” This is what you are asking, isn’t it? According to you, what will happen?

Visitor: I feel that person will not be there at all.

Swamiji: You will not be existing? Then what will happen to your family at that time? It will not exist? Or will it come with you to liberation?

Visitor: I don’t know.

Swamiji: You have studied so much, come and seen people like us in the ashram so many times, learned so much. Actually, you are asking a stupid question. How is it possible that such a question arises? The question that you have asked me is stupid because after liberation nothing happens. If you want something to happen even after that, that means you are not liberated, so you are caught by your statement itself. The idea of happening is an idea arising out of the perception of the world. If the world does not exist, the idea of happening will not arise; and if the world is absorbed into God, the question “What happens?” will not arise because happening is an event which takes place in the world of time, which is this world, and when the time process is transcended, there will be no happening. So how the question will come, “What will happen? Where will I be?” These two questions arise because you are seeing the world. When you have gone beyond the world, you will not be somewhere, and you will not be at some place or some time.

If God sees you, what will He tell you? Suppose God sees you one day; what do you expect from Him? What do you want from Him, actually? Suppose God suddenly appears. What will you say? What will you ask Him?

Visitor: I don't want anything.

Swamiji: When you don't want anything, you don't want God also. Or you want nothing except God? Where is God? According to you, where is He?

Visitor: Everywhere.

Swamiji: Then where are you sitting?

Visitor: In His lap.

Swamiji: He has no lap, unfortunately. [laughter]

Visitor: Then I don't know, just as a child doesn't know.

Swamiji: If you say that God is everywhere, then it follows that you are nowhere. It automatically follows. Would you like to be nowhere? Or would you like to be somewhere?

The mind has to get purified still further to understand this question. You have used the word ‘I’ so many times, which has no

meaning, really speaking. About which I are you speaking? Whose I is it? Is it your I, or somebody else's I? Why did you use that word I? Everybody has an I, so which I are you talking about?

It is better not to talk about liberation. You should not use such words. Ideas which are beyond human thought should not be thrust into the mind; otherwise, the mind will go crazy. This is what happens if you are too wise. Too much knowledge also is no good.

When you attain liberation you will be everywhere, and you will be everything, and you will not be there – only That which I cannot express through my words, because anything that is said about it is meaningless. Human language cannot express it. You can be happy that everything will be all right with you. I will give you a simple answer. “After liberation, what will happen to me?” you asked me. My answer is: Everything will be all right with you. You will have no problems.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

A visitor: What is the purpose of life?

Swamiji: The purpose of life is to achieve perfection, and nobody in the world is perfect. There is imperfection everywhere. You feel you are one among the many, and the existence of other things delimits your freedom. You cannot be 100% free as long as there are other people who also want that freedom. So you are located in one place; and getting tied up to one location, one place, is a consciousness of finitude. You are one among the many, but are not everything. Finally, if you analyse yourself carefully, the wish of everyone is to be so complete that nothing outside could interfere with that perfection. But there is no such thing which will not be interfered with by somebody else. So it finally takes you to the relationship between you and the world. The world is limiting you, and you cannot have mastery over the world. The world seems to be too big for you because it existed even before you were born. So here is a very important point. A thing that existed even before you were born controls you, and then everything that is in the world also is the controlling factor, so that you feel utterly helpless in this big ocean of unintelligible vastness of the world. Neither can you have any say about other people, nor can you have any say about the world. This question arises because you do not know your relationship with other people, and also you do not know your relationship with the world.

Now, you must know in what way you are connected with the world. If you say “I have no connection with the world” then you cannot live in the world, and if you say “I have no connection with other people” then also you cannot live in the world. You have got a vital connection with everybody in the world, and you have a vital connection with the natural world also. It is up to you to find out what kind of relationship it is. This is not a matter to be discussed casually in a few minutes. It is a deep, profound secret of life. A lot of study, a lot of analysis, a lot of deep thinking, and what you call meditation are necessary.

To clinch the matter without going into great detail, the purpose

of life is to come in contact with that which has projected this world, projected you, and projected other people. We are all effects of a cause. The world is changing. People are changing. You are changing. The entire atmosphere is in the state of transition because everything changes. That change can be directed towards something transcendent, which itself is not changing. That Changeless Being is transcendent. It is above the world, above other people, above yourself. It is all-pervading inclusiveness of perfection. This is what religion calls God. You may call that by any name: the Universal, Ultimate Existence. It is the cause of the whole world, the cause of everybody, the cause of you, so that everything seems to be a bundle of effects with transition characterising everything. Nothing is static. Everything is moving. You have grown from childhood to an adult, and everything moves, moves, moves, moves, which they call evolution. The whole universe is moving, but moving towards what? It is moving towards that which itself does not move. That is the aim of life, the purpose, and I cannot give a long answer to you now. You be satisfied with this for the time being.

Another visitor: Physics has come to an end where it sees consciousness as a part of...

Swamiji: Physics is coming to that conclusion that life is made of consciousness. All right, let us take it for granted that life is consciousness. So what happens after knowing this? After knowing that life is consciousness, what impact does this have on our daily life? How does it help your daily life? Having known this great truth, in what way has it changed your pattern of life practically?

Visitor: It impacts me in two big ways. One is, I feel I must have an experience of, or study or understand consciousness and spiritual life. The other is, I must make others see this also.

Swamiji: What you are saying to me is an object of deep meditation. Life is consciousness is another way of saying the whole universe is consciousness. It comes to that. And if the whole universe is consciousness, there is nothing else to think of in the mind because you cannot think anything outside consciousness, outside the universe. When you cannot think anything outside the universe, then all your problems are solved in one minute. So when you deeply

contemplate this matter, it is like the whole universe contemplating that it is consciousness. Can you do meditation like this: The whole universe is consciousness, and it is contemplating on itself in this way, and you are also a part of it. So the whole universe is a glowing light of perfection, absolute consciousness. It is wonderful to hear this. If your heart has accepted this, you become a superman almost. You will not be a human being afterwards. Then you will have such strength that you may help others, or whatever it is. First of all, make yourself perfect, then you can make others perfect.

Another visitor: I have a sincere desire to grow and to help others grow in the knowledge of the Self, and also spread spiritual values.

Swamiji: You have used the words “knowledge of the self”. What are the characteristics of a person who has knowledge of the self?

Visitor: Peace.

Swamiji: Everybody here has peace. There is nobody without peace, but still they are not having Self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is different from peace. It is another thing. Spirituality does not mean peace. It is something more than that.

Visitor: Freedom.

Swamiji: It is much more than that. No word can explain it.

Another visitor: I have a doubt about whether I am Self-realised or not.

Swamiji: Nobody can be realised in this birth so easily. Only you are preparing for it. If God is kind enough, He can liberate you in this birth or He may do it next birth. You should never ask for anything from God. If you ask for anything, it will be an obstacle for your Self-realisation because asking is a mental action, and the mind is always against spiritual progress. So you should only meditate on the greatness and glory and all-pervading nature of God, and never ask for anything. Then you will progress. Meditation does not mean asking, expectation. Neither expect anything nor ask anything. You don't ask the sun every day: “Please come up and give light to me.” You need not say that. It will be automatically done. So if you live a regulated life, you will maintain health. Similarly, if you regulatedly

think without interfering with the fruit of the action that you are performing... The whole Bhagavadgita is this teaching: You do your duty, but never ask. Then it becomes an interference. Then you will succeed. Your thoughts should be only of God or mantra, but never expect anything. Then you will progress.

EVERYTHING IS CONSCIOUSNESS

A visitor: This building is made of consciousness.

Swamiji: I agree. This building is made of consciousness, it is not made of bricks. Bricks do not exist. There are no such things as bricks. There is no such thing as anything except the flood of consciousness which looks like persons, things, trees, bank balance, America, India, man, woman, this, that. They are all a dramatic pageantry presented in the theatre of the cosmos by the great director, which is consciousness, which is also the audience of the drama. The theatre is made of consciousness, the audience is made of consciousness, the actors also are consciousness. So what do you say? The actors, the theatre and the audience are all consciousness. Can you make out any sense of it? If you can make any sense out of it, then you shall have no problem in your life. If you cannot make any sense out of it, it is high time that you try to make sense out of it. These are all serious matters. Your destiny is in your hand. You should not sleep over these things.

All our ideas are nonsense finally because we are looking at things through a wrong instrument, and so it gives us a wrong picture. This is a matter which requires great meditation. The only duty in life is meditation, and all other great busy activities in which you are engaged are wrongly conceived as totally different from meditation. You are thinking that meditation is one thing, work and activity are another thing, and engagement in the world of business is a third thing. Nothing of the kind. All these things – factory, business, railway station, bus stand, and all your activities, everything – is a tremendous wave of the ocean of consciousness which includes yourself and myself, everybody and everything. If you can meditate on this vast ocean of consciousness which is dashing through its waves in all the forms of the persons seated here and all the things that you can conceive, you will simply melt into the liquid of the Absolute.

Another visitor: In your book on the Bhagavadgita, you write that Om is not just a symbol but the thing itself, so that it is universal being or limitless being.

Swamiji: Is your name identical with you are not?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Your name is not what you are because that name has no meaning if other people are not there in the world. So the name is not necessary. You shed the name, and shed the form also, and see what comes afterwards.

Another visitor: I want to make everybody happy.

Swamiji: In what manner can you satisfy God's ordinance? Now we are satisfying human ordinance. You want to make everybody happy by your good nature and service. Let millions and millions of people be happy due to your wonderful work, but the Creator also should be happy. Your heart will tell you whether the Creator is happy with you or not. The heart is the representation of the Almighty God. He has kept an ambassador in your heart. He will tell you what God is thinking. That is called the conscience.

If this point is missed by any sadhaka or spiritual seeker, he will be only engaged in certain activity. Sometimes sadhana may also take the form of activity, but meditation is not activity. It is the sinking of the soul into itself.

Very few people will talk to you like this. They will always pamper you and praise you and give you everything that you need, but what you need is not people's grace. You do not require people's grace. You are not alive due to people's grace, though it may look like that. You are alive by the grace of somebody else, Who has sent you here, etc. etc. So whatever has made you important is the blessing that you have already received from God, and it is your duty to keep Him in a good mood always. Do you know the art of keeping God in a good mood?

Visitor: Love.

Swamiji: Here is the whole thing. How would you love that Being that is all enveloping the entire space and time?

Visitor: By loving His creation.

Swamiji: No. He is more than the creation. The architect is greater than the structure that he has built. The poet is greater than the poem

that he has written. The doctor is greater than the surgery that he has performed. You are a greater man than the work that you have done because your greatness manifests itself in the surgery that you are conducting. So God is a transcendent being who manifests Himself in the form of creation.

But even if you think it is creation as a whole, can you know the vastness of creation, how vast it is? What is the length and breadth of creation? It encompasses the entire space-time complex. How will you love that? It is possible to do that. If you can do that, your heart will melt into the liquid of the whole universe, and you will be a spark of the Absolute scintillating here. Difficult it is to conceive this. Nobody will talk to you like this, and nobody will help you in thinking like this because people are busy. It is a great virtue nowadays to be busy, and if a man is not busy he is a useless fellow. But you must be busy with that which is going to be your final succour. When everything goes, something remains. A time will come in the life of everybody when everything goes. That will happen to a person at any time, but definitely at the time of passing from this world. That is the final test of the greatness of a person. When a person passes away from this world, how much greatness does he carry with him? Will he go like an industrialist or a millionaire or a big authority in the government? In what capacity will a person leave? That is your real worth. That which remains as the sediment of your personality at the time of your leaving this body, what you are at the time, that is really what you are.

Now, even before that event takes place, we can close our eyes and think: "What is my status?" You must sit alone and think: "What is my real importance?" Let the thought go inside. Do you think you are a very important, great person? Does that answer come from inside or not? Even if you feel that you are a very important, great person, what are the reasons for your feeling like that? What is the greatness that you have got? But if you feel that: "I am a poor little thing, finally. I cannot take even this body with me, let alone the possessions of this body. I will take myself." Who is this "myself" that is going? That is the quintessence of what you are.

Close your eyes. Feel the presence of that Great Being which is looking at you with infinite eyes. It knows how many times you

wink. Your winks are counted, your hairs are counted, your breath is counted. There is no secret in you. Everything is known to the cosmic computerised system. The moment you think, it vibrates in the highest heavens in one second. In that context you think: “What is that Being thinking of me?” Your heart will tell you. He is sitting inside you and prompting you to think. He is working through His instrument, which is His own hand. In the Bhagavadgita it is said everywhere hands, everywhere feet, everywhere eyes, everywhere legs of that Being. So these hands I am seeing here are His hands. The legs are His, the eyes are His. If this vastness of perspective can take possession of you, you will walk on the road as a Cosmic Being. When you go for a walk, you will feel the whole universe is going with you, and you are perfectly in a state of sadhana. You need not sit in a closeted room or in a temple or anything. You are sitting in the temple of the universe; what other temple do you want? You are sitting just now in the temple of the universe, so why do you want another temple? The whole world will follow you when you walk on the road. Can you feel that majesty of such a possibility? You are a world citizen, a citizen of the galaxies, of all space and time – a mighty man, mighty because God has entered you. The great might of the Almighty, as we call it, has entered you, and you are like steel, such strength you have got in your spirit. You came as great, you live as great, and you go as great. Don’t humiliate yourself by saying “I am nobody”. If this confidence is in you, you will not come back to this world again. You will be absorbed into the Absolute. This is my little message for you.

THE MIND IS A PRESSURE POINT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Swamiji: There is no such thing as mind, really. It is only a concentrated pressure point of consciousness. When it is pressed concentratedly in one imagined location of space and time, it looks like mind. We call it mind because the moment it gets isolated from other such pressure points, it looks upon other points as objects of its own awareness. Everybody in the world, everything, is a pressure point. Every drop in the ocean is a drop in the ocean, but if the drop insists that it is a drop and is consciousness of itself as an isolated drop, it has to look upon other drops as objects, whereas the other drops are not objects. They are internally, organically blended together with the very substance of that which imagines that other drops are objects. This requires a deep analysis of the structure of the process of our thinking. It is not somebody thinking; the whole ocean is thinking in its diversified imagined form of drops. So the process is practically like waking from dream. In an instant, all the multifarious diversified phenomena experienced in dream ceases to be diversified and multifarious when it gets absorbed into the waking mind, which is the sea or the ocean behind these multifaceted drops that appear as dream objects. This requires deep affirmation of consciousness that it is so.

There is a story. A lion cub strayed away into a group of sheep. It was such a little cub that the shepherd took it as one of the sheep. Because of continuous association with the sheep, hearing their bleating and so on, this little cub also started bleating. Lions don't bleat. Their sound is quite different, but because of living with the sheep and the daily observation of what is around it, it thought it is one of them because it cannot see its own face and sees only the faces of the others. It went on like that, bleating. One day the real lion from the jungle happened to pass by, and he saw this little lion bleating like a lamb. He took it aside and said, "Do you know who you are?"

"Yes," said the cub, and it started bleating.

"Look at me. See my face. Do I look like a sheep?"

"You do not look like a sheep, but I am a sheep."

“Come on,” said the lion, and he took the little cub to a pool of water. “Look down. See your face. Does it look like my face?”

“Yes.”

“Then what made you think that you are a sheep? See what sound I make. You do like that.” He roared. “You are like me only, but you think you are a sheep.”

“Oh,” the cub said. So he had to meditate on being a lion now, when he previously thought he was a sheep. By practice, practice, he started roaring.

Likewise, we are thinking that we are sheep because we have strayed among the objects of sense. The lion of Guru or God must tell you, “You are like me only. Why are you looking at the sheep of the objects? Look at Me. Look at Ishvara, the great Creator, and you will find that He is not a sheep. You are also like me only. Roar!” He will say, “Now you are bleating. So you roar like God.” What do you say? This is a humorous story.

The whole point is that we have the inveterate habit, formed right from childhood, of being convinced that we are what we appear to be in a mirror, but it is not like that. The very consciousness of the finitude of a person is not possible unless there is a simultaneous awareness of something which is beyond the finite. You cannot know that you are limited unless hiddenly, impliedly, there is a consequence following that there is something which is not finite. The finite cannot know that it is finite unless there is something which is not finite. So your consciousness of the infinite is hidden behind your acceptance of being finite. This point is missed always. So the lion is behind, and you are thinking you are a sheep only. You cannot know that you are a finite, limited, localised individual unless there is something wider than this finite localised individual. The consciousness of finitude is not possible unless there is a hidden consciousness of the infinite, so it shows who you are. On that you meditate. The mind will melt into the ocean of consciousness. Keep it in mind.

A visitor: So the difference between mind and being disappears.

Swamiji: You give up the idea of mind. There is no such thing as mind. It is only a localised pressure of consciousness only.

Another visitor: It is not possible to emulate the life of Sri Krishna because we have not reached that stature as yet.

Swamiji: Suppose you are attempting to reach that state – everyone is to attempt to reach that state – then would you do that? There is an inherent conflict between the human way of thinking in its present empirical form and the ideology of the Absolute way of things. We are combining in our mind two things: the ideology of utter Universal perfection and the compulsion of the human way of thinking. Both are working in us. They do not always coincide because man cannot be God and God cannot be man. The whole problem is that. And yet we are trying to infuse godliness into the human nature and reverse human nature into God in the Incarnation. This applies to every Incarnation, whether it is Krishna, Rama, Jesus Christ, or anything; otherwise, you must simply say we are not supposed to meddle with these things.

Another visitor: I am worried about the future. I have experienced states of agony and fear, but not of anything in particular. It is just a state of darkness and depression.

Swamiji: Unless there is a source of fear, fear cannot be there, so you must find out the source. From which source does the fear come?

Visitor: Maybe it's not fear. Maybe it's a lack of energy. Sometimes I feel very strong and sometimes I feel very weak. I ask myself what I am missing.

Swamiji: Everybody has that question. Everyone is missing one's own self. Your self is not sitting here in this body. I am saying something which is quite different from what you are speaking. You are not sitting inside this body. That is a misconception arisen on account of psychobiological involvement. You are a centre of awareness. If awareness is absent, you are also absent. One who is not aware of oneself actually doesn't exist, so to exist is to be aware one is existing. Now, in what form are you existing? You are thinking that you are existing as a body, but it is not like that. Your awareness of your being in this physical body has, at the same time, a suspicious feeling that it is limited. You are a limited person, and nobody likes limitation of any kind. You want to exceed the

boundaries of limitation. The awareness of your existence is locked up within this body. That is an agony for this awareness, which otherwise they call a soul. What people generally call a soul is nothing but the awareness of your existence.

Now, you are aware, at the same time, of other people's existence also. That is the trouble. This awareness, to put it briefly, is a kind of consciousness. Consciousness cannot be locked up in one particular place. Now, very carefully you have to listen to what I am saying. If consciousness is limited to one particular location, it should know that it is locked up in that particular location, and it cannot know that it is locked up in a particular location unless it simultaneously knows there is something outside it. The consciousness cannot know that there is something outside it unless it has already broken the boundary of this body. So you are not actually inside your body. You have now, by this analysis, found out you are a little outside your body also.

Now, imagine that you have gone outside your body, and your existence has transcended the limitation of this physical body, because by this analysis you found it is impossible for the consciousness to be always aware of itself inside the body. All right, it has broken the boundaries, gone outside. To what extent has it gone outside? You cannot put any extent to it because the moment you say a limit is there, again it will be conscious of something beyond it. Likewise, you will go on extending your awareness until it reaches endlessness; finally, you will find your consciousness is an endless, all-pervading existence.

This is the trouble with everybody. It is not the trouble of any one person. The whole world is suffering with the agony of self-limitation and the fear of there being something else outside oneself. The greatest fear is the presence of another outside you, which you cannot tolerate because another can do anything to you. You have no control over another unless another becomes yourself by an extension of your own personality so that it gets absorbed into your being and that all-being becomes Total Being. Actually, this is called God-consciousness. I am leading you to what is called God-consciousness. You are inseparable from that Universal Being, which is said to be the Creator of this universe. Can you think like

this? This is meditation. Centralise yourself in this deep thought of your being, not a thought of a limited awareness, and then this fear will vanish.

SADHANA IS AN ENHANCEMENT OF BEING

Swamiji: Actions cannot take you to God – any action, no matter what it is. Actions have no connection. God is being, He is not becoming. He is called Being, not doing. We don't call God as the great Doing, we call Him as the great Being. We call God as Supreme Being, not as Supreme Doing. There is a difference; being and doing are different. What is the difference? We are thinking of doing only. The being has gone away.

You have to take many births to understand this. In one birth it won't come. There is the encrustation of wrong thinking right from childhood, and that encrustation has to go first. That is called purification.

A visitor: Very difficult.

Swamiji: If it had been so simple, there would be movement to God by all people. That is not taking place.

Your yoga should be a being, and not a doing. You must be something more than what you are by yoga. If you are the same person tomorrow as you are today, your doing has no meaning. Sadhana is not doing; it is an enhancement of being. This secret nobody knows.

Visitor: But then you do something.

Swamiji: No, it is not doing. You have not done anything to grow into an adult from a child. From a little baby you have grown into an adult. That is not doing anything. The being in itself has expanded into a more mature state. In every stage of development, your being expanded. You have not done anything. You have not put forth any effort to become an adult. It automatically takes place by nature's action.

Visitor: So automatically we come to God-realisation.

Swamiji: You must, first of all, have a clear idea of what God is. What is your idea of God? It is Universal Being. 'Being' means it is just existence, existence as such. That existence includes your existence, my existence, the existence of everybody, the existence

of even mountains and trees and rivers. It is Total Existence, a total existence with nothing outside it. Can you conceive in your mind Total Existence, outside which there is no existence? Because if there is an existence outside Total Existence, then that would not be total. It would be partial. Very difficult it is to conceive this. Total Existence includes every kind of existence, even a stone, even a particle of dust, space, time, cause, sun, moon, stars, everything. Everything goes into that Existence. That is God.

How you will think like that? How can the mind catch such a thing? If you can think like that even for one second, you are a blessed person. Even if for one second you can really appreciate this, you are a most blessed person. You will simply vibrate with a force which you cannot imagine in the world. If God enters you, do you know what will happen to you? It is Universality entering into particularity, if you want to put it in the philosophical style: Universality entering into particularity, the Total entering into a fraction or a part, the ocean entering into a drop. If the whole ocean enters a drop, there is no drop. It becomes ocean only. If the drop wants to become the ocean, what should it do? Should it do rituals, pujas, worship, going here, there, pilgrimage? Will the drop do that? It has only to sink down; that's all. The dimension of the drop gets enlarged into the dimension of the ocean. The drop does not have to move here and there; it is the ocean itself. Where will it go? No pilgrimage is necessary, no ritual. The drop does not do any puja to become the ocean; it has only to adjust its consciousness to "I am the ocean" and it becomes that. In one way, it is the easiest thing that you can do. Even to go to a marketplace you have to put forth effort, but to become God, no effort is necessary.

It is stunning to hear all these things. God is nearer to you than your throat. Your throat is a little far away, but God is nearer than that. But you cannot appreciate it. The mind is so cussed, and is taught wrong education right from the beginning. Right from childhood society has spoiled every individual by giving wrong education, telling wrong things right from the beginning: "This is you, this is not you," etc. You should think as God thinks at the time of creation, the Total Whole in which you are merging. All action goes into it. You will be simply thrilled. You will vibrate inside. You cannot

contain the thought if you are able to adjust your consciousness like this. It is a blessedness which you cannot imagine in the mind. One minute thinking like that is sufficient. You will shudder. The whole space enters into you; all time, sun, moon, stars will melt and go inside. What will happen to you? Think over that. That is called the Cosmic Form.

Because it is difficult to understand what it is, we have got analogies, like the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgita where Sri Krishna is said to have shown the Cosmic Form. Everything is inside that, everything. Even the one who beholds it is inside that. Such a wonder it is! That picture is drawn for us in the epic of the Mahabharata because we cannot think abstractly. The mind is poor, so this analogy has been given to help us think like this. Day and night you have to think like this. You have no other duty in the world. You cannot play jokes with God. It is a very serious matter.

PERFECTION

Swamiji: God is an all-inclusive Being, and love of God is an all-inclusive approach. It is an all-inclusive approach of the total person in the direction of the total Reality. Here is the essence of what you call religion, spirituality, yoga, and so on. If you are in it heart and soul, then you are the most blessed person on earth. So be happy.

A visitor: I want to be perfect, complete, unified, and I want to serve other people.

Swamiji: Even if a person has no illness, that person is to be considered as not perfect. A person need not be sick in order to be imperfect. Even a healthy person can be imperfect, for some other reason. It is not good to be sick. Therefore, the first step is to see that you do not have any inconveniencing sickness. If it is a minor thing, it does not matter. Everybody has some pain. But if it is a serious agony to you, you must take care of it first.

What do you want finally? What is your aim? Your aim cannot be to serve other people because that idea has not come to you if you are fully satisfied with life in this world. A person who is not satisfied with life in this world cannot satisfy other people, and nobody can say that one is fully satisfied with this world. There are insufficiencies everywhere. There is old age, and one day death will take place. A person will be annihilated completely. These are great problems for everybody, and the greatest imperfection is subjection to this kind of experience called old age and self-annihilation in death. If such a thing is ahead, any other thing you do is useless. You may do anything, but old age will pursue you, and one day it will finish you. So perfection does not mean living comfortably for some years. You must be always perfect. Do you believe in God?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Where is God?

Visitor: Within.

Swamiji: Do you believe God is the Creator of this world?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: God does not sit inside your heart and then create the world, so before He created you, He was certainly not inside your heart. So where was He when He created the world? That is the real God. Can you imagine what God would have been before He created the world? Where was God before He created the world?

Visitor: Infinite.

Swamiji: You have rightly described God. So you need not say He is inside you. It is not a good definition. He is infinite. The attainment or experience of this Infinite is ultimate perfection. Nothing else can be considered as ultimate perfection.

There is a thing called yoga practice, which means the art of adjustment of one's consciousness to the requirement of the nature of the Infinite. You can understand what the Infinite is. It is an all-pervading, inclusive, infinite, eternal, immortal perfection. Can your mind think like this: God Almighty, infinite, everywhere, in everything, including myself? There is such a being who is your father and mother, brother and sister, caretaker and everything. He is your ultimate resort. You came from Him and you will go back to Him. Your duty is to work hard in whatever way to reach Him, back to that pristine, great, glorious existence where you were once upon a time, and from where you came as a created being.

We started by discussing perfection. Nothing can be perfect except this kind of thought in your mind. If you can adjust your consciousness to that infinite compass of the most majestic God Almighty and think Him continuously for at least fifteen, twenty minutes or half an hour, your whole body will vibrate with a sense of rejoicing and a blessedness and a feeling of health entering into you. You will feel natural forces are cooperating with you. The sky and the sun and the moon and the stars, space-time, everything will start vibrating in harmony with your personality because they are the embodied forms of God.

You are in the midst of this great wonder. You are not living in a wretched world, as people think. You are in the midst of a great wonder, which is called God's creation. Accept that. Be happy that this is the thing. Everything is all right, and everything shall be all right in the future also. In the middle only you are suffering because you have not properly understood this truth. Now you are

awakening yourself to the great truth of the universal existence of God Almighty, who is the only thing worthwhile, and you have everything. In this manner if you go on meditating every day, you will be mentally happy, emotionally stable, and even physically healthy. This is sufficient for you. It will bless you. Do this practice.

In spite of the fact you have got hands and feet, nose, eyes, ears and so on, the difference between them does not in any way affect your conviction that you are one entity. You don't feel that you are a bundle of two eyes, ears, legs, a brain, and so on. You don't feel like that because of your self-identity with the very existence of these limbs. They have become you, and you don't consider them as parts of yourself. You say, "I am coming." You do not say that your legs are coming or your head is coming, irrespective of the fact your personality is made up of limbs. Millions of cells, one different from the other, constitute this body. Each one is different from the other, yet you do not feel you are a bundle of many cells.

This is an example to show how the universe is constructed. It is exactly as your body is. It is a total, universal, absolute, organic perfection. This tree and other things mentioned are all limbs of this total organic substance, and you are also a part of that. So if you want to think the cosmic Reality, the Ultimate Being, you have to raise the status of your consciousness to that level of comprehensiveness that everything that you apparently see with your eyes as an external object becomes part and parcel of your total organism.

This is, in a way, God thinking. If you can imagine how God is thinking, it is like this. God will never say that there are many people and things. There are no many things for Him. It is just 'I am what I am'. That 'I am' includes everything, and if you want to be one with that perfection – which is the aim of life, the aim of spirituality, the aim of religion, the aim of everything – if you want to become immortal, deathless, if you don't want to be reborn, if you want to attain the Almighty Lord, this practice should continue. You become one with everything, as God is one with everything.

Everything is controlled by one mind, and therefore, it is sensible to say only one person is working. Even all the activities going on through an infinite number of personalities in dream are not done by any one of them. The string-puller is somewhere thinking, and

all this dances here like a puppet show. Millions of puppets dance, and the string-puller pulls the strings. So it is perfectly correct that nobody does anything, and yet the foolish, outward-looking individual imagines that he is doing it.

A fly was sitting on the wheel of a moving cart, and so much dust was coming up. The fly was thinking, "See how much dust I am raising!" The dust was created by the wheel of the moving cart, but the fly who is sitting on the wheel thought that it was creating the dust.

PRANA AGNIHOTRA

An ashramite: If all our limbs are normal and healthy, we don't remember God. But if we catch cold, we start remembering.

Swamiji: You will not even know that the body exists.

Ashramite: Like that, Swamiji, when we are in harmony with God, but if we don't remember, are we in harmony with God or in remembrance of God?

Swamiji: You are in harmony with something else. That you must be careful about. Even harmony with your own personality also may bring you satisfaction, but that is not cosmic identity.

Ashramite: But no problems are there.

Swamiji: That is because by some freak you are feeling comfortable. Therefore, no problem comes. But some problem can come any time when the body is put out of order because of the disbalance between yourself and the cosmos. That the cosmos is tolerating you does not mean that it is always your friend. It can let you off for your mistakes, but it can give a kick also. So why do you wait for that occasion? Are you cosmically conscious always?

Ashramite: Not always.

Swamiji: Always you must be cosmically conscious. Why should you think that you are in one place? Again and again comes the same point: You are thinking that you are in one place. If everything is in one place only, then what is the situation of each one? If each one is in one place only, there is no connection of one thing with the other thing. That will be an impossible situation. Everything is connected to everything else.

Ashramite: Then even though we are in a normal condition...

Swamiji: How will you exist independently like that, without having connection with anybody else? You cannot even breathe without air from outside. You have not paid for it. You want water, you want air, you want heat. If the sun does not give heat, see what happens. So why not be in harmony with it? Why do you consider it as an object?

It requires a change of the thinking process. Things will flow into you. Otherwise, they will get repelled if you assert yourself.

Ashramite: Then, Swamiji, with volition we must remember God somehow or other, in all conditions.

Swamiji: You have to remember always your union with everybody and everything. *Yas tv etam evaṃ prādeśamātram abhivimānam ātmānaṃ vaiśvānaram upāste, sa sarveṣu lokeṣu sarveṣu bhūteṣu sarveṣv ātmasv annam atti*: If this Vaishvanara has entered you and you are thinking like the universal Vaishvanara, when you eat, the whole universe eats and every being eats, and every self anywhere eats. *Yatheha kshudhita balah mataram paryupasate; evam sarvani bhutani agnihotram upasate*: The food that you eat is an Agnihotra sacrifice. The whole world will be looking at you – When will he eat? – because when you eat, others are satisfied due to your union with them. Just as every limb of the body is happy because you eat through the stomach, everything else in the world will be happy if your existence is in union with the existence of everybody else. Your eating is a cosmic action. That is what is called Prana Agnihotra. The food is going into the *prana agni*. It requires a great alertness of mind. If for one minute you miss the point, you will slip down.

The building bricks of this body are the same as the building bricks of this cosmos. You are made up of the same substance as the substance which constitutes the whole universe. The earth principal, the water principle, the fire principal, or heat, the air that we breathe and the space inside are the same earth, water, fire, air and ether outside. Due to an egoistic assertion, an affirmation of unwarranted independence of our personality, the universal forces get segregated, and we cut ourselves off from the healing and the helping forces of the universe. We reject everything because of the egoism of our sense of independence. “I am independent; therefore, I don’t care for anybody.” If you tell this to the whole universe, it will tell the same thing to you.

Asserting one’s own individuality is the worst evil. We cannot exist even for a minute without the cooperation of the five elements. Where does air come from? Are we purchasing air from the market? From where does light come? From the sun. From where water comes? See, they are all free. The water is free, heat from the sun is

free, the air that we breathe is free. Suppose we have to pay tax for these things. Will we survive? And we don't care for them.

We require sunlight. We live in rooms which are closed from all sides, and use artificial lights, these fluorescent tubes. They are not good. I have seen in Delhi all people use fluorescent tubes. Even midday when the sun is blazing, the light will not enter the room. Inside it is chilly. Outside the sun is burning. The buildings are not built properly. They are not open to sunlight. So many confusions we create. We eat when we should not eat, and we do not sleep when we are supposed to sleep.

There are some old sayings: A person who eats the midday meal after twelve noon and keeps awake after twelve midnight, he will not be maintaining good health. You should not keep yourself awake after twelve midnight, and you should not eat after twelve noon. Because the sun's power goes on rising from morning till midday, you feel energetic in the forenoon and your energy declines in the afternoon. You feel like resting; you feel tired, and so on, but in the morning you won't feel like that. You feel fresh and energetic, and turn out more work from morning to midday. After noon you want to cut off all the work. So it is with food also. When the sun is up with energy pouring forth everywhere, at that time you eat food, not when the sun is going down. Your food also will go down, and it will not give energy. When the cells of the body require a rest after midnight, you should not go on working after midnight. So these are normal things.

And prejudice, hatred, evil, selfishness, a grabbing habit, condemning – these are the certain traits of the human being. We can never be all right with these traits. Why don't you be friendly with all people? Speak sweetly: "How are you? Can I be of any service to you?" If you utter these words, what do you lose? This is the greatest charity. People don't want money from you; they don't want anything from you. They want a good word: "Hello, how are you? Can I be of some service to you?" He will be highly pleased to hear these words. Though he doesn't want anything from you, these good words will sooth the whole system.

But people are so very miserable that they can't even use a good word. It is poverty of your speech; what about other things?

Selfishness has gone to the core of human nature. You don't like anybody. You like only this little frame. It cannot stand like that.

NINE OBSTACLES IN MEDITATION

Swamiji: It is the reaction that the mind is bringing about when you are trying to think in a manner which is not the normal way of thinking. The mind cannot think anything that is all-pervading. It thinks only of this little body: I want this, I will do this, I, I, I, I. You are living only this I, which is the body; now you are trying to think something different which is totally outside and beyond the body, and you are asserting it so much that the body trembles and it says, “No. What are you doing?” In meditation the mind, which wants to be only inside the body, is forced to think something beyond the body, so it is a clash between the higher thought and the lower thought. And the lower thought, which is connected to the body, trembles and creates digestive disorders, pains, fatigue.

Patanjali systematically mentions the troubles. The first is *vyadhi*, physical illness. You will find: “I cannot eat this. My stomach is going out of order.” When people go to Uttarkasi for meditation, the first thing is, they suffer with tummy upset, diarrhoea, etc. They cannot get medicine there, so they come here.

If you somehow overcome this discomfort of physical illness, then another thing starts. *Styana* means: “Okay, let it go. Today I will not do meditation. Tomorrow I will do it. I am tired today.” *Styana* means dullness. The mind becomes a little bit dull, and it cannot go on meditating every day. “Let it go. I have meditated for so many days. Today I will not do it.” This is a trick to stop the meditation.

Then comes *samshaya*, doubt: “Is this the correct way of thinking, this meditation? Buddha said something, Krishna said something, Yajnavalkya said something. Now, who is telling what? Which way should I follow? Nobody has seen God. Then what am I meditating on? I am meditating on something which nobody has seen, nobody can conceive. Where do I go after I die?” These questions come again and again.

Pramada means giving up the meditation itself: “It is not my concern. Finished! I have done so much; now let it go. It is not possible for me. I will go on pilgrimage; that’s all. I am very much tired. God will bless me. I will go on *tirth yatra*. I will go to Kathmandu and Rameswaram, have a tour and come back. Some

change is necessary.” Then meditation is gone. *Pramada* is this kind of thing.

Alasya means lethargy, sleep: “This is winter, a very uncomfortable time. When summer starts, regular meditation will start. This winter is not suitable. The cold is pinching, biting everywhere.” When summer starts: “It is so hot, horrible. It is not the time. We will see. When the rainy season starts, I will start.” When the rains come: “It is going on pouring, pouring. I can’t sit anywhere. When winter starts I will meditate.” Buddha says you go on saying this, and you will never meditate. Seasons come, seasons go, but you do nothing. Many tricks are there.

Avirati. Then suddenly, the whole thing will be upside down. The very thing that you disliked and gave up will come to you with double force. A desire which was small will become very big. You will want even small things. “You have got two pens? I think I’ll take one. Can I take it? I would like to have one.” This kind of desire also comes. “You have got two pens, and one I will take, Swamiji. I like it very much.” And sometimes they won’t even tell that. They just take it. This is called kleptomania. Kleptomania means stealing silly things – a pencil, a pen, and so on. Even a king’s son can be a kleptomaniac. *Avirati* means wanting the same thing in double and triple form, the very thing which you abandoned. That which you abandoned will come back with three times the force. Then people start building empires and ashrams, and have so many thousands of disciples, flying in airplanes everywhere and become a Mandaleshwar, a Mahamandaleshwar, triple, 108, 1008. Then meditation is finished. It is a kind of gluttony. This name and fame is also a kind of gluttony. You want to swallow everybody and eat everything. You swallow the fame of everybody else also, so that your fame is the greatest.

Then there is *bhrantidarshana*. You will think that already you have had the vision of God. Something you have felt; it may be a *bhranti*, but still you will think you had a vision. It is a trick of the mind again.

Then comes *alabdhabhumikatva*: You cannot fix the mind on the point. It will go on oscillating like this.

Then comes *anavasthitatva*: Even if you get the point, it will not

continue for more than one second.

These are the obstacles. Nine are there. And each one should know where one is standing. Sometimes all the nine will come, but generally they come one after the other. The mind is trying to take all measures to see that you don't succeed, all due to the attachment of the body. All this is due to that. Because you are counteracting attachment to the body, it says, "I will see to it. I will retaliate."

There must be extreme caution, extreme caution, as if you are walking on a single rope across the river. The rope is shaking, and on the one rope you have to walk. You must be so cautious; otherwise, you will drop into the water. How carefully you go! How carefully circus experts walk on a wire! On one single wire they will go, like this. If the concentration is missing, they will be down. Day and night you have to be meditating. It is not a one-hour meditation. Day and night there should be only this, like a person who has lost a great treasure. Day and night the person will be thinking of that only. He had a large treasure, and he has lost it. He can never forget that he has lost it. Whatever work he may be doing, he will remember, "I have lost so much."

A SADHANA TECHNIQUE

Swamiji: The thing that is here cannot say that it is somewhere else. It cannot say that because already it is convinced that it is inside only. There is something else which says that it is here and there. There is a consciousness which says, "I am inside this body." There is a consciousness which says "I am in some other body also." So the consciousness which says "I am in other bodies also" cannot be the same consciousness which says "I am in this body only". Do you understand? So that is another consciousness. It is the *adhyatma* which is saying, "I am in this body." And "I am not in that body," that is *adhibhuta*. *Adhibhuta* is the distinction I make: myself and yourself. That is why I use the word 'yourself'. I don't call you 'myself'.

Now, the one that says "I am not only in this but also in that" cannot be the thing which is inside the body because if it is inside the body, it will say it is only that. It cannot say anything more. So there is *adhibhuta* and *adhyatma*, and there is *adhidaiva*, the third consciousness, which is transcendent to both. It is like a triangle. *Adhyatma* and *adhibhuta* are at the base of the triangle, and at the top is *adhidaiva*, which sees both the *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta*, which means anything that is seen is included. Like that, you go on roving your consciousness.

For a moment you have gone out of your body. You are looking at your body just as you look at someone else's body. I am looking at you in the same way as I am looking at myself. He who looks at me cannot be me. He is different from me. That which looks at me cannot be myself because myself cannot look at myself. That thing which is not myself says that I am elsewhere also. 'Elsewhere' means 'in everything'. Therefore, only one person is everywhere: "Oh, I am everywhere. I am not only in this body. I am in the other body also."

It is impossible to easily remove consciousness from this body because so much attachment is there, but there is one easy way. Say, "All right, I am in this body, agreed." If you say you are not in this body, the body will not like to hear that, so you don't say that. Say you are in this body, but you are in the other body also. That will

give you some pleasure. “Okay. I am now a bigger person, not only in this body.” But don’t say you are not in this body because then it will revolt. Never make that mistake. Say you are in this body, but you are in that body also. “Okay, that is very good. I am happy now,” it will tell, “because I have become a bigger man by including the other man also. That person is with me. I am he. I am a very big man now. But I am still in the body. Whose body? Everybody’s body.” Now a new release takes place from this body.

Don’t close the eyes. Open the eyes. See yourself everywhere. Whom are you seeing? “I am seeing myself everywhere.” This is called Virat. I am asking you what it is thinking. It is thinking like this: I am seeing only myself everywhere. You go on telling this like a mantra: I am seeing everywhere myself. The Mandukyopanishad says that. All the hands and feet, all the heads, all the eyes, all the stomachs and all the brains are my brains. Not only this brain, but every brain is mine only. Every brain, every hand, every eye, every leg anywhere is mine. Even the insects, even the dogs, even the cows, even the bulls, even the elephants – their legs are my legs. I am moving like an elephant, I am moving like an insect, I am like a scorpion, I am like a horse, I am like a soldier, I am like a prime minister, I am like a king. I am like a father, I am like a son, I am like a daughter, I am like a mother. I am inside everything, and everywhere I am moving. *Sarvataḥ pāṇipādām* (B.G. 13.14): Everywhere eyes, everywhere legs, everywhere hands. “Oh, happy! I am everywhere and I am everything.” Don’t say you are not in the body; the body doesn’t like that sentence. Say you are everywhere, that you are in this body but you are in the other body also. Ask the body, “Are you happy?” It will say, “Oh yes. I am happy, of course, because I am becoming bigger. Why should I be only in this little body? Oh yes, I am everywhere. I am breathing through everybody’s nose; all the air is going inside me. Millions and millions of noses are breathing through me.” ‘Me’ means not this person. That idea must go away. Again and again the foolish idea will come, but you must free yourself from that. All the noses are breathing now. When I eat food, the whole universe is eating. Lord Krishna ate a little leaf from the vessel of Draupadi, and when he ate that leaf, the whole universe is eating, he said. He fed the whole universe with that

little leaf. When that leaf went into his body, it went into the whole universe, not only into his body. There is no 'his body'. Every body is his body only.

Go on thinking this every day, day and night – everywhere, everywhere, everywhere, me, me, me, me, I, I, I. That's all. Which I? Not this personal I. Remove this idea of personality. It is the I of everybody. Everybody's I, everything's I – even the trees' I, the stones' I, and the mountains' I, I am that I. The mountain is knowing that I am I. The mountain says, "I am here". But you are there also. That *adhidaiva* consciousness is telling this, not the *adhibhuta* or the *adhyatma*. *Adhyatma* means this personal I. *Adhibhuta* means he, she, it. You should not use the words 'I' and 'he', and so on. It is all a big, big body. The word 'I' is very tricky, and also dangerous, because it can mean anything. It can mean this body, and it can also mean the whole Universal Being. When you say you are everywhere, it means that the whole universe is thinking, so all the brains are yours only. There is only one brain because all the brains are melted together into one big brain of the whole universe. The whole universal brain is thinking. The whole universe is eating food, the whole universe is speaking. To whom am I speaking? I am speaking to myself only. To whom are you speaking? Myself. Oh, how happy. Oh, oh – go on doing like this. This is the Virat thinking. I am giving a sadhana technique.

Even in your quarrelling, you are quarrelling with yourself only, not with another person, because your consciousness is there also. When you quarrel, the phenomenal clashes with the noumenal, but when you know that the phenomenal is inside the noumenal, then it becomes calm. How can the waves dash against the ocean when the ocean is the waves and the waves are the ocean? A war is taking place between the waves. A huge wave comes and puts down the small wave. This is called battle, but it is happening within the body of this great mass of ocean. Similarly, war is taking place within the universe only. It is not somewhere in a field.

This is how the Virat thinks. There is great force, energy, great joy and confidence. Everything will be all right, finally. Say that has become all right. Do not say it will be all right; that is not a correct statement. Say that it is all right. It has become all right, and it is

all right. Everything is okay. Everything – there is no everything there. Only one thing is there; into that I entered, and everything has entered into me. The me has also gone. Something is thinking, thinking, thinking through all space, all time, everything. It is Pure Being. There is no thinking; it is only Being. Pure Being is Being. About Being, nobody can talk. Being is there, Being-Consciousness, Being, Total Being-Consciousness, Universal Being-Consciousness. Here I am sitting. Where am I sitting? I have no place to sit. There is no place to sit for Being. Being is Being; that's all. Take a deep breath. Oh, how happy! This is the great sadhana. So I have initiated you into a great mystery.

Ashramite: We should do that every day.

Swamiji: Every day, all day. The whole day you must think it. Even when you're walking, keep only this thought. There are no people outside. That idea must go away. You only are moving with other people. Very difficult, sir. Moksha is not easy. You must cry and weep. Every day you have to cry and weep why it is not coming, why this consciousness is wrongly thinking like this.