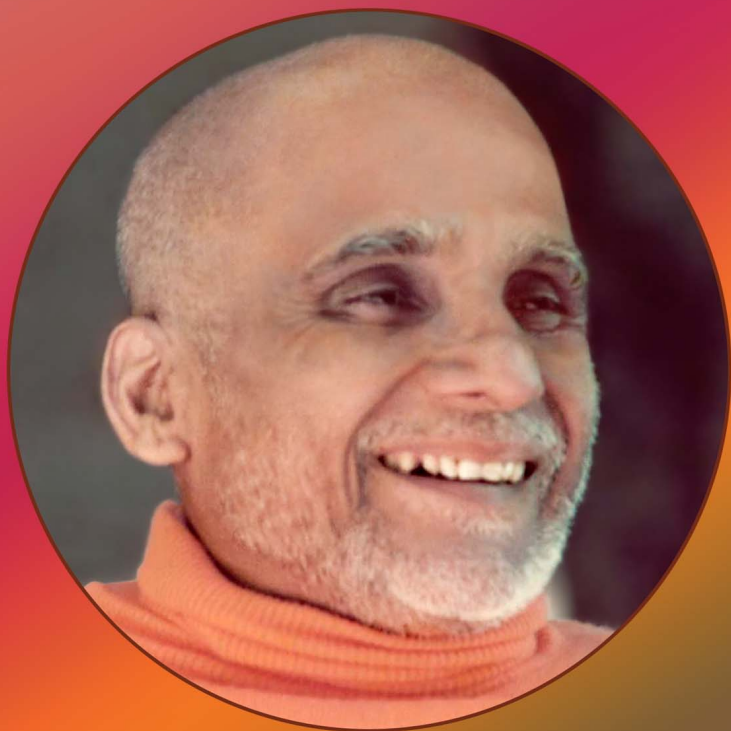


Darshan of Swami Krishnananda in 1997



**Sivananda Ashram
Rishikesh, India**

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

These are transcriptions of recordings of Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj's morning darshans with ashramites, guests and visitors during the year 1997. They are in chronological order.

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THE ESSENCE OF SPIRITUALITY

A visitor: ...two hour chanting and cleaning of the Siva *lingam*, and I think pouring milk on the Siva *lingam*, and then dressing it in flowers and crowning it, and it made me...

At first I did not understand the whole ceremony, but then it reminded me of what I read in the Bible about a king has been born, about Jesus and how... And it felt like first you clean the *lingam*, which is a purification. You cleaned it, and then when it was totally pure, you anointed it with milk, and then you dressed it up. And in the end, you were crowning it to king, and it felt like a big celebration.

Swamiji: You are treating it like a king. Yes. God is a king.

Visitor: Because this is not just important as something outside. It felt very much it had to do with me in my spiritual longing and in my journey, and it became... The last week I understood something which I never understood before, and it's about an old mythology, it's about the phoenix rising out of the ashes, and I had the feeling that this is very much the same thing...

Swamiji: It rises out of its own ashes.

Visitor: Yes, from nothing. From nothing, something new comes, something new rises, something that the world has never seen before.

Swamiji: We have all come from our own ashes, we ourselves. We are also the same thing. We were nothing once, and now we have become something, and therefore this something also is a nothing because its origin was nothing only. A very important point.

Okay, now what are you driving at finally?

Visitor: The driving at was not when I was born, but it feels like the spiritual transformation is actually this phoenix on account of that realisation.

Swamiji: Right, right.

Visitor: What to do with this?

Swamiji: Nothing. You have understood the whole thing, only you have to adore it and be happy.

There are one thousand ways of treating God as an adorable Being. You have to treat God as an adorable Being, and there are a hundred-thousand ways of adoring. You can adore a person in many ways: by good words, by giving a seat, by giving an offering, by dressing, by feeding, by making him rest. So many varieties are there by which you can satisfy a person. That is the technique they adopt for God also because God is considered as a Great Person, most adorable. He is the President of the universe. He is the Emperor of the universe. He is Himself the universe.

And if you can behold such a Being, what will happen to you? Suppose by chance you behold such a Being in front of you with millions of eyes everywhere looking at you, all-powerful, absorbing the whole universe into Itself, and immortal, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent. It is looking at you, what do you feel? That feeling is called devotion. It is impossible to imagine what you will feel at that time. You will simply start melting down. Your personality will melt down by the awe that you feel in front of that Majesty, which will be beautiful on one hand, majestic on another hand, and fearful on another side. You do not know how to encounter God. Is It a fearful, terrible force which you must be afraid of, or is It a most beautiful thing which you must go on looking at, or is It a very compassionate mother or father for you Whom you must hug? You do not know what to do with that God.

That multifaceted, indescribable feeling which arises at the time of beholding, or at least conceptualising that mighty Being, is the essence of spiritual life. Your heart simply gets churned completely, and you get transformed into a great purity which manifests itself. Even when I'm talking to you now and when you are listening to this, it is actually a purifying process going on. It is not simply chatting; it is not talking. It is a highly important thing I am telling, and something is happening to you now in your mind. You feel happy, wonderful: I am better now. Every minute you will feel, "I am better. I am purified. I am in the presence of the mighty sun which is blazing forth in front of me. I have no problem. It is looking at me. Only I have to love it, and it will love me. If such a thing loves me, I have no problem."

This is the essence of spirituality finally, and you can manifest

that spirituality by rituals, any kind of ritual: pouring ghee, milk, and whatever you said just now. Or they may not be necessary at all. You can do this in mind only. You can pour milk in mind, you can adore Him in mind, you can clothe Him in mind, you can talk to Him in mind. You must be in the state of ecstasy. That ecstasy you feel in that condition is the essence of spirituality. Everything else is unnecessary. This one thing that you feel in the conceptualisation of that Almighty, that answers all your questions, and you will not talk afterwards. Your mouth will be shut because of the happiness. The more you are spiritual, the less you will speak. You will be so much happy that you cannot speak afterwards, like a person who is going on drinking nectar and cannot speak afterwards. He is drowned in it.

You don't require to do anything; you have only to be something in the presence of That because when that Mighty Being is there, what can you do in front of It? You are flabbergasted at that time. You are simply paralysed. So you don't have to do any ritual for That. It does not want anything from you; It wants you only. It will say, "I want nothing from you. I want you." The whole thing will go, the whole thing, and you enter into it. That is the supreme blessedness.

This is meditation, this is spirituality, whatever you call it. So even this discussion is a blessed thing. I am also happy, you are also happy. Because I speak it, it is good. You are hearing it, it is also good.

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

Swamiji: [To a group of visitors] I am saying something to you about this Ashram. This is popularly known as Sivananda Ashram, after the name of the founder, Swami Sivananda. Officially, this is a registered body under an Act of the Government of India, and the official name of this otherwise-known Sivananda Ashram is The Divine Life Society. This is an organisation founded by a great spiritual master called Swami Sivananda.

To mention the least, I may tell you that he was a superman, not an ordinary human individual. His vision of life was cosmically oriented, not individually oriented. Whenever he spoke or he wrote or he gave advice, he did it from the point of view of the whole of creation of God Almighty. His view is an organic conception of the universe. The universe is to be regarded as the body of God Himself. It is an interconnected spiritual kingdom. You have heard the words 'kingdom of heaven' or 'kingdom of God'. You may say this is the kingdom of the Almighty All-pervading Being. Inasmuch as this Almighty is omnipresent, it is also inseparable from everything that is created. Yourself, myself and everybody are part and parcel of this cosmic cosmopolitan society, you may call it, which is headed by a Supreme Intelligence we call the Creator of the universe, Father in Heaven, Creator, Preserver, Destroyer, God Almighty, whatever name you may give to this mighty inclusive Being.

So Swami Sivananda, the founder of this institution, wanted to create a nucleus of activity in this place called Rishikesh, whereby people may come from outside and participate in a program of spiritual instruction, guidance and training—philosophically, spiritually, socially, and every point of view. His conception of the human being is multifaceted. A human being has many needs and requirements. Firstly, the soul of the human being requires its own spiritual diet. The spiritual diet spoken of here, in this connection, is the aspiration of the soul for unity with God. This aspiration is the diet of the soul. It requires it, and it cannot be happy unless this is provided. Whatever facility, comfort you may have in this world, if the hunger of the soul is not appeased, there will be restlessness everywhere individually, socially and politically.

First and foremost, therefore, is to see that the appetite of the soul for God, the hunger of the soul for the Supreme Being, should be cared for appropriately by adopting techniques of meditation. Meditation is the centralising of the soul of the human being in the Supreme Absolute. Apart from this, there is the psychophysical individuality of the human being. There is hunger, there is thirst, there is fatigue, there is illness, there is ignorance. All these have to be taken care of. Swami Sivananda provided for all these requirements of the human personality.

We have a large kitchen here, which feeds people. Any number of people come and take food here. There is a unique peculiarity in this Ashram, which is the large feeding of people. Usually we feed about 500 to 600 people every day in the Ashram. No charges; free food. If visitors come here, we do not charge anything from visitors—neither for lodging nor for boarding nor for water nor for electricity nor for instruction and training. Everything is provided free under the dispensation of the great founder, Swami Sivananda. This is why I said he is a very comprehensive, mighty man, a superman.

For treating illnesses of people, he has opened a hospital here which renders free medical aid. We have doctors, we have costly medicines we purchase and give free to people. We never charge money from patients. There is free food, free accommodation, free medical aid, and also free educational facilities to poor students, numbering about one thousand in a year. This facility also is provided.

This was originally a backward area of the mountains. This is not a very polished area. Now it is coming up politically, but previously it was backward. People are very poor. They cannot go to colleges and schools because there is no money. So Swami Sivananda instituted a system of financing the educational career of students who are poor. I mentioned to you, about one thousand students are financed. We spend about 4-5 lakhs. Five hundred thousand rupees we spend for education of these students. It is very interesting to hear that everything is free. We never charge for instruction, training, yoga asana, food, water, anything.

You will be wondering how we run the institution with giving everything free like that. This is the mighty thought of Swami

Sivananda. He says if God wants the institution to run, it will run. He believes fully perhaps in the great dictum of Jesus Christ: Ask and it shall be given. Knock and it shall be opened. Seek and you shall find it. See ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. In this sense he was a true Christian. He believed fully in this: If you seek the kingdom of God first and foremost, then all the facilities of life will follow automatically. He did not merely teach it; he believed it one hundred percent.

This is how I can say that this institution is running in a most unique, incomparable manner spiritually, educationally. Even politically this is a highly respected institution. The Government of India has a special soft corner for us because our accounts are so perfect, meticulous. Everything is clean, and people are happy to see our balance sheet, accounts, etc. When we submit to the Government our accounts, they simply marvel. They say, “Thousands of statements of accounts come to us from different parts of the country. Yours is the best.” They are so much pleased. You will be surprised; they don’t even want to see our accounts. They say, “It is The Divine Life Society, so it is okay. No problem, no problem.” And because of this appreciation of the great charitable activity of this Ashram, the government has exempted this Ashram from taxation. We never pay income tax, and so many other taxes are exempted.

This is just to mention to you the power of Swami Sivananda, the founder. He trusted in God hundred percent—hundred and one percent, I may say. He is a Godman, and we are humble followers of this great master. Thousands of people came here—came and went, came and went. About a dozen of us are still here for the last about fifty years, following his advice, and following his footsteps literally without changing one inch from his dictum. Even now we follow the dictum of Swami Sivananda: Never ask from people. If they give, they give; if they don’t give, that’s also good. A hundred people come and eat, and go. It doesn’t matter. Let a hundred people come and eat; we have no objection. But one person will give, and compensate the whole thing. God does like that, you see. He can give with this hand, and take away with this hand also. Belief in God is a very difficult thing. It is very difficult until your soul is united

with the structure of the whole cosmos.

I am mentioning to you briefly the foundational characteristic of this Ashram, The Divine Life Society.

A visitor: Those who join, do they have to be of a certain age and education?

Swamiji: No, there is no restriction on formal education, but there is a restriction on moral principles. They must not tell lies, they must have self-restraint, and they should not commit violence. These three are the basic principles of any person: non-violence, self-restraint and truthfulness. If you take a pledge in these three ways, you can be admitted as a member, and formal education is not required. It may be or it may not be there. Anyone can become a member—men, women, anybody—provided they are aged about twenty or twenty-one years. Small children we don't take; we take adults. That is how membership is instituted.

Another visitor: When did this first start, in what year?

Swamiji: This started in the year 1936. It is sixty years. Recently we have celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of this institution. Diamond Jubilee we have celebrated, sixty years of working.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

A visitor: When you try to make advances on the spiritual path, you have to fight against the lust and anger and greed, and so forth.

Swamiji: You need not have to fight against them. They will evaporate automatically before the blaze of your love for God. When the sun rises, there will be no darkness. What is important is not to drive the negative qualities but to develop positive qualities. When the positive comes, the negative vanishes. When your body is healthy, the diseases go automatically. Love of God is the greatest panacea for all negative qualities. You cannot have any bad quality in you if your heart loves God. God will see that everything is cleared up. So love God with heart and soul, and you will see your negative qualities vanish of their own accord. As I mentioned, you need not have to drive the night out with force. With sunrise, then the night goes. So I, for one, do not focus on the negative qualities—'very bad, ugly, remove, don't, don't, don't, don't'. Instead of saying 'don't, don't, don't', I say 'do, do, do, do'—the positive thing.

The concept of God, the vision of the Universal Being, is such a powerful medical method of curing illness that you will be surprised how it works. It is a health-giving potential vitamin injection, I may say. The moment you close your eyes for a few minutes and conceive the all-pervading integrated universal omnipresence, you will feel a thrill in your heart, a joy that you cannot explain, and your negative qualities will not be there at that time.

You need not go on thinking of lust, anger, greed, and all that. They will not be there if you are able to develop this positive concentration of mind on Almighty God. We emphasise meditation first and foremost—meditation on God. This is pure spiritual life. This Ashram is mainly spiritual. All other social activities, etc., are secondary. Humanitarian activities are secondary for us, though they are important enough. But the main thing is spiritual. To revolutionise the very outlook of life and orient it in the light of the presence of God, Who is all pervading, with this concept of the vision of life, negative qualities will not find a place in the heart of the human being.

Visitor: It says in the New Testament that Jesus was tempted by the devil.

Swamiji: Everybody will be tempted by a devil. It is not only Jesus—everybody—but Jesus has the power to summon God’s force, and then the devil vanishes completely. When you summon God to your aid, no devil will stand before you.

Another visitor: I don’t quite follow what you’re saying. You shared with us a lovely, inspiring vision of the sun rising and the darkness disappears. But when the sun sets, the darkness comes back again.

Swamiji: The sun of God will never set. That is the difference between that sun and this sun. The sun of God will never set. It is eternal bliss. It is eternal; therefore, no setting. That is the difference between our ordinary sun and this spiritual sun. It is a perpetual blaze which will illumine your heart and brain and keep you happy always, and you should not have any doubt about it.

Another visitor: How does marriage and procreation fit into the Ashram?

Swamiji: In the Ashram, nobody marries. But people who have already married, lived a householders’ life, and afterwards decided to lead the life of renunciation, withdrawal and spiritual meditation are welcome to this Ashram. When a householder, a married person, comes to this Ashram, he does not live like an ordinary householder or a married person. There is detachment in his mind. The attachment that is characteristic of household life is removed here, though outwardly husband and wife can stay here. But they don’t behave like husband and wife. They are like partners of the Spirit. Householders can come here, but they don’t live here as usually people live in ordinary life. The outlook changes here.

Visitor: How about children?

Swamiji: Sometimes we don’t encourage children here because of the disturbance that they can cause, but basically there is no objection. There are people who come, as I mentioned to you, householders. They stay here for one week, two weeks, three weeks, even one month. They have got some children. We don’t raise any objection unless the children are a nuisance, making noise and all

that. Basically there is no objection. They can bring their children.

Another visitor: Who furnishes all the food and the medicine and the...

Swamiji: We receive voluntary donations from people.

Visitor: I know. But somebody each day must cook and serve and clean...

Swamiji: We have got people.

Visitor: Who are they?

Swamiji: We are many residents in this Ashram. Some of them are sannyasins. Some of them are not initiated people, they are called brahmacharis, and there are others, laymen also, and we have got some servants also we employ where it is necessary. We have got a large number of people here who do the work of different departments. We are about three hundred permanent residents here—permanent. They do the work.

Visitor: So what is their level of spirituality—the servants and employees?

Swamiji: Different levels. The servants here are slightly polished persons. The atmosphere of the sannyasins and the spiritual seekers here has a great influence upon them. ‘Hello’ they won’t say; they will say ‘Om, Om’—like that. Even these servants, when they come and knock at your door giving you tea or anything: Om, Om. Hello, hello—they don’t say like that. Even when we lift a telephone—hello, hello, we don’t say hello. Om, Hari Om, Hari Om. There is a spiritual orientation even among servants. They behave very politely and very, very cooperatively, and they are good children. That is the influence of this atmosphere even on servants.

Another visitor: I believe that among our group most of them are Christians of many different beliefs. Some may have no belief in God whatsoever.

Swamiji: Can I ask you if there is a Christian who does not believe in God? Are you saying that Christians do not believe in God?

Visitor: There may be some among us who do not believe in God.

Swamiji: It doesn't matter. But do you mean to say they are not Christians?

Visitor: They have no belief. They do not believe in a God.

Swamiji: Let them not believe in anything, but they must be believing in something else.

Visitor: But most of us are Christians.

Swamiji: According to my idea, no Christian can be an atheist. It is not possible.

Visitor: I say that most of us are Christians with various beliefs. We do not all believe the same, we do not all follow the same religion even though we basically are Christians. Some are Catholic, some are Protestants, some may be something else, and some may be nothing. They don't believe in anything. That's the truth. Some of them may not believe in a God. Is there any hope for the rest of our society?

Swamiji: There is hope for everybody. Nobody can be rejected.

Visitor: We can be saved?

Swamiji: Yes. Even a person who does not believe in God is welcome to this place. Even if a person does not believe in spiritual life, he is welcome to this place. But when he comes here, he changes his mind. He becomes a different person.

Visitor: But if we don't change our mind?

Swamiji: He will automatically change by the power of this place. I have seen any number of people coming here with hundreds of doubts, and they go joyfully, being satisfied. There is a special power in this place. Even a person who does not believe in God believes afterwards. Even a person who is an out-and-out communist, who hates everything except violence, that also changes here.

This is a powerful place, my dear friend. This is not an ordinary place. When they come and sit here and speak to us, in a few minutes the mind changes. There is the power of the founder, Swami Sivananda, I should say, or God Almighty Himself. And we are honest in this, and we believe in it, and everything shall be all right.

Another visitor: This gentleman used the term ‘saved’. Do you have a concept of that?

Swamiji: Even if a person does not believe in God, God believes in this person.

Visitor: But do you have a concept of salvation?

Swamiji: What is your concept?

Visitor: I don’t have one. This gentleman used it, and I just want to know if it’s part of your goal.

Swamiji: Popularly, without going into the deep mystical aspect of it, popularly it means ‘attainment of God’. You came from God, and you return to God. The return to God is the salvation. That’s a simple answer.

Visitor: Good.

Another visitor: If I wanted to come here, how long could I stay?

Swamiji: It depends upon your requirement. You tell me what are your needs, and I will decide how long it is necessary for you to stay. What are your requirements? What do you expect from us?

Visitor: Well... Does The Divine Life Society exist outside Rishikesh?

Swamiji: We have several branches of The Divine Life Society outside also. There are a few hundred in India, and a very few outside India—in Malaysia, in South Africa, and one or two in Europe and America. We have got centres, yes.

Visitor: Well, I’m almost 74, so therefore I’m going into the last stage, so that would be, I guess, my need: to know what to do.

Swamiji: What would you like us to do for you? What are you expecting from us?

Visitor: Well, I don’t know how long I’m going to live. What will be my needs?

Swamiji: You may live for any number of years. That is not in anybody’s hands. But you always believe that you are going to live long. Nobody says, “I am quitting tomorrow.” Nobody says that,

and it is not necessary to go on saying all those things. For the length of time that God has permitted you to stay in this world, live a good life of divine thoughts.

Visitor: I thought I did that already.

Swamiji: No, you must do it again. There is no end for it. The thought of God is not only for some days; it is for all time. That is sufficient for you. Okay?

Visitor: Thank you.

Another visitor: The importance of meditation I understand. You also alluded to a little bit of socialisation. In addition to that, do you conduct within the house sessions, learning sessions, spirituality sessions so that those of us who would be...

Swamiji: Throughout the country we are doing that, throughout the country, and our people go and conduct classes and lectures in many places in India. Even now many are outside, touring for this purpose.

Visitor: How does one continually evaluate whether you're on the right road to spirituality?

Swamiji: From the deep satisfaction that you feel inside. Your satisfaction and your feeling of betterment, comprehensiveness and power, will tell you that you are on the right path.

Visitor: Is it then for the good of the whole Ashram, or is it for the good of mine only?

Swamiji: It is for the good of the whole universe. We don't believe in individual salvation; it is cosmic salvation.

Another visitor: Could you give us a general idea of what a typical day would be like?

Swamiji: A typical day of people like us? We have a prayer session in the early morning, recitation of holy formulae called mantras, and a few minutes of meditation. After that, people go for their breakfast. They take bath and breakfast, and all that.

Then everyone is doing some service here in the departments of the Ashram. We have got some 22-23 departments of service, and each one is working in some capacity or the other, in one or the other

departments till about 11:00. This work goes on from 8:30 till 11:00, say. Then afterwards there is a lunch break. After that, again about 1:00 or something like that people go to their work till about 3:30 or 4:00. Then after that they are free.

Now here, in this particular instance, I conduct a meditation class here at about 5:00 in the evening. In the summer I do it another time; in winter it is 5:00. Just as you are sitting now here, people come and sit here at 5:00, and from 5:00 to 6:00, one hour, we sit calmly, quietly, without speaking, closing the eyes, doing meditation. That is one thing here.

After that there is a little dinner. We have got a simple dinner; people go for that. Then again we have a spiritual session, we call it *satsanga*, which is similar in the pattern of the early morning prayer, with an additional discourse by a swami or some competent guest. After that people retire to their rooms, do a little meditation, then go to bed. Then the day starts the next morning in the same way. This is briefly a day.

Visitor: Are there moments that people are in silence other than times that they might be doing their administrative work? Do you spend a day of silence?

Swamiji: Very important. It is a very, very important item in one's life. Everybody should find time to be silent and alone to oneself either in the early morning before starting work or before going to bed in the night. It is a must for everybody to go into one's own self and find time to be one's own self. It is a very important matter. Everybody should have time for that morning and evening, both times.

Another visitor: We understand that the Hindu religion emphasises particular images of God—Siva, Ganesha, and so forth. Do you have particular images of God?

Swamiji: We have no objection to anything. We never object to anything. We always include, absorb, harmonise and set in order. We never criticise, condemn and hate. This is not our policy. Everything should be in its proper place. Ugly things look beautiful when you put it in the proper place. If I splash a bottle of ink on your body, it is ugly, but if I splash it on a canvas it becomes a beautiful painting,

and you look at it and enjoy it. What do you say? Everything in its own place. Anything in its proper place and in the proper context is beautiful. Anything out of context looks ugly.

So our duty is to see that things are kept in proper context. Whether it is a child or a sick man, a man or a woman, saint or sinner, whatever it is, he must be placed in a proper perspective, and ugly things become beautiful, corners become rounded up, and we believe finally that God does not create evil things in the world. It is a wrong perception of the human mind that sees ugliness and corners, and all that. Everything is okay in the kingdom of God. This is what we want to bring to the practical life in this world.

Another visitor: How do you regard those who give up the Hindu religion? How are they regarded, and what do you foresee for them in the life after that?

Swamiji: There is no necessity to become a Hindu. He need not become anything at all. He must be a human being first. And what will happen to a person after death will be the same thing that will happen to any human being. We are to look upon people as human beings, not as Hindus, Christians, Muslims. These are all fundamentalist-created ideas by human beings. When you are born into this world you are not born as a Hindu. You are born as a little child. And whether he is a child of a king or a beggar, it makes no difference. When God beholds you, I don't think He will think that you are a Christian or a Hindu. He will see that you are a little part of Himself.

Visitor: Based on what you're saying, you can be anything that you want to be.

Swamiji: We don't insist on anything. There is no need for religion at all. Let there not be talk of religion. We want only aspiration for God, and this can be entertained without any religion. Let all religion vanish in the world, still there will be spirituality. This is our view.

Another visitor: Would you make some comments about reincarnation and your thoughts about reincarnation?

Swamiji: This is another thing which, in modern days, is called the evolutionary process. You know what is evolution? There is organic

evolution, biological evolution, natural evolution, social evolution, political evolution, etc., which simply means the outgrowing of the earlier condition, giving birth to a new condition. You have been a very little child, a small baby, once upon a time. You have become now a very adult, mature person. You have grown. This process of growth from babyhood to this adult condition of yours involves a destruction of the cellular constitution of the baby and a new constructive activity of a positive type of cellular constitution which makes you look like an elderly person. So birth and death are taking place every day. Every minute it takes place, and it is said after seven years the whole personality changes. And the only thing is, because the consciousness continues unremittingly, we cannot know that we are dying every minute. But when the consciousness withdraws itself from a particular pattern of human existence, we think it is birth and death. Actually, it is a cosmic necessity arisen on account of the aspiration of the whole universe for God. When the universe asks for God, it transforms itself from the lower condition to a higher condition until it becomes divine. So birth and death are neither good nor bad. They are scientific processes which cannot be denied. It is nothing but another name for growth, decay, destruction and reconstitution.

MEDITATION ON GOD OUTSIDE

A visitor: I have a question. God is everywhere. God is also in me. But in meditation, for me it is easier to connect with God when I feel God outside me.

Swamiji: You can do that. There is no objection. If you feel that you can connect yourself to God better by conceiving Him as outside, you can do that. All right, do that. So what is the problem now? If you feel this is a better method, and it is easier and benefits you much better, go ahead. The only thing is, what are you thinking in your mind about God? When you say 'outside', which place? 'Outside' means in front of you, behind you, to the right side of you.

Visitor: Over me. Above in the sky.

Swamiji: Above in the sky. All right. How far in the sky? How far, roughly? Roughly you tell me, how many kilometres away. [Laughter]

Visitor: Not so much kilometres.

Swamiji: But 'above' means there must be some idea. All thoughts must be clear. You should not have hazy ideas. When you say 'above', how far is He above? In the seventh heaven? And He is occupying heaven, or what? Your mind must be clear to you; then concentration will come.

Okay, now coming to the point, you can go ahead with this meditation provided the mind is concentrating and is not distracted by any other thought. How you conceive God is not important. What is important is, are you thinking anything else also, other than this point of concentration? You can conceive God in any way you like—above or below, it doesn't matter—but you should not think anything else except that. If you think anything else, then it will defeat the purpose because at least you have made a suggestion that you are also existing as much as God exists, isn't it? So there are two things that exist: yourself and God. That is a very important point. What do you say? You also exist, God also exists, so two things exist. So the relationship between two existing things is meditation.

Who is meditating on whom? Both are equally real. You are not

less important, because a less important thing cannot meditate on a more important thing. You must be equally important. The receiving medium, this electric bulb, should be as strong as the voltage that comes. Otherwise, the voltage will burn this medium or there will be no light at all, one of the two. So the receptive capacity of yours is as important as the concept of God that you are entertaining in your mind.

But anyway, this method is satisfying to you, satisfying?

Visitor: It is easy.

Swamiji: But is it satisfying? Let it be easy; do you feel happy about it? Do you feel everything is okay? It is satisfactory?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: You don't have any difficulties afterwards? You don't have any feeling of limitation or difficulty? You feel this is perfectly all right?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Then there is no question. If you are satisfied with it, then you can continue until your own heart tells you there is a method better than this. Now you continue that.

Visitor: And can I try through the body awareness to keep God in me?

Swamiji: Inside you?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: But you said 'above'.

Visitor: Yes. But I ask, is it possible through body awareness to bring God in me?

Swamiji: Now what do you want finally? Do you want Him to be inside you or do you want Him to be above you? Which is better?

Visitor: Be one with God.

Swamiji: One with God? One?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: You can be one with God even if He is above, and even if He is inside. It makes no difference. You feel that feeling Him inside is better? You feel like that?

Visitor: I am searching. I am trying.

Swamiji: Now, at this moment, what is the conclusion?

Visitor: At this moment it is easier to feel...

Swamiji: Feel that God is above?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Now let it be that. Now don't bring inside. Let Him be above only. You continue that. Yes.

LOVE AND HATRED

An ashramite: Swamiji, if I don't love a thing or hate a thing, what is that?

Swamiji: Because you love a thing, therefore you are hating it. They are one and the same thing. Anything that you don't love is the object of hatred. Because you cannot love the whole universe, you select some portions, and what you have selected is the object of love. Anything that is excluded is the object of hatred.

Ashramite: That is not my point, Swamiji. Why do I love a thing?

Swamiji: Because you are weak in your mind. You think that you are a weak fellow, and you want to make yourself complete by thrusting something from outside. You have got no faith in your own strength, and so you want to import strength from outside. It cannot be done. The thing that you are loving will never come to you because it is outside. Anything that is outside you is always outside only, so every love is a futile attempt at getting anything. Whoever loves will have tragedy in the end because he is trying to get something which he cannot get. Already you have created a false notion of things being outside, and that thing knows it. That thing that you are loving knows that you are considering it as outside, so it rejects you immediately, and then you have a tragedy. So all love ends in tragedy because you have a double standard. You have cut off connection with it by saying it is outside, and it is not a foolish thing. It also knows. Even a wall has eyes. It will understand: "You are telling that I am outside. Then I will kick you out." So all love is a misconception in the mind, and so nobody is feeling happy. Afterwards they will become...

Ashramite: What about affection?

Swamiji: That is love only. It is the other side of it. It is another name for hatred: love. That which you don't love is hatred. You don't like something interfering with your love. That possibility of something interfering is hatred, and you always keep a foot on it: "Don't come near!" But it is connected with this. They are like the right hand and left hand. You cannot have one hand only. There is only one object in the universe; one side of it is love, the other side is hatred. But you

cannot have half of the universe, and reject half of the universe. The universe is not half . It is full. Half of it you want, and half of it you don't want. It is not possible. It is a total misconception right from the beginning itself. And also it is a kind of lack of faith in one's own strength. A weak person wants something else. If you yourself are complete, who can complete you? That which you want is already inside you, but you are not believing it. You think it is outside. If it is outside, it is outside forever. It will never come near you.

Everything has got eyes to see. There are no blind objects. Even a table—if you tell the table, “You this stupid thing, why are you sitting here?” it will understand: “This fellow is talking to me like this.” But if you say, “My dear table, how are you?” it will understand. You are thinking it has no eyes to see. Even the walls have ears, they say, and the walls have eyes also, not merely ears. Everything sees you. You are not isolatedly sitting. Even your thought is reverberating in the skies. The whole universe will know what you are thinking. There are no secret thoughts anywhere. What you are secretly thinking will drop there like a thunderbolt in an expanded form through the mind. There is a big microphone in the sky, and it will amplify even the silent thought of yours, so everybody will know what it is.

You cannot stand outside the universe; therefore, you are complete, and there is no meaning in loving anything or hating anything. The whole thing is finished. The basic misconception should go away. When you are alone, you must be absolutely happy, as if heaven has entered you. If you feel you are alone and miserable, and need to go to the market and shake hands with somebody, then you are a poor fellow. The more you are happy when you are literally alone, the greater you are. The more miserable you are when you are alone and want another friend to shake hands with and chat, the more you are a poor fellow. The more you are alone to yourself, the greater it is. Nobody should see you, and you should not see anybody. You don't want to talk to any person, and nobody should talk to you. At that time you feel immensely complete in yourself. But if you say, “No, no, it is not like that! I want to go out and talk to this man. I will go to the market, make purchases,” that means you are a poverty-stricken person, psychologically poor. That is lack of faith in one's own self, so how can you have faith in another person?

A visitor: I know someone who is very happy when she's alone, but she feels uneasy among people.

Swamiji: There are no people. They don't exist at all. That is your imagination. You are also people only, so you are also the same thing as another person. There is no difference among people. All are people. Everyone is like anybody else, so there is no comparison. If you don't like them, they will not like you, so it is complementary. Humanity is one mass. It is not segregated into I or you and all that.

MEDITATION TECHNIQUE AND SERVICE

A visitor: I am doing my study and...

Swamiji: That is okay, but what is the sadhana that you are doing?

Visitor: I'm doing asanas.

Swamiji: Asanas you are doing? And what else?

Visitor: When I find time, then some japa and meditation.

Swamiji: Meditation you are doing? How do you do meditation? Let me hear. What are you thinking in your mind at that time?

Visitor: I try to watch my thoughts without any...

Swamiji: You see, you cannot watch the thoughts like that. It is not possible because you yourself are the thoughts. If the thoughts are to be watched, then you must be other than the thoughts. Do you understand me? Are you something other than thoughts? You yourself are the thoughts, so how can you watch the thoughts? It is no good, this method. It is not a proper method.

Do you believe in God? Do you pray to God? No, you don't pray to God? How do you pray? What is the method? How do you pray, tell me.

Visitor: By chanting some...

Swamiji: You are chanting God's name? Is it so? God's name? What is God's name? What mantra are you chanting?

Visitor: Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya.

Swamiji: It is Lord Krishna's. So why don't you meditate on that instead of watching thoughts? Your watching thoughts will not bring you any benefit. Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya means: Salutations and prostrations to Lord Sri Krishna. Why don't you think like that? Meditate on Lord Krishna because your mantra is like that. You concentrate your mind on the mighty, great incarnation, powerful, Narayana's incarnation, Lord Krishna. Think that continuously day in and day out. Don't think anything else. That is meditation. Watching thoughts is no good. It is not a proper

method.

Visitor: Swamiji, I have read Krishnamurthy books also.

Swamiji: Why are you reading Krishnamurthy? You should not read anything. You simply give up all this. Read only Bhagavadgita, and Lord Krishna's name I have given you: Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya. Meditate on Lord Krishna. Don't read any other book; it will distract your mind. A hundred people write a hundred things, and you should not go on reading them. So this is sufficient. Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya is your mantra. It is the mantra of the great divine incarnation of Narayana, Lord Krishna, and if you can fix your mind on that Great Being then you have no other problem. Don't do any other sadhana; this is sufficient for you. Okay? Don't change your method. Continue. Every day you must do that, at least one hour. In the morning one hour, in the evening one hour.

Visitor: In this sadhana which you are telling, can it cultivate love?

Swamiji: Whose love? Love for whom?

Visitor: Love for every being.

Swamiji: Why do you want to love everybody? If you love God, that is sufficient because everybody is included in God.

Visitor: Swamiji, sometimes I feel my heart is empty.

Swamiji: When your heart is empty, think of Lord Krishna, then it will be filled. When Lord Krishna enters your heart, how can you call it empty? If you want to serve people, serve. What kind of service can you do, tell me? You are an agricultural man; what kind of service are you going to do? If you can do service, do it. But what kind of service are you able to do? Can you find time to do that? Are you free? How will you serve? Whom are you serving? Your mind must be clear first. Whom do you want to serve? You say "people". Where are the people?

Visitor: Those who are near to me.

Swamiji: Who are they? Your father and mother and brothers, and all that?

Visitor: Yes, yes.

Swamiji: Okay, how will you serve them? You can serve anybody, so why only father and mother? Anybody. Even so many are sitting here; you serve them. But it depends upon how you will do that.

Visitor: Swamiji, I want to do without any want, without any expectation.

Swamiji: All right, okay. You do it without expectation. It is left to your freedom. But you must have the capacity to serve. You must have capacity. You must have means. Unless you have means, how to serve other people? You do it, no objection.

So meditate on God, as I mentioned, and serve people, if you like, in any capacity. It is left to you how to serve. If you are a medical man, serve through medicine. If you are an agricultural man, serve by agricultural methods. If you are a rich man, serve with money. If you are a professional type, you can help people in education. You can do anything, whatever you like.

SATISFACTION OF THE SOUL

Swamiji [To a group of visitors]: Your intellectual curiosity may be satisfied, but the soul may be saying no, not okay. Do you believe you have a soul? Do you all have a soul? No?

Visitors: Yes.

Swamiji: Okay, but you ignore that. Nobody thinks of that. Little poor thing inside, it is neglected. And it is crying always. We are busy with eating and picnicking and travelling and sightseeing, and all sorts of things we do, but the soul cannot be satisfied by any kind of doing. The soul is a being. You must make a distinction between these two things. That which is being cannot be satisfied by any kind of doing. Even if you go to heaven, the soul will not be satisfied because, after all, that is also a process of becoming, transformation, change.

A very serious matter this is in spiritual life, and so serious that it is completely ignored by the pressure towards outer performance. We are very fond of outer performance, especially in the West. The West is fond of doing something. Always you must do something, manufacture something, improve your physical conditions, have more comforts physically. But it is up to you all to think over it: How can the Being be satisfied?

Being can be satisfied by Being only. It cannot be satisfied by any other thing. Your activities have no meaning for the soul. Soul does not do anything; it just is. And if your is-ness can widen its dimension and the soul becomes larger than what it appears to be as if located within the prison of your body, it exceeds the limit of your body. It is difficult to understand what it means. How can the soul exceed the limit of the body? You will be wondering: "How is it possible? It is inside my body, and how this swami is talking about exceeding the limit of the body?"

It has to exceed the limit of the body. It is now wool-gathering. It is dreaming. It is suffocated. It is stifled by the smoke of external activity. You can never be satisfied even if the whole earth is given to you as a charity. You will want the skies. You will ask, "All right, I have got the whole earth, but what about the skies? I want the

sky also.” And if you get the skies, you will find out what is there beyond the skies. You will never be satisfied because the asking of the soul is endless. The dimension of the soul is not within the ambit of the physical body.

Suppose there is a little glass tumbler, and space is inside it. But is the space inside the tumbler really? What do you say? Space is everywhere. Suppose the space inside this glass tumbler is conscious that it is inside the glass. It is the soul of a human being, but it is as foolish as anything can be if it thinks that it is inside the glass. The space is not inside the tumbler; it is everywhere, but if by some hypnotic effect of identification with these little walls of the tumbler it begins to feel that it is inside, that is the soul of a human being. This is what has happened to us.

But you are not the soul of a human being. You are the soul of the cosmos, so it is dimensionless. Absolute Being is your nature. You are not Europeans and Americans, and all that. You are not even men and women. This is also a mistake. You are not even human beings. You are only certain pressure points in the cosmic force. It is doing its majestic work, and you think, “I am doing something.”

I am leading you to enlightenment by these words. What I told you is a very serious matter. If you ignore it, you will repent afterwards. Very serious matter. I have briefly told you a few sentences, but they can contain the whole world inside. You find out your status. What is your status at this moment? It is a kind of foolishness. You have ignored the whole thing. We have forgotten our own selves, and thinking something else outside, like this. There is no outside. It is Universal Being. It has no externality. The idea that you are the perceiver of the world, and the world is outside you, is the cause of trouble. The world is not outside you. It is organically connected with you and, vice versa, you are organically connected with the world.

So there is only the one Universal Being, and there is no man, no woman, no this person, no that person. If this can be contained in your thought, this thought is real meditation. This is the highest spiritual meditation, into which I am introducing your mind gradually, and if you can keep this in your consciousness for a long time, you will be the most blessed person in the world. The whole universe will serve

you. Now you are serving the world; the other way around, it will serve you.

Right from Haridwar to Badrinath, the entire area, is called the land of the gods. In Sanskrit we call it Deva Bhumi. Deva Bhumi means ‘the land of the gods’. We cannot know who is staying here, who was staying here, and all that. Great Masters are supposed to be living in this area. And many of them are invisible; you can’t see them. They are in the higher frequency of existence, and the lower frequency cannot contact. But they can know that you are here, though you may not see them, just as God knows that you are here but you cannot know that God is seeing you.

There was a blind man—this is a humorous joke—who wanted to have darshan of holy Badrinath. The blind man was asked, “What are you going to see there? You have no eyes to see.”

“But He can see me at least,” he said. “So I am going there so that He may see me. That is sufficient for me.”

So don’t bother if you are able to see Him or not, but be sure whether He is seeing you or not. If you are sure that He is seeing you, then you are blessed. But how will He see you unless you are His friend, and you are made up of the same stuff as His Being? Only God can see God. He will not see anything else. And to the extent you have risen to the level of godliness, to that extent He will see you. And if you have really become as vast as God Himself, you will just merge into it. This is called moksha, salvation, and nothing more can be said about it. All the words will be hushed, and you will not open your mouth afterwards in the bliss of Universal experience.

Thank you very much. God bless you. Hari Om!

LASER BEAMS

Swamiji: Laser beams, all these will be seen. All these people are laser beams only. They are not human beings or anything, though they look like that. You are all concentrated rays of supernatural light which has taken a shape for some reason which no human being can understand. Why should light take a shape and look like trees and mountains and human beings, and men and women and children, what not, vegetables, tomatoes and all that? Everything is made up of the same substance. Everything—the biscuit and book and paper and whatever you can think—they are all made up of the same substance by permutation and combination.

Milk and poison differ from each other due to a particular number of electrons being more or less. A particular number of electrons around a particular nucleus will make it milk; another vibration will make it poison. So it is a kind of permutation-combination of the entire component of this creation, and you can adjust yourself to anything. You can become a god in one minute, or a devil. Anything can be done; it depends upon the adjustment.

So many sages have told us so many things. Because of the infinitude of the ultimate aim, there seems to be infinite methods also to reach it. If you want to reach the sun, you can reach him through any ray of the sun. You can catch hold of any ray and you can reach the sun. But how many rays are there? There is no number for the rays of the sun. Infinite rays are there, and so there are infinite methods of movement also towards that. You can move to the Absolute here, just now, from this place. There is a direct highway. It is not in the temple, it is not in the church, it is not in a holy place because there are no unholy places for the Absolute.

You see a beautiful painting of Michelangelo. Directly if you see, it is a beautiful thing. But if you see like this [sideways], it looks something else. Look at the mountain. If you look straight, it looks as having one shape; if you see from behind, it is another thing. So from different sides, different shapes.

The Absolute looks like everything. It can look like a marketplace, it can look like a motorcar, it can look like a railway train, an aeroplane, a hospital, a temple, a human being, a stone.

There is nothing which it cannot look like. If this thought enters the mind of any person, will that person be able to live in the world? What do you say? What will happen to you? You will slowly start melting into liquid. Your personality will evaporate into rarefied atmosphere, and no one will know what will happen. Even to hear this is a frightening thing, a little bit: “What is going to be my future?” In case the Absolute is going to embrace you, “Come on, my dear child,” what will you do? You will become vapour, and pervasive, and you will find yourself everywhere at one stroke. You are not in America, you are not in India, you are not in Swargagram. You will find yourself at one stroke everywhere.

Plotinus, the great mystic of Alexandria, has written a book called *Enneads*. He is a wonder-man. It is worth reading what he is saying. He is the most prominent Western mystic. He says when you enter this state, light flashes forth everywhere. Light beholds light. That which beholds becomes that which is beheld. That which is beheld starts beholding. What is it beholding? That which sees becomes the seen, that which is seen becomes the seer, and everything enters everything else. This is, in Indian terminology, called *Brahmaloka*. We have got a word called *Brahmaloka*. The penultimate stage of the Absolute is called *Brahmaloka*. A particular stage is reached in our ascent to the spirit where we...

There are seven stages of ascent. Every stage is a melting down of personality. First the physical embodiment melts, then the psychological, then the intellectual, then the causal, then the very affirmation of individuality melts. And then you will find yourself in all space and all time. You will be at all times also, not merely at all places. You will find yourself in the past, present, future—everywhere. You will see Jesus Christ, Muhammad, at one stroke, here. They are not dead and gone. The *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, all are taking place just now, at this very moment, at that time, because time goes away at that time. So the past becomes present, and the future also can be seen there. This is called eternity. This is the blessed stage.

Even thinking like this is a blessing. Even by thinking like this, you have moved an inch in the direction of this great blessedness, and God is looking at you. God is looking at you now, like this, and

if He looks at you, then what else do you want?

THINKING AS GOD THINKS

A visitor: It seems to be one thing to realise it, and it seems to be another thing...

Swamiji: So you make a distinction between realising and enlightenment? You make a distinction between enlightenment and the realisation of it?

Visitor: It is one thing to realise it, and on the other hand I should be able to express...

Swamiji: In order to realise, you have to meditate. Mere listening to a discourse is not sufficient. You have to sink your mind in the Ultimate Being. That is the way to what you call Self-realisation. And in your daily life, in your practical conduct of business in the life of the world, also this meditation should have an impact. You should not live two kinds of life—a divine and godly life in the meditation room and an ordinary useless life in the marketplace. That will not work. Even in the railway station, marketplace, vegetable shop, hotel—everywhere you are have the concept of God entertained in your mind. You are a divine child wherever you go. You are not a divine child only in the classroom—everywhere. If you can transmute every activity of yours into this kind of meditation on God, then you are blessed. But is it difficult to do that? Is it a difficult thing?

Visitor: It's a difficult thing.

Swamiji: Why should it be difficult? If what you call God is the Ultimate Being, and it is universally present everywhere, then it is everything also. It is not merely present everywhere; everything that you see with your eyes also is That. So when you are handling anything, you are handling That in various forms of manifestation. Something may look like a vegetable, another may look like a dollar, a third thing may look like a railway train and a fourth thing like an aeroplane. They are different modus operandi of the operation of the One Being, and you have to handle it in the same way as you will handle God—in a universal compass of your comprehensiveness. In other words, it is the art of thinking as God Himself would think.

God is thinking something just now. Now what does He think, in your opinion? Stretch your imagination to the highest heaven and imagine that God is looking at you. What does He think about you? Can you tell me what is He thinking about you? That is your worth. Your worth depends upon what He is thinking of you. That is your value. Whatever God thinks you are, that you really are, and whatever He thinks you are not, that you are not.

Now you may say, "I have not seen God and so I cannot answer this question." But yet God has planted Himself in your heart, and your heart will give the answer to this question. God is not sitting only in high heaven. He is in the recesses of your heart, so your conscience will tell you what God is perhaps thinking of you. Have you any doubt about it? Do you feel that He is perhaps thinking not well of you?

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: God is thinking well of you?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: So all are blessed. If everybody says that, you are blessed. Be sure that God is thinking well of you. "Good child, I am happy to see you." Let God say that; then you have no problem. But don't doubt: "He may criticise me. He may say this is no good. He may find fault with me." Do you think there is anything in you for which He will criticise you? Or you will say, "No, there is nothing wrong with me. I am in perfect alignment with God's thought."

Meditation is freedom from every kind of doubt. With a dubious mind you cannot meditate. When you close your eyes in meditation, feel the Absolute is in front of you. You are meditating not inside a room, but in the presence of the Absolute. With its millions of eyes, it is beholding you. Then close your eyes. "Millions of eyes are seeing me. The eyes of Eternity, the eyes of Perfection, the eyes of the Absolute, the eyes of God Almighty, the eyes of the Creator of the universe, they are looking at me." Will you feel unhappy if you are beheld like that by millions of eyes of the Eternal Being, or will you feel blessed: "I am bathed in the protection of the power of this Almighty. I am blessed. I am very happy. I shall have whatever I want." God has the capacity to give you whatever you want.

Instantaneously God will give you whatever you want. He will not tell you to come tomorrow. He will say, "It is here. Take it."

But you must know what you are asking. When you are asking from God, be careful as to what you are asking. Don't ask God to give you anything; ask God to give you Himself. I read a humorous story the other day in a book of Jalaluddin Rumi. There was a person who went to Moses and said, "Please teach me the language of the animals." Then Moses said, "I will consult God." Then Moses asked God, "This gentleman is wanting me to teach him the language of the animals." God said, "Give him what he wants." Then Moses said, "He may get into trouble by this blessing." God again said, "Give him what he wants." A third time Moses said, "He may even die by the consequences that follow from this kind of knowledge." Then God said a third time, "Give him what he wants." Then Moses came and told this gentleman, "It is done."

The next morning when this gentleman woke up, he found a dog and a hen talking to each other because he could hear and understand their language. The hen was plucking a little piece of bread, and the dog was saying, "Why are you pecking this bread? Why don't you give it to me? Because you have got a beak, you can peck grains anywhere, but I cannot peck like that. So I want this bread. You give it to me." The hen and said, "Don't bother. Tomorrow the cow of your master will die. Eat it."

When the master heard this, he ran and took the cow, and sold it to somebody. A very clever man he was. The cow was going to die the next day, and such a thing he is selling for a price. He wanted to make capital out of this knowledge. The next day the dog asked, "Where is the cow?" The hen and said, "I have told you the truth, but what can I do? Your master has sold her to somebody." "Oh, I see. So I am deprived of my food." Then the hen said, "It doesn't matter. Tomorrow the bull will also die." When the man heard this, he immediately ran and sold the bull. Then the dog asked, "Where is the bull? Your prediction is not okay." "No, I have told the truth, but he has sold it." Then the third day the hen and said, "Tomorrow the horse of the master also will die. You eat it." Then the master ran and sold the horse also. Then afterwards the hen said, "His camel will die." Then the last day it said, "His slave will die, and you eat him."

He immediately also sold the slave to someone.

Finally what happened was, one day the hen said, “Tomorrow your master will die, and you eat him.” The master ran from there. He ran to Moses and said, “Save me, save me, save me, save me, save me!” Moses asked, “Why have you come? Do you want more knowledge of animals?” “No, I don’t want anything,” he said. “I don’t want to hear anything from animals. They have already told me something. Bless me, bless me, bless me.” Because they have told some terrible thing, he said, “I don’t want to hear any language of animals.” Jalaluddin Rumi is right. Foolish asking is not good.

There was another man who wanted that everything that he thinks should materialise. He asked God, “Bless me. Whatever I think, it should happen.” “Okay.” Oh, he was very happy. He sat under a mango tree. “Mangoes,” he thought, and mangoes started falling. He looked to the side. There was forest everywhere, all forest. He thought, “Oh, some tiger may come and eat me.” Immediately a tiger came and ate him. Now what is the good of this blessing? When you have no control over your mind, you should not ask for blessings from anybody.

So what you should tell God is, “Give me whatever You consider as best for me.” Don’t say, “Give me a sword. Give me a fountain pen. Give me wealth. Give me children.” Don’t ask. You will get into trouble by these things. When you go to a king, tell the king, “I want you only.” Don’t ask for gold and silver. If the king asks you what you want, reply, “I want you, your Majesty.” Well, then the whole kingdom is yours. So if God asks you what you want, say, “I want You only, God.” Then He will take you to Himself. These are all titbits and humorous stories about the wonder of meditation on God, the difficulties on the path, and the puny desires of the human being which persist even at the gates of heaven.

So briefly I am telling you, meditation is nothing but trying to think as God thinks, that’s all. You don’t have to read any book. What is God thinking? What can He think? He will think the whole universe at one stroke because He has manifested it. What is God thinking just now? The whole universe in its entire unlimited compass He is contemplating as His own body, in which you are also included because you are included in the creation of God. Therefore,

when God contemplates the whole universe as His own body, you have also gone into it. You don't exist separately. So what is God contemplating? The answer is very difficult. Is God contemplating you or contemplating Himself or contemplating the universe? All the three mean one and the same thing. When a body thinks of the feet, is it thinking of the feet or is it thinking of itself? It is thinking of itself only, though it looks as if it is thinking of the feet. If I think of my nose, I am not thinking of my nose; I am thinking of myself. So if God thinks anything, He is thinking Himself, and if He thinks you, then also He is thinking Himself. If you can train your mind to think in this fashion, you will feel a pervasion of your spirit everywhere, and you will walk on the road like a majestic divinity.

SADHANA AND POLITICS

A visitor: As *sadhaks*, should we not also become involved in political matters?

Swamiji: You have no business to get involved. You are going out of the way by thinking wrong things. Instead of thinking the Creator of the universe, you are thinking some useless things in the world. You must ask this question to God Himself: Why did You create this world? You ask Him; let us see what answer comes. He will say: "I have never created the world, and I have not created you also."

You must know what you want finally. Pursue that, and don't go in a wrong direction, looking around like this. Instead of looking around, look up and see what is above you. You will find the light of reason, and from there you will get the answer to every question in life.

As you do not know how big this universe is, you cannot know how it is working also. You are seeing a little petty ball of mud called Earth. It is the tiniest thing that you can think of in the creation, the most insignificant thing, and bigger things you have forgotten. There are the sun and the moon and the stars. What is happening in the sun and the moon and the stars? Do you know that? Then why are you worrying about little Earth, which is so tiny a speck in this vast astronomical universe? It has no value at all. The greater things are the sun, the moon and the stars, and do you know what is happening there? Do you know what is happening in space and time, and beyond the cosmos? Do you know what is happening in the heavens? Why are you not worrying about that? You are thinking of little petty things. So lift your mind above, from this horizontal way of looking to the vertical way. You must go up, and you will find the answer to every question in one second.

Suppose you are dreaming, and you have borrowed ten million dollars from somebody in dream, and you are having no money to pay back the dollars. A hundred million dollars you borrowed from somebody in the dream world for some purpose, but then you found you cannot repay that money. What is the way of repaying? Do you know? You wake up from the dream, and you have repaid it in one

second. What do you say? Suppose you wake up; the debt is paid in one instant. Or are you worrying still that you have not paid the debt? So is the problem of the world. It is something created by the human mind without understanding what is actually happening. You wake up to the Universal Being, and then all the debts are paid in one second. You need not pay any debt afterwards. But it is a very difficult subject. Your mind has to be trained for it. Untrained minds cannot understand it. Even if it is told one thousand times, you will not know what is being told.

The mathematics of creation is quite different from the arithmetic of schoolboys. They are quite different. Actually, there is no arithmetic in God. He doesn't go by mathematics. Two and two make four. Two and two do not make four there. It is quite something else. So all our thoughts have to be reoriented completely, and you have to awaken yourself to a new way of thinking. As an immortal being you must think, and not like a mortal lady. Very important matter. It requires a lot of training under a competent guide. In a few minutes you cannot understand these questions. Your question is connected with the whole creation itself. It is not connected with any particular country in the world. It is a question of the whole creation. If that is answered, every little thing is also answered. Okay?

Another visitor: What is Self-realisation of the cosmic reality?

Swamiji: It is the whole cosmos. It is not sitting inside the body. It is the all-pervading eternity. That is what you are trying to attain when you say, "I want Self-realisation." It is not this person's self or that person's self; it is the Self, the Self of the universe. If that can contemplate itself as the Self of the universe, it is God thinking Himself. This is the purpose of all yoga, by whatever name you call it. Finally it is that. Infinity and eternity should blend together in Absolute Existence. This is the purpose of every kind of spiritual effort, whatever be the technology that you adopt. Very important.

If all of you are on the right path, you belong to one single community. You belong to one community because all are on the right path. What do you say? Don't you believe that you are on the right path? Why are you hesitating? You tell me: "Yes, we are on the right path."

Visitors: Yes, we are on the right path.

Swamiji: Okay, then no problem. If you are so very confident that you are on the right path, then no problem will come to you—never. But you must be sure that you are on the right path. You have said just now that you are on the right path. Now don't withdraw that word. Permanently keep it in your mind: "I am on the right path."

The right path is that path which leads to the proper destination. Now another question comes: What is the proper destination? So one problem will lead to another problem. The right path leads to the proper destination of humanity. Am I right? Now, what is the destination you are aiming at? What do you want finally?

Visitor: Peace.

Another visitor: To be truly here.

Swamiji: Where is this place? This 'here' is... The destination is what you are aspiring for. What are you aspiring for finally? That is called the destination. Your destination is Self-realisation. Then the question comes: What is the meaning of 'Self'? So many selves are there.

This is how you have to train yourself. It requires great training. You should not be diffident. You should not be melancholy. You should not be depressed. You should not have any kind of suspicion and doubt in your mind. You may doubt anything, but you should not doubt yourself. "I am perfectly okay. Do I have any doubt about it? I am perfectly all right. Nothing wrong." Can you confidently say that in the eye of God you are perfectly all right? Are you perfectly all right in the eye of God?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Oh, blessed soul! You are a blessed soul. If you are perfectly all right in the eye of God, then there is nothing more to say. We will close our mouth.

Another visitor: I'm not perfectly all right—small self.

Swamiji: You are all right, sir. You are all right.

Visitor: Small self.

Swamiji: No, no, you are not the small self. We have already gone and clarified this matter a little bit. Never consider yourself as a small self. There is nothing wrong with you. You are perfectly all right. Your self is not small. The idea of small cannot arise unless there is also a simultaneous idea of a bigger self. The existence of a bigger thing is implied in the acceptance of the smaller, so you are implying that the bigger self also is there. So assert that. Instead of saying “I am small,” say, “By implication of my saying that I am small, I am asserting at the same time that there is a big one also, and the bigger has a still bigger one.” There is a hierarchy of bigger selves—layer by layer, layer by layer—until your self becomes as large as the entire space and time. You become a cosmic Self. Why should you say ‘become’? You are that even now, but you have, by some peculiar circumstance, come down to the level of this little six-foot long, two-feet wide small, small self, which is a travesty of affairs. You have fallen headlong down from the Garden of Eden, as the Bible will tell you. When there is a fall, it is not just a fall vertically; it is an upside down fall with legs up and head down, so we cannot see anything properly. Your perception is topsy-turvy. What is inside you see as if it is outside, and what is outside will look inside. You see your face in a mirror. The right will look like left, and the left will look like right. You go and stand in the Ganga and see yourself. The head, which is the topmost, will look like the lowermost in the reflection. You understand me? The feet, which are the lowermost, will look like the uppermost. This is what has happened to our consciousness. The whole thing is topsy-turvy. Nothing that we think is okay. For that you have to turn the tables round. The top has to go to the top only. Why should it look like it is down?

You are in the world; therefore, the world is not outside you, but yet why do you say that the world is outside? This is the topsy-turvy perception. For that you have to turn your consciousness—no turn the physical body, but to the consciousness—so that you behold yourself as that prior condition of yours before you became a human individual: the world spirit. You are the world spirit.

Expand yourself in the dimension of your consciousness: “Wider I have become, wider I have become. My being is larger than the

being of this little body. My consciousness cannot be limited to this body because I can think even the stars.” It is possible for your mind to think even the stars, which means to say, your mind can exceed even the limit of this body. It can reach up to the stars and heavens. Close the eyes and think like that. “I have become bigger and bigger, larger and larger, wider and wider, more and more profound. I have touched the corners of space and time. I am not sitting here in this room. This is an illusion that has been created by topsy-turvy perception. I am not in Rishikesh. I am not on this Earth. I am not in this world at all. I am in a cosmic dimension. I am the world spirit. Unfortunately, I have fallen down. Like an exile, I have been thrown out of heaven. I want to return.” God has kept a flaming sword, it is said, that a person who has fallen cannot go back. This flaming sword is the egoism of the person. The intense, adamant assertion of one’s own physical individuality is the flaming sword that God has kept so that you will never go back. That has to be melted down by meditation.

Close your eyes and think that your dimension has increased. You have broken the limits of the horizon. You have touched the corners of the whole space and time—as far as possible. The whole universe is melting down, and it has entered into your Universal Self. “Now I am contemplating myself as all in all. The whole universe is this body.” Then if this contemplation can continue even for a few minutes, you will get whatever you want. The universe will provide you with anything that you want because you have become a friend of the universe now. When you are considering the universe as something alien and outside you, it can give you nothing. You are afraid of it. Now you are befriending it. “My dear world, this universe, you are not outside me. I am thine, and I am thee.” Then all the treasures of the world will flow into you. You become not a man but a superman. Good days are coming. Always tell yourself: “Good days are coming for me. I am happy. God is kind to me. He has planted in my heart and in my mind these great ideas that are entering into me just now in this little room. I am blessed. Everything shall be all right.” So, tell yourself.

THE CASTE SYSTEM

Swamiji: The caste system is a classification according to the disposition of the mind and the ability to contribute to society. It has nothing to do with superior/inferior and all that, as is the case nowadays. It is a tragedy to consider something as superior, something as inferior.

In the Purusha Sukta of the Veda this caste system has been mentioned. The face or the brain of the Virat Purusha is Brahmana, the arms are the Kshatriya, the thighs are the Vaishya, the legs are the Sudra. Now, do you mean there is inferiority and superiority there? Can you say the legs are inferior? It is the cooperative activity of the social system depicted in this analogy of the Purusha Sukta.

There are four things necessary for administration. There must be spiritual direction; everything is based on spiritual direction. Then there must be administrative capacity. There must be trade, and there must be production. The production is Sudra. Trade, commerce, etc., is Vaishya. Administrative capacity and political administration are Kshatriya. And wisdom is Brahmana. So all the four are necessary. The brain has to work, the arms have to work, the thighs have to move, and the legs have to move. It is an organic conception of society which has nothing to do with superior and inferior. Brahmana is superior to Sudra; this idea must go. It is a cooperative action. It is like saying the brain is very important, the legs we don't want. You should not say like that. Which part of your body is a Sudra? You have no such thing. It is yourself. They perform functions in different ways. It is a functional cooperative system. But prejudice has entered into it, and one man says someone is inferior to someone else. That is a tragedy that has crept into the originally well-conceived social organisational system. Otherwise, it is perfectly in order. Everywhere you will find... Right from Plato's time it is going on. There is an administrator, there is a warrior, there is a tradesman, there is a producer. Everywhere you will find these four varieties. Society cannot exist unless these four cooperate with each other.

A visitor: But Sudras are debarred from the study of Vedas.

Swamiji: That is a tragedy, again. They should not be debarred.

There is no inferiority/superiority among human beings. Only their capacity might be less or more because of the preponderance of the *gunas*, that's all. Otherwise, basically, you cannot consider any person as an evil man. It is not proper. There are no evil people in the world. That is not correct. It is only a gradation of capacity and the power of absorption, understanding. In a motor car, is the engine more important or are the wheels more important, or the steering is more important? You should not compare like that. All are important. You want only the engine; if you say like that, the wheels will not work.

You must have a charitable heart, and broad-mindedness. Too much constriction of the heart is no good. The universe is one family, and which member is a bad man? In a family, no member is bad. They are all cooperative people. The whole universe is one family under the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. But people degenerate into selfishness gradually, little by little, and say, "I am all right, and you are not all right." This idea of 'I and you' must go away.

Visitor: This is not correct to debar them from the study of Vedas?

Swamiji: No, they can study. But if they are unable to understand it and chant it, then there are other scriptures like the Puranas, Mahabharata, etc. The Vedas have to be recited with proper effort. Even among Brahmins, all cannot chant. Some of them simply go on saying something but the intonation is not correct because they are not trained. They are simply reading a passage and chanting.

There is a special technique of chanting Veda mantras. It is like music, raga; everybody cannot sing music. You can read the words of the song, but you cannot follow the tune. Without the tune, there is no music. The words are not the song; the tune is the song. Like that is the Veda also. You can chant it, but it is not like prose. It has got a tune. That is the speciality of Veda; there is a sonorous tune and an emphasis on high pitch and low pitch, and so on. Without knowing that, you should not chant it, just as ragas are mutilated if you don't know the pitch and notation, etc. Otherwise, no objection. Anybody can do it.

BECOMING A FRIEND OF GOD

Swamiji: [To a visitor] Projected out through the ray... The heat and light of the ray is nothing but the heat and light of the Sun himself. So whatever intelligence you have got, and whatever facility you have got in your life, whatever comfort you have got, whatever be the welfare that you are enjoying, they are all emanations from that Mighty Being. And your welfare, your blessedness, will go on increasing both in quantity and in quality, in proportion with your identification of your being with that Being. If you are a very close friend of a powerful person, your power will be still more, and if you are closely related to the mighty Creator, then you will be an indomitable example for all people in the world.

A friend of God is not a human being; he is a little God only. But it is difficult to become a friend of God. Unless you have some quality of God in you, you cannot be His friend. If I can think like you and if you can think like me, we become friends immediately. But if you think this way and I think that way, we cannot be friends. So if your way of thinking is not in any way harmonious with the way God thinks, then no such contact is possible.

God thinks in a universalised manner, whereas we think in a particularised, externalised, sensory manner. We look outward to see anything, but God sees everything everywhere, like the solar orb seeing everything. If the Sun is seeing anything, he doesn't see as we see with our eyes. It is a total enveloping perception. So God's perception is a total, all-comprehensive perception. To the extent you are able to envisage and imbibe this way of universal perception, you will become a mini universal man. This is the essence of spirituality, religion, yoga—the way to blessedness. Our hands and feet, however much active they may be, cannot bring us perpetual blessedness. Human effort is nothing independent of God's grace. God's grace is first; human effort is only in addition to it.

So what I'm saying is, you are a busy man evidently, and you are also blessed in your own way, but you should be able to maintain this blessedness and enhance it to the extent possible by close association of your spirit with the spirit of the universe. This is called meditation. Feel your presence in the vicinity of God, as if

He is seeing you. You feel the all-knowing, all-seeing, omnipotent Being is looking at you. You feel as if from all sides it is seeing you like this. Visualise: From all sides it is looking at me with millions of eyes, with compassion, with grace. You will feel a tremor in your body at that time. You will feel a shaking of the system if you sincerely, honestly and deeply feel that you are being seen from all sides. Generally, we do not like to be seen from all sides. It is not a happy thing. But here it is a blessing because God's seeing is also an energy flowing. If you actually do this every day, you will see what difference it makes to your life.

Visitor: How do you control your mind during adversity?

Swamiji: You need not control the mind. You simply concentrate it on God, and it is controlled automatically. How do you control a thief? You place him before a policeman, and then he is controlled automatically. So God's vision is like a policeman standing, and before Him no thought can arise. How to drive away the darkness of night? If you ask this question, what can I tell you? You must wait for the rise of the Sun; then the darkness of night goes. Though the darkness of night is so thick, in one second it goes. So whatever be the problems of life, they will melt away before the light of this great Grace. You must have faith that it will work.

Visitor: How do you take away all the oppression?

Swamiji: You need not take away anything. I told you, why are you trying to take away? Bring That. When That comes, this goes. You should not do the topsy-turvy method. Don't try to drive away anything. Let them be there. Bring the force; this goes automatically.

Visitor: You bring the force through meditation.

Swamiji: Yes, and then all these troubles that you are talking about will melt away in their own way, like mist before the sun.

Visitor: How long do you practise meditation to do that?

Swamiji: It depends upon your facilities. How much time you can devote is left to you only. Start with half an hour. I don't try to impose any idea on your mind. I would wish one hour, but you can start with half an hour in the morning before you take your breakfast. Sit like

this, compose yourself, and collect your thoughts in the direction of what I am explaining to you just now. The same thing you do before going to bed in the night, for half an hour. At least twice, morning and evening—after waking up, before breakfast, and in the evening before going to bed. And then by practice you will feel the joy of it, the benefit of it. You would like yourself to increase the duration for some time.

You are welcome to come again. God bless you.

HELPING HUMANITY

A visitor: How can I help humanity?

Swamiji: It is not in your hand. It is in the hand of the collective totality of humanity. It is not one person speaking. You cannot solve the world problems unless you become a world man. You must become as long and as wide as the world itself, and then with that power you can change creation itself. But as an ordinary individual you can do nothing. You can only make yourself all right, and make your next door neighbour also all right, then make a third person all right, then make a fourth person all right. Like that you go on increasing the number of people whom you will make all right, in the same way as you made yourself all right. When the number of people who have become all right goes on increasing, so much of the problem goes away. Do you understand me? This is how you have to increase the circle. You increase the circle until you reach the largest circle, as much as possible.

I told you yesterday that you have to do some meditation, and I gave you the brief technique of it. I hope you remember it.

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Don't forget it. Meditation is the art of building up your personality internally as well as externally. It is a holistic reconstruction and reconstitution of your psychophysical personality. That is meditation. It is a scientific exercise, very important for every person.

Visitor: Do you think it is scientific?

Swamiji: Nothing is more scientific than that. You are setting yourself in tune with nature, which is the most scientific thing you can think of, and finally you are setting yourself in tune with the mighty Creative Principle of the universe. And what can be a greater science than that? All other sciences come afterwards. All physics, biology, chemistry, they all come afterwards. But this is a transcendental science.

Visitor: For us they are two different parts.

Swamiji: They are not two different parts. The other sciences are only external manifestations of that internal science. It is the controlling switchbox, I can say, of every other science you can think of in the world. It is a total science. Other sciences in the world are partial, segregated, one different from the other, whereas that includes everything. That's why I said it is holistic in its nature—holistic, total. It is a total science which includes geography, history, politics, everything.

Another visitor: I teach yoga.

Swamiji: You have got your own centre.

Visitor: No, I'm teaching at some different yoga schools, just teaching asanas.

Swamiji: Do you teach meditation also?

Visitor: No, I don't teach meditation. I just teach asanas.

Swamiji: If you don't teach meditation, what will happen is the body will be stabilised in some way because of the yoga exercises, but the mind will not be stabilised because you have ignored it. If you ignore the mind, it will not be pleasing to the mind. It requires respect, because the body and mind go together. You cannot separate them. You cannot have physical health without mental stability. So what is the harm if you teach them the art of mental harmonisation? What do you lose by that?

Visitor: I don't think I have anything to lose. Maybe I should do that.

Swamiji: The alignment of personality is mostly a psychological process, which is a part of meditation. Your person should be aligned properly. That is to say, you should have internal stability and composure. The body and mind should be made stable; otherwise, a person will be sick mentally. Balanced thinking is what I meant by proper alignment of personality. You should not go to extremes this way or that way. You will feel a satisfaction inside you. That is a sign of internal balance. Do you feel a satisfaction inside you? Otherwise, that is no good. Something is seriously wrong inside if there is no satisfaction, and what is wrong, each one has to know for oneself.

You have to adjust yourself with everything. Mere physical exercise is not sufficient. Our sorrows, our griefs are not born of the physical body. They are born of our mind only, in the way in which we are thinking.

Another visitor: Last night they chanted the Fourteenth Chapter of the Gita, and in it it speaks of the *gunas* as something distinct from the Self. In meditation I am confused because it feels like the mind is something that is superimposed, and I don't understand whether it's to be rejected or controlled, and if it is to be controlled, who is controlling the mind.

Swamiji: The best thing is not to think of the *gunas*. You simply feel that they don't exist at all. They are three types of disturbance that arise in the mind. There is no need of going into detail of all these things. If your mind is able to fix itself satisfactorily on whatever your concept of the Almighty is, these *gunas* will fly away like birds. They won't come near you afterwards.

These *gunas* are only certain types of imbalance of the mind. They don't exist outside the mind. It is a very interesting subject. The *gunas* do not exist independent of the mind. They are the very threads out of which the very fabric of the mind is woven. Just as threads make the cloth and minus threads there is no cloth, minus the *gunas* there is no mind. If the mind is able to adjust itself to the lofty concept of the great Universal Principle, these *gunas* will subside automatically. They will find themselves in a state of balance.

There is nothing equal to meditation. Everything will follow from that. You should not go on reading books unnecessarily, and hearing all kinds of sermons. They may be good in their own way, but they will all be covered by this one masterstroke of maintaining oneself in a satisfactory position in the light of the presence of the Almighty in whatever way you may be considering it, whatever way you conceive it.

You should not think too much of these *gunas*. They actually don't exist except as constituents of the mind itself.

Visitor: In meditation it feels like there is a contradiction for myself of a feeling for who I am, as I am, to concentrate on some Almighty wonder, and to be separate from it.

Swamiji: It is not separate.

Visitor: I know. That's the contradiction.

Swamiji: What is the use of saying "I know, and it is a contradiction"? If your mind cannot accommodate itself to the presence of the Almighty, it should try to do that by repeated exercise of concentration. It cannot get accommodated abruptly like that. It requires daily practice. Anything with which it is not accustomed, it will not agree to. But it is necessary to make it get adjusted to that thought, and a day will come when it will be a normal way of thinking.

RETREATING INTO YOURSELF

Swamiji: Retreat into yourself. Go back into yourself. Now you are outside you. Now go inside. You are thinking so many things outside. Therefore, you are not in yourself always. You are mostly outside you.

Visitors: Yes.

Swamiji: Is it meaningful to hear that a person can be outside one's own self? Do you make any sense when I say that a person can be outside one's own self? How can one person become something different from oneself? That is what we are doing actually, to the sorrow of everybody. To be something which is not oneself, that is the way of the world. That must be taken care of properly. You have to know yourself first before you know the world or anybody else.

This is virtually meditation: deep concentration of yourself in the ultimate fact of your own being. 'Ultimate fact of your being' is neither American nor European nor English nor anything. You must find out what it is. What is the ultimate fact of your being? Before you were born into a particular country in this world, you must have been existing somewhere; and that somewhere would not have been a country like this, and that has as much value as what you ascribe to your present situation.

There are endless realms of being, and the soul that one is ascends and descends through these infinite number of realms of being. When it ascends it becomes more and more rarefied, more and more expanded in its dimension, and when it descends it becomes more and more gross, and it becomes so material until it becomes this heavy physical body. That it has entered this physical body and virtually become the body itself is the worst thing that could happen to any person. You cannot go further down. When consciousness has become matter—consciousness cannot become matter, they are opposites, but yet when we feel that we are physically sitting here, consciousness has managed to deceive itself into the feeling that it is this material embodiment.

So this physical life of ours is a kind of transcendental deception, you can say. It is not an ordinary deception, but a transcendental

misfortune that has befallen everybody. And so practice of yoga and meditation is not to be taken lightly. It is a serious matter. To disentangle yourself as a spiritual entity from the physical embodiment, and find yourself in the rarefied atmosphere of the higher realms of being, is the spiritual ascent spoken of. The whole life must be dedicated for this purpose, and there is no other duty I can think of for any human being: to free yourself from this prison-house of material embodiment and wrong perception. Let the soul speak.

This is my brief message to you.

Visitors: Thank you.

MODERN PHYSICS AND THE ABSOLUTE

Swamiji: The world will not bend before you. It is vehement. But if your meditation is equally vehement, it will bend. Even a hard steel rod can be made to bend by heating it. Blacksmiths bend iron rods, though ordinarily they will not bend like that. Even steel will melt in the furnace. So the steel of human egoism can be made into a liquid of accountability, provided your meditation is a furnace. If you simply think something, wool gathering, it won't work like that, because nature knows you are a child of nature.

Scientists, anthropologists, cosmologists and astronomers tell us man is a latecomer in the process of evolution. In the beginning, there was no human being, as you know already. There was only an indescribable cosmic atom, and if you believe in the doctrine of modern physics, there was a Big Bang. And where were you at that time? Do you believe that you were there, or you were not there?

A visitor: In the Big Bang?

Swamiji: When the Big Bang took place, where were you? It is a very important matter. You should not get defeated by that. I will tell you one thing, my dear friend, which is surprising. Even now, just here, you are in the same place where you were at the time of the Big Bang. You will be wondering what is this swami talking. It looks nonsense, isn't it? There was no time; there was no such thing called time at the time of the Big Bang. Time is a falsehood; therefore, you can be at that time, and now also at the same time because there was no time. Time is an illusion created by a maladjustment of the later development of personality with that original that it was. The mind cannot conceive all these things.

Think: "I am just now in the same place where I was at the time of the Big Bang. Millions and millions of years have passed, and I was there, but even now I am there only. I am not in America, I am not on this Earth." Can you accommodate yourself to this thought? You will melt immediately into the whole that you are talking about, and the whole world will come and prostrate itself before you. Would you like it?

Visitor: It's fantastic. [Laughter]

Swamiji: You see, meditation is not a joke. It is not some routine—just get up in the morning and roll the beads, or anything. It won't work like that. We cannot deceive ourselves like that by being too officiously religious. It won't work like that. There is no use of being religious, and even modern spirituality. Everywhere there is spirituality these days, everywhere yoga. So many centres are there of yoga teaching. They get on. That becomes a kind of business afterwards, a kind of trade—a yoga trade. It will not work.

This kind of thing that I am telling you is a magical formula which will transform you in an instant if you are prepared for it. But how will you get yourself prepared for it? You have got an adamant individuality which refuses to melt into the Big Bang, and all that. You say: "No, it is not like that. I came just now. I was born some years back, and the Big Bang happened so long ago. How can I be now at the same place?" You forget that time does not exist and, therefore, then and now have no meaning. The then can be now and the now can be then, because at that time there was no time, there was no eternity, and therefore no space. The universe was not big like this. Inconceivable. A little bit of study of modern physics is also good. It is very wonderful. Some of the great masters of modern physics lead you gradually to the height of spiritual thinking, like Sir Arthur Eddington. Have you heard of him?

Visitor: No, I haven't heard of him.

Swamiji: Oh, you can hear him. I will mention some names of great masters in modern physics. They have stumbled upon the Absolute by going the other way around. They have gone the wrong way, and finally they fell on it willy-nilly by mathematical compulsion. Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington. You know there is a thing called quantum mechanics? It was discovered by a German physicist called Max Planck, and it has transformed the concept of the world to such an extent that you will be wondering whether the world exists—whether it is existing or only we are dreaming.

I'm not talking about that subject now. "There are more things in heaven and on earth than our philosophy dreams of." This is what Hamlet said. You should not be satisfied that you know everything.

We are nothing, poor fellows, compared to the vast ocean of knowledge that is there. Heaven is larger than you can think it to be. Heaven is not as the Bible describes it. It is something more than that. And we are also something more than what we appear to be to our own selves. We have to be very humble, very simple, and always bending before the might of the mystery of the universe. And if you want to trust in God, you must trust in the true God. It is not a Christian God, a Hindu god—nothing of the kind. There is a true God who is above all these gods, who will melt everybody together into the liquid of comprehensiveness.

I am telling you something which will stimulate your mind. It will stir your mind into a way of thinking which is not usual, and with which nobody is accustomed.

Now I have said everything. Now you speak. [Laughter]. You have got a standard method of technique of meditation. You said there is a standard way of meditation.

Visitor: It is very simple. Just to... [pause]

Swamiji: You ask them to sit like this. And how do they accommodate themselves?

Visitor: Be still, at ease, and to pay attention.

Swamiji: What are they attending? Attention to what?

Visitor: Nothing specific.

Swamiji: Are they conscious at that time?

Visitor: Very conscious.

Swamiji: It is not consciousness of something?

Visitor: It is consciousness of everything.

Swamiji: Can you be conscious of everything at the same time?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Everything—you must know what everything is. How big is everything? There should be nothing outside that 'everything'. If there is something outside the everything, it is not everything. Again I am coming to the same point.

This is a great exercise which is dear to the soul of every person. The soul is wanting it. It is crying for it. You are not giving time for it to come out. That's why everybody is restless. The restlessness and inadequacy and insufficiency that everyone feels in oneself is due to the call of the Infinite. It is telling, "Come on." When the Infinite calls, the finite feels wretched, miserable. Every type of happiness that we have, and restlessness and inadequacy, is the result of our inability to properly respond to the call of the Infinite. We bungle completely. We make a mistake. Even before God we cannot speak. If God calls—suppose you get a notice tomorrow—if God calls, what will you say? How will you say it? What is He going to do? There is fear, like a judiciary sending a summons. You don't want a judiciary sending a summons to any person. You will think what kind of trouble this is, and all that. The greatest judiciary is God Himself, and you don't want to be summoned like that, unawares. What do you say?

Visitor: I agree.

Swamiji: Our concept of God is very funny. I heard a story. When the great ship Titanic was sinking, people said, "You pray. You all have to pray." Immediately one of the crew went in and put on good dress—pants and all that. He was asked, "What is the matter?" "I don't want to go to God like a poor man. I must look decent before Him," he said. He may be honest in thinking like that. When I go to God, will I go wearing a rag? I will go as a decent man. This is also a concept of God if we think that we can go to God in this dress. Strait is the gate, narrow, only one person can go at a time. Narrow is the way. You cannot carry luggage when you go to God. Your body also is a luggage. That also cannot be taken. Anything that is not me cannot go, and the body is not me, so it will not come. You will be stripped of all raiment which is encrusting you with material associations.

You can't imagine what it is. Spiritually stark naked you will stand before the Absolute, and no lawyer will come and protect you at that time. Nobody will argue on your behalf. You have to answer all the questions yourself: "What have you done?" "I went to the hotel and ate, I went here and there. What can I do?" You should not say like that. You must tell powerfully before God, "Great Almighty,

You have sent me as an ambassador of Thyself, and I have fulfilled Your command and come successful.” You tell that. You are an ambassador of God. He has sent you for a purpose. He has not sent you here to enjoy in the restaurant, and travelling here and there. There is a mission with which you have been sent here: to spread divinity in the world, to implant godliness in the hearts of people and turn people in the direction of that Almighty. For that purpose He has sent you here. But if you misuse this great blessing with which you have come here...

Our understanding is the blessing. Your intellect is very clear. Suppose your mind is not working; how will you exist in the world? Wealth, property, land, friendship—these are not as valuable as the understanding. Clear understanding, clear perception, powerful reason, clean intellect—that is the greatest blessing. That is your property. If the understanding is misled, what is the good of wealth? If a person cannot think properly, what is the good of the wealth of that person? He may be a millionaire, but his mind is not working. Let the person be a pauper financially but the mind is brilliant, and he is a genius.

Many of the geniuses of the world were poor people. Some of the greatest saints were farmers, carpenters, shoemakers. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a priest, a poor priest in the temple. Christ was the son of a carpenter. Jacob Boehme, a German mystic, was a shoemaker. It doesn't mean that Godmen are always rich people. They will be the opposite of it. The nearer you go to God, the farther you seem to be going away from the world. The more does God want you, the less does the world seem to want you. All Godmen were rejected by the world. They were crucified. They were thrown out. The world doesn't want that because the world goes in a centrifugal direction, and Godward movement is centripetal. Centripetal means movement in the direction of the centre of the universe, and centrifugal means going opposite, in the direction of the periphery or circumference. We are all moving outside, in the outer circle, and cannot know what is inside us.

That is why, in one of the Indian scriptures, God is supposed to have said: “The more I love a person as My devotee, the more I deprive him of all material facilities.” Look at St. Francis of Assisi,

and so many saints like that. They were Godmen. They had nothing to wear, not even a cloth. Ramakrishna Paramahansa I mentioned to you, an illiterate priest of a little temple, and he could contact God. He could visualise the Absolute everywhere. He would tremble by being possessed of the All-being. And other great Masters there were. Great heroes were there—Moses was there, Christ was there, what to talk of that.

There was a great mystic in Alexandria called Plotinus, a Greek mystic. He wrote a book called *Enneads*. ‘*Enneads*’ means a book of nine chapters. He describes the Absolute. He is the only person—he is the only mystic, to my knowledge—who says that he has entered the Absolute three times. Nobody says like that generally. “Three times I entered the lion’s den,” he says. Entering God, entering the bosom of the Absolute may look like entering the lion’s den. And what will the lion do? It will swallow you. Would you like to be swallowed by God? Even God should not swallow you. You don’t want that.

There are great philosophers, professors and masters of thinking who cannot, especially in the West, accommodate themselves to the thought that in the ultimate liberation, personality is abolished and individuality melts. You don’t exist at all. That alone is, and you cannot be there. Nobody can accommodate oneself to this thought. One professor from Cornell University came here. He said, “I am not there at all, you are telling me. Then what is the purpose of going there? I will not exist there.” Now, he doesn’t catch the point.

Actually, you will be there in a real sense, not in the unreal sense that you appear to be now. There is an original of every person in the heavens. We are the duplicates here sitting. It was Plato who said that we are shadows of the archetypes. We are all shadows of our own selves. That’s why we are pulled up every time. We never get satisfied with anything. We want more and more, more and more. Give anything to a person—“No, I want still more”—which is another way of wanting one’s own self in the higher heavens. The heavenly archetype of your existence is pulling you up: “Don’t be satisfied with anything.” So you feel miserable in this world. Your real status is in the heavens. You have come here as an exile, if you want to call it so. But Plato says you are a shadow cast by your

own self, as you ought to be, as you are in the high heavens, in the eternal kingdom of the Ideas, as he calls it. The Idea doesn't mean the mind thinking; it is the Logos of the cosmos, Eternal Idea. That is your home. We are wandering here as people thrown out from the kingdom of heaven, as shadows. Would you like to be a shadow of your own self and bury yourself in the streets? What a shameful thing.

You want to turn the table round and go back to your original archetype, which is in the high heavens, and the high heaven is not only geographically or geometrically high; it is an all-pervading eternity. Time must melt in eternity. Space should melt. And then what happens, you will know when you go there. What do you say? I cannot say anything further. You go there and tell me what you saw. If you can come back and tell me what you saw...

They say you will not come back. A person who has become wise will not want to become foolish once again. If a fool has become a wise man will he say, "My foolishness has gone. I have lost something"? He has not lost anything. If a person is sick and he has gained health, will he say, "Oh my dear illness, it has gone. I have lost something"? Will anybody say like that? Illness is an unnatural state, and so you are not losing anything. So all your property in this world is unnatural possession. You are catching a shadow, but the original is somewhere else. If the consciousness can contemplate on this eternal archetype of everyone's being, I think that would be true meditation.

PRATITYASAMUTPADA: DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

A visitor: I am a Buddhist nun. I don't know anything about God.

Swamiji: What do you want to know?

Visitor: What is God?

Swamiji: Why do you want to know what is God?

Visitor: Because people talk about God often, and I don't know what God is.

Swamiji: You tell me what you know already. You tell me what are the things you know.

Visitor: I know the place of *anatta*—no self. I know that from experience.

Swamiji: *Anatta* means there is no soul, no soul.

Visitor: Soul isn't mentioned in Buddhism.

Swamiji: *Anatta* means it doesn't exist. It does not exist, that is *anatta*. It is a Pali translation of the Sanskrit word *anatman*. *Anatman* means non-self.

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Very good. You know *anatta*. And after that what happens?

Visitor: From that, states of consciousness arise and pass away, but are still sometimes refined and mostly crude. There is attachment to states sometimes, more often than not.

Swamiji: Why are you attached?

Visitor: Because I am not clear.

Swamiji: What is your problem?

Visitor: Greed, hatred and delusion—the usual problems of a human formation.

Swamiji: You tell them: “I am not happy with you. You go!” Tell

the greed: “I am not happy with you. From tomorrow onwards I am not greedy.” You have got understanding. You can tell your mind, “Greed is not good for you, jealousy is not good for you, hatred is not good for you. From tomorrow don’t come,” and it will go. The mind is intelligent. It is not a foolish thing, so it will understand.

From tomorrow onwards, think only of Pure Substance. Think like that, and it will automatically adjust itself because nobody wants unnecessary things. It wants only good things, and you can find out from your heart what is a good thing; that thing which will satisfy your heart, that is a good thing.

You are meditating according to Buddhist psychology, isn’t it? Your method of meditation is based on Buddhist psychology?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Do you know Pratityasamutpada, the Buddhist terminology for dependent origination?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: You meditate like that. Dependent origination is a big series of twelve links from cause to effect, from effect to cause. This is the essence of Buddhism. It is called Pratityasamutpada, and in English it is called dependent origination: one thing hanging on another thing. There are twelve links in the chain, and if you can continuously meditate on these twelve links, up and down, you will be free from bondage. That is sufficient for you. Meditate on dependent origination.

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Thank you.

Another visitor: During my meditation I try to feel that I am growing, growing, growing.

Swamiji: That is very good. It is a proper method. Correct. But how far will you grow, to what extent? You can extend up to the skies.

Visitor: Yes, over the skies.

Swamiji: The problem is very simple. We are thinking that we are sitting here only, in this body. It is not true. You are not sitting in this

body. You are a little more than what you are. This is what you mean by saying 'expanding'.

There are many methods. One of the methods is a very beautiful description by Sage Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras. Feel that you are sitting there, not here. You are sitting there. Strongly you feel like this: "I am sitting over there, and I am seeing myself here. I am not sitting here. I am sitting there. I am in Swargashram, on the other side of the Ganga." Strongly feel: "I am in Swargashram, and here is only the body; I am seeing only the body." Then you feel: "I am still further up. I am in the skies." It requires a little power of will to imagine like that. You are sitting at the top of the terrace of the sky itself, and from there you are seeing the whole world. You are seeing Italy, India, America, this country, that country; you are seeing the sun, moon, stars, everything, and you are on top, sitting.

Your mind will slip from there. It won't agree. But again you say: "I am sitting on the roof of the world. I am on the roof of the world. I am above the sky. I am as vast as the sky. I have become as big as the sky. I am the sky itself. The sky is my body." Go on telling yourself this. You may not speak loudly; you may mentally say: "The sky is my body. Oh, how big I am!" So all these people sitting here have also gone inside you. The whole world has been swallowed by you. "So big I am. So what do I want? There is nothing that I want because all things that I want are inside me only. All things that I want are inside me only, so if I want anything, what shall I do? I have to think, and it comes; that's all. If I think, it comes. It comes not because it is somewhere; it is me only. The thing that I want is myself only, in my larger dimension." Go on telling this again and again, again and again, again and again, again and again, and as big as the whole universe you become.

And you can go even further: "I am sitting on the throne of the Almighty Creator. Oh, I am seeing the whole universe. I have become one with the Creator of the universe. What do I want? What does the Creator of the universe want? Nothing. So in that case I also want nothing because I have become one with it. What am I seeing now? I am seeing the whole universe as my body. I have expanded, expanded, expanded. I have gone outside of myself. First I went to Swargashram, then I went further up to the skies, went beyond the

sun the moon and the stars, went beyond space and time. Beyond to the kingdom of heaven I have reached. So big I have become. So what do I want now?" Go on telling yourself. This is a kind of psychological treatment. "What do I want? Nothing. I want nothing because already I have got everything. A person who has everything does not want anything. Oh, how happy, how happy! I am happy, permanent, eternal. I will not die because death is possible only if I have got a body. I have gone out of that body. I am sitting in eternal light. The whole transformation of evolution, coming and going in the process of creation, it is all within me taking place."

You will feel some indescribable power entering into you at that time. It is impossible to describe what you feel at that time. You will feel all these mountains becoming liquid and entering into you. "The mountains are becoming liquid and entering into me. The sky also is melting. Even time is melting. The sun is also melting and entering me. The great force of the sun and the moon and the stars, wind and atmosphere, they are all liquefied and enter into my cosmic being." So what strength you have got now! Can you imagine what strength you have got? "Indomitable power, eternal existence, unlimited happiness, immortal being. I am blessed." Chant like this. Every day you do it, as many times as possible.

Visitor: It is a process of affirmation.

Swamiji: Complete affirmation of the consciousness. The consciousness is foolishly now tying itself to this body. That must be removed by deep, deep, deep affirmation like this—going outside the body by affirmation, feeling yourself as wide as possible, until you cover the whole creation. This is the method. You will feel something happening even by hearing all this.

Visitor: Thank you, Swamiji. I feel the truth of what you say.

Swamiji: You will feel a tremor and the prana adjusting itself. A new constitution takes place inside.

MANY REALMS AT THE SAME TIME

Swamiji: A person can be in many places at the same time. In one realm of being you are doing something; in another realm of being you are doing another thing. And there are an infinite number of realms of being, and in all the realms you are operating simultaneously. In one realm you may be a king, in another realm you can be a beggar, in a third you are a brahmachari, in a fourth you are working hard, in a fifth you are something else. Anything is possible due to the variety of karmas embedded in your heart. These experiences of multiple personalities doing varieties of things is due to the work of the infinite variety of karmas that you have performed since many incarnations.

So you are everywhere, doing varieties of things. Only thing is, now here you are bound to the space-time complex of this world, so you are thinking only this body. The other space-time complexes are cut off; you cannot see them, just as you cannot see the people that you saw in dream. They are also real only. These are not unreal people. When you enter that realm, you see them wandering there. Actually, the people you saw in dream are existing. They are not unreal phantoms. They are existing in some realm. And whatever you saw, whatever you were, whatever you did experience in dream, you are actually experiencing in some realm.

So you have got a multiple personality, and that you are confined unfortunately to one particular personality only is a suffering that is caused. If you realise that your personality is multiple, and that in every realm you are doing different things simultaneously, you become a cosmic operator. There is no difference between dream and waking. Both are equally real. When a dream is there, it is as real as this. And when you wake up to the *mahat tattva* of the cosmic consciousness, this will look like dream. But it is not dream when you are experiencing it.

Actually, there is something beyond the cosmic mind also. So every level will look like something inferior in comparison with the higher, but by itself nothing is inferior. Everything is perfectly all right. Everything is a lesser truth, but not untruth. There is no such thing as untruth in the world. There is only a lesser truth. From

untruth you cannot go to the truth. It is not possible because there is no ladder from untruth to truth. But from the lesser truth to the higher truth there is a ladder. If the world is totally unreal, you cannot go to God because unreal things cannot help you in going up. So the world is not unreal; it is a lesser real. It is a ladder that enables you to go up to God.

So don't say anything is a non-entity and it doesn't exist, and all that. It exists. Anything that consciousness approves as existent is existing in a particular time and space. If your consciousness says it exists, it is really there. And if the consciousness feels it is not there, it is really not there. So you cannot say what is there and what is not there. Everything is there if your consciousness says it is there. Any level of experience is there, and no untruth exists. It is a lesser truth only.

So you must be very happy to hear this, that you are living in a wonderful world, and you are blessed.

A visitor: May I have a better definition of a lesser truth and truth?

Swamiji: That which is less comprehensive is the lesser truth. That which is more comprehensive is the higher truth. That which includes more of the universe into itself is the higher truth. That which includes a lesser part of the universe...

Now you are a person. As an individual confined to the physical body, you are a lesser truth than the community of human beings to which also you belong. You may say the nation is a larger truth than an individual. Because you are merged into that, you are included. The international system of administration is a larger truth than the localised country's national system. And the world as a whole, when it operates, is to be considered as a larger reality than what is happening merely here. Finally, the largest truth is that which includes everything in space and time, and when you come down to the lower level of wholeness... Everything is a whole only. You are a whole person, the family is a whole, the village is a whole, the district is a whole, the state is a whole, the country is a whole, the world is a whole, and everything is a whole only, but lesser wholes and bigger wholes. A little baby is a whole person, and a grown-up person is a whole person. A very mature person like you is a whole person. Even when you become old, you are a whole person.

So wholeness has degrees of comprehensiveness. You are an elderly, mature person, a whole in your own self, but your comprehensiveness as a whole, as an adult, a grown-up, mature person, is wider than the wholeness of a little child in the mother's womb. So like that, everything is a whole only. Everything is a holistic movement. There is no fraction anywhere. Even an insect is a whole, an elephant is a whole. Everything is a whole. A leaf is a whole, a plant is a whole. There is no fraction anywhere. Only they are less comprehensive in comparison with the higher one to which they belong and of which they are a part. Do you understand me?

Visitor: Yes. Thank you.

Swamiji: Thank you. Hari Om. Om Namō Narayanaya.

MATERIALISM IS ONE ASPECT OF THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD

A visitor: Too many times I feel like a coward on the spiritual path.

Swamiji: Why? Why like that?

Visitor: I don't know. I still have one foot in the material world. I'm like a half-hearted seeker.

Swamiji: The material world is not outside God. So there is not one leg this side and one leg that side; that question does not arise. There are no two legs there. There is one leg only. You have made a mistake of thinking that the world is outside God, so when you search for God, you are thinking that the world is causing some obstruction. This is what you are feeling. That is what you meant by saying 'materialism' and all that.

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: There is no materialism. These words should not be used. It is one aspect of the manifestation of God Himself. When eternity manifests itself in time, it looks like the world. There is no world, really speaking, apart from God. It is a spatiotemporal condensation of the timeless eternity in the form of space and time—a little hard thing to imagine. The mind cannot conceive what happens at that time.

Gas can become liquid. For example, hydrogen and oxygen become water—H₂O they call it. H₂O. Two particles of hydrogen and one of oxygen blended together become water, but originally they were gas. Water can solidify itself and become ice. Ice can get hardened after many years into a rocklike substance. It can become hard like stone if it goes on condensing itself in intense frigidity and cold. Now, you cannot say the hard substance is outside the gas. The gas itself is a hard substance. Eternity itself is time. Time itself is the world, and you are inseparable from it. So there is a holistic manifestation, which is called the universe. The universe is the body of the Almighty.

So there are no two legs, as you said. It is the lower and the

higher appearing to be different from one another, like a baby and an adult. The baby itself becomes the adult. Now, you cannot say when you are a baby you are in one world and when you are an adult you are in another world. Only the degree of density and comprehension has changed, but the same person has become the adult person. So the world is a condensation of the time process, not existing outside eternity, which is God. It is a vertical ascent and a similar descent, but not horizontal. The world is not outside us. It is involved in the entire cosmic operation, and you are inside it, so you are in one stage of the evolutionary process. The world cannot be considered as an outside object, just as you are not an outside object to your own self. If you consider yourself as integrally related to the whole creation, you will not find that the world is outside you, because that would mean that you are outside your own self. It is an impossible thing. It requires a little bit of hard thinking. The world is not outside you, and you are not outside the world. You are involved in the world. You are inseparable from the world. So when you think, the whole world thinks, as it were. This is the beginning of spirituality. Spirituality begins with your attempt to think as the world thinks, and not as Mr. so-and-so thinks. Mr. so-and-so does not exist outside the world. You are integrally connected with the whole structure of the world. You are organically connected with the whole world, like the limbs of the body. The limb is not outside the body; so you are not outside the world. So in that case, when you think, the whole world thinks; and if the whole world thinks, it is like God thinking.

Okay? This is how you have to raise your mental operation from the lower wholeness of individuality of your own body, and raise it to the wider comprehensiveness of the whole world, and raise it further up to the eternal comprehensiveness of the whole of creation, so that you rise gradually from your body consciousness, individuality consciousness, personality consciousness, to world consciousness, from world consciousness to space-time consciousness, from space-time consciousness to Absolute consciousness.

So spirituality is a rise from the bottom to the top. It is not moving horizontally from this side to that side. There is no world outside you, so you cannot say one leg is in the world. Give up that idea. Did you catch what I said?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: This is the essence of spirituality, the essence of meditation, the essence of yoga, the essence of anything whatsoever. Everything worthwhile I have told you in a brief compass.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF YOGA

A visitor: What is yoga?

Swamiji: Yoga has many meanings. It is not a simple matter. It is setting up a balance in the system. When I say 'system', you must understand what is the system. When there is balance in the system, you are in a state of yoga. When there is disbalance in the system, it is an unhealthy condition.

To take the example of your own body, if it is kept in a perfect equilibrium, you feel healthy, very spirited, agile; you like to run, your breathing is perfect, you feel happy. That is due to the balance of the functioning of the body and the anatomy. The physiology and the organs, the emotions, the lungs, the heart, the muscles and the nerves are all set in harmony. Then you feel a sense of happiness born of perfect health. This is one stage in the practice of yoga. And what you call asana, physical exercise, they are trying to do only this much: to create a balance in the physical system, the nervous system and the muscular system. All the organs inside the body must be kept in balance.

But there is a higher part of yoga, and that is emotional balance. You may be physically okay—you eat well and you have got a strong body, and everything looks all right—but internally the mind is not happy. It is disturbed by some desire, some frustration, some sense of loss. These also are to be taken care of properly. Even if you do yoga exercise every day, if the mind is disturbed for some reason, that yoga practice will not help you much. The mind and the body should cooperate. It is very difficult.

The emotion is the most important factor in your life. Are you always feeling happy or have some agitation inside? You curse something, and you are feeling, "I am not getting what I want. This is hopeless." Are you making remarks like that? Are you in a mood of despondency? That kind of person is unfit for yoga. So there is also a necessity for an alignment of the internal structure. Physical alignment is yoga exercise, and internal alignment is psychological, and is more important than the physical body.

There is a system of yoga known as the raja yoga of Sage Patanjali.

It is a system of yoga which is a systematically arranged pattern of rising from the lower to the higher—systematic. I told you two things: firstly the physical one, then the emotional and psychological one. Then comes one still higher up: the control of the energy of the system. Every person has energy. There is a quantum of energy which is maintained, which keeps you perfectly all right. You should not lose that energy by excessive desire. With too much of anger and jealousy and hatred, and desire for unnecessary things of the world, energy goes out. Such a person becomes psychologically weak, and such a person may also become physically weak. This is a much higher state of yoga, and it cannot be practised by oneself without proper guidance. Physical exercise anybody can do. To some extent you can keep your mind calm, but beyond that it is all very difficult. That requires a guide.

How will you keep your energy intact in yourself without allowing it to go outside through the sense organs? That state is the third state of yoga: control of the sense organs so that your energy is complete. If your energy is stabilised in yourself, and it is not moving in the direction of objects of sense outside, then the energy of the universe will enter into you gradually. Now it is not entering. That's why you feel very weak and unhappy. The whole universe is a mass of energy, and you are inside this universe, so the whole universal energy is operating through you.

But you don't believe it. You have no faith that you actually belong to the universe. You think you are independent, and that you can do whatever you like. You can do whatever you like, provided you are in harmony with the universal force. If you are against it, and you are disobeying it, and you are in conflict with the natural laws, and you develop your egoism too much, the natural forces will not enter into you. So a still-higher yoga is the harmonisation and stabilisation of the energy of the person in a state of balance with the cosmic energy.

Still higher, there is another state. At that state, you will be thinking like the universe. You will not think like a person from any country, and all that. You are not a human being at all at that time. You are a cosmic universal being.

Still beyond, there is something. I should not go on telling you

everything like that. There is no purpose in talking about it. These are all internal secrets. The highest yoga is union of your soul with God. That is the highest yoga. The highest yoga is union of your soul with God stage by stage, stage by stage, stage by stage. If your soul is one with the Almighty Creator, you have reached the highest yoga so that yourself and the universe become one and you feel the presence of the all-pervading Spirit in yourself. This is a short answer to your question, and if you have anything more to ask, you are free to ask.

Visitor: How can we get it? How can we be one with the universe?

Swamiji: Now you try to do what I told you. Can you do what I told you? Is it not possible?

Visitor: Yes, I believe this. We can realise it.

Swamiji: If you can understand what I have told you, you will also know how to do it.

Visitor: Maybe you can teach us, to show us the way.

Swamiji: How can I show God to you, show the universe? You are asking me to show the universe. How can I show you the universe? You are inside it. To the extent you understand me...

Firstly, are you happy people? This first of all you find out. Unhappy persons cannot do yoga.

Visitor: Yes, we are happy.

Swamiji: You find out. Close your eyes: "Am I satisfied, or am I not satisfied? If I am not satisfied, why am I not satisfied? Perhaps I want something and I'm not getting it." Are you justified in wanting it? This also you must ask. Sometimes you can create unhappiness by asking for unjustifiable things. So it is up to you to use your discrimination. It does not mean that everybody should want everything. There is no such thing at all. Everybody wants something, but not everything. You want food to eat when you are hungry, you want water to drink when you are thirsty, you want a house to sleep in, you want clothing. Okay, it is perfectly all right. But more than that if you ask, it may lead to luxury. There is a distinction between luxury and necessary requirement. You are permitted to have all those things

which are necessary for maintaining your health and comfortable life, but luxury is not permitted.

Anyway, whatever be the reason for your unhappiness, that must be removed first. The first step in yoga is you must be internally calm, quiet and happy. If you are not happy, you must find out the cause for that unhappiness, and the cause must be removed by special means. Here you may not be able to do it independently because a person is involved in the psychological complex, and therefore by oneself one cannot disentangle oneself from that complex. A sick person cannot treat himself. He has to go to a doctor; otherwise, a sick person goes to a shop and eats medicine and becomes okay? That is not possible. In the same way, when there is an emotional complex, an experienced person must be consulted. Every person should have some guide, especially when you are in turmoil emotionally and psychologically. If that matter is set right, then you can go up to the higher stage of meditation.

And I told you how it can be done by daily sitting. Every day you sit for one hour at any convenient time. Close your eyes. Feel the presence of God—that Mighty Being everywhere Who created this universe, Who is called by various names in various religions. In Judaism you have got one name for God, in Christianity you have got another name for God, in Hinduism another name, and so on and so forth. Everybody calls that Mighty Power by different names. Whatever it is, it is One Being. That created you, and you are inseparable from it. Feel the presence of that Being in yourself inside, outside, everywhere, and feel a vibration taking place inside you by the entry of that Great Being into yourself. Every day offer prayers to that Almighty Being, and you will find that God will bless you in some way. God has the power to bless you. The grace will come, the divine grace.

Anyway, you require a guide. Whenever you are in trouble, the mind is not concentrating, and internally you are in disturbance—there is some clash of purpose, some conflict inside or outside—when that takes place, a person individually by himself or herself may not be able to solve the problem. So you must go to a guide. Such a guide you must find. And each one should find it. Anyone among you, someone might be a little superior to the other. You can

consult a better person among you: I have got some trouble. My dear friend, what are your suggestions? Also you can mutually consult among yourselves and solve your little problems.

This is a brief outline of yoga. I have told you something which requires deep thinking, and you have to give sufficient time for it. At least one hour every day you must keep quiet. Don't do anything but think along these lines. That's all I can tell you. What else?

Visitor: You can guide us to stop the war in our country so that our enemies will stop.

Swamiji: You do what I told you, then only you ask questions. Are you doing what I told you? Why are you asking questions unnecessarily, which has no connection with what I told you?

Visitor: I don't understand.

Swamiji: You cannot understand anything unless your mind is covering the whole cosmos. You are thinking you are from Israel, and therefore you are talking like that. You must belong to the whole universe and then think with multiple eyes, and interconnectedly. You must connect everything with everything, and then only you can know the connection of one thing with another thing. War or peace, birth or death, that's a different matter. How are these taking place? It is due to some internal operation of the structure of the universe. And unless you know what the universe is made of, you cannot answer any question. So simply sitting quiet and asking questions has no meaning. You must have a good knowledge into the astronomical, psychological and metaphysical structure of the whole cosmos. It requires great training; otherwise, no answer will come.

You are thinking like a small person. You must become a big person, as big as a whole creation; then you will find the answer yourself. Things are interconnected. One thing happens, another thing happens. One cause is there, and an effect follows. If you eat too much, you get headache. "Why a headache is coming?" you are asking me. Because you have eaten bad things. Something is there. So every event has got a cause behind it, and unless you know the cause, the effect cannot be answered.

Every event is a good thing; every event is a bad thing also.

It depends upon the viewpoint you take. Nobody can answer such questions unless your mind expands into the level of the entire creation.

Visitor: Thank you very much. I have been doing yoga for 3-4 years and I learned some system, and I think in India they have many things to teach us about the heights of spiritual thinking. Thank you very much.

DETERMINISM VERSUS FREEDOM OF CHOICE

A visitor: How much of our lives is predestined or decided by fate as opposed to how much do we have control or choice?

Swamiji: The nearer you go to God, the greater is the freedom of choice, and the farther away from Him you go, the more determinism works. The determinism works more and more the more you run away from God, and freedom of choice continues more and more the nearer you go to God. Finally, only God can be free, nobody else, and so the nearer you go to God and feel the presence of divinity in you, the more you feel a sense of freedom of choice.

Now what is your practical problem? You are asking some theoretical question. What is your practical problem? Are you feeling that you are determined by somebody? What is your practical difficulty?

Visitor: I wonder whether it's worthwhile to worry about choices.

Swamiji: Unless you know the structure of the whole universe and your relation to it, you will never be able to answer this question. Are you outside the universe or are you inside the universe? First of all, you find out. If you are inside the universe, you must know if you are one with the universe or you are not one with the universe. If you are one with the universe, who is going to determine you, because you have become one with that which is going to determine everybody. Okay? But if you are not one with the universe, if you are outside, the universe will determine you thoroughly and you will have no freedom.

Anybody who is considering oneself as outside the universe is not having any freedom of choice because, like the law of gravitation, everybody will be controlled by it. You know what is the law of gravitation? Do you know what is gravitation? Who can have freedom of choice to violate it? It is determining you wherever you go. Likewise, every law will determine you because the law of gravitation is the law of the world, and you are not one with the world. You are outside it. Therefore, it is pursuing you and making you feel miserable. But in meditation, in the practice of yoga, if your soul unites itself with the whole structure of the cosmos, slowly you

will feel a satisfaction inside that these laws are not your enemies. They are your friends.

This is a theoretical question. I don't think it is worthwhile bothering about it. Do your spiritual practice, if at all you are doing any. Are you doing any spiritual practice? Don't ask theoretical questions. Are you doing any spiritual practice?

Visitor: Meditation. I am doing Goenka.

Swamiji: Breathing, breathing.

Another visitor: Vipassana.

Swamiji: You are doing Vipassana? Okay, you do it. It is all right. Now you don't worry about this determinism and all that. Actually, only God is free, and the more you become godly, the more are you free. The more you are away from God, from the universe, the more are you controlled.

Another visitor: How to be together?

Swamiji: Two people cannot join together.

Visitor: Nothing?

Swamiji: No, very difficult, but it is possible. It is not impossible, but it is very difficult because two is always two only. Two cannot become one. If two is one, then you should not say there are two. You accept that there are two, and then you want to deny that there are two and make it one, so you are trying an impossible thing. But it is possible. You want to merge two people into one person. It is a very good idea. And then, why two? It can be a hundred. All the hundred people can join and make one. Finally you can join everything in the whole universe and make it one mass of perception. That is called God-consciousness. Why two, three, four people? The whole universe, bring them together into a cooperative organisation of spiritual fraternity with one principal superintending over the whole cosmic operation. If this can be conceived in anybody's mind, that person should be considered as most blessed.

So why two people? You bring many people together, as many as possible, until you bring all things together, the entire thing—all space, time, cause, everything—under the ordinance of God

Almighty, and you also go inside it. You don't stand outside. When you speak of two people, three people, you are not talking of people outside. You yourself are involved in that. You have also to get united so that there is a cosmic configuration of united experience under the principle of one eternal consciousness.

Here is the essence of everything—essence of religion, essence of spirituality, essence of good behaviour, essence of anything worth the while. This idea should get accommodated properly into the heart of a person, and it should be made a part and parcel of deep meditation every day so we get transmuted and transformed into a larger dimension of experience until, by the grace of God, the dimension touches the horizon of the cosmos, and we may become Godmen instead of mortals. Children of God—wonderful!

MEDITATION IS THE GREATEST SERVICE

A visitor: I want to serve the world.

Swamiji: Think in the cosmic level, and everybody in the world is included inside that. There are no people outside that thought because you are operating through the cosmic mind at that time; therefore, there are no people outside that. All the people have got small minds, individual minds. But now you have gone beyond those things. It is the universal mind, and so when you think through that, you are thinking through everybody else also simultaneously. It is like going to the root of the tree, which is equal to touching every branch automatically. When you manure and water the root of the tree, you have done service to each branch automatically. You need not go on pouring water to every branch and leaf separately.

This is a thing which the mind has to accept, but because your mind is individually thinking, you may find it a little difficult to understand what it is. You become a larger, comprehensive mind which includes the minds of everybody else, and what service can be greater than that? You are working through the minds of everybody, and can there be a service greater than that? It is the highest service, and also the greatest blessing. You are blessing them.

Visitor: So meditation is...

Swamiji: Meditation is the greatest service. Nothing is equal to that. The greatest people in the world are unknown to society. The people who are known to society, whose names appear in the newspapers, they are all third-class great people. The greatest people come silently and go silently; they leave their thoughts to vibrate in the eternity of the firmament, and that is the great blessing that they give. They want nothing from anybody. They are unknown people, but they are known to the Almighty God.

When Swami Vivekananda went to America and gave some lectures, he said these great people whom you think of as Christs and Buddhas, they are all second-rate heroes. The greatest heroes, you have never heard of. They don't descend into birth at all. The greatest people never descend into the earth plane. They are in the

astral plane. From there itself they start operating.

It is like treating a disease from inside rather than from outside. You treat the very causal body itself, which is the cause of every kind of illness, which is better than treating the physical body outside. So likewise, they are in the higher level of spirit, which operates through every body, every person, every individual in the world. When you close your eyes and think the welfare of a person, you have already contributed your duty towards the welfare of that person. Your thought is your service. It is a greater service than physical movement.

Visitor: So this effort of meditation that we do morning and evening is our contribution to the welfare of humanity?

Swamiji: It all depends upon what you think in meditation. Your meditation should be cosmic; then it will work. It should not be a mere experiment. You are not doing experiments. It is a down-to-earth entry into the reality of life, and then it will work. Even your one-hour meditation is a great service that you are doing, not only for your salvation but for the blessedness of everybody. If some few hundreds of people in the whole world make centres of meditation like this, it will vibrate in a positive manner and contribute to the blessedness of everybody.

So have a meditation centre in Italy when you go there. Like that, everybody may start in all the countries. In India, in Europe, in America, in England, everywhere, let a few people join together, sit, and create a vibration of this cosmic meditation. They will all start vibrating, and then contribute to the blessedness of the earth. That is the greatest service that you do to humanity, and at the same time a service to God Himself. Nothing is equal to that.

Wherever you are, continue the same practice that you have been doing here. It is immaterial where you are. Wherever you are, the same method should be done. Whatever you are doing here, that you do anywhere else.

Another visitor: In meditation, are you actually indirectly concentrating on the thinker?

Swamiji: Who is the thinker?

Visitor: The principle of consciousness.

Swamiji: That is the Universal Being. The principle of consciousness is universal. It is not sitting somewhere. The thinker is the Universal Being. It is a direct concentration on the supreme thinker, which is the Universal Being. There is only one thinker in the universe. The thinker is only one. There are no many thinkers.

Visitor: Then how can one think the thinker? One cannot think the thinker.

Swamiji: When you think the Universal Being, you have thought the thinker. It is the thinker thinking himself, or rather God thinking Himself. There is only one thinker, finally.

Another visitor: If someone is sick, can we contribute to his recovery through our sadhana?

Swamiji: You are asking whether your sadhana can diminish his sickness?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: You see, if you have only one bucketful of water and you go on giving it to thirsty people, the water will become less and less. But if you are a sea like the Arabian Ocean, any quantity of water you can give to thirsty people and you will never diminish. So it depends upon what you are. If your resources are endless, any amount you can give to other people and it will not diminish. But if you have got limited resources, to that extent it will become a little less and less. So you find out what is your amount of resource. If your resources are only a bucketful and something goes out... But if you have got endless strength, then you will not feel anything. If a person is a millionaire and he gives a five-rupee donation to somebody, he will not feel the pinch of it. But if he gives half of his money, half of it goes to somebody, he will feel the pinch of it.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SAINT

A visitor: When was this established as a holy place?

Swamiji: Sixty years back, in the year 1936. It was founded by a great saint.

Visitor: What caused him to be a saint? Was he made a saint or did he do good work?

Swamiji: When a person is established in God, he becomes a saint. He does not become a saint by doing good work. Even a person who is not a saint can do a lot of good work, but that is not the criterion. The soul must be centralised in God; then that person can be called a saint. But if this consciousness of God is absent, any amount of service means nothing. It has no value. So that is the difference between a social welfare worker and a saint. A saint also can do a lot of social welfare, but the social welfare is not identical with saintliness. They are two different things.

Visitor: So how is sainthood manifested?

Swamiji: Manifested? He doesn't manifest. He is looking like you only, but his mind is different. He thinks in a most comprehensive manner, as God Himself would think. But others think in terms of individuality, personality, egoism, selfishness and all that, which he is totally free from. Have you heard of any saint in the world any time?

Visitor: I am thinking of the Christian saints.

Swamiji: Let it be. Let it be Christian, it doesn't matter. Who is the Christian saint you are thinking of?

Another visitor: St. Francis of Assisi.

Swamiji: Oh, very good. Very great saint. You have chosen the best of them.

Visitor: Who declares that a person has reached that particular level of sainthood?

Swamiji: Nobody can declare. It is a personal experience. You see,

a person is a genius, for instance. You cannot know that a person is a genius unless he does something. So the saintliness of a person cannot be known except by the aura that he spreads around himself, the influence that he exerts upon others, and the satisfaction that you feel in his presence. These are some of the characteristics. Saintliness is a state of mind; it is an awareness of consciousness. By looking at him you cannot see anything, just as the wisdom of a man cannot be seen by merely seeing his face, but it can manifest itself by his behaviour, by his way of talking, by the influence that he exerts upon other people and the satisfaction that people feel when they sit near him. From that you can indicate what kind of person he is.

First visitor: How long have you been a Guru, a swami?

Swamiji: I have never been a Guru, but I have been a seeker of God, and if you want to call me a Guru it is left to you, but I don't call myself a Guru. But I accept that I am a seeker of God.

Visitor: As a child did you feel a calling?

Swamiji: Oh yes, I think so. It looks like that, yes. There was a calling from childhood. Maybe it is due to some impressions that I have brought from my previous life, so they are propelling me to think in one particular manner, which is manifest in what I am doing and what I am.

Visitor: Thank you.

Another visitor: I understand why penance is the main route to spirituality. Suppose you don't feel you've done anything terribly wrong. Why would it be penance instead of knowledge and...

Swamiji: According to your understanding of penance, what exactly is penance? What do you mean by penance?

Visitor: By penance, I mean I feel I have done something wrong or something is bad about me and I have to apologise to the universe for this.

Swamiji: That is a lower type of penance. But there is a higher type of penance which is actually the way to spirituality. Even a person who is very good, very virtuous, very righteous, who has not done anything wrong, even such a person requires penance of a different

type to attune oneself to the nature of God. A person may be very good, very righteous, very truthful, very helpful, yet that person may not be godly.

So a higher type of penance consists in the disciplining of the whole personality in terms of the nature of God Himself. You have to become divine in your nature. For that, the human weaknesses should be shed completely by disciplining the mental structure. It does not mean that penance is only for bad people. Even a good man should do penance, of a different type altogether. Even if a person is highly righteous, that person remains only a human being. But to convert, transform a human being into a divine being, a higher type of penance is necessary, which is called meditation. Meditation is the higher penance, and what you are thinking of is a lower one, and unfortunately the same word is used for both things. But I am thinking of the higher one, which is pure meditation on God. That is the highest penance, which is spiritual purification—not ordinary psychological purification but spiritual.

Another visitor: How do you meditate and get your mind off that you have to do this—you have to do the laundry, oh my Lord, somebody is waiting for me? How do you meditate and focus?

Swamiji: I am happy that you have put a very great question. I think your question is the best that anyone has asked: how you orient your mind to God.

You know that God is all pervading. God is omnipresent, everywhere. There are two great characteristics of God: it is an all-pervading presence, it is everywhere. How would the mind of a human being conceive that which is everywhere? That effort of the human mind to accommodate itself to the presence of that which is everywhere, that effort is called meditation.

The mind generally thinks of one thing, two things, three things, a hundred things, but it cannot think one thing—the one thing which is everywhere. It is necessary for the mind to think in all directions: right, left, top, bottom, everywhere at one stroke. If a person can adjust the mind in order to be able to concentrate it in ten directions at the same time, comprehending the whole world—that is, when you think, you think the whole world at one stroke—that is called total thinking. This kind of total thinking, including everything that

the mind can think of at one stroke, at one moment, is the highest discipline, which prepares it for the meditation on God.

God is the total whole, outside which nothing can be. As I mentioned to you, it is omnipresent, all pervading; everywhere it is. The mind has to adjust itself to this nature of the great Being, which is God, and shed the limitations of the mind, which is accustomed to think of only one or two things, and it should think all things at the same time as God Himself would think. This is one way of meditation.

But there are other ways of meditation also. Each person who is religious and is aspiring for spiritual life has a concept, whatever it be, of the Supreme Being above this cosmos, the Supreme Person who created this cosmos. This is a religious way of concentrating the mind on the highest principle of the universe. Religions everywhere call this highest principle as God, Supreme Being. And the other way, I mentioned to you already, the attempt of the mind to think all things at one stroke in a single act of thought, as God Himself would think. That is abstract meditation. The other one that I mentioned to you is personalistic meditation.

Or if you want something still lesser, you prevent the mind from going here and there in a hundred places. You take some object which you like very much. There is something in the world which you like very much. It may be a painting, it may be flower, it may be a musical note, it may be a piece of poetry. You like it very much and your heart is going for it. Go on thinking of it again and again, again and again, again and again. Any object that attracts you wholeheartedly can become the object of your meditation.

So I have mentioned to you three stages of meditation. One is the lower one: concentration on anything that you feel as most attractive, beautiful and wonderful. The higher one is the concentration on the whole creation itself, the principle of creatorship, Almighty God. The third one, which is still higher, is abstract thinking of the total reality of the cosmos at one stroke. All this is done to free the mind from the bondage of mortal existence, to liberate it and to make it fit for immortal existence. That is the purpose of spiritual life, and the way to it is meditation; and briefly I mentioned to you what it is.

Visitor: St. Thomas Aquinas says that the human mind is not capable

of realising Reality because God is total and we cannot do this.

Swamiji: Ordinarily the mind is not capable of doing that, but by practice the mind can gradually expand itself to a larger dimension of comprehension. I don't say that the mind can jump suddenly to God. It is not possible. But gradually, little by little, little by little, little by little, by daily practice of expansion of the mind to regions beyond the body, to outer space, to the sun and the moon and the stars, the whole sky. Think of the whole sky; the mind expands. Think of the sun and the moon and the stars in high heaven. When you think of them, the mind expands. I am just giving you a technique of expanding the nature of the mind. Instead of thinking one thing only, or this body, or somebody sitting here, marketplace, railway station, airplane—these are all little, little thinking. But there is a bigger thinking. The whole sky you are thinking: the entire sky, all over, and the entire time and space, the sun and the moon and the stars. Close your eyes. Think this wonderful universe. When you think like that, the mind expands. It reaches beyond the limit of ordinary human perception. This is the beginning of the process of expansion of the mind. And if you are a lover of God, the thought of God itself is sufficient for you. Everything will be taken care of. God will bless you. Okay? Be happy.

RELIGIONS BELIEFS

A visitor: Swamiji, I'm born as a Hindu. I'm a born Hindu. If anybody wants to become a Hindu, how can one do it?

Swamiji: You ask that person, "Why do you want to become a Hindu?" Why does that person want to become a Hindu? He must be belonging to some religion. He may be a Muslim, he may be a Christian, he may be a Buddhist, or anything. You ask him, "Do you feel that your religion is insufficient, due to which you are wanting to become a Hindu?" Who is that person? And you ask that question, "Why is it necessary to become a member of another religion unless one is dissatisfied with one's own religion? If that is the case, what is the cause of this dissatisfaction?" Will a Christian say that Christianity is insufficient? Will Buddhists say Buddhism is insufficient? Why should a person belong to a religion and then feel that it is insufficient? There is some psychological limitation in the way of thinking. If I see that person, I can speak to that person. You tell him there is some kind of mistake in thinking itself. If a person has no religion, then he can take up the methods of Hinduism; it is all right. But where is the necessity to change the religion unless the previous religion is defective? And I think no person will say that one's own religion is defective. Every religion is good if it is properly understood.

Visitor: One more question. I would be interested in knowing, why do we believe in rebirth?

Swamiji: You need not believe. I am not asking you to believe that.

Visitor: We Hindus believe in rebirth.

Swamiji: Hindus do not believe, because any scientific person will accept that. It is a scientific process. It is a process of evolution. Rebirth means the changing of the constitution of a particular thing, the shedding of the old condition and becoming another thing altogether. You have seen people telling you that the evolutionary process started with the transformation of matter into life, life into mind, mind into intellect. The mineral kingdom produced the plant kingdom. The plant kingdom manifested itself as animals. From

the animal side some human being has come up. So the previous life has been shed. You have been reborn completely into human life. If you have not shed the animal's nature, and if you have not been transformed into a new characteristic of humanity—a plant continues to be plant only, the animal continues to be animal only, and man continues to be man only—then that is no evolution. The evolutionary process implies the shedding of the earlier condition and the coming in of a new, more prosperous condition, and rebirth is nothing but the shedding of the limitations of a physical individuality and becoming more purified in a new form that you assume. It is neither good nor bad; it is a scientific necessity. It is pure science.

Another visitor: When we say according to karma you have a rebirth, then...

Swamiji: Whatever you do, you will get back either in this birth or the next birth. Nature follows the law of gravitation. Gravitation is equal and opposite, as they say. Whatever be the intensity of what you do, in that intensity you will get back the fruit of it. If you do good action, people will do good to you. If you do bad action, bad things will come to you. This whole nature does that. That is called karma.

Visitor: What I mean is the soul, when it is coming out, the body is shedding here, then why the soul is taking these things into...

Swamiji: It is not the soul; it is the mind. The soul does not take birth, it is the mind. The mind it is that does good or bad.

Visitor: So the mind has done bad and so it will suffer again, so the mind will go to another body.

Swamiji: Yes, it is the mind that is reborn as the body.

Another visitor: Why is there suffering in the world?

Swamiji: Because people do wrong actions. It is the result of wrong actions—either individual wrong action or collective wrong action. There is no mutual respect among people. Each one dislikes the other, and each one is selfish; therefore, the law of nature penalises this selfishness and creates a catastrophe, which is called suffering

in the world. It is selfishness of each individual and disregard for the welfare of other people.

Visitor: But children, infants sometimes suffer some terrible disease.

Swamiji: Children suffer for the actions they have done in the previous life. They are not children; they are persons born from a higher heaven. Just now I was telling that gentleman it is a question of birth and death. We are not suddenly coming out from the mother's womb like that. We are coming from a high level, where we are also existing. The cosmos is much bigger than we can think of on this Earth. There is no experience possible unless there is a cause behind it. Though a child may look like a child, it is a reborn form of a person who existed earlier in another form prior to the manifestation of this child. So any experience that is brought from previous life, that materialises itself as the experience in this life. There are no children and elderly people for nature. Nature does not believe in children, in old people, kings and beggars, etc. There are no such things for nature. They are all animate entities integrally connected to the whole cosmos.

So you should stop thinking like an ordinary individual. You must think of the whole nature as it is, and then you will find there is no child, no old man, no beggar, no king—nothing is there. They are all various manifestations of intensity of pressure exerted by actions performed in a previous life, either in this birth or in the previous birth. It is like transferring the individual from one place to another place, and if the population increases beyond the capacity of the Earth to sustain it, it will create a catastrophe, and it will destroy.

Another visitor: Can it be on another planet?

Swamiji: It can be another realm of being. There are many levels of being. And also, this population explosion cannot continue for a long time. If it goes too high, beyond the capacity of the Earth to bear, it will create a catastrophe and then destroy people, and then it maintains the balance.

Another visitor: What are the activities of this ashram?

Swamiji: Oh, many things. We have got a large kitchen in which a large amount of food is cooked, and it is served to some five hundred

people every day in this ashram, including poor people, beggars, and whoever comes as visitors, etc. We have got a hospital. We have got a printing press which prints religious, philosophical and scientific literature. And we have got some system of social welfare work like educating students and helping poor people. If they are very poor we finance them, if they are hungry we feed them, if they have got no clothes we clothe them. Sometimes people have no house to stay in; we build a little hut for them. And whatever need is felt by people who are in a very unfortunate condition, we try to help them to remove their ignorance through education, to make them healthy through medical attendance, and giving food when they are having nothing to eat. There are varieties of social welfare activities we are carrying on. But our principal aim is to spiritualise people and to lead them to the path of God-consciousness. Together with that we are doing social welfare work also—both of this world and of the other world.

Another visitor: By what process do you begin to determine that a man is a reincarnation of God?

Swamiji: Man is not a reincarnation of God. Man is a reincarnation of man only. Maybe, once upon a time, at the time of creation, he may be a part of God Himself because you cannot come from anywhere else. As God is everywhere, naturally you must have been included in that God-consciousness. From where else will you come? Originally God alone existed, and therefore everything like us must have been existing in a potential form there only because every effect must be in the cause, and the ultimate cause being God Himself, nothing else can be outside Him, so you have to feel that we must have also been there only; otherwise, from where we come? We have come from the ultimate cause; therefore, everything comes from God ultimately. It is perfectly correct.

Visitor: A lot of people do not like the word 'religion' because it connotes a section, a belief in organised...

Swamiji: That is what I am trying to remove from your mind. Religion does not mean a section. It is a comprehensive thinking in terms of God-consciousness.

Visitor: Right. But we like the term ‘spirituality’ rather than ‘religion’, which is divisive.

Swamiji: Religion is the outer manifestation of spirituality. It can take any form, like Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, this ism, that ism, but originally it is a total inclusive concept. Anyone can be religious, but a Hindu cannot become a Sikh, a Sikh cannot become a Buddhist, because they have got limited concepts. So you must trace all these isms to their original source of pure religious awareness, which you call spirituality. Correct. You are right.

Another visitor: But Swamiji, dharma is not religion, it is not a...

Swamiji: Then what is dharma?

Visitor: Dharma is your duties.

Swamiji: What is duty?

Visitor: How you should behave in your life.

Swamiji: You have to behave as God ordains you to do. You should not do any bad thing. You should not use Sanskrit words—dharma and all that. They get confused by that. Use only English words. Why are you using Hindu words?

Visitor: But religion is not the meaning of dharma.

Swamiji: Again you are using that word ‘dharma’. I said to avoid that word completely. It creates confusion in the mind.

Another visitor: Do you have any words for someone like me who feels that they have no beliefs at all?

Swamiji: A person who has no belief believes in something else. What is that something else?

Visitor: I believe in the cycle of nature.

Swamiji: Okay. So you are a believer?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: You said you don’t believe in anything.

Visitor: But I don’t believe that there is a God, I don’t believe in...

Swamiji: Let it go. You don't believe in God, but you are believing in something else. What is that something else?

Visitor: Nature.

Swamiji: Where is nature?

Visitor: We are born, we need to procreate, we need to eat, sleep, and then we die.

Swamiji: After you die, what happens to you?

Visitor: We become grass, roses, plants. We become one with the earth.

Swamiji: Do you believe you will become a vegetable and somebody will eat you? If you become a vegetable, someone will eat you?

Visitor: Yes. That's fine. To me that's the cycle of life.

Swamiji: Whoever has created this kind of cycle that somebody should be eaten by somebody else must be a very cruel nature—very cruel, not very compassionate.

Visitor: No, I don't think it's compassionate. I don't think of it as having any...

Swamiji: Otherwise, why should anyone eat another person? It is a very hopeless thing to imagine. Nature does not do that. It is a confusion in thinking. There is no such thing called nature. It doesn't exist. What you are thinking of as nature is these plants, trees, water, mountain, wind, and all that. They are only the outer manifestation of a basic nature which is the cause of it. You are thinking of an effect, which is the nature, but it modifies itself. Nature evolves, and therefore there is something behind the evolving nature which is the cause of it, into which you must go. Then you will know how things are working.

It is better to be happy under any circumstance. Under any circumstance, be happy. One should not be unhappy under any circumstance, and you must find out the way how you can be happy completely, for all time to come, as far as it is possible. If it is nature, okay. Nature is another name for God. Perfectly okay.

Another visitor: You've spoken of meditation. I don't have a good

answer for you on the religion question. I think for us religion is basically seeking an ethical life and trying to live it. But...

Swamiji: But there is something more than an ethical life.

Visitor: Well, maybe. Perhaps. My next question sort of touches on that too, and you have spoken of meditation, and most of the meditation has different levels of seeking God and spirituality. What have you to say about meditation on Self-knowledge?

Swamiji: That is the highest kind of meditation. Meditation on the Self is the highest kind of meditation, and I did not mention it because it is too difficult to understand. It is too difficult to understand, so I did not touch that subject, but it is the highest kind of meditation. Everybody tries for Self-knowledge, or Self-realisation, as they call it. There is nothing equal to that. If you know your own deepest Self, you have understood the whole creation because you are a cross-section, a specimen of the structure of the whole creation, so knowing oneself is equal to knowing the whole universe. So Self-realisation, and any method towards that achievement, is the highest meditation that one can think of. You are right.

Visitor: Thank you.

Swamiji: Thank you all.

HOLI, MOUNT MERU, SATI

Swamiji: We have varieties of festivals, and each one has its own shape. This [Holi] is some strange thing. They throw coloured water on your face if you go out. I was trying to find out why they are doing like that. They say, people never change their clothes. They are very miserly. They use the same cloth for three years, so once in a year at least you must change the clothes, so they throw some colour on your clothes, and then you have to throw them away and put on a new cloth. It is a compulsion to wear fresh clothes—that is one thing.

Secondly, it lifts the usual social ban on behaviour. How long can you ban a person? He is unhappy about it. Every individual requires some freedom, but everywhere you have got some restriction on your freedom: You cannot do this; you should do this only. Everywhere you will find this kind of thing. Whether it is administrative or social, financial, economic, whatever it is, there is some restriction. This lifts it for one day at least so that you become wild with your original nature. The original nature of the human being is being wild, wild. They say originally the human being is wild, but he doesn't look wild because of some restrictions.

There was a great political philosopher called Thomas Hobbes. Thomas Hobbes—very famous. His doctrine is, every person is like a wolf basically, and he is always a wolf only; he cannot become better than that. If only the occasion arises, the nature of the wolf will manifest itself. So everywhere is a wolf only. The whole world is filled with wolves, and the wolves were not happy because it is very difficult: “You see, we are all scratching each other every day.” Some wolves joined together: “This is no good. We shall not quarrel like that. We shall have some wolves to form a system of management to control our behaviour. We will agree with them.” They say this is the beginning of government. Many wolves joined together and put a restriction on themselves so that it is good for them; otherwise, every day one wolf will attack another wolf. This is not a good thing. Then the few who were selected to administer the wolves said: “You are so large in number, we are few, so how will we manage you?” “Then we will give another set of wolves for

the police and the army and all that. So these wolves will protect you against us.” This is the original contract theory of political government. It is a mutual agreement among wolves. But the whole point is, it is wolves.

Are we wolves, basically? You see, it depends upon how you encounter a person. You don’t encounter a person properly. Very severely you oppose others, in every way. In every way you must oppose the person, a hundred percent; then the wolf comes up. Otherwise, if you oppose a little bit, it will be not sufficient. When everything goes, the real strength of the man comes up. That is the political theory of Thomas Hobbes. It is called the social contract theory. Government was created by people, by mutual agreement, for their own benefit, which amounts to saying something like democracy. Democracy is a mutual agreement.

A visitor: When did Holi originate?

Swamiji: Since ancient times, ancient. No date for that.

Visitor: I heard that Krishna, he was the first.

Swamiji: Even before that, even earlier. Krishna only followed that system, but it was much earlier also.

Visitor: Swamiji, can I ask you one question? Do you know where Siva took the poison? In which place? Where is this place that he ate it?

Swamiji: It is not on this earth.

Visitor: Really?

Swamiji: No. It is some heavenly event—heavenly event. It is a big story. When the gods and the demons of ancient mythology decided to become immortal and never die, they wanted to churn the ocean. It is not an ordinary ocean which we have here. It is a cosmic ocean. Churn it and extract nectar from the ocean. And they used the huge mountain called Meru Mountain as the churning rod. A rod is necessary to churn like this. And the rope was a huge snake, a poisonous snake. Not an ordinary snake—so big, as vast as the world itself. One side of the snake was held by the gods, and the other side was held by the demons. By chance, or as the case may

be, the side of the mouth was held by the demons, and the side of the tail was held by the gods.

They churned and churned and churned and churned and churned. When it was vigorously being churned, the snake emitted poison, deadly poison from the mouth. It choked the throat of everybody, and it came firstly to the demons because they were holding the mouth. Then they all prayed to Lord Siva: “What to do with this poison? It is suffocating. Please, O Lord, come and help us.”

He drew all the poison into himself and swallowed it. It had not gone inside—in the neck only. When it was sticking at the neck, his consort, Parvati Devi, said, “Don’t swallow it into the stomach. Otherwise, the whole world will be burnt because your stomach contains the whole universe and everybody will perish by this poison going inside your stomach. Please don’t swallow it.” So Lord Siva would not allow the poison to go up because the gods would be affected, and he would not allow it to go down because human beings would be affected, so he held it in his neck only. Therefore, Lord Siva’s neck became blue due to the intensity of the poison.

So even today he is called ‘blue-necked’, and he is not allowing anybody else to suffer due to that. He kept it in his neck forever so that nobody is troubled. And he has got the power to hold it up. The snake cannot do anything to him, and he can digest all the poison. This is the old story in the Puranas—ancient history, ancient cosmic history, of which we have plenty in India. It is a mythological story. Visitor: Is Meru Mountain in the Himalaya?

Swamiji: It is not in the Himalaya. It is the central backbone of the whole universe. You cannot see it with the eyes. You can only conceive it in your meditation. If you can imagine, you conceive the whole universe as a person, and the central backbone of the whole cosmos, which stabilises its existence, that is the Meru. It is not in the Himalayas.

Visitor: I heard that some great men, some yogins, they came to Himalayas in physical bodies. Ganda Baba, he came to Sumeru in a physical body. Is it truth?

Swamiji: That is only... Actually, Sumeru does not mean anything visible in the physical world. I told you, it is some spiritual concept.

We can conceptually translate it into a visible form of it. We can conceive the whole body of an individual as the cosmos, and your spine may be compared in a way to the central Meru spine. As everything that is in the universe is inside you, and whatever is inside you is the universe, some kind of comparison can be made. But actually, in the true sense of the term, it is a cosmic concept, and it should not be brought down to the earth level. It is a highly spiritual notion. It is a metaphysical, philosophical, highly spiritual concept of the totality of the universe presided over by the highest consciousness—Lord Siva or whatever you call it.

Visitor: Sati's body was...

Swamiji: You are asking where she died?

Visitor: No. Where her heart... When Vishnu cut her body into fifty-one pieces...

Swamiji: No, it is not like that. He didn't cut the body of a living person. He cut the body of the dead person only. And this happened in Haridwar. There is a place called Daksha Prajapati on the bank of Ganga. This event of Sati burning herself happened in Haridwar. It is called Daksha Prajapati.

Daksha was the father-in-law of Siva, and in the assembly of Brahma, the Creator, all the gods were sitting, and Siva also was sitting. When Daksha entered the hall, all people stood up in honour, with salutations. But Siva did not get up. He sat. He did not bother that Daksha is entering the hall, so Daksha got insulted. He stood up and shouted. "Here is a shameless man," he said, "to whom I gave my daughter, wrongly. He has no shame. He has no respect for elderly people. He roams about like a naked person. It is a great mistake I committed. I never knew he is of that kind." He went on blabbering, shouting against Siva with great anger. Siva did not say anything. He simply got up and went away from the assembly.

Then what happened, this Daksha, who was so angry, performed a great sacrifice, a *yajna*. He sent invitations to everybody, but he did not send an invitation to Siva though he was his son-in-law, because of this incident. When Sati was sitting in Kailasha with Lord Siva, she saw so many celestial planes flying with divine couples. Somewhere they are going, going. She asked them, "Where are you all moving?"

They said, “You do not know? Your father is performing a huge sacrifice. You do not know?” “No, I don’t know,” she said. “I don’t know anything.” “How is it that they are not sending an invitation to you, when you are the daughter of Daksha?” “No, and he didn’t invite Lord Siva also.” She was very much upset. “How is it?”

Then she told Siva, “I want to go to attend the sacrifice.” Siva said, “I don’t think it is good for you to go because he insulted me in the assembly. For you to go there, it is not good.” “But I want to go,” Sati said. “I am telling you again, it is not good for you.” “Let us go,” she said. “I am not coming,” Siva said. “But I want to go.” “If you want to go, you go,” Siva said. “I am not coming, and I am not interested also in this matter. But I am telling you it is not good for you to go.” Sati said, “I am going.” But anyhow, in compassion, Siva sent some attendants with Sati to take care of her. She went.

When Sati entered the hall, nobody recognised her. Her father did not even notice that his daughter has come. Sati was completely ignored. She was very angry. “Firstly, my husband Siva, the great god, has been insulted and not given an invitation. Secondly, I am also insulted here.” Then she sat. “I want to end this body. I am born to this man who has no respect for anybody. I do not want to have this body anymore.” She sat in yoga, and fire broke out from her *nadi*, and she burned herself—half burned.

This news went to Siva: “Your wife is burnt.” He sent an army. He took his hair and struck it, like this [Swamiji gestures]. Immediately a huge giant came. “What do you want?” he asked. “Go and destroy this sacrifice.” So this huge giant went, with a large retinue, and attacked that sacrifice, and Daksha’s head was severed. So a big war took place. But even then, that was not the end of the matter. The anger of Siva did not subside. He himself ran, took that body...

Now here the answer to your question comes. Siva simply ran in all directions, as if he was going crazy. He held the half-burnt body. Everywhere, throughout the universe he ran. The gods in heaven got frightened. “If this happens, we do not know finally what will be the conclusion. Siva is running with great anger.” They went to Vishnu. “Please do something. It is a very serious situation.” Then it is that Vishnu let off his Sudarshan Chakra and severed the body of Sati into little pieces. It fell. Because Siva was roaming with great

speed, Sati's body fell in different directions, and they are called Shakti Sthal—the sacred spots in the country where these little parts of the body fell. They are all objects of worship, even today. When the body got scissored completely and there was nothing there, Lord Siva became calm.

Then Vishnu and Brahma came, and pacified Siva. “You should not get angry with a foolish man. Daksha is ignorant. He doesn't understand, so calm down. Don't get angry with him. And give him back his head because you removed the head. Let him complete the sacrifice.” Then they brought the head of a goat, and fixed it on Daksha's body. And with that he prayed to Lord Siva afterwards. He chanted mantra. We have got Veda mantra where the sound made is something like the sound of a goat. You know how a goat sounds. It cannot make sound like a human being. An odd sound it makes, odd sound.

There is one goat always coming behind my room here and making that sound. There is a little green grass there. To eat it, it jumps the corridor and comes inside, and then it cannot go out because it is caught. It is a foolish goat. He jumps inside, but cannot get out, and so the whole night it makes a sound like that. With that kind of sound Daksha chanted prayers to Lord Siva, and that *yajna*, sacrifice, was completed with great joy. So this is the story of Sati Sthal.

Visitor: Very interesting story. Thank you very much.

THE ASTRAL AND PHYSICAL BODIES

A visitor: During the meditation, when we start meditation, we start concentration, and in one moment we need to divide the astral body from the physical body. Are there any special mantras which can help us to divide the astral body from the physical body?

Swamiji: Are you... What is your name?

Visitor: Katani.

Swamiji: Katani. Is this Katani an astral body or it is a physical body? Who is talking to me now? Who is talking to me?

Visitor: Both astral and physical.

Swamiji: This is the answer to your question. There is no need of separation. It is not possible for you to talk to me through the subtle body only and reject the physical body. They join together and act. So in meditation there is no separation. Both act simultaneously.

Visitor: But when I'm in the physical body, I am present only in one place. I am here with you. But if I am in the astral body, I can be everywhere in the same moment. Am I right?

Swamiji: An astral body also cannot be everywhere. It is as limited as the physical body. Only your mind and thought can expand itself beyond the body, and beyond even the subtle body. The subtle body is only a replica of the physical body. It is a kind of photograph of the physical body, so it is as much attached, as much limited as the physical body. Whenever you are thinking, it is through the subtle body only. But in meditation you are not expanding the subtle body, but your thought, which is superior to the astral body. Your reason and your thinking process expand, through which the soul manifests itself. It is the light of the soul manifesting itself through the mind that expands itself. So don't think of the subtle body and the physical body at that time. Even the idea should not arise. Forget yourself at that time. That is my answer.

Visitor: I want to know about Kailash, about the cave where Siva was sitting and meditating. Would you be kind to say something

more?

Swamiji: Kailash is not in this world. It is in the high heaven. The other day you asked me where is Meru. Kailash is on the top of that Meru. That is the real Kailash.

Visitor: I would like to know if the coming down of the principles are after *buddhi* and *ahamkara*, the *tanmatra* and the *mahabhutas*.

Swamiji: Yes, you are right.

Visitor: And where is *manas* in this?

Swamiji: It comes after the *mahabhutas* because there is no *manas* in the cosmic scheme. It is only the individual. There is no *manas* in the *mahabhutas*, and in the cosmic setup there is no *manas*. There is only *mahat*. That is the cosmic *buddhi*. When the individual separates itself from the cosmos it develops a replica of the *buddhi* or *mahat*, and that is called intellect, and it is called *manas*, etc.; and also, together with that, the sense organs manifest themselves. The sense organs, the pranas and this body, they are all individualised ramifications of the original, unramified cosmic setup. So we are all, as individuals, like shadows cast by this Universal Being, and split into parts. Whereas that is one integral whole, we are all individuals, one disconnected from the other. So *manas* is only for the individual. There is no such thing for the cosmic.

Visitor: Which *guna* is coming first? Is it *tamas* or is it *sattva*?

Swamiji: In the original condition, they are in a state of equilibrium. There is no first and second. Then comes *sattva*, which manifests *mahat*, and a little bit of *rajas* enters into *ahamkara*, then *tamas* comes below in the *tanmatras* and *mahabhutas*.

Visitor: *Rajas* is for the *karma indriya* and *sattva* for the *jnana indriya*. So the *jnana indriya* comes before the *karma indriya*.

Swamiji: Yes, you may say that. Right. You are very fond of Sankhya.

Visitor: Yes. We can understand very well the descent of the principles and the ascent of man.

Swamiji: Where are you going to ascend? Which place? Where do you want to go?

Visitor: I want to go to God, to the Absolute.

Swamiji: You are asking too much.

Visitor: Yes, perhaps, but I am sure if it is not there, in another life I will go.

Swamiji: You are very modest. Why in the next birth? In this birth itself you must get.

Visitor: Yes, I would like.

Another visitor: I recently saw a well-known astrologer in Delhi, a pretty famous man. He told me some things about my future that I don't particularly like. I asked him a question about renunciation, becoming a monk entering a monastic order, and he said that he wouldn't recommend it because he thought I would probably quit.

Swamiji: There is no question of recommending. If the stars recommend, then it will take place. It is the planets. The planets are the people who are giving orders for you, so the astrologer cannot do anything. He has only to find out what the planets are saying. So let him tell what the planets are saying about you.

Visitor: Okay, so the planets said that if I join a monastic order I will quit in a few years.

Swamiji: So it is not a happy thing. What are you searching for? What do you want finally?

Visitor: I'd like two things: to serve God, and to realise God. Now I don't know whether the best way is through the monastic order or outside the monastic order. I'm not attached. The monastic order is just a stepping stone.

Swamiji: To realise God there is no need of entering into any order. God is not a respecter of orders. He only respects your mind.

Visitor: But there is a blessing that comes along with being within... There is some strong blessing, I am sure.

Swamiji: How will you reach God unless your mind is thinking only of That and nothing else? Are you thinking only That and no other thought enters your mind?

Visitor: No, not at all.

Swamiji: Then you yourself have answered the question. Your mind is wandering.

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Then what is the use of talking? You must restrain that mind. Even if you enter into an order, the mind will be working in the same way. The mind cannot take sannyas; it is the body that takes it, so the mind will say, "You are the same man." It is not going to leave you like that. So cloth or no cloth, sannyas or otherwise, is immaterial. Are you free from the sensory desires of the mortal world?

Visitor: No. Very few sannyasis are.

Swamiji: That is no good. Sannyasa is a mental condition of freedom from desire, and the cloth is only an external symbol of your internally being free from desires. It is only an indication that you are free from desires. Otherwise, how will you reach God?

Visitor: Isn't it also just a stepping stone to God, or can it be that way?

Swamiji: The stepping stone is the control of the senses. You may put the cloth or you don't put the cloth. God does not care for your cloth; He cares for your mind only, what you think in your mind. Your future is depending on how you are thinking, and not what dress you are putting. It is only an indication outside that you are free from desires.

Visitor: Swamiji, I'm not interested in the dress or the colour of the cloth. For me, renunciation would be living in an ashram, staying in a holy environment.

Swamiji: No, that is not necessary. You may stay anywhere. No such rule is there. If your love for God is increasing, your love for the world will decrease automatically because the love for the world is a negative trait, and love for God is a positive character. The more you are able to concentrate your mind on God, the less will you be taking interest in anything in the world. Then you may call it sannyasa or by any name. The whole point is simple: how far your

mind is able to accommodate the thought of God in itself, to what extent it is possible. To that extent your attachment to the world will decrease. You need not worry about the world. Think of the positive side. When you go towards the east, you are going away from the west automatically. So you need not worry about going away from the west. Don't go away from the west; go to the east. Then the west automatically goes off. So you need not have any kind of negative aspiration of renouncing, throwing away, and all that. You catch hold of that supreme concept of God Almighty and implant it in your heart; then everything will take care of itself. You need not worry about sannyasa. God is greater than sannyasa, and He will do everything for you. Are you searching for God finally? Really? You be clear about it.

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Then you will get it. Have you got family?

Visitor: Parents and siblings.

Swamiji: You have no responsibility towards them?

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: You are a totally independent man?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Then there should be not much problem for you. You are already free from some entanglements. The world is conscious of what you are thinking. It is feeling inside: "This gentleman is trying to abandon me." And it says, "No, you should not abandon me like that so quickly." Your involvement in the world is your family. Family does not mean human beings only. You are involved in the world in some way or the other, whatever be the way. That involvement is the family, really speaking. Anything that you are concerned with, anything that pulls you in the direction of the world, anything that you like, anything that you cannot abandon, that is the thing that gives trouble. If you are convinced that whatever you want you can get from God, then you need not think anything else. You must be convinced that whatever you want you can find there. Anything—even material things you will find there, everything.

Visitor: Sometimes I think that way, and then sometimes I get distracted.

Swamiji: You must do meditation. Every day meditation is necessary; then the distraction will come down slowly, little by little, little by little. Everybody has distraction. Nobody is free from it, but by continued meditation the intensity of the distraction gets diminished. There is a necessity for repeated practice every day, to the extent that it is possible. Go slowly, go slowly. It is not easy to join institutions like that.

Another visitor: How to detach yourself from the personal ego, love of my daughter, to the Universal Being? How can I do that?

Swamiji: To whom have you got attachment?

Visitor: My daughter.

Swamiji: Let it be. It is very good because it is your daughter.

Visitor: I've been taught there should be no personal attachment.

Swamiji: Why did you produce her if you don't want her?

Visitor: Oh, I want her more than anything. [laughter]

Swamiji: Now you have got a duty. Now you cannot say 'no'. You create a problem and then say "I detach". You should not do like that. It is better not to create a problem instead of creating it and then saying, "I detach from that." You have got a duty towards her, and that duty you must fulfil. After the duty is completely fulfilled, then you can detach.

Visitor: Now, what is completely fulfilled?

Swamiji: You don't have any obligation towards her.

Visitor: Obligation will be forever.

Swamiji: No, when she is independent, when she is able to take care of herself and she doesn't need your help, then you can say the obligation is over.

Visitor: Thank you.

SANKHYA AND VEDANTA, RELATIVITY AND QUANTUM

A visitor: Could you tell me about *maya* in the Sankhya philosophy?

Swamiji: In Sankhya there is no such thing called *maya*. It doesn't exist. The word '*maya*' is never used in Sankhya. It is only used in Vedanta.

Visitor: But you have written that in the Panchadasi.

Swamiji: Panchadasi is not Sankhya. It is a Vedanta book.

Visitor: But is there a difference in the quintuplication in the...

Swamiji: Quintuplication is accepted by Vedanta and Sankhya both.

Visitor: Yes. Is the Vedanta based on the Sankhya?

Swamiji: No, it is not based, but it has no objection to it.

Visitor: It accepts the principles of the cosmology?

Swamiji: It accepts the principles of cosmology, but yet there is a great difference.

Visitor: But why the Samkhya Karika doesn't speak of quintuplication?

Swamiji: They stop with the *mahabhutas*, and they don't go further. It is a defect in the Samkhya Karika, really speaking. They ought to have accepted it.

Visitor: And then about *tanmatra*, can we say that *tan* is 'to stretch' and *matra* is 'measure'?

Swamiji: *Tanmatra* means the potential of *tat*. *Tat* means 'that'. *Matra* means 'the fine potential'. The fine potential of the elements is called *tanmatra*.

Visitor: So *tan* is not 'to stretch'?

Swamiji: No, it is quite different. It comes from *tat*.

Visitor: And the scientists are saying that matter and antimatter....

Swamiji: What is antimatter?

Visitor: I don't know. It is the other side of matter.

Swamiji: What is the other side of matter?

Visitor: I think it must be beyond.

Swamiji: You should never use a word whose meaning is not clear.

Visitor: But the scientists say...

Swamiji: Antimatter is a word that is used in quantum mechanics, and why are you touching that terrible subject?

Visitor: Because when they meet—matter and antimatter—light comes.

Swamiji: Now what subject are you discussing?

Visitor: About yoga.

Swamiji: How is yoga connected with antimatter?

Visitor: When a sage is in the light, it must be...

Swamiji: A sage is not in the light of antimatter. He is much beyond that. He is in the light of the Universal Being, not connected with matter and antimatter. He is still higher.

Visitor: Antimatter could not be the Universal Being?

Swamiji: The Universal Being is still higher. Antimatter is a very low state. Matter and antimatter are low states, whereas this spiritual light of the sage is based on the Universal Being. It has no connection with science and all that. It is quite a different thing. It is high. It is the light of *mahat-tattva*. You know what is a *mahat*? That is the sage's light. Matter is a very low category. There is no connection between the light of a carbon rod, which also lets off light in a cinema projector... A cinema projector produces a huge, powerful light by the proximity of two carbon rods, and matter attracts matter and produces light. It is not that kind of light that the sage experiences because this light is material light, but that is the spiritual light of the soul. So I can only compare it with *mahat-tattva*. *Mahat-tattva* light, cosmic light, that is the light of the sage. It is not material light. It is spiritual light. They are quite different things. What subject are you

talking to me? Everything you are mixing up.

Visitor: I am teaching Sankhya, and was interested in the discovery of the scientists.

Swamiji: You have not understood the scientists properly. You have read only a little bit. You must thoroughly know it; then you will have no doubts. You have read only a little bit of it, so little bit of Sankhya, a little bit of Vedanta, a little bit of science and quantum mechanics has created a chaos. It must be properly understood.

Visitor: That is why I'm here Swamiji, and I ask questions.

Swamiji: There is no contradiction. They are all finally leading to the same conclusion. The only thing is, their methodology is different. As their methods of discovery, investigation, differ from one another, it looks as if they are telling different things. There is the finding of the relativity doctrine, for instance. It appears that relativity differs from quantum mechanics, but finally it does not. Quantum mechanics is concerned with subatomic particles, whereas relativity is concerned with space, time and gravitation. So they are two different things.

Now, a difficulty has arisen: How will you bring together into a state of harmony the cosmological discovery of space, time and causation according to the general theory of relativity and the subatomic theory of quantum mechanics? The unification of these three theories has been attempted right from the time of Einstein, but they did not wholly succeed. That unification theory is called the unified field theory. Even now people are working for it. How can the law of the subatomic particles harmonise itself with the cosmological findings of space, time and causation?

They are not two things. They are one and the same thing, as in Vedanta it says the innermost thing is also the outermost thing. The nearest that is in you is also the farthest that you can conceive. The farthest is the theory of relativity; the nearest is the quantum. That which is most inside you is also that which is farthest. It appears like that.

Quantum mechanics and relativity consist of equations. They are not intended for ordinary people. Ordinary people can only accept the conclusions drawn by them, but how they arrived at

that conclusion, ordinary people cannot understand because it is highly subtle mathematics, which leads to such conclusions of an astounding nature that these equations finally cease to be equations. They cease to be mathematics, and then become operations of the mind only. Mathematics is a way in which the mind operates; otherwise, why should $2+2$ make 4? Who told that? It is a kind of law that is operating in the mind which cannot think in any other manner. Though $5+2$ is equal to 7, and 3 angles of a triangle make 2 right angles, which is accepted by everybody, this geometry and this mathematics does not hold good in the realm of subatomic particles. There the 3 angles of a triangle will not make 2 right angles, and $5+2$ may not make 7. And yesterday can become today; today can become tomorrow. Time also is abolished there.

There is a conundrum: “A person came tomorrow.” How can a person come tomorrow? Is there any meaning? “A person came tomorrow.” It is funny to hear that. In the theory of the relativity of the cosmos—which transcends space, time and cause—past, present and future also are denied. A particular event is taking place always. It did not take place many years back. It is taking place even now, and it is taking place in the future also. Even now Christ is being born, even now the Mahabharata is taking place, even now Lord Krishna is dancing in Mathura. You may say he did it many, many years back. That is our space-time concept, and an event that is valid for a particular space-time concept need not be valid for another space-time concept. A thing that has taken place may yet take place in another space-time, and in the third context it may be taking place just now. In one realm the Mahabharata has already taken place, Christ has come and gone, Lord Krishna has also come and gone, but in another realm they have not yet come. Krishna is yet to be born, Christ has not come yet, and the Mahabharata is going on just now. So cosmic history has no past, present and future.

This is a wonder which we are led into gradually by subtle modern physical discoveries, especially in quantum and relativity. You will find that finally it is the same as *tat tvam asi*. *Tat tvam asi* means ‘thou art that’. Thou art that, that art thou. ‘That’ means ‘relativity’; ‘thou’ means ‘quantum’. So, that art thou—quantum and relativity join together and become the field theory of the universal Absolute.

Visitor: It is fascinating.

Swamiji: Yes, a wonder. There are many wonders.

Visitor: Another question. There are particles and waves.

Swamiji: A particle can behave like a wave and a wave can behave like a particle.

Visitor: Yes, but the scientists say when the observer is looking, it disturbs the observation.

Swamiji: Therefore, it cannot be observed by anybody unless the observer enters into it.

Visitor: Yes. I wonder if the sage can go into not the particles but the waves, and not interfere.

Swamiji: When he enters into it, he enters into the universe.

Visitor: The waves are also in the universe, or it is beyond?

Swamiji: Entering into the particle and the wave is the same as entering into the cosmos, and he becomes universal experience at that time. For him no wave is there, and there is no particle at that time. Only he himself is there. When you isolate the perceiver and the perceived, these difficulties arise, but in the entry of the perceiver into the perceived, these questions will not arise. He will see himself only, and nobody else will be there afterwards.

A visitor: How do I know when I realise God?

Swamiji: How do you know that you are sitting here?

Visitor: I am aware that I am sitting here.

Swamiji: Same thing. You will be aware there. You will be aware of it in the same way as you are aware that you are sitting here. There will be no doubt at that time. If you want it, it will come. Whatever you want you can get, provided you want it. If you don't want it, it cannot come.

Another visitor: How can Sankhya reconcile with Vedanta?

Swamiji: If Sankhya gives up the idea that purushas are many, and accepts that there can be only one *purusha*, and also abandons the

idea that there is such a thing called permanent *prakriti* opposed to *purusha*—if these two things are done by Sankhya, it automatically merges with Vedanta. It should give up the idea of the multiplicity of *purushas*, and it should give up the idea of *prakriti* as a completely different entity with no connection with *purusha*. Because of its insistence on these impossible things, Vedanta does not agree with it. If it accepts that *purusha* is only one and *prakriti* does not exist independently by itself, then Vedanta and Sankhya merge into each other. That is the only thing. Otherwise, there is no controversy.

Visitor: Then what is the relationship between *prakriti* and *purusha* if *prakriti* does not stand outside it?

Swamiji: According to the Sankhya, there is no relationship. They are totally different; therefore, it creates a problem. Even if the *purusha* realises itself in liberation, the *prakriti* will be there as an unknown entity, and the liberation attained will be a false liberation. As long as there is something outside you, liberation is not complete. So Sankhya is wrong in holding that there is a *prakriti* existing independently even after the *purusha* realises itself. There is no relationship between the two. They are two different things—that is the Sankhya *purusha*. But according to the Vedanta, the *purusha* and the *prakriti* are the subjective and the objective sides of things, both of which are transcended in the Absolute. This is the difference between Sankhya and Vedanta. The objective universe is called *prakriti*, the subjective consciousness is called *purusha*, and both of them are correlative of each other, one depending on the other; and the truth is neither this side nor the other side. It is a transcendent principle which is the Absolute, Brahman. So this is the reconciliation of this unnecessary contradiction created by Sankhya. That is the whole sum and substance of it. Otherwise, there cannot be any relationship between two contradictory things.

Swamiji [to another visitor]: To make your life spiritual, what is the technique that you are adopting? What do you do actually?

Visitor: I am teaching. I try and help other people maybe, if I can.

Swamiji: Helping other people is a social service, but that is not actually meditation. Though it is helpful, it itself is not. Spirituality

is the consciousness of God. Without consciousness of God there is no spirituality. You may do anything afterwards. You may love people, serve people, you can do any business, no objection, provided it is based on love of God. Otherwise, any activity has no meaning. All activity has the soul which is God-consciousness. You have to maintain God-consciousness, which is called meditation. Then after that you may do anything. You do your professional work, you may do your business, you may do anything. Any activity is good provided at the background there is the rootedness in the consciousness of God.

Mentally can you visualise that there is a Creator of the whole universe? This is important. Your heart should accept that there is a Creator of the whole universe, a Mighty Being pervading the whole universe and transcending everything, knowing all things, present everywhere, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, eternal, absolute. That Being is the only reality. This is what you want. If you can visualise this mental picture of the great universal Creator, and make it part and parcel of your feeling, and think of it as many times as possible, you will get transformed completely spiritually to the extent you are able to concentrate your mind on that. Then you become a teacher, you do business, anything you do, and there is no objection. You can do whatever you like, but it should not be minus God-consciousness. Have you got any problem?

Visitor: I have been doing meditation over the years, but I don't find balance between this part of my life and the part that I am a teacher.

Swamiji: There is no contradiction between God and His creation. It is His own emanation, so you should not see a gulf between two things. When you are externalising God with your sense perception, God looks like the world. When you see the whole world with intuition, the world itself looks like God. It is only the perception that makes the difference. There is no such thing as world minus God. Both are identical, but they look different on account of your identity through the sense organs. The eyes and ears and the other organs of perception, working through space and time, project the Absolute into an external something, and we call it world. And you should finally not make a distinction between the two. They coalesce. The external and the internal joined together become the

Universal.

Visitor: How?

Swamiji: How? By meditation. You must deeply think this. You are the internal as the perceiver of the world, and the world is the external as that which is perceived. These two join together and become one Universal Being. That is God-consciousness. It requires great effort. A few minutes of thinking is not sufficient. You must devote as much time as possible throughout your day. If you are sincere and honest, and persist in this visualisation through meditation, you will succeed. You will be happy.

Visitor: I understand, but in practice it doesn't work.

Swamiji: That is because your will is not very strong. Your willpower is weak.

Visitor: Maybe.

Swamiji: Persistently you must do that. Go on repeating it like a mantra, and by repeated chanting the mind will come to a point of concentration.

TEACHING VIOLENT CHILDREN

A visitor: I am an elementary school teacher. My students are eight years old and they are very violent among themselves. I've been teaching for thirty years now and the violence has increased in Europe, above all among young children, and I don't know how to face this violence. I don't know how to act correctly in front of this. It is a big problem.

Swamiji: You must first of all find out, as a good teacher, what makes them violent. What is the reason?

Visitor: There are many reasons: the family life, the divorce of parents...

Swamiji: They may be not necessarily bad people. There may be a wrong motivation, a very bad upbringing from childhood. How did the parents treat them first? It starts with that. The child is influenced very much by the manner in which the parents bring up the child. There are affectionate parents who feed the emotions and longings of the children with great love and regard. But if the parents discard or threaten or behave in an unintelligent manner with the children, that reaction which the mind of the child feels due to the unpleasant behaviour of the parents will tell upon it. The whole life will be marred by that. Much of the way in which people live in the world depends upon how they were treated by the parents. You must remember that. Were you a very happy child in the house? Was the family was very good and very cooperative, very loving? Were you living in a very loving, happy, cooperative beautiful family or was there tension, quarrelling? If the father and mother quarrel, then they quarrel with the children also. So each child should be taken individually, and you must examine the child's psychological condition, as a medical expert will examine a patient. You cannot teach a group like that. Each individual should be taken independently. You must find out what is the trouble.

Visitor: Yes, but I cannot interfere in the family life. It is not my business.

Swamiji: Then what is your business?

Visitor: I must teach them.

Swamiji: Unless you understand the child, you cannot teach the child. You must have a thorough knowledge or understanding of the mind of the child before you start teaching it. There are twenty people sitting here. It does not mean all of them are thinking the same thought. Before I talk to any person, I must understand what that person is thinking in the mind. Accordingly I must treat that person. If I have a general behaviour with everybody, it won't work.

Teaching is a psychological art. It is not simply throwing knowledge into the mind. You must be a very good psychologist to understand the nature of the child whom you are teaching. You must be a father or a mother to that child. The teacher is not a boss or an authoritarian, but a parent. The teacher may be strict, but yet very affectionate. So love and discipline should go together. Then you may find the children may grow along the right path. It is up to the ability of the teacher. Much depends upon the way of teaching and the characteristic of the teacher.

Visitor: I have another question. Can I realise God through karma yoga only, or through meditation or bhakti or...

Swamiji: You can realise God through karma yoga only provided your karma, or action, is the same as the action of God. If you work as God works, and if you consider that as the highest karma yoga, you will certainly reach God by that. If you work like God, you are doing the highest kind of karma yoga, which is what is explained in the Bhagavadgita. The Bhagavadgita is a great scripture on right action. Have you studied the Bhagavadgita?

Visitor: No, I am just a beginner, so I don't know which line...

Swamiji: No action is useless, but every action is useless if it is wrongly done. Now, what is the meaning of right action and wrong action? Any action that is harmonious with the action of God is right action, and that is equal to meditation. Action in the light of the existence of God is identical with meditation on God. There meditation and action are the same. Contemplation and action are not two things if your action is not in disharmony with the action of God. That consciousness of your action being in harmony with

God's action is itself meditation. So meditation and action are the same if it is directed to God's consciousness. But if your action is selfish, motivated for personal desire, then it will bind. That action cannot liberate you. So the divine action is liberating. It is the same as meditation. That is my answer to you.

Another visitor: When we sit down to pray, we have got so many deities. We all have faith in one God at the background, but when you read about Hanumanji you...

Swamiji: Why do you want so many deities? Even if there are a hundred gods, they are all arms and limbs of the one God. So you should not call them many gods. They are manifestations of the one God only. You can call Him by a hundred names and a thousand forms; it makes no difference. Every form, every name is the name and form of that one Almighty, so there is no difference. So you can think anything, and yet it means that only.

Visitor: Suppose I pray to God and I imagine all the four arms and discus, and then Hanuman's strength...

Swamiji: You should not imagine that they are really different. They are not really different. They are only manifestations of One. Like the million rays of the sun—even if there are a million rays emanating from the sun, it is the sun only that is emanating the energy. It doesn't mean that every ray is a different God. So there is no harm. Even if millions of drops of water fall in the rain, it is rain only. Any amount of streams of water that flow during monsoon season do not mean that many little rivulets are coming. So any number of forms it can take, any shape, and you can give any name, but it is a multifaceted manifestation of the One Integral Unity at the back.

ARCHETYPE AND PROTOTYPE

A visitor: What is the meaning of 'archetype'?

Swamiji: You are a duplicate of your own self. Your original is in the high heavens. When you were born, you did not drop suddenly into the mother's womb. A cosmic activity was taking place as if a parliamentary act was passed that you have to be born. It is decided in the highest heaven. And then, just as in government, papers are released from a high office to a lower, lower, lower, lower, lower one. The orders are issued: This particular soul has to be born under such circumstances, in this area, for this reason, for such a length of time, etc. It is decided. Your constitution, the rules and regulations of your very existence, are framed even before you are born.

Then you descend gradually through the seven planes of existence. There are seven levels of existence. To reach this Earth you have crossed seven planes down, little by little. Firstly it was an ethereal, pervasive being. Then it became more and more concretised and more and more dense until it became a solid little individual as you are. So your original is somewhere else. You are the tip of the iceberg, as they say, and the ocean is somewhere else. Your real, original, ocean-like existence is on the top. That is pulling you every minute. You are summoned by your own self every minute by your original, which is somewhere else. That is why you feel restless. Nothing can satisfy you. No object in the world can please you. Anything that is given to you will be insufficient. Everywhere you will find finitude and littleness. Even if the whole Earth is given to you, you will not be satisfied because you want your own self, and that self is not to be found in this world. It is somewhere there. That is the archetype, the original, and all other things that come down little by little, they are called prototypes, like reflections. The original is reflected in the lower level. That second reflection is reflected once again in the third level. That third reflection is reflected in the fourth, so that when you come down it becomes so very diluted that your personality is a flimsy something. It has no value at all. You look like a miserable nothing.

Now your duty is to go back, turn your head back from this

lowest level to the higher until your dimension is wider—high, high, high. Through seven stages you must rise until you reach the topmost original, which is something indescribable. Eternity is your archetype, temporality is your prototype, and the most miserable form of involvement in this time process is your present existence. You must retrace your steps.

The great mystic saint, Teresa of Avila, has written a book called ‘Interior Castle’. In that you will find described the seven corridors—the first step, second step, third step, fourth step, to seven steps. When you reach there you will find your own self. The more you go interior to the substance of the cosmos, you will find yourself more and more, until you find that, in the last centre, you are everywhere. You are as much pervasive as the whole cosmos because eternity and all-pervasiveness are one and the same. That is the original archetype. And there are levels of prototypes, seven levels. This is the whole of yoga and meditation. The entire spirituality is only this much.

As you go higher and higher, it becomes more and more formless. As you come down, it becomes more and more formed. In the highest state there is no form because it is all pervading. You are not originally an individual. Originally you are cosmic only. That cosmic thing gets restricted little by little, little by little. It gets split into parts, and you become one of the little parts. Many parts have been cut off from that original whole, and you are one of them.

If you simply follow the technique of meditation, you will rise up to higher and higher, higher and higher levels until you experience your own universal Self. It is very difficult to explain all this. It is highly mystical, and very secret. A great secret it is. That subject cannot be explained in a lecture.

Another visitor: Swamiji, you talked about the seven inner planes of existence going towards the archetype. Can this only happen within the human birth?

Swamiji: It can happen in one birth if your meditation is strong enough.

Second visitor: Swamiji, if all this is just concepts, then...

Swamiji: No, it is not a concept. You should not use such words.

‘Concept’ is a psychological word. It is the nature of being, your own being. You are not thinking the archetype; you are the archetype. You are not thinking that you are yourself; you are yourself. Are you imagining that you are yourself, psychologically? It is being itself. Your existence itself is that. So in meditation there is no concept, there is no thinking, there is no psychological function. All functions melt into the being that you are. That state of being includes emotion, intellect, understanding, will—everything. Your existence is not conceptual. It is much more than that. You are not thinking and arguing that you are existing. It is intuitional and immediately appreciated: I am here. This conclusion does not come from thinking. It is intuition, direct intuition.

Visitor: Swamiji, if I had a dream last night that I was here in my dream, I wouldn’t have been here in my dream.

Swamiji: In dream? Why are you bringing dream here?

Visitor: Because this is the same. It is not any different.

Swamiji: Dream is a conceptual process.

Visitor: This is the same as dream.

Swamiji: Are you existing or you are not existing?

Visitor: Only as much as I was in my dream.

Swamiji: Are you doubting that you are existing?

Visitor: The identification doesn’t seem any different than in the dream.

Swamiji: This whole waking life also is dream only. So what is the problem now?

Visitor: So my question was, if all of this is a dream only, a concept only, an imagination only...

Swamiji: All the levels of being are dreams only, in greater levels. Only they are more and more real as you go higher and higher. Just as waking appears to be more real than dream, the higher still, next step, will be more real than waking, and again higher and higher and higher. Finally you will enter into the Eternal Being, and there you

will not conceptualise. You will not be existing there at that time. You will simply melt into the cosmos. So there will be nobody to talk to you afterwards. Now you are an individual person, so you are thinking like that. Your mind is still working. As you go higher and higher, the mind will merge into the Self.

You must make a distinction between being and thinking. They are not identical. Your existence is not thought. It is direct intuition, just as you know it is waking time now. You are not arguing by syllogistic argument coming to the conclusion that it is daytime. You know it is daytime for reasons you know very well. You know who you are for reasons you know very well. You are not arguing and conceptualising and deducing by syllogism. It is just intuition, direct intuition. That is why I called it Pure Being.

Another visitor: I find it difficult to sit for meditation.

Swamiji: Doing work, walking, running, being immensely active is an easy thing, but keeping quiet one hour is not an easy thing. Doing is easy, but not doing is difficult. Can you understand this contradiction?

Visitor: Yes, Swamiji. It is very difficult not to work.

Swamiji: It shows the structure of the personality. It is agitated. Unless the personality is agitated, you would not like to do work. Of course, there are higher kinds of activity, that is different, but usually... That is why nobody can sit one hour quietly. Even in meditation, there are people who yawn in the middle, as if meditation is a fatigue. It'll take fifty years for a person to understand what is meditation. It is not a fatiguing exercise; it is a relaxing exercise. It is not an outgoing exercise; it is an inwardising exercise. It is not a grief-striking exercise; it is a joy-giving exercise. And the more you sit, the more you like to sit because the more you become yourself, the more you are happy. The more you become other than what you are, the less you are happy. Meditation is the art of becoming yourself. What can be more valuable than yourself? If that also is causing agony, then what can anyone say?

Even to be fond of one's own self is difficult. It is easy to be fond of something else, but we cannot be fond of ourselves. A serious psychological knot it is. *Granthis* they are called—Brahma-granthi,

Rudra-granthi and Vishnu-granthi. Three kinds of knots are there, and these knots are not allowing the mind to be rested in itself. Very important matter. One day old age will come. At that time one walks with a hunched back, bending. Who will protect you? When the health is good in youth, everything looks okay, but that will not continue. Youth will fade like an evening flower, and all the beauty of the flower will droop. At that time no caretaker is there. The caretaker is yourself only. Meditation is very important. Meditation not as a religious exercise, but is an art of becoming one's own self.

This is not a matter to go on speaking about. Any amount of speaking will not make sense because it is something with which nobody is accustomed. People say even space and time do not exist. You can hear it a hundred times, but what sense are you making out of it? If space and time do not exist, the world also does not exist. If the world does not exist, you also do not exist. Then what exists? You can hear this many times; scientists speak it, but what sense comes out of it finally?

Visitor: It is only an intellectual understanding, Swamiji.

Swamiji: Even the intellect does not grasp it fully. But even if it is an intellectual understanding, it is not bad. If it is understood thoroughly, and its implications are appreciated and go deep into the feeling, that will work wonders. It should not be simply a kind of entertainment. That is not good.

We are our own friends, we are our own caretakers, and our destiny is in our hands. Knowing this, if you sit for meditation the mind will understand: This is a very serious matter for me.

THE QUINTESSENCE OF SPIRITUALITY

Swamiji: There was a bullock cart driver. This is a story. The wheels got stuck on the ground. “God, you are so kind. Whenever there is difficulty you come and help me. Please come and push this cart out.” God came in a particular form and said, “Foolish man, have you not got the strength to push it? You want to sit idle in spite of your capacity to push it? You want me to come and push it. If you feel you have no strength and are paralysed completely, I will come and push it. If you are able to do it, why are you calling me? So you are an idle man, lethargic and selfish, a grabber. Such people should not pray.”

God is very intelligent. He is not a foolish person. He knows your mind even before you start thinking. He is sitting behind your mind itself, so you cannot deceive Him by saying, “Give, give,” and all that. He will give; I’m not saying you will not get it, but you must be prepared for the cost of it. The surrender that is required from your side should be compatible with your expectation of reward from the other side. Your egoism should be wiped out.

Thinking of God is nothing but a process of eliminating personal consciousness as much as possible, and if your personality-consciousness is completely eliminated—you have merged with the whole world and you have become a world citizen—then the whole world will protect you immediately. The world will fall at your feet. You need not fall at the feet of anybody. All the gods in heaven will come. But your heart should be so pure and confident: “I shall get it. There is no defect in me. I am sure I have no defects. I am pure. I am faultless. My asking is pure. I am asking the whole universe because I belong to the universe.” You tell the universe, “Take me into your bosom.” When you belong to your family, your family will protect you, but if you tell your family members, “I care a hoot for you!” then they will say, “Get out of this place!” Like that, it is a family. The whole universe is a family, and God is the Supreme Father. A family cannot survive if one of the members is revolting. You have to be a cohesive participant in the structure of the family.

Everything is a family only. The district is a family, the nation is a family, the state is a family, the whole world also is a family;

the entire creation is a family, but everyone, every little item, should participate wholeheartedly for the welfare of the other. There is no such thing as possessing. There is only belonging. You must belong to that which you are asking for. If you belong to that which you are asking for, it will automatically come to you. It is a very subtle matter, highly scientific. You cannot climb to the top of a tree and tell the gravitational force, "Don't throw me down." Who asked you to climb the tree? You see, the gravitational force is the gravitational force. The gravitational force has no pity. It doesn't say, "The king is sitting on the top. I should not drop him down. And a baby is sitting on the top." Nobody asked you to climb, and now you are going up and saying, "Don't throw me down." That you should not ask. The law must be respected, whatever the law is.

A visitor: Maybe you can give me guidance.

Swamiji: What guidance do you want? In what direction?

Visitor: Spiritual.

Swamiji: Spiritual life means a life of love of God. That is called spiritual life.

Visitor: What is love?

Swamiji: When you want a thing immensely, abundantly, that is called love.

Visitor: Isn't love attachment?

Swamiji: It is very good to have attachment to God.

Visitor: So what is God?

Swamiji: God is that which has created the universe. The universe is so big, and God must be bigger than that. So you cannot get attached to that like that.

Visitor: So when I love God, what is it that I love?

Swamiji: Then you should not love anything else, because That includes everything else. The whole universe is included in God, including yourself. You have also gone inside. So everything goes into it, and you develop a universal all-inclusive eternal satisfaction

of being all things at the same time, like God Himself. You will be as happy as God Himself is.

This practice of concentrating your mind on that almighty, all-pervading Universal Being is the essence of spiritual life; everything else that you do, whatever else you do in the direction of fulfilling this purpose, is also spiritual. But the main thing is concentration of the mind on God, the supreme Creator, all pervading, in Whom the universe is merged.

Visitor: So what is this thing that I am loving?

Swamiji: You are loving nothing. At present you are loving nothing. You have got distraction.

Visitor: So what is God?

Swamiji: You listen to what I am saying. I have told you what to love. Close your eyes and centre your mind in the eternal all-pervading Being which is as vast as space, beyond space and time, beyond sun, moon and stars, inclusive of all things, majestic, wonderful, very powerful, all knowing, great happiness, ocean of light. Deeply think like that. Then your health will improve. You will be very strong inside in your mind, in your feeling, in your intellect, in your will, in society—in everything you will be very strong. This is the quintessence of spirituality.

GOD-REALISATION AND THE WORLD

A visitor: You said that in God-realisation the world is like a dream, so that the whole world is vanishing like the dream is vanishing after waking up. On the other hand, you said that the leaves cannot fall down from the tree without the sanction of the Supreme.

Swamiji: Right.

Visitor: But that means that in God-realisation, you are not aware of leaves and trees, so you exclude them.

Swamiji: The leaf becomes God Himself. There is no leaf at that time. The leaf enters into God's being. The leaf becomes conscious. There is no tree at that time. They will all melt into the consciousness of God. There is no tree at all; it doesn't exist at all. It is only an illusion that you are seeing, and they will all melt down afterwards and become one vast ocean of existence. Even yourself, you will vanish completely into it. There will be no person to put a question afterwards. Only God is. He is looking at it, looking at Himself in that tree, mountain; everybody is going inside.

Visitor: But is it completely vanishing inside?

Swamiji: It will vanish into it. It is not vanishing; it gets absorbed into it, just as the dream objects get absorbed in waking consciousness. They are not vanishing; they are still there, but they are now operating through the waking mind instead of the dreaming mind. They cannot vanish. Nothing can vanish, but they get transmuted, transformed into a higher level, just as all the objects in dream get transformed in the waking consciousness. That's why you are not having any attachment to objects of dream, because they are all inside the waking mind. And so also is the case of God-consciousness, Universal-consciousness. When you attain that state, nothing in the world will attract you afterwards because it will be like the dream world. Whatever you are feeling now about the dream world, that you will feel about the waking world in that condition.

There are three stages of ascent. One is the dream world, another is the waking world, and the third is a transcendent experience. The transcendent one absorbs the waking condition as the waking

condition absorbs the dream condition. It is a stage-by-stage ascent until you reach that where everything is absorbed into itself, and you will not find anything outside afterwards. It is a total experience, holistic, where you won't be existing afterwards. You are inside That. So only one thing is thinking; Pure Being itself is conscious of itself. When God alone is, you will not think of trees and all that. The trees have gone inside it already. Pure Being is conscious of itself: I am what I am.

Visitor: Then in the world of fantasy of...

Swamiji: What is the world? Which world? This world will not be there at that time. Just as the dream world is not there in waking, this will not be there in the cosmic mind. What has happened to the dream world? Where it is now? It has gone inside your mind. The same thing will happen. The whole world will go into that cosmic mind. So nobody will be there to think of this world.

Visitor: But the Supreme is acting in this world.

Swamiji: Is the waking mind acting in the dream world or not? Is the waking mind acting in the dream world? If you say yes, then God is working through the waking mind. If you say no, then you can say it is not working. When you are dreaming of things, do you believe that the waking mind is working? Or it is not working? In one way yes, in one way no. There is no waking, dream at that time. It is transcendent consciousness.

Your mind cannot grasp it because you are not able to think without the externality impulse in your mind. You always think of something outside. That outside becomes inside there, and becomes universal. I gave the simple example: Whatever happens to the objects in dream when you are awake, that will happen to the world of waking when you reach God. Do you feel that you have lost something when you have woken up? Perhaps you were a king in dream. "Now I am a little poor man sitting here. I have lost my kingdom." Do you feel like that? You feel it is a foolish thing. This you will feel there. It doesn't exist at all. The mind itself vanishes. It is Pure Being.

Visitor: But we speak about the Almighty also.

Swamiji: That is the same thing. What you call transcendent experience is called the Almighty. It is another name that you are giving.

Visitor: Almighty means Almighty in dream.

Swamiji: In dream also you are almighty only because you have got control over the things. You may be having a lot of land in dream, you may be a king, you may be having so many servants, you have a lot of money in dream, so you have got control. But when you wake up, you find it is not there because they are external projections of the waking mind. The same thing will happen in transcendental consciousness. All the values of life, including whatever thick walls, buildings, sun, moon, stars, they all get absorbed into that consciousness. They are not vanishing; they get absorbed into it, so that it is inclusive of whatever you are considering as valuable here. The mind is also not existing there because, as you say, it is not psychological because the mind is not existing. It is only Pure Being, consciousness of Pure Being as such. Unless your mind is purified, you will not be able to understand this. You must purify your mind first. Otherwise, headache will come. It can cause headache.

There was a person who tried to meditate like this, but he had an impure mind. The mind was not pure. So the mind, which was having submerged desires concerning this world but consciously the desires were not visible, started meditating on the absoluteness of Consciousness. That gave him such a kick, like a huge electromagnetic field giving a shock to a man who goes near it, that he lost his senses completely, and he came here. I saw him. He was doing like this [shaking his head from side to side].

I said, “Why are you doing like that?”

He said, “I tried to meditate that all is Consciousness. The moment I started doing that, this happened to me. I got a blow on the head. Now I am doing like this.” He asked me, “What am I to do now?”

I said, “You stop your meditation. Eat well, sleep well. Forget all this spirituality and God and everything. For one month you don’t do anything. After one month you will be all right. But don’t start this meditation because you are not prepared for it. Only an electrical engineer can climb the electric pole. Suppose a layman climbs, he

will get a shock and die there. You cannot touch a live wire, but engineers can touch it. Likewise, this is a kind of live wire, high-voltage. You should not play jokes with it unless you are insulated properly with purity of mind and strength of will, and without any kind of turmoil in the emotions. You must be a perfectly integrated person, very happy and very strong, fully satisfied: 'I want nothing.' Then this trouble will not take place. So don't be in a hurry."

SLAUGHTERING COWS

A visitor: My family makes their livelihood out of slaughtering cows. In our country, New Zealand, the main export is meat.

Swamiji: You cannot live without doing that kind of work?

Visitor: I can. Yes.

Swamiji: What is the other alternative?

Visitor: I'm in construction management.

Swamiji: Do that.

Visitor: And my family... What connection is my dharma to my family and that community? My father is getting old, and there is something with the family land and the cattle.

Swamiji: You have to find a job which does not involve killing cattle, and with that you must maintain your family. You can till the land, you can raise a factory, you can do business. Don't involve yourself in cattle. You do any other business, other than this. There are so many ways of living in the world.

Visitor: My brother is living on that land, and he is slaughtering cows. Should I continue to live on that land with my brother?

Swamiji: Does the land belong to your brother or does it belong to you?

Visitor: It belongs to all of us—three brothers and one sister.

Swamiji: Tell your brother that you are not going to do this kind of work, that you will have your own work.

Visitor: But should I live alongside them, in the family where there is...

Swamiji: If you can live elsewhere, if you have got the means of living elsewhere, live elsewhere. If it is impossible to find a place, you have to live there only, but don't do this work. If you can find another place comfortably, conveniently, do that.

Visitor: Swamiji, is it correct dharma for me to run away from that

situation? Is it correct for me to run away from my society and my culture?

Swamiji: What is your culture?

Visitor: It's based on this for economic reasons.

Swamiji: No, what you are doing cannot be called culture. It is the opposite of culture. It is not correct.

Visitor: So the whole New Zealand culture is not correct because our economic base is killing animals?

Swamiji: The more you are considerate in regard to the lives of other living beings, the more are you cultured. The more are you inconsiderate in regard to the life of other living beings, the less are you cultured. So you cannot say that killing cows is a culture. It is not culture because you are interfering with the lives of somebody else.

Visitor: So what to do then, because I was educated by my father from his livelihood?

Swamiji: Let the father do anything. I'm not talking of your father. I'm talking about yourself. I cannot talk about your father because your father is not here.

Visitor: Okay. Well, I come from a culture, and now it is not a culture, so how to live there?

Swamiji: You need not live there. If you can find another place comfortably, do that.

Another visitor: But Swamiji, it's difficult if you were raised... I didn't raise cattle but I feel like I benefited by the work that they did, which now I see as uncultured, and still I have a biological relationship to them in one way, and also they have helped me to be here, and...

Swamiji: You can receive help from them by being physically away from them, because you are saying it is not agreeable to you. If the culture that they are following is not acceptable for some reason, you need not live there, though you need not cut off your connection with them. You can live elsewhere but still maintain your relationship

because they are your parents or whatever they are. You cannot live in a place where your conscience is revolting. That place is not good. Find another place.

I would not permit the killing of any living being. It is not a proper thing. And you are not in such a bad predicament that you cannot exist without eating cows and all that. You find another work, another job.

Another visitor: How to become strong in the mind?

Swamiji: Are you not strong in the mind now?

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: Are you weak?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: How did you find out you are weak?

Visitor: I am not very strong-willed to do anything.

Swamiji: What do you want to achieve by the will? What do you want to achieve?

Visitor: Wisdom.

Swamiji: Wisdom of what?

Visitor: Of life, to serve.

Swamiji: What is your profession?

Visitor: Psychologist.

Swamiji: You have studied so much. How did you study without willpower? You have got willpower. Why are you always feeling that you are weak? You must not say that. You are a psychologist. You will become whatever you think you are. If you say you are a weak man, you will become a weak man only. This is a kind of induction, and you are wrongly hypnotising yourself: "I am a poor man. Nobody wants me. I have got nothing. I am weak." You should not say like that. Say, "I am a strong man. I have got great power. I shall get what I want by the power of my will. I am one with the cosmic force. I am united with God Himself. All the power of God is working through my mind. My power of will is strong." Why

don't you say that? Why do you say 'weak, weak', and all that? Whatever you are affirming in your mind, that you will become. As a psychologist you know all the techniques. I think there is nothing wrong with you. You are perfectly all right. Only affirm the strength of your will, which derives strength from the cosmic will. No problem. Be happy.

INTEGRATING THE MIND

Swamiji: You asked me a question: What is integration?

Integration means thinking that which is complete. The thought of anything that is complete in itself is the way to maintain integration of the mind. You cannot find anything complete in this world. Everything in the world is incomplete because everything excludes something else. Therefore, nothing in the world can be complete. So you cannot have an integrated feeling by thinking of anything in this world because everything is partial inasmuch as it excludes something else. You cannot find in this world anything which includes everything into itself. Therefore, the world is incomplete.

Therefore, the satisfaction that you get from the world will also be incomplete. So nobody can be completely happy in this world fully because you are pursuing that which is itself not complete, and what cannot be complete can give you only incomplete satisfaction. The only thing that is complete is that which created the whole world. Can you conceive that?

Visitor: I can try.

Swamiji: You can do it in one minute if your heart is up to it. It takes one minute. Then you will feel you are integrated. The whole world gets concentrated in you when you pray to God. 'The whole world' means that which does not exclude anything from itself. The world is integrated because outside the world nothing can be. If that total can be conceived in your mind, you are immediately psychologically integrated. You may think the whole world or the whole of God, as the case may be.

This requires a little bit of practice, and every day you must sit and try to adjust your mind in this direction. You should not think anything outside which there is something, because then it is not complete. You must think only of that, outside which nothing is. You may think of the whole universe; that also is good enough because outside the universe nothing can be. The thought of the whole universe at one stroke is also integration—or if you like, God Himself. This practice must be done. Then the world will get attuned to yourself. That which is complete in itself should get tuned up to

you, either the whole world or the whole of God. You will not be able to find solace by thinking of little petty things. For this, you must have a little faith in your own self. You will become all right if you follow this path. When you come back again, you will be a better man if you follow this path. Okay?

Visitor: Yes, Swamiji.

Another visitor: My question is, how to identify bliss.

Swamiji: You should not have attachment to anything in this world. You should neither love nor hate anybody. Then your mind gets purified. Then the bliss will come from inside. But when there are attachments, it won't come. If you like and hate, *raga-dvesha*, clinging and avoiding, and the mind is in a state of conflict between *raga-dvesha*, then a mind in conflict will never attain bliss. So it requires purification of the mind first. If you live like a *grihasthi*, full of attachments and complications and commitments, always thinking too many things in the mind, the mind cannot get concentrated. A person who can think two things cannot get one thing. You are thinking two things, a hundred things in the mind, so how will the mind get concentrated?

You are not in your own self. You are outside yourself, thinking of the world outside—marketplace, family, business, money, profession, pension. These things in the mind are occupying you very powerfully, so you have forgotten yourself completely. In your concern for other things, you have lost concern for yourself; therefore, the bliss is not coming out. You forget that you are an important person. You are thinking the world is very important. The whole thing is topsy-turvy.

Visitor: Swamiji, but I have not understood. What is my real nature?

Swamiji: Your nature is Absolute Being. Your nature is divinity. God-nature is your real nature. You have come from God; therefore, you cannot be something else. A spark of fire has come from a huge configuration of fire, and therefore it is also fire. The only thing is, it is covered with smoke and many other forms of dust, etc. If you are sure that you are created by God, God would not create some non-God. He will create God only. So there is an element of God

in you, which is shrouded by too much concern with that which is other than one's own self.

God has no external object; therefore, whoever thinks of external objects does not think as God thinks, and therefore the bliss of God cannot manifest in oneself if your mind is not trained in that way. It is a very difficult thing, but a very simple thing to understand. A thing with which you are not acquainted looks very difficult, but when you understand it, it is the simplest of things.

In our concern with people outside, we have lost concern with our own selves. You consider yourself as an unimportant person in your concern with other people, but you are not to think like that. You are a very important person. If you yourself do not exist, how will you be showing concern for other people? Will you abolish yourself in order to save other people?

Unless you are strong, you cannot make others strong. A person who is caught up in a prison cannot liberate others from prison. Come out of the prison first, and then there may be some way to release other people also. You yourself are inside the prison and want others also to get out.

The bondage consists in thinking totally contrary to what God will expect you to think. This requires a lot of training, and two days sitting in Sivananda Ashram is not sufficient. You should not put questions like that. No answer will come like that. It is like asking an engineer, "How did you build this bridge? There is a big bridge across the Ganga. Please explain to me how you built it." He will say, "What kind of question you are asking? I studied for twenty-five years and then with that knowledge I have built it, so how can I answer the question? It is a question of technology."

This is a psychological technique; you may call it a spiritual technique. It is a highly proficient way of thinking. It requires discipline and time, and earnestness, and eagerness to know it, and you should not say, "I have no time." If you have no time for what is good for you, where is the time for you for other things? First of all, find out what is good for you. What do you want, finally?

Most people suffer from not knowing what they want. Ask anybody, "What do you want finally?" He will look up, and he cannot answer. He will say, "I want many things," but actually

nobody wants many things. They want themselves only, in a most-expanded form, permanently. You want yourself only, but not as Mr. so-and-so sitting here. You want to enhance the dimension of your being as much as possible. You would like to be as big as the universe itself, if possible. Why should you be a little man sitting in Delhi? “If possible I could be as big as Delhi itself, as big as the whole world.” And also, for how many days? Suppose you are so big for one second, and then die tomorrow. That is no good. So you want to be perpetually existing also.

So two desires are there. One thing is, you must be as big as possible, and another is, for as long as possible, so your desire defies space and defies time. That is your desire. You want to overcome space and overcome time also. That means to say, you want eternity. This is what your desire is. But you are not able to understand. You are muddled up with so many confused things, mixed up. You have not found time to think over this matter. You have come here for two days like a tourist. Students don’t come like tourists; they come for studying only, and they must have as much time to spare as is necessary. You should not think anything else in the mind. Forget everything.

But many commitments are there; you will think like that. The commitments and duties of the world are not opposed to spiritual meditation. That is another mistake that we are making. The activities and the industrialisations and the great business of life is not an obstacle to spiritual life. The obstacle is the inability to reconcile these two sides. You are unable to reconcile the internal and the external. You think they are opposites. It is not like that. It is like the opposition that you are creating between God and the world. God is not opposed to the world, nor is the world opposed to God, yet sometimes we think like that: This world is wretched, and God is wonderful! This thinking also is a very immature thinking. All this requires great training.

VISHVA PRARTHANA

Swamiji: We should pray to the Almighty Lord that this country, this world, receive into its bosom greater and greater souls who sustain this world. The world is not sustained by money power, it is not sustained by police and army, it is not sustained by military activity; it is sustained by the great thoughts of people. The power of thought of all humanity, that sustains this world.

The greatest service that you can do to anybody is a noble thought that you can evoke in your mind in regard to either somebody, or to a group of people, or to the whole country, or to the whole world itself. Vishva-prarthana. We do every day Vishva-prarthana. It is an invocation from our deepest source, our heart, for the welfare of the whole world.

We cannot be happy by merely sitting in one room and thinking everything is okay. We should not think like that. If the atmosphere is disturbed, if the community is disturbed, where is the security for a house? If the village is disturbed, the whole district is disturbed, the entire state and country are disturbed, where is the security for one person? And if the whole earth is disturbed—there is catastrophe, cataclysm, earthquake, wind and tornado—where is the security?

The whole universe should be pleased; then you are also pleased. Your little community, your little cottage, your little house in some corner of this world can be secure only if the whole universe is secure. Otherwise, there will be a thunderstorm at the centre of the cosmos and the whole thing will shake. This is the power of Vishva-prarthana. All our prayers should be directed to the welfare of the whole universe—not my welfare, your welfare, and all that—because individual welfare is included in cosmic welfare.

These are the great saints and sages. They do not speak about themselves. They don't advertise themselves. They don't write books about themselves—no autobiography, nothing of the kind. They are happy. The world is attracted towards them.

A visitor: *Shunya*, nothingness, and beingness are eventually the same thing, isn't it?

Swamiji: Both mean the same thing. When you are asserting

everything, you are asserting nothing. When you are asserting nothing, you are asserting everything. So the philosophy of Acharya Sankara and the Upanishads that everything is, is just like the Madhyamaka, Nagarjuna's philosophy that there is nothing. If you can think of everything at the same time, you are practically thinking nothing, and if you can think nothing, you are actually thinking everything. You may say they are like night and day because there is no such thing as night and day. There is always sunlight somewhere in the world, and there is always night somewhere. At every time it is morning, and at every time it is evening. When you say it is morning, morning where? Which place? Every minute there is a morning on the Earth. Every minute there is a sunset. Every minute it is midday, and every minute people are sleeping at midnight, so it is a very interesting thing. Anything is okay; everything is okay. You can say no or you can say yes. Existence or no existence, both mean the same thing.

In the Bhagavadgita Lord Sri Krishna says, "I am existence and non-existence combined together." Even the idea of non-existence is existence. You cannot think non-existence unless you assert the existence of your mind. So there is no such thing as non-existence. It is existence only.

[To another visitor] Raikva was a very big man, very big. I will tell you the story about that man. There was a king. In the hot summer he was sitting on the top of the house because it was very hot. He was lying down. Two birds were flying. One bird was in front; another bird was behind. The bird that was behind told the bird in front, "Don't cross, don't cross. The fire of the power of this king is coming up to the skies. It will burn you. Don't you know? He is a great man. His *tapas* is a fire. He is lying on the top, and it is coming up to the skies. Don't go, don't cross. He will burn your wings." The other bird said, "Whom are you talking about? Who is this king, as if he is equal to Raikva?" He pooh-poohed—'pooh-pooh' means he didn't agree—that this king is a great man. The other one said the king is so powerful he will burn if anybody crosses him, but the other one said he cannot be equal to Raikva.

The king heard all this and said, "There is a man greater than I—Raikva, Raikva. Who is Raikva? I have never heard of him." The

bird was insulting this man: “Who are you, as if you are equal to Raikva?” He didn’t sleep in the night. He was very much disturbed: “In my country there is somebody who is greater than myself.”

In the morning, all the attendants started bugles and music, and all that, to wake up the king and praise him: “Maharaj, great king, get up.” The king said, “Don’t praise me. I am not equal to Raikva. Find out this Raikva; only then I shall be happy. Why are you praising me? I am not equal to Raikva. Find out who is this Raikva who is supposed to be greater than myself. This bird said, ‘This Raikva is so great, if anybody does any good thing in the world, the result of that good thing will go to his credit. If you do some good charity, that person will get everything.’ What is the matter? We are doing some good things, and the result goes to somebody else. How is it possible?” He couldn’t understand. Something terrible! This person is a terrible man, not ordinary.

So he sent a messenger, “Go around the whole country. Find out Raikva. I want to go and meet him.” They went to all the towns and cities, everywhere. Raikva, Raikva, they could not find any Raikva. They came and said, “Your highness, there is no Raikva. We cannot find him.” “Where did you search?” “We went to all the towns.” “Hey, do you think that great people are staying in towns? He must be staying somewhere far off. Why are you going to the towns? Go to those places where great people live.”

Again they went in search. In some far-off village a man was sitting. He was scratching himself. He had some itches also. And he was having a bullock cart—no bullocks, cart only. He had to pull it himself. Physically very poor. They went. “May we know if you are Raikva?” “Hey, they call me like that,” he said. “The king wants you.” “Let the king go,” he said. “Who is the king? I have no connection with a king. Don’t talk of kings,” he said.

They ran and told the king, “Here he is. He doesn’t care for you. He doesn’t want to see you also. He is sitting alone with a cart.” The king himself came with all retinue, gold, silver, this, that, and offered it. “Please teach me what you know.” “Hey, go!” he said. “You want to purchase me by gold? Go, go, go, go!” Oh, he was very much upset.

The king went, and again he brought something extra, and

offered. “Please take.” He said, “I will give the whole village to you. You are sitting with a cart. The entire village is yours. I call it Raikva village. Take, and teach me what you know.” “Oh, let us see,” he said. He spoke. This is a story in the Upanishads, in the Chhandogya Upanishad.

What did he speak? Why is it that anybody’s good action goes to him? What is the reason? If a thousand people do good things, the good result will go to that man only. It is unthinkable. I am doing good things and the result goes to that man. Very strange! How is it possible? It is something like this. Even if the mouth eats the food, the body gets the strength. If the eyes see an object, the whole body is happy. If the ears hear music, the whole body is satisfied. If the stomach gets food, the entire body is satisfied. So whatever any organ does, it satisfies this because it is the total. Likewise, these people—yourself, myself, anybody—who do good deeds, they are like little, little sense organs, but he was a big body who absorbed everything into himself.

“Teach me,” said the king. “Oh, I will tell you,” Raikva said. “Absorb,” he said. The philosophy of this great Raikva is called absorption. What are you absorbing? “I absorb the sun into myself, I absorb the moon into myself, I absorb the sky into myself, I absorb the rivers into myself, I absorb the mountains, I absorb the earth, all the elements. The whole creation I absorb. This is the meditation,” he said. The whole universe absorbs into it, so there is no wonder that if you do anything it goes to him only. He was a cosmic being looking like a poor fellow scratching the body and having a cart without even bull. A great wonder. So there was a great person called Raikva. You become Raikva. Is it possible? Can you become like that?

KARMA PROPELLING US

A visitor: Swamiji, is it just karma propelling us through a stream of consciousness?

Swamiji: It is the karma of the past that is propelling you into the future, and the karma of the present is propelling you to come here. The karma of the past is propelling you to the present; the present karma is propelling you into the future. And there is no end for the future, because the future becomes the present when you actually enter into it. When you enter into the future, it becomes the present, so there is no end for this. Continuously you are going on floating.

Visitor: No, if the karma is continually changing, then...

Swamiji: Karma cannot change. The way in which karma acts changes. Karma is nothing but the potentiality of your desires. Whatever you desire produces a reaction. That reaction is called karma. As many desires as you have, so many ways of reaction of karma also are there. As your desires have no end – they are endless in number – therefore endless lives also you have to take for the sake of fulfilling them. You can never fulfil them because there is no end for your desires. The only way is to merge in the Absolute. Then there is no karma.

Visitor: Then there's no karma itself from incarnation to incarnation, after several incarnations.

Swamiji: When you merge in the Absolute, the whole thing goes.

What happens in deep sleep, that happens in *pralaya* in the same way. This sleep is a miniature dissolution, and cosmic dissolution is a universal sleep. But they are of no help to anybody. In sleep we don't benefit except that there is a revival of energy in the body, but the consciousness does not change. In order that we may wake up in the manner in which we wish to wake up, we have to do deep meditation. We have to affirm that which we want to be. If we go on affirming that which we do not want to be, then what is the purpose? If it is decided that you want to be a saint, and you do not want to be anything else, you start thinking like a saint. Now itself you start. Tell yourself: "I am a saint. I think like this."

Another visitor: Swamiji, how do you define enlightened sensibility?

Swamiji: There is no such thing. Sensibility is not enlightened. Sensibility is an action of the sense organs. You are using a wrong word. Sensibility and enlightenment cannot go together. Actually, in sensibility there is no enlightenment. It is a confusion. In the sense organs, the enlightenment goes; it is completely gone. Your question is not aptly put.

[To another visitor, an economist]: There is the economics of life also. Economics is not merely finance. The conducting of one's own life so that one may be able to adjust one's personality and maintain proper alignment, that is also economics. Neither you should eat less, nor you should eat more. Then how much should you eat? This is a part of the economy of life.

Visitor: That much which the system can digest.

Swamiji: Great knowledge of your own self is necessary first, before you eat. You have to know yourself very well before you eat. Who is it that is eating? What kind of person am I? Am I mentally worried, have I got disturbed emotions, have I to catch a train just now? At that time if you start eating, it is as good as not eating. The train is whistling, and you are taking lunch at that time. The stomach will revolt: "No, I won't eat like that."

Every subject is interesting, highly interesting. Everything is beautiful if you go deep into it. God has created a beautiful world, if you would like to see it. If you don't want to see it, okay, all right. You can see the beauty of the rose flower, or you can see the thorn that is underneath. Which you want to see? Which is better? There is a thorn which pricks if you touch it, so you can say it's a horrible thing. You can say a very detestable thorn is there, or you can say how beautiful it is. So one and the same thing is both.

Another visitor: Is intelligence prosperity?

Swamiji: Intelligence is not prosperity. Intelligence is the determining principle of everything that is happening in the world, including financial prosperity, job, police, anything. It is the enlightened condition of the mind which leads you to particular lines of activity, whether it is financial or whatever it is. It is the

life principle of your existence itself. Your very existence is nothing but intelligence. Minus intelligence you don't exist at all. Your being itself is intelligence. Your consciousness of your being is the fundamental reality for you. You are conscious that you are existing. On the basis of that foundation, everything follows. If you are not conscious that you are existing, then nothing will happen afterwards. So intelligence is the first principle of the universe, and when it is attended to the whole universe, it is God-consciousness. Individually it is your personal consciousness; cosmically it is God-consciousness. If you can expand your individual consciousness to the cosmic level, it becomes God-consciousness. But if you limit it to a physical body encasement, it becomes individual consciousness. Both are the same. One is like an ocean; the other is like a drop. You have got a drop of consciousness, and if all the drops in the universe join together, it becomes God-consciousness. So you can take whatever you like.

Visitor: I able to understand what you want to communicate to me, but I'm not able to understand it in totality. What is the main intelligence that you are talking about?

Swamiji: What I'm telling you is, your intelligence is a small intelligence in comparison with the total intelligence of the whole universe. But if you can adjust your individual intelligence to the cosmic intelligence by deep meditation, it will enter into you, and a man can become a Godman. It is a very great thing to experience that. It requires a lot of effort, persistence and sincerity on your part, and if you want it, you will get it.

THE HINDU RELIGION

A visitor: According to you, what is the greatest weakness of the Hindu religion?

Swamiji: The greatest weakness of the Hindu religion is that nobody can understand what it is. That is the greatest weakness. You ask any Hindu, "How do you know that you are Hindu?" Let him answer the question. He will fail in the exam.

Hinduism has no weakness. The weaknesses is in the mind of the person who is trying to understand it. Hinduism is so comprehensive, and it extends from the atom to the stars. Every concept, every faith, every religious viewpoint, every aspiration, every gesture, every state of mind, every level of reality—all these are comprehended in that vast compass of religious consciousness which today goes by the name Hinduism.

The word 'Hindu' is not known to Hindus. It is a foreign word. It has come from Persia and Greece. India does not know that it is India. It is a later development. When the Persians came, they crossed the Indus River, which was called Sindhu. Persians cannot pronounce the letter S, so they pronounce Sindhu as Hindu, and whoever is beyond the Hindhu River are Hindus. Then the Greeks came with Alexander the Great, and they crossed the Indus. The H became I, Ind. So Hindu became Ind afterwards, and now it is a country called India.

Neither the word India, Ind nor Hindu have any connection with the religion and philosophy of this country. It has no name. It is a universal sweep. It is a way of conducting oneself according to the law of the universe, that's all; and it is up to anyone to find out what is the law of the universe. Atom, molecule, object, stars, galaxies, space, time—all these are degrees of the manifestation of the law of nature, and every degree of the manifestation of the law of nature should be respected. You have to pay dues to it.

Hinduism is a religion which absorbs, but does not repel. Hinduism is only an ideal. But human weakness does not permit this kind of appreciation. No human being really can think of anything which is not finite. It is a respect that you pay to every viewpoint,

every degree of reality, and every kind of relation that obtains between oneself and the universe.

If it is too difficult to understand, we go by the lesser definitions of the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavadgita, etc. People who do not want to go too much beyond the limit of human capability, they confine Hinduism to the Bhagavadgita. Whatever the Gita says, it is okay; that's all. Some say it is the Vedas, some say the Upanishads. Usually, normally, the popular mass considers the gospel of the Gita as the gospel of Hinduism. But the Gita is not very simple. It is also very multifaceted. It requires a guide to understand it.

Anyway, if you are a lover of God and you aspire for God, and that is the main aim of your life, you can be sure that you have understood religion. A person who does not love God, who does not consider the attainment of God as the final aim of life, will not know what religion is.

As I mentioned earlier, as the soul demands its needs, what you call spirituality arises. The soul's demand is not philosophy; it is not religion. It is crying for the very source from where it has come. Your soul cannot be satisfied with anything—any learning, any possession, any amount of property, any amount of status and wealth. Nothing can satisfy you. No one can be satisfied with possession of the whole earth because what can satisfy oneself is the deepest recesses of one's own heart. That is the spirit which is the voice of God. Religion is super-philosophical. When God starts speaking through you, you are speaking religion. Let God speak through you.

Another visitor: How to transcend the mind?

Swamiji: By meditating on God.

Visitor: But then when meditating on God, it is also in the mind.

Swamiji: No, it is not in the mind. Meditation is practised by the soul. It is not by the mind. There are two kinds of mind: the higher mind and the lower mind. What you are thinking of is the lower mind, which thinks of objects of the world. The higher mind is pure reason, which is a spark of light. There is a difference between the electric bulb and the electricity. Electricity is the radiance; the bulb is the outer form of it. When the electricity passes through a bulb, you may say it is like a mind shining, but by itself it is not an electric bulb.

It is by itself an intelligence. It is a universal power of intelligence which animates the mind and makes the mind wrongly believe that it is thinking. It is like electricity passing through a copper wire. The wire is the mind; electricity is the reason, the higher mind. When you see electricity charging a copper wire, you may say the wire itself is electricity. You cannot touch the wire. But the wire is not electricity. Electricity is different from the wire, but for all practical purposes it looks the wire itself is electricity. So is the difference between consciousness and mind.

So you have to put forth great effort to disentangle pure consciousness from contaminated and mental activity, which works through the sense objects. When you meditate, you don't work through the lower mind, but you work through the higher reason, which is pure intelligence. Actually, your higher intelligence is the real ambassador of God. There is something in you which says you are more than what you are, but the mind says you are just this body only. The mind says: I am coming from England, I am the son of so-and-so, I have got this occupation, I am a businessman, I am a man, I am a woman. This is told by the lower mind. But the higher reason, which is also working in you, says that you are a finite individual, and therefore there is something beyond the finite. The consciousness of your finitude indicates there is something more than the finite. This is the work of the higher mind, to which I gave the name 'ambassador of God'. But the lower mind says you are a son of so-and-so, you are a human being, you are a man, you are a woman, you want this and that.

So you have to use the higher reason in meditation and lift your finite consciousness to that implication which is involved in the very consciousness of finitude. You must convince yourself: "I cannot be finite because the consciousness of the finite implies that there is an infinite." You cannot know that you are a finite being unless you simultaneously accept that you are also infinite, so transfer your mind from this lower conclusion that you are finite: "I am involved in a consciousness of finitude wrongly by listening to the voice of the lower mind. The implication is that I am a non-finite existence." Non-finite means infinite. Raise your mind to that concept. Feel your presence everywhere.

The idea of finitude suggests the existence of the infinite. It is a logical conclusion. Now catch hold of that suggestion like a rope by which you can climb up. With great effort climb up from the finite to the infinite suggestion, and deeply meditate, and you will find that you will be elevated automatically, and you will receive sustenance from the higher power. It requires great practice.

A GIFT FROM GOD

A visitor: I have heard, and I feel, that the experience of God is a gift. But is there a way to hurry up the gift?

Swamiji: You are right. It is a gift from God. You are perfectly right. But why are you in a hurry? Why don't you wait for some time?

Visitor: Well, I seem to have waited a very long time.

Swamiji: The whole life, even if it be a very long life of a human being, is like one second before God. So He will say you have waited one second only. You are saying it is a very long time, but it is less than one second. Centuries may pass, cycles of creation may come and go, but before God they are like flashes of a split of a second, so you cannot say you have waited very long. From His point of view you must see it.

If you are expecting a gift from God, and you are thinking of only that in your mind always, you have done everything that is necessary to be done by a human being. Don't do anything else because God will know what you are thinking. Are you living a spiritual life?

Visitor: As much as I can.

Swamiji: A person who is expecting a gift from God is certainly a spiritual person. No other effort is necessary.

Another visitor: What is your interpretation of God?

Swamiji: The only thing that exists, that is called God. That which passes away, that which is perishable, that which is today and is not tomorrow, that which has a beginning and that which has an end, that is not. But that which will never pass, which is perpetually existing, eternity, beyond time and space, comprehending everything, all-being, perfection, glory, magnificence, wonder of wonders, this is God.

Another visitor: There is a feeling that I have to do something.

Swamiji: You don't have to do anything. Spiritual life does not mean doing things. It is an absorption of all doing into being—Universal

Being, Pure Being, Complete Being. The more you are able to touch being, the more you are spiritual. It has nothing to do with doing. Doing is an aberration from being. Being is what you are, and it has to be expanded into cosmical levels—Absolute Being. The consciousness of that Absolute Being, this is the highest peak of spirituality. No doing. Don't do anything. Be happy within yourself.

Visitor: I feel that when the mind is satisfied, it seems to go somewhere.

Swamiji: When the mind is satisfied it will not go here and there. It goes here and there when it is not satisfied.

Visitor: Well, it seems to not be there when it satisfied.

Swamiji: When you are united with your own self, and to the extent you are united with your own self, you will be happy. To the extent you are dissociated with yourself and you are thinking something outside, to that extent you are unhappy. Are you satisfied with yourself? Then you will be happy. If you are not satisfied with yourself and you are wandering here and there thinking of anything which is outside, it will not give you happiness.

Visitor: But sometimes I think that this body is myself.

Swamiji: If you are thinking your body is the self, what can I do for that? Okay, you go on thinking that your body is the self.

Visitor: I don't want that thought to be there, but it comes.

Swamiji: If the body is not the self, then what else is the self? If the body is not the self, the self must be something else. What is that something?

Visitor: The self is what is eternal.

Swamiji: Okay, you meditate on that. After years of practice and meditation, you have come to the conclusion that the body is the self. How such a thing is possible?

Visitor: That's not my conclusion. I'm saying that the feeling of body consciousness comes.

Swamiji: Let the body consciousness come. It will be there in

everybody's case. But you have to expand it to a wider dimension of your true self.

If there are unfulfilled desires of any kind, desires which are connected with the physical existence and social existence, and if these desires have not been satisfied or sublimated, they will come again and again and prevent any kind of higher meditation. If they are minor, silly desires, like wanting to have a cup of tea, you can take the cup of tea. But if there are other desires which will devastate your spiritual aspiration, they must be sublimated. There are destructive desires; they must be sublimated. If there are desires which are very mild, they can be tolerated. You have to use your discretion.

Your meditation is perhaps not up to the mark, which is why you have all these distractions. You should study such literature where methods of raising the consciousness are described.

Visitor: But there are so many different methods.

Swamiji: No, there are not so many methods. It is a simple method only. The lower mind is telling you all these stupid things; the higher mind indicates that you are a representative of a wider realm.

Great effort is necessary, and unnecessary childish enthusiasm is no good. Meditation is not some kind of child's work. It is a very serious matter. Your heart should be in it. You should not have any kind of extraneous desire. Your desires should be sublimated in the love of God. If your mind is willing to do it, it is not a difficult thing, but if it is unwilling to do it, it is an impossible thing. If your mind is wanting it, it will certainly be successful. Your mind is not wanting it fully; that is why it is oscillating. If you want a thing wholly, your mind will get absorbed into it. But if your mind does not want it wholly and is only experimenting with it, it won't come. Deep study is necessary together with your effort in meditation.

Visitor: What do you recommend to study, Swamiji?

Swamiji: There is nothing greater than the Bhagavadgita. A hundred times you must read that, a hundred times, and it will inspire you.

Visitor: Can you suggest a commentary?

Swamiji: No commentary is necessary. If you persist in reading

it again and again, the meaning will come out. You don't need a commentary. But many times you have to read it; then some divine interference will take place.

Another visitor: I meditate on various forms of great people.

Swamiji: Why do you meditate on great people? You meditate on God.

Visitor: As I meditate and do *japa* with the mantra in which I was initiated, I am getting these forms.

Swamiji: So what is your difficulty?

Visitor: Is it correct that these various forms are coming?

Swamiji: It is not correct. You should not have any forms except God's form. It is all right, but there is something more than that.

Visitor: How to overcome this?

Swamiji: By concentrating on something higher than that. You must desire it. If you want it, it will come. But if you are satisfied with the lower, it will persist.

Visitor: So formless...

Swamiji: No, it need not be formless. It can be a form, but the one Universal form, not a human form. Divine form. God is not a man. You should not think of human beings. It is the Maha Purushottama. The Lord is called Purushottama in the Gita: Supreme Person. On that you meditate.

Visitor: But in what form?

Swamiji: That is left to you. You find out. When you think of God, what do you think in your mind?

Visitor: Formless?

Swamiji: Why formless? It can be a form also. You cannot think the formless. But some form, the Supreme Person who created the world you conceive in your mind as you like—as Rama, Krishna, Purushottama, Narayana, Vishnu, whatever you like. That will help you.

Visitor: What about the Guru?

Swamiji: You think of God. You transcend the Guru also. God is the highest Guru if you want real benefit.

ADHYATMA, ADHIBHUTA, ADHIDAIVA

Swamiji: Consciousness is moving in three different ways, like a triangle. Actually, this is what we call *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva*. The myself is *adhyatma*, the world is *adhibhuta*, and the thing that is connecting both and is invisible and un-understandable is *adhidaiva*. A very serious matter.

The *adhidaiva* is a transcendental principle. By ‘transcendent’, we have to understand the principle of inclusiveness of two things, and also standing above them. This *adhidaiva* includes myself and the other, and yet it is neither me nor the other. It is above. Inasmuch as it includes me and the world, it is immanent. Since it is beyond me and the world, it is transcendent. So in philosophical terms we may say God is transcendent and immanent at the same time. If He is not immanent, He will not be able to connect the subject with the object. If He is not transcendent, He will be involved in the world. So can the human mind understand this situation and lift itself from the necessity to be always conscious of a world outside, and be satisfied with that which includes the world and one’s own self?

If we are going to be satisfied with that which includes myself and the world, then there is no necessity to think of myself too much, and there is no need to think of the world also. Why is it that a person is too much conscious of one’s own self and very much conscious of the world outside? This is a travesty of affairs. This is the greatest tragedy that has befallen humanity. It is useless to emphasise the importance of oneself and the importance of the world, because this importance arises from another thing of which oneself is totally unconscious. This is called samsara, or bondage. The worst thing has happened, to put it in proper terms. We are in the worst condition possible where we are totally severed from reality.

Inasmuch as this subjectivity of mind and the objectivity of the world exists by the mercy of that transcendent principle—they cannot operate without the operation of that principle—we may say that only this works everywhere. If I think, it thinks through me. If there is something happening in the world, it is done by it. But not knowing it, and attributing our activity to oneself or the world, either we say that we have done it or we say somebody else has done

it. Now the fact is neither that we have done it, nor that the world has done it. It is done by a third thing altogether.

But there is an impossibility to accept it. The mind is not prepared to accept that it is not doing anything, nor can it accept that nothing is taking place in the world. That is because our understanding is sensorially oriented, sensorially conditioned, and intellectually also is not a very great advancement that we are making because the intellect mostly plays second fiddle to the reports of the sense organs. It is acting as a justifying medium of the activities of the sense organs. The sense organs give a wrong report that you are here and the world is there. The intellect accepts it by a logic of its own. Every logic is a dovetailing of two aspects of a proposition, the subject and the predicate. Every proposition is having a subject and a predicate. Now, no proposition can be there unless there is a subject or a predicate. They are two different things. It is necessary to bring the subject and the predicate together by the logic of identity. Why should there be an acceptance of this dual aspect of the proposition—the subjective side and the objective side? Why are there two? Why is there a proposition which is made up of two parts? And why is there a necessity to bring them together also? This is a defect of intellectual thinking.

Logic is not a final word. It is a shrewd participant in the erroneous activities of the sense organs. It is necessary, because I was mentioning about moksha, to have a great power of understanding and dispassion to one's own self, as well as the world. It is necessary to draw the consciousness to the transcendent principle, and think through that transcendent principle only, as if you yourself are that.

In a figurative way, we may say, you place yourself at the apex of the cosmos, and look at the world and all the people like this. With great effort the consciousness has to be lifted, which is a hard job. The consciousness will not leave this body; it will not leave the world also. Great effort is necessary to concentrate on that which is above this subjective side and the objective side, and place yourself as if you are the creative principle Himself. You are sitting on the throne of the Creator. With multiple eyes you are seeing the world of subjects and objects, and if this could be done with some effort, sincerity, and honesty of purpose, knowing well there is no other

duty in this world, everything else is futile if this is not achieved—if this conviction arises and the higher region permits it, you will feel a thrill inside. You will shudder that this thing and the world join together like this, like the Ganga and the Yamuna joining together in the ocean. A shudder, a tremor, a shakeup and a jerking of the prana, everything will be felt at that time. People weep at that time sometimes—weep, shedding tears. It is not that they want to weep, but some tremendous change takes place, and then tears start coming. And they jump and dance; everything is done because the elephant has entered the hut. It is like an elephant entering the house, and you will not know what to do. Ramakrishna Parmahansa has mentioned that God coming is like an elephant entering the hut. It will simply damage the whole thing, and only it will be standing there.

So we live like foolish people, being satisfied with a cup of tea and our daily meal, and we sleep also afterwards, we have got some work every day, something pulling us, some routine. The wheel is there. What is done yesterday, we do today, what we do today we do tomorrow and day after. Every day the same work, the same thing is repeated again and again and again and again, without any final meaning in it. If this is appreciated, the entire meaningless world will assume a tremendous meaning. All the chaos will become order, all the ugliness will become beautiful, and all the enemies will become friends. Everything will look beautiful before the eye of the Absolute. Everything is grand and beautiful.

DHARMA AND MORALITY

A visitor: I am studying dharma in the Bhagavadgita.

Swamiji: Do you understand the Bhagavadgita? What do you understand already? What is your dharma?

Visitor: My particular dharma is helping other people.

Swamiji: You have no other dharma?

Visitor: Yes, there are many levels. I have other things.

Swamiji: So don't make any statement so quickly. Dharma changes its nature like a chameleon. Wherever it sits, that colour it is. So whatever be the circumstance in which you are finding yourself, that circumstance will decide the dharma of that time. It is not an eternally solid, stone-like concept. It is a flexible, adjustable consciousness of what you ought to do under a given condition. 'Under a given condition'—you must underline that. It is not that you should do the same thing always. Under different conditions of time and circumstance and involvement, you may be obliged to take steps which are proper for that particular context. If you are hungry, you must eat. If you have tummy trouble, you should not eat. Now, eating is your dharma, or not eating is your dharma? It depends upon the condition. You said, "I am serving other people." You must have a very clear idea about this matter. What prompted you to think that service of others is good? Who told you this?

Visitor: That's what I was brought up to believe.

Swamiji: Now, 'others' means all people in the world; that is 'others'. Do you believe that you are also part of people in the world?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: So there are no other people, actually. The word 'other' must be removed because you are thinking that people are outside you, but you are forgetting that you are also included in that mob of people which is society. So it is not service of others; it is service of humanity. Give up the idea of others. Other people whom you are seeing may look like others to you, but they will look upon you as

an other. So who is the other in this world?

If you can give up the idea of otherness, the concept of totality will arise in your mind. Do you understand me? This is the dharma of the Gita. You look at the total situation of the whole universe. What is the total situation of the whole universe? Whatever you are expected to do to that, that is your duty. It is not to others. There are no others in this world. Everybody is me, and other than me is another. Now, who is the another, and who is the me? The another also is a me from one point of view. So the ideas of I, me, he, she, it have no meaning, really speaking. You must give up this concept: I, she, he, it, myself, himself, this, that. It is humanity speaking. It is a total mass of human consciousness, and when you try to serve that, you are serving yourself also simultaneously. So you are not excluding.

It is not serving other people. It is serving the whole total of human consciousness. This is like actually serving God Himself. This is the Gita. Serving God and serving humanity are identical, provided you have a correct concept of humanity. And don't say 'others'. The word 'other' must be removed.

So briefly I told you something about the Gita, but much more is there. For the time being this is sufficient.

Another visitor: The way we live in the West is causing problems for people, for individuals and for the planet, as well as encouraging spiritual practice, meditation and living with morality.

Swamiji: What is your definition of morality?

Visitor: It involves not killing, not lying, not taking what's not given.

Swamiji: Suppose these things are all practised by a person. Suppose there is a person who is practising all these things that you have said. Can he be called a moral man?

Visitor: Externally.

Swamiji: You are putting conditions. When you give a definition, you should not put conditions. You must give an unadulterated definition.

Visitor: Well, in the end morality also means letting go, not being attached. No attachments.

Swamiji: Suppose a person is not attached. Can you call him a moral man?

Visitor: If he is living compassionately and following these things without being attached, I think so.

Swamiji: No, a person may not be attached to anything, but he may not be a good man.

Visitor: No, but if he's doing good things. . .

Swamiji: He need not be good. How do you know? How do you judge a man?

Visitor: I don't try to judge people. I judge myself.

Swamiji: Even the great critic Immanuel Kant has failed completely, miserably, in touching the subject. He ought not to have touched this subject, really speaking. He unnecessarily went beyond the limit. He was a person who said that nothing true can be known by the faculties available to the human being.

Visitor: And that was unfortunate because it was a mistake.

Swamiji: Whatever it is, he was a very great man.

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: And everything is phenomenon, so you are caught up in phenomena. And phenomena cannot know that it is phenomena. Somebody other than phenomena only can know that it is phenomena. You understand me? You cannot know something is moving unless something is not moving. If everything is moving, you cannot know there is movement at all. What do you say? So he was caught in his own logic that if everything is phenomenal, he should not posit the existence of anything that is not phenomenal. He said that which is not phenomenal cannot be known, but when he said that, he has an idea of what that thing is. He has already transcended that phenomena.

Visitor: He had the idea of the noumenal.

Swamiji: Yes. But then he made matters worse by writing another book called *The Critique of Practical Reason* where he says you

cannot prove God by reason because it is noumenal. The noumenal cannot be known, because you are caught in the phenomenal. He says the moral impulse in a man justifies the existence of God. Now, the moral principle is as unreliable a thing as the phenomenal reason of the human being. If the phenomenal reason cannot justify God, the morality also cannot justify anything because it is only another faculty of the human being.

Visitor: I agree.

Swamiji: So Kant is a miserable failure in all his greatness because morality doesn't come from God. It is a faculty of the human being only. He says it is phenomenal. Then how will you prove God?

Why I am telling all this is, nobody can understand what morality is.

Visitor: In the Bhagavadgita you have...

Swamiji: No, don't bring any book into it. Don't quote any book. Use pure reason. You tell rationally. Logically you describe what it is, what you mean by that. If this is there, morality is there. If this is not there, morality is not there.

Visitor: A pure heart...

Swamiji: Again you are bringing another word, which is very mystifying. When you say 'pure', you don't know what is pure.

Visitor: Not selfish. We know what selfish means.

Swamiji: This is only a dictionary meaning. It is an intriguing thing, intriguing. Now I cannot give lectures on that. It's a very big subject. You go into deep waters, and if you go so deep, you may enter into samadhi here. A great mystery. The whole universe is a mystery. We will simply get frightened by the grandeur. The grandeur also can frighten. The frightening thing is not a fearful thing but a grand thing—so grand that it is frightening. That is the structure of the universe. You can't understand. You don't know where you stand actually.

The human being cannot know where he is. We are passing through in a spaceship. Is it not a good thing to hear that? Why do you say, "I am in India"? Don't say like that. Say, "I am in a spaceship. I am going through space." If you think like that, you

will be more happy than saying you are in Rishikesh. Say, “I am in a spaceship. It is rattling through space. And it is the Milky Way, it is the vast space-time complex. Where am I living now? I’m not in America, India, and all that. I am in the vast space-time continuum.”

When you think like that, your personality will melt completely. You will melt into liquid. You won’t exist. That’s what I meant by saying that you may enter samadhi afterwards, that samadhi may come. If you think too much, you will liquefy your personality. It will abolish itself by the majesty of this wonderful thing that we are talking about. It is a terror, beauty, magnificence, grandeur. You cannot explain what it is, and you cannot stand it. That is why when it was shown to Arjuna he said, “Enough, enough, enough, enough!” because he was about to melt completely. He said, “No, come down! God bless.”

It is a very great thing to think like this. You will get stimulated inside afterwards. To some extent, you get purified also. Automatically you are purified by even thinking like this. You feel as if God is entering into you slowly, little by little. That is why *satsanga* is very important. *Satsanga* means this kind of discussion. Every day you must do that, then something will happen. You should not waste your time in chitchatting and going about here and there, sightseeing. No use. The company of good people, people who think alike and discuss these matters with great sincerity, is a very good thing. Nothing is equal to *satsanga*. It’s the greatest thing that you can think of.

[Later on]

Swamiji: If reason cannot understand what is beyond phenomenon, morality also cannot justify God.

Visitor: No, it does not justify.

Swamiji: He says it justifies.

Visitor: This is not about Kant. This is about thinking about morality.

Swamiji: He is talking of morality only: The moral urge inside justifies the existence of God.

Visitor: No, no.

Swamiji: He is wrong in that because the moral urge also is a phenomenon only.

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: So what justifies the existence of God? He has ruled out all the teleological, cosmological, ontological arguments. There is a thing called the ontological argument. That is the only thing that can prove the existence of God. I hope you know it already. The consciousness of infinity is not possible unless infinity exists. A finite individual cannot even be aware that there can be anything called the infinite. How can a little tiny brain which is entirely finite imagine there is something called the infinite? The potential for the existence of the infinite must be planted in the finite itself; therefore, the consciousness of the limitation of finite individuality proves that there is something beyond the finite. You cannot be even conscious that you are finite unless there is something beyond the finite. You cannot know that you are a poor man unless you know what is a rich man. This is called the ontological argument: The consciousness of the presence of the infinite proves the existence of the infinite. So God exists by the ontological argument, and Kant refuted it without understanding things properly.

Visitor: My question is about just morality as a vehicle towards realisation with an outside and an inside.

Swamiji: Is it moral for a tiger to go and eat a cow?

Visitor: It's the tiger's nature.

Swamiji: Is it moral or not?

Visitor: It is the tiger's nature, so it's okay.

Swamiji: It is permitted? So how many kinds of morality you have got? One permits...

Visitor: No, morality for human being...

Swamiji: No, morality, why should you give it only to human being? It applies to the whole world.

Visitor: Morality has to do with what we can do or we can't do. A tiger has to eat.

Swamiji: Then we also will eat another man.

Visitor: No, because we have the ability to eat only vegetables. We can avoid eating tigers and other men.

Swamiji: The consciousness of something being right and the consciousness of something being wrong arises in the mind in a mysterious manner. Who told you that something is right and something is wrong?

Visitor: Most of the time we know right away.

Swamiji: No, you are brought up, so it is conditioned by your upbringing.

Visitor: That's true, yes.

Swamiji: So it is not automatically arising in your mind.

Visitor: No, but right now I know that I should be talking and not be looking around, or something like that.

Swamiji: Nothing can be proved except that you are existing. That is the only certain thing. And whatever follows from the fact of the certainty of your existence also exists. All other talks are unnecessary things. If the infinite exists because you are existing, then you will know at that time what to do. That is morality. You need not have to read books for that.

HANDLING THE MIND

A visitor: I want to seek that which is beyond death.

Swamiji: There was a boy called Nachiketas. He went to the God of Death and asked this question: “What is beyond death?” The God of Death answered, “You please go away from here. Don’t put such questions.” Now, why did the God of Death give that answer?

Visitor: He wanted to assess the preparedness of Nachiketas.

Swamiji: He offered him all gifts—gold, silver, long life, and the wealth of the three worlds—but that boy rejected it all. If somebody offers you the wealth of the three worlds, will you reject them?

Visitor: I don’t know, Swamiji.

Swamiji: Then what is the use of reading the Upanishads? So in one sentence you are defeated.

Visitor: I admit to my unsureness.

Swamiji: But it is a serious matter. It is not just a matter of thinking and throwing it away. Why is it that we are not prepared to accept that intriguing ‘something’?

Visitor: I think it’s a lack of *viveka* and *vairagya*.

Swamiji: It is a serious defect in our thinking process. The grandeur, glory and perfection of That cannot be contained by the human mind. The mind is able to contain the glory of the earth, the glory of an emperor of the whole world. The mind is jealous of such a person: “See an emperor of the whole world enjoying a throne of gold. What a wonderful thing! If I had the chance, what would...”

There is no person called the emperor of the world. It is not possible. But if such a thing is possible, what a glory, what a happy thing! This happiness one feels even by thinking such a possibility of being a king of the whole world, such happiness does not arise in the mind when you think of the Absolute. Why does it not arise?

Visitor: Lack of experience, lack of tasting the Beyond?

Swamiji: What happens is the idea of the Absolute is, at present

at least, a conceptual phantasm. It doesn't satisfy. But the earthly glory is solid. You can touch it sensorily. That is, what is sensorily contactable immediately promises tangible satisfaction. But That is not contactable by the eyes or ears or anything, so whenever you talk about it, it looks like simply telling stories. So the mind cannot contact That.

But with tremendous effort, go on repeating to oneself: "Whatever glories these emperors have got, you will find there." You don't say that you want to reject all these things. If you say that, the mind will not agree. It doesn't want to reject anything. You have to give it a little comforting teaching. "My dear mind, you do not want to contemplate on That because you are thinking the majesty and the beauty of an emperor of the world is more attractive than the glory of the Absolute. All right, we accept it. But you will get it there tenfold, a hundredfold."

In the Upanishad this is mentioned: The glory of the whole world, the emperor, is one kind of happiness. There are seven planes of existence. In the next plane there are people whose happiness is a hundred times more than the happiness of the king of the whole world. Then there is a higher, third plane. There the happiness of people is a hundred times more than the happiness of the second world. It goes on like that a hundred times, a hundred times, a hundred times. Finally, many hundreds—hundred into hundred, hundred into hundred, hundred into hundred—it goes on like that for millions and millions of numbers. Many millions and millions and millions are computerised, right to the point of incalculable perfection. "So many times is the happiness of that Absolute in comparison with this drop which is the king of the whole earth," you tell the mind.

"Oh, I see," it will say. "Okay, now I understand. I am not going to lose anything. I am not going to lose the joy of the emperor of the world. I will get that also. Oh, I will get more than that, more than that, more than that, more than that, more than that." If you go on telling that, it gives some positive suggestion. Don't tell the mind to renounce the world, and all that. If you say that, it will reject the whole idea. The mind doesn't want that. You should not give any negative teaching. "You will get whatever you want, all the enjoyments you want, all the honey and milk and glory and power

and authority. Take it! I will not deny you. But more than that, you will get there.” You tell the mind every day. You go on telling like this, “Foolish mind, don’t be idiotic. You will get everything. Go contemplate. You have to pay a heavy price to become the king of the world. You have to suffer hard. But here you need not have to suffer. You have only to think deeply, and immediately it comes. Do you understand?” Tell as if you are talking to a little child: “You are going to get everything. Think of it deeply. Don’t think anything else. The whole world will come to you.” Tell this; then you will get it.

You should never tell the mind, “It is all stupid, the world is wretched, it is evil. Reject it!” The mind will not accept such things. “Okay, very beautiful, everything is good, nice, wonderful, glorious. But you will get it tenfold, a hundredfold, a millionfold.” Then it will agree, “Okay.” You must know the psychology of thinking. You must not thrust knowledge into the students. You must enter into the mind of the students before you teach them. The mind is a child. It is naughty, and so you must know how to handle naughty children. You must be careful.

Another visitor: Why is it that, in spite of hearing you, the mind...?

Swamiji: Because your mind is not accepting it. Your feeling says that you are a weak man. The intellect is understanding it, but the feeling says, “No, I cannot.” You should assert, “Now, from today onwards, I shall think like this only.” Day and night you think like this.

Visitor: So then again, it is effort.

Swamiji: When you become it, there is no effort. The effort leads to effortlessness, action leads to actionlessness, becoming becomes being, object becomes subject, outer becomes inner, and the particular becomes the universal automatically.

EXPERIENCING THE BEYOND

A visitor: I have experience of that which is beyond. First I have to know it; then I can experience it. How can I do that?

Swamiji: If you do not know it, how do you know it exists at all? Who told you that it exists? When you know that it exists, already you know everything about it. You said you have experienced it. Then why are you putting questions to me? When you have experienced it, there is no question afterwards. You already know what it is. A thing that is not known cannot be experienced. So you have got knowledge of it; that means experience. Everything is fine. There is no problem now. So what is your problem?

When you say 'beyond', how far beyond is it? How far? How much distance from you?

Visitor: No distance. Beyond the thought of any distance.

Swamiji: If it is not beyond physically, it is just sitting on your head. Is it so?

Visitor: But I am not aware all the time.

Swamiji: Why are you not aware?

Visitor: I don't know.

Swamiji: That is your mistake. You are thinking something else. Why are you thinking something else when this is very good and very important? When you have decided this is the right thing, the most important thing, why are you thinking something else? Where is the necessity?

Visitor: I don't know.

Swamiji: What do you feel? When you experience it, what do you feel inside?

Visitor: Nothing. There is nothing else needed.

Swamiji: Do you feel happy, always happy, no problem? You have no problems. What do you say? What is your problem now?

Visitor: I have this experience but then I neglect it afterwards, even

though I can understand.

Swamiji: That's because your mind is not properly fixed on it. You are thinking something else. So do one thing. Whenever the mind goes to something else, you draw it back with the power of will, and fix the mind on it. As long as possible, fix the mind on it. But if the mind again goes to something outside, keep quiet for a few minutes. Then draw it back and again think of it as long as possible. Then after that again it goes back. Then keep quiet; don't do anything. After some time again draw the mind back. If you go on doing it again and again, again and again, again and again every day, it will not go afterwards.

You have to play a trick with the mind. You tell it, "Go outside. After some time I will call you back." Every time you go on telling it, "You go there. I will call you after some time." Then it will be afraid of you. Then it will not go, and then there is no problem.

You have to apply reason. We have a higher reason and a lower reason. The lower reason is only a crystallising medium of sense reports, but the higher reason tells you that you are greater than what you are. This is a very great thing. Do you feel that you are basically greater than what you are? Otherwise, you will not be pulled up to a higher level of perception. The fact that you are not satisfied with anything in the world shows that you belong to a realm where alone your requirements will be fulfilled.

The finitude of the human individual limits it to sensory perception and satisfaction, to whatever is available by contact with the sense organs. People are happy by gadgets, by fast movement, by television, by the stock market, by authority, by power. These are all empirical, outwardly motivated, whereas the higher reason tells you that you are an ambassador of a realm that transcends time and space. This is the reason why you want to overcome every limitation. You would like to conquer the whole space itself, if possible. You would like to defy time. That is the reason why you want not to die. The instinct inside, that is the eternal instinct, tells you that it is good and necessary to defy time, and the desire to expand your personality to infinite dimension is the desire to overcome spatial limitations. Finally, what you want is transcendence of space and time. This is virtually God-realisation.

Another visitor: Swamiji Vivekananda said there is a way to look at God, meet Him, see Him, realise Him. How did Vivekananda get that experience? I am not Vivekananda. I am an ordinary person.

Swamiji: If you want to meet Him, you can meet Him. If you don't want, you cannot go. If your mind is distracted and thinking a hundred things in the world, then the mind is not concentrated. To the extent your mind is able to concentrate on that eternal Reality, to that extent you will go near it. But if you are involved in worldly affairs—thinking a thousand things, going here, going there, doing this, doing that, involved in many things—and having no peace of mind, restlessness, and completely diverting the mind in all directions, then the concentration is not possible. When you are bound by the time process of distraction and multiple activities, the concentration on eternity is not possible.

So you must fulfil all your duties in the world first. You should not say that you have got duties, that you have got this duty or that duty. These duties will pull you back to the world. If you have got any duties, fulfil them 100%. Be free from all entanglements in the world. Physically you may be like anybody else, but mentally you are detached because you have done what you wanted to do. You have taken care of your family, you have earned money, you have no problem, your health is good, you are a wealthy man, you have food to eat. You will have no problem, so there is nothing to pull you to the worldly side. If that satisfaction comes, the mind will directly go to the Eternal. Then the meditation should be practised continuously on that universal Eternity. Then you will see what you would see. It cannot be explained. You will see a flash of light coming to you, and the answer will come from inside you.

But how much entanglement is there in this world? That must be taken care of. You cannot keep your legs in two different boats. Then one boat will go that side, and one boat will go this side. It should not be like that. You must sit in one boat only. One side is the boat of the world, and the other side is the boat of God. Is the mind prepared to concentrate continuously on the Universal Being, having fulfilled all the desires of the world and getting fed up with everything? You must be fed up with everything 100% because you have seen everything, enjoyed everything. There is nothing more for

you to achieve. Whatever you want to see you have seen, whatever you want to enjoy you have enjoyed, and there is nothing more; then automatically the mind will go back to the eternal Reality. Then you practise meditation on that.

If the mind is perfect, and concentrated wholly, and sincerely—wholeheartedly your mind goes to that—then you will have the experience yourself. Not only Vivekananda, even you can have it. Every human being has a right and a prerogative, and whatever one had another also can have. There was nothing special in Vivekananda. He was like you. The only thing is, he was determined, and if you are also equally determined, you will get it. It requires power of will. The main thing is disentanglement from any kind of obligations which are distracting the mind in various directions.

Visitor: Probably I will have to take one more birth for that.

Swamiji: If you want to take a birth, you can take it. But if you decide you will not take it, then you need not take it. It is in your hands. Your mind should say, “I don’t want to take another birth. Whatever I wanted to have in this world I have had already. Why should I have the same experience of the world *ad nauseam*?” Have you not learned lessons from the world? It has troubled you, it has caused you anxiety and so many other repercussions. Anyone who has seen the world properly would not like to see it a second time. If you want to see it a second time by taking another birth, it means you have not seen the world properly. You have only an insufficient knowledge of the world. You have a misconception about it.

Visitor: That is true.

Swamiji: When a tiger is sitting in front of you, if you mistake it for a cow, then you have not understood the animal properly. The world is like a tiger really, and you think it is a milch cow, but it is not so. It can swallow you completely. It has done that. The world has swallowed emperors and kingdoms; all have gone. Great emperors who ruled the whole earth, they have gone to dust. Such power the world has got. That is why I say it is a tiger. But you are thinking the world is a milking cow, so you go on asking for honey and milk and so on. That also appears. Even a tiger can give milk; it is not that it cannot give, but one day it will maul you. So once you have seen

the world properly, you will never like to come back to this world. It is like having been imprisoned and you want to go to the prison a second time to see how it is. You have had enough of it; why do you want to go a second time? So why do you want to take another birth? Already it is the same repetition of the same sorrows. What you cannot achieve in this life you may not achieve in the next birth also. You are accepting that your mind is weak, and why should you accept that? You are an educated man, not a little child.

What I told you is sufficient gospel for you. You decide, determine, “I have had enough of the world. I got everything from the world. I don’t want anything further. Why should I take another birth? My mind will concentrate on the Eternal Being.”

Visitor: Because my activities have become my shadow, it is difficult to give them up, and also I don’t feel dissatisfied by the activities.

Swamiji: When you have satisfaction from the world, you cannot have satisfaction from God. They are two opposite poles. God will say, “Okay go. Enjoy the world, and then when you are fed up you come.”

Visitor: I have rejected God for that purpose.

Swamiji: God is not unkind. He says, “When you want the world, enjoy it. When you don’t want it, then you come to Me.” So if you want to take one more birth...

But there is one thing, my dear friend: In the next birth the same predicament will start. You will have the same activity, the same entanglement, the same duty, and once again the activity will become a shadow. Whatever you are telling now will repeat itself in the next birth. It is like eczema; the more you scratch, the more it comes. Activity will never cease. It is a kind of irritation of the nerves, and this irritation will continue in the next birth also.

Anyway, I have told you something worth the while. You bestow some thought on it.

Visitor: I will do that. Thank you.

AHIMSA

A visitor: ...defending countries and societies without arms, what we call as non-violent defence.

Swamiji: If you can do that, do it. The only thing is, if you cannot do it then the question doesn't arise. Do you think you can succeed?

Visitor: I don't know.

Swamiji: You cannot succeed?

Visitor: It's a difficult question.

Swamiji: Why is it difficult?

Visitor: Because there is conflict and violence.

Swamiji: Who is doing it? You are not doing violence, and if somebody does it, you keep quiet. That is what you are saying. That is your idea of *ahimsa*. If somebody invades the country, the country will keep quiet. That is what you mean?

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: Then what else? What is *ahimsa* then?

Visitor: You can also defend. You can defend your country without violence.

Swamiji: Without violence how will you defend? You have to counteract them. So where is the *ahimsa*? It is gone in one minute. *Ahimsa* cannot be understood so easily. It is like meditation. However much you may probe your mind, you don't know what is meditation. Like that is this. It is only a word. People go on uttering the word *ahimsa*, *ahimsa*. They don't know what it means.

When you treat a person suffering with microbes in the body, you destroy the microbes. Now is it *himsa* or *ahimsa*? Your concept of *ahimsa* must be very clear. It is a vague word which means nothing finally, though people think it is very clear. When you sweep the floor, some insect may die. In the kitchen when you burn firewood, some insect may get burned there. You may trample on an ant when you walk, and how will you avoid it? So the definition of *ahimsa*

must be clear first. What is the proportion, what is the extent and what is the motive behind it, finally?

There was a man called Bertrand Russell. He wrote, "Let us think we should follow *ahimsa*." He was a very humorous man. Suppose Hitler invades England. England will keep quiet. They won't do anything. Hitler will arrest all the British officers. Let them keep quiet. Let them be arrested. He will put German officers. Let it go. They will charge tax. We will not pay tax. Then they will put us in a concentration camp. Let it be, we will be in the concentration camp. We will lie down on the road. They will pass a bulldozer over these people. Let it go, we will die for that. He says finally the man will be fed up. He cannot go on like that ruling the country by putting bulldozers over people and then controlling people with no tax paying. The dictator will be fed up afterwards. He cannot bear it. Then he says this *ahimsa* will work. What do you think? Half of the population should die before *ahimsa* succeeds. This is one definition. But that is not the intention of anybody who propagates it. They don't say you must die for that. You must succeed in it.

Now, what is your problem?

Visitor: I wish to know about non-violent resistance.

Swamiji: Will you not resist if somebody attacks you? What do you say?

Visitor: I will.

Swamiji: Then why are you asking that question? You have already answered the question. Otherwise, you keep quiet.

Visitor: The form of resistance, the form that I would choose to defend myself, I might persuade the person from attacking me.

Swamiji: He will not listen to you. You go and tell a tiger, "Don't kill the cow." Would you be able to dissuade it? It will eat you also, not only the cow. That is very important. It depends upon to whom you are talking. If you are telling a saintly man not to be very aggressive, he will understand, okay. But if you are talking to a brutish type of person, he is already a brute, and he doesn't want any advice from you.

Ahimsa cannot be defined so easily. It is highly intricate, and

it changes from circumstance to circumstance, from condition to condition, from one context to another context. It is not a rigid steel frame. It is not like that. It is just like medical science. You cannot give the same medicine every day to the same person. For different persons, different medicines, different conditions. It is a kind of dharma. Dharma varies from minute to minute, circumstance to circumstance, condition to condition, person to person. It is not uniformly even. It is a highly flexible evolutionary process. *Ahimsa* or *himsa*, whatever you call it—war and peace, whatever it is—they are all parts of the evolutionary process.

Evolution is the destruction of the lower condition and the emerging of the subsequent condition. Now, universal evolution is *himsa*. What do you say? You have destroyed the babyhood that you were once upon a time, and now you are an adult. Have you destroyed your babyhood? So evolution is not destruction, it is evolution. Somebody cuts off the legs of a man. If it is done by a doctor, it is called surgery. If it is done by an evil-minded man, it is called assassination. But both are doing the same thing. So who is right, who is wrong? Tell me. The act does not give the answer. It is the motive behind it. So your question is to be answered by the motive of a person.

There was a person who got very angry. He just gave someone a kick, and he fell on a big pot of honey. Now, to be inside a pot of honey is a very nice thing. You can go on drinking it. Can you say he has done a virtuous act by throwing him into a honeypot? But the intention was not to give honey. Incidentally he got honey also, but his intention was something else. He has not done a virtuous deed just because he is drinking honey. So you can't answer the question like that. This question includes many others.

Have you read Tolstoy's *War and Peace*? You have to work in the manner the universe works. That is the teacher for you. You need not ask questions from anybody. Just use your mind to understand how the universe is working. That is the way you have to work. And if the universe is operating without causing any kind of internal change within itself, then you can also do like that. You need not bring any kind of change. You simply keep quiet. But every moment there is internal change in the cosmos where the lower is transcended by the

higher, completely transformed. So transformation of the lower into the higher may also look like the destruction of the lower for the sake of the higher.

In the Mahabharata there is a sloka: *tyajed ekam kulasyārthe grāmasyārthe kulam tyajet, gramam janapadasyārthe ātmārthe pṛthiviṃ tyajet* (M.B. 5.37.16). In a family if one person is a wicked person, he is an impossible man, for the welfare of the family you can throw him out. Suppose there is a family which is vicious; all the members of the family are vicious, then they must be turned out from the village for the sake of the welfare of the whole village. But if the village is rotten and it is behaving unmannerly and affects the state administration, the state can throw out those people. For the sake of the attainment of God, the whole universe can be thrown out. So the lower can be thrown out for the sake of the higher.

In the Bhagavadgita, Lord Krishna says, “Cast out all dharma and come to Me.” Everywhere people say you must follow dharma, and he says throw it away. Now, what does he mean by that? What is he throwing? He means that when you follow the higher, inclusive dharma, then the lower one gets subsumed. It is not throwing away; it is transcending, transcending. When you become a graduate, you throw away the primary educational textbooks. But you have transcended them, not thrown them away. So when you say ‘throw away’, it means ‘transcend’. Renunciation is not throwing away. It is not giving up. It is not casting out. It is overcoming the limitations caused by it and transcending above it. The world can be renounced only if you are above the world. If you are one of the finite individuals inside the world, controlled by gravitation and other things, how will you renounce the world? Only he who has conquered the world can renounce it.

So these are all unnecessary talks. People don’t understand. The evolutionary structure of the cosmos is your Gita, so do exactly what it does. If you think it is doing nothing, then you can also do nothing. But in the Gita it is said *na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhatyakarmakṛt* (B.G. 3.5): Without action, not an atom will keep quiet. Every atom is evolving, and where it is moving? The planets are moving. The sun and moon and galaxies, they are all moving. Towards what end are they going? Why are they moving? There is a

higher destination for them which is a universal comprehensiveness. They want to achieve cosmic Self-realisation. That is the purpose of every kind of movement. Even an ant is moving towards God only. Though it is moving towards some hole, its impulse comes from somewhere else. When a leaf moves, it is the wind of the cosmos.

So unless you know everything, you cannot answer any question. You have to know everything in the universe in its totality, and then every question will be answered inside. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

DREAMS AND SADHANA, COMPASSION OR LOVE

A visitor: Can we make use of dreams in assessing the progress of sadhana?

Swamiji: You cannot do that by dream. Sometimes dreams are irrelevant. But in one way you can have some idea. If you dream certain things, you can conclude that you have got some suppressed emotions. Some desires of this birth, or even a previous birth, they also will come in dream. And it doesn't mean that every dream is bad. Suppose you dream that temple worship is going on, or you are taking a Ganga bath, or mahatmas are giving discourses—if that kind of dream comes, it means your mind is getting purified.

Sometimes physiological conditions also bring about dreams. If you eat a heavy dinner in the night and sleep immediately, the digestive process will stimulate the psychological organ also, and you will have all kinds of irrelevant dreams. They have no spiritual connotation. Sometimes if there is wind in the stomach you will feel that you are flying in the air. The flying in the air is not a yoga shakti or anything. It has no connection with sadhana. It is some physiological trouble. Sometimes you will feel that you are in the ocean swimming. They are all physiological reactions. They have no spiritual meaning.

Only if the dream is connected with some divinity, saint and sage or higher realms of being—*puja*, worship, *satsanga*—those dreams can be considered as signs of progress, but not every dream.

Another visitor: If the universe works according to some immutable, inexorable, impersonal law, then where is the case for compassion or grace or love?

Swamiji: It doesn't exist in the universe. When you are united with That, you will never put this question to me. You are standing outside it. You are talking like a human being, not as a part of nature, so there is a contradiction between your feelings and what is actually the fact of life. Nature has no compassion. It has no human feelings. It is a scientific law. It is like mathematics. Mathematics is not a

compassionate science. If you make a mistake, everything will be a mistake.

You cannot understand these things as long as you think you are a human being sitting outside it. You have never taken the trouble of concentrating your mind forcefully by uniting it with Nature's mind. You must think like the whole universe; then you will never put this question because you will not be there at all at that time. But the moment you are outside, you will put all these questions.

Visitor: So all this talk about right motives, etc., is irrelevant. When we say that there should be right motives for action, that's...

Swamiji: All things will be summed up in one single moment if you are able to think like the whole cosmos. The cosmos has no questions, and therefore it has no answers. Unless you have a strong will and are free from emotions, you cannot even for a second identify yourself with the whole creation.

What makes you think that you are outside creation? Who told you that? Who is putting the question? Granted that you cannot stand one inch away from the total creation, who is putting the question? The question becomes irrelevant in one second.

Visitor: So if it is myself, there is no such thing as kindness or compassion?

Swamiji: There is no such thing. But everything is correct if you, as an individual, are putting questions to me. If you are an individual, whatever you said is correct.

Humanity is a multiple society, and wherever there is multiplicity of individuals these laws do operate: compassion, goodness, badness, right, wrong, beautiful, ugly, and so on. But Nature is not a society of human beings. Therefore, human laws cannot apply to it. Nature is not a society at all because there are no individuals. It is one compact operation, so your laws cannot work there. It has no meaning, just as the hunger that you felt in dream cannot be appeased by eating food in the daytime. You must eat in the dream world only. So they are two different realms of consciousness. But the emotional pressures which everybody is subject to in some way or the other...

"Let anything happen, it is all right for me." Will anybody be able to say that? "Let anything happen, it is all right for me." Has

anybody the courage to say that? You will say, “No, it cannot be like that. No, no, it should not be like that”—because you stand apart from that. “If everything goes, still I am perfectly all right.” How can anybody say like that? If the property goes, relations go, job goes, money goes and nobody wants to look at your face, at that time are you perfectly all right? Have you got some strength inside to say, “Yes, I am all right?” You can be all right even at that time, provided you have entered into That which requires nothing, which needs nothing.

This is why every day you must sit and meditate. It is not coming to Sivananda Ashram and sitting for two minutes discussing this, and then going back. You can go back, but this point should not be forgotten. Every day you have to wash the vessels. If you don’t wash them, they will become black. So likewise, every day you must sit and meditate like this so that the mind may not get encrusted with other things. I’m not saying that people should not work. Do your work.

“If everything goes, I am still all right.” The conscience must tell that. But that conscience must be highly purified, a purified conscience. If the family goes, wealth goes, money goes, reputation goes, everything goes, what happens at that time? There you stand in your true nature. Your true nature is completely camouflaged by the external associations that you have got. You are an important person because of the presence of other people around you who are cooperating with you in some respect. But if you are alone, without anybody around you, your importance has gone in one second, so that cannot be called importance at all. It is a camouflage, and so any time it can leave you. You must find out if you have got any intrinsic worth, or if your only importance is because someone else is there. Are we existing because somebody is there, or can we exist if nobody is there? That you find out. If our existence is conditioned by the existence of other people, it is a very, very pitiable existence. But you can exist even if nobody exists.

For that, a little conviction is necessary. You should not be doubting in the mind: “Is it all right, is it possible for me, am I fit for it?” You should not put such questions. You are fit for it. Nobody is unfit. If you want it, it must come. It cannot be achieved immediately,

but little by little, little by little, by pushing yourself in the right way by deep meditation, at least one hour in the morning or evening, as the case may be.

But the primary importance of this issue cannot be forgotten. One day or other you may be driven to that. Everybody can be driven to that corner one day or the other. Even kings have become paupers in one day. At that time what do the kings do? They will go on crying. Empires fall in sudden catastrophe, so what happened to the emperor at that time? Because his power was extrinsic, it cannot abide.

A human being should have some superhuman internal worth. It is the superhuman internal worth in you that can drive you upwards. If you are not superhuman but you are mortally human, then there is a gulf between your way of living and the natural way of existence.

A very sincere and deep conviction is necessary: “I shall get it, and I shall see to it, I shall think of it, I shall not forget it. I shall keep it in my mind always, whatever be the work that I am doing, and revert to it.” Like a cat—whenever it is threatened by anybody, suddenly it goes to the top of the tree. It has got only one way. Likewise, whatever trouble comes, you have only one way: to revert back to that foundation of your existence.

THE ATMAN AND MATTER, LIBERATION, INDIA'S SPIRITUALITY

A visitor: What causes the Atman to come in contact with material existence?

Swamiji: It cannot come in contact with material existence. It cannot. They are totally different things. They are dissimilar in character. Matter and spirit cannot join, they are two different things—unless you conclude that either the Atman does not exist or the matter does not exist. If one of them does not exist, then there is no problem, but both cannot exist simultaneously. This is a philosophical blunder committed by people in the history of philosophy.

There is no such thing as matter, really speaking. It is only an externalisation in space and time of the Atman itself. When matter is internalised it becomes the Atman. When the Atman is externalised it becomes matter. So they are one and the same thing appearing as two things. So there is no question of one coming in contact with another thing.

There is only one thing in the whole universe. The entire universe is made up of one substance. If it is universal, it is Atman. If it is externalised, it is matter. Due to the operation of the sense organs which externalise everything, even yourself, you look like one of the many other persons in the world as an object, as it were. But you are not an object. You are a subject. You are an independent, self-identical Atman yourself, but when people look at you they think you are an object because you can be seen. Anything that is seen with the eyes is an object. So it is an error in imagining that there is an object. The interference of the sense organs through the medium of space and time creates a misconception that there is an external reality, while truly there is only a universal reality. The universal reality includes the internal Atman as well as what you consider external matter. This is a deep mystical secret and, ordinarily, a layman cannot understand it. Be happy.

Visitor: What does liberation mean?

Swamiji: Liberation is the merging of your existence in universal

existence so that you don't exist apart from the Universal Being. You become universal yourself. Now you are located in a particular place. At that time, you will be omnipresent. This is liberation. You may call it God-realisation. Be ready for it. Are you ready?

Visitor: I don't know.

Visitor: Do you think that India's spirituality is going to survive in the 21st century?

Swamiji: Certainly. It cannot perish. India has many difficulties of an exterior type, but its interior stuff has not deteriorated. Even today when generally people feel that there is a lot of political and social confusion everywhere, yet the soul of the civilisation of this country is still alive. Even if there is only one person in the whole of India who represents this mighty soul of the country, you can say the country is alive. One person is sufficient. It has to pass through various ups and downs through human history, as is the case with every country. Anyway, I am not going into larger details, historical or anything else. I am only giving a direct answer to your question: The soul of India will survive.

Visitor: Will the body survive?

Swamiji: What is the meaning of 'body'?

Visitor: The Ganges River is in a very bad state, the forests are... There are hardly any forests left in India.

Swamiji: It will pass through many difficulties and hurdles, but it will survive.

Visitor: I'm talking about the body of India, I'm talking about the physical...

Swamiji: That which you see physically you are calling the body of India, the geographical India.

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Oh, it will survive, certainly. Though it will have to pass through various difficult processes of survival, yet finally it will survive.

Visitor: And will it spread in the world, the spirituality of India?

Swamiji: This is a great question. The whole world will receive the spiritual message more and more as history advances. There is an old belief among world historians that culture moves from the East to the West, and then it takes one round. Again it will come back. Nature moves as a cycle. The movement of nature is not a straight line, but a circle. There was a time when India and China were having the highest kind of civilisation—once upon a time. They were number one, both India and China. Then what happened is by a purely historical process, the culture started moving to the West. There were the Persian emperors and the Babylonian and Assyrian emperors, for the time being. Then it moved to Israel, then it went to Greece, then it went to Rome, then it went to Europe. It went to England. Now it is in America. America is becoming a very powerful country, but it cannot go on like that. It will not be exactly as it is forever and ever. It will turn back, as if by a rotation of the Earth; through the Pacific it will come to Japan. Now Japan is coming up. It is competing with America in some way. After centuries it will again come back to China and India. All told, good days are coming to us. Thy kingdom come.

Visitor: How soon?

Swamiji: Oh, you will have to take many births, unless you want to reach God before that time. Why do you worry? You go to God first. From there you will see the whole cosmos.

BHISHMA AND DHARMA

A visitor: Why does Bhishma at a crucial juncture say that dharma is that which the powerful do or say?

Swamiji: No, he didn't say like that. Nobody will say like that. He said it is not possible to answer this question. That's all he said. And when he was asked to answer the question, he said, "You refer to Yudhisthira, who knows things better."

Visitor: But then he also said that dharma is that which the powerful do or say.

Swamiji: He has said a hundred things, all self-contradictory.

Visitor: This is one of these things.

Swamiji: Might is right. That is also one philosophy of political science.

Visitor: But Bhishma is saying that.

Swamiji: But he is also a political science man only.

Visitor: But at that particular juncture, which is not a political science question...

Swamiji: The whole thing was political, entirely, right from beginning to end. It is a preparation for war, and in war, everything is right. That is what people say. There is nothing wrong there.

Visitor: Bhishma is a participant in the preparation for war?

Swamiji: Yes, right. Certainly. If he had said that we don't want war, it would not have taken place. He could have told Duryodhana to keep quiet. Then nothing would have happened. But he had no courage to tell that, due to some weakness of feeling.

Visitor: He had no courage.

Swamiji: He had the power to stop it.

Visitor: He had the knowledge of dharma but he didn't have the courage to follow it.

Swamiji: He did not know dharma fully, only partially. When crucial questions arose, he said, “You please refer to Yudhisthira who knows things better.”

Visitor: That’s right.

Swamiji: He was more like a mathematician who calculates, but dharma cannot be calculated on a computer. It is a flexible adjustment of values to changing circumstances. It is not a stereotyped, standard definition. You cannot do that. Every minute dharma changes, every minute.

Visitor: So he has not internalised it, he just has learned some rules.

Swamiji: He has totally failed finally because Draupadi’s question was a very important question, and it is a question of today also, and he cannot answer that question. When it was said, “You know Yudhisthira is on the right path and Duryodhana is on the wrong path, so why are you siding with Duryodhana?” he says, “I am the servant of the salt that I have eaten.” Who asked him to eat the salt? That is another thing. It is another foolishness. He had taken a vow when he was young, “I will protect the king of Hastinapura,” but he did not know a devil will come and rule Hastinapura. He had to protect the devil also. He did not know that. He could have changed his opinion. A king is in Hastinapura and he has taken a vow “Whoever rules I will protect” but he did not know what kind of person has come. An evil man came. Will you protect him? But he will protect him because he has taken a vow: Whoever is there I will protect. This is called foolish logic, foolish logic. He cannot cling to that.

Visitor: His vow was to protect the kingdom but not the person.

Swamiji: But he mistook it. You must see the consequences of action and not merely the action itself. When you take any step, three or four factors are to be considered: firstly, the justifiability of your intention in doing that thing; secondly, the consequence. Your intention may be good, but there might be a very bad consequence of it, so the consequence also should be justifiable. The purpose for which you are undertaking this action should be justifiable, and the overall net result of it should also be justifiable. You cannot stick only

to one aspect of it. People act with good intentions, but they produce bad results. “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” This is Milton. Mere good intention is no good. The intention may be good but the brain is not functioning. Each one is one’s own judge under critical circumstances. Your conscience will tell you which is right.

Visitor: We must know what the conscience is saying.

Swamiji: Conscience does not require instruction. It is the voice of God inside. The last thing that you have is the conscience. Conscience is not consciousness. It is something deep inside. It is the soul telling you. When you try to do something, the inner conscience will tell you automatically whether it is all right or not. But many times you press it down with ulterior motives.

Stealing is very bad. Socrates has got this questioning habit. He will ask somebody, “My dear so-and-so, do you believe that stealing is bad?” “Certainly.” “You will stick to this answer always?” “Yes.” “It is unconditionally a correct statement?” “Yes.” “Suppose there is a madman brandishing a sword. A person very slowly goes behind him and steals the sword. Has he done the right thing or the wrong thing? So stealing is good? Now modify your definition,” he said. Like that he has got a way of putting people into a corner, and finally nothing can be defined unless the higher voice thinks.

Some dacoit was pursuing a pilgrim. A mahatma was sitting under a tree. The dacoit asked the mahatma, “Did anyone pass this way?” The mahatma understood the reason for this question. Can you say, “Yes, I have seen him. He is there”? Can you say, “I don’t know anything”? Both sentences are wrong. So he adopted one technique. “That which has seen cannot speak. That which speaks cannot see,” he said. That is, that which has seen is the eye; it cannot speak. And that which speaks is the tongue; it cannot see. This is the answer he gave. Then the dacoit thought he is a crazy man, and he went away afterwards.

Visitor: But evasion of truth Swamiji, evasion?

Swamiji: But what he said is correct. I am telling correct things. The eyes cannot speak. What is wrong with it?

Visitor: But that’s not how we can live in the world.

Swamiji: He has lived in the world. There was a client who filed the case in the court. It was a very weak case, weak. His lawyer said, “Your case is very weak. It will not work. So the only way I suggest is this: When the judge asks a question, you simply make one sound: blah. Whatever question he asks, you say ‘blah’. He will think you are a mad fellow and he will send you away. Your witness fails. So in the court it was declared that he is a madman, and the official document says that he is a mad fellow. Afterwards he went away. The lawyer asked, “My technique has worked. Bring my fees.” He said, “Blah.” [Laughter] “Hey,” he said, “You are telling that to me also.” But he cannot file a case against that man because it is proved that he is a mad fellow.

Visitor: He was smarter than the lawyer.

Swamiji: There are so many interesting things in the world.

FREUD, ADLER AND JUNG

Swamiji: ...another is Adler, and a third is Carl Jung. They were supposed to be Freud's disciples, but they were not just saying what he says. They have gone very deep into psychological structures.

Freud's doctrine is that there is an inborn pressure in every living being towards some end which the society will not permit to express itself. There is a clash between this impulse and society. He calls it 'conflict with reality'. By 'reality' he does not mean God, so society is the reality. Every person has a conflict with society. Society will not permit the expression of every kind of impulse. The impulse says, "I am perfectly right in expressing myself." But the society says, "I shall see that you should not express yourself."

Now, the pressure of society often is more intense, and a war takes place between the impulses and society, the social norms. Society will never permit a person to behave as he likes or she likes. Now, whether society is in the wrong in doing that or the impulse is foolish, that is for God only to decide. Anyhow, there is a conflict. Then there is a repression for fear of any onslaught from society. The society can do anything, so the impulse is frightened. It goes back. Many complexes arise due to that. It wants something. It cannot get it because of the pressure from society. Then it says, "Okay, I will not ask for it, I will ask for the next best. If that also is not permitted..." Suppose you say, "I want this." It is not allowed. "Another thing I want." That also is not allowed. Then it will be satisfied with a third thing, much lesser than that, until it is forced to go down and down in asking for smaller and smaller things because society does not permit anything. Then it becomes what is called narcissistic. A psychological malady arises in the mind. The love for something gets converted into the love for one's own self, not in a spiritual sense but in a morbid, sick sense. Then they will suck their own thumb afterwards. That itself is sufficient for them. It ends in catastrophe. Now, how to get out of this conflict is a huge history of psychoanalytical psychology. This is Freud, briefly.

Adler says what Freud says may be partially true, but it is not the whole truth. There is an inferiority complex in everybody. "There is somebody better than myself. I cannot tolerate that. I want to

compete with the best of things. So many great people are there. They are superior. Why should I remain as a humble nobody?" There is struggle for power, authority. It is the desire of the impulse to become equal to others, if not more than others. Everybody feels inferior before a larger body. Even before an elephant you cannot go. You feel very humiliated before that elephant. You would like to become that elephant itself, if possible. You are frightened by the ocean, frightened by the elephant. You envy the moon for its beauty. So everybody feels small in the presence of something great. This conflict between what you ought to be and what you are is the cause of all psychological maladies. What you are and what you ought to be, what you would like to be, clash with each other. This is Adler.

Carl Jung is a more philosophical man. There is conflict between the inner and the outer. People plunge themselves into activity of the outer world, like the modern social welfare workers. "I do work for other people, I do work for other people, I do work for other people," and all that. Just now I was telling some friend, "You are doing work for other people, and what are you doing for your own self?" This person who works for other people is also included in humanity. Actually, social work is not work for other people. It is work for humanity. There is no such thing as 'other'. You should not use such words. It is a total humanity. The whole humanity rises up. You need not have to think of yourself separately when you think of humanity, but people cannot think like that. They make a distinction between the outer and the inner.

The balance that is required to be set between the inner need and the outer duty, this is the Bhagavadgita practically. Yoga is the balancing of the inner needs with the outer need. Neither of them is unimportant. As this balance is not easy to maintain between the outer compulsion for duty and the inner needs, it creates a complex, and they become psychopaths. This is Carl Jung.

But all these three people are partially right, not wholly right. The truth about it we have in the Upanishads. When the Universal multiplied itself—this is mentioned in the Aitareya Upanishad—a catastrophe took place. We should not imagine that we are one fraction of God. We should not think like that because if God has become many, we are one among the many, so we should be thinking

like mini-gods. It is not merely one becoming the many. Each one that has become the many becomes topsy-turvy in its perception. Headlong one falls, so that the outer looks like the inner, the inner looks like the outer. The world, which is prior to you, looks like the object of perception. Though you came later, you think you are the subject.

Because of this wrong perception, the universe, of which everyone is a part, gives a kick, like this. That kick firstly manifests itself as an inability to bear or tolerate the operations of earth, water, fire, air and ether. Hunger and thirst, heat and cold, they manifest themselves the moment this takes place. The outer looks like inside, inside looks like outside. When you see yourself in a mirror, the right eye looks like the left eye, the left eye looks like the right eye. If you see yourself as a shadow on the bank of the Ganga you will find your head, which is uppermost, will look lowermost, and the feet, which are the lowermost, will look uppermost. This is what has happened to us. The whole thing is chaos.

So we are not thinking like gods. We are completely torn individuals, into pieces. We are not only thinking upside down, but thinking as a reflection thinks and not as an original thinks. The fraction aspect and the reflection aspect, both have joined and spoiled everything so that nothing that we do is a correct action. The whole thing is chaos. This is called samsara. So this is much more than Carl Jung and Adler and Freud. They are telling something, but greater trouble has taken place than what these people are telling.

The only method is not to see yourself with head below and legs up or right becoming left and left becoming right, but standing erect and attuning yourself to the Virat consciousness. With great effort the consciousness should identify itself with everything at one stroke, as Virat feels. The moment this is attempted, fear will start because the attempt to be united with the Virat consciousness will abolish individual assertion. Individual personality will vaporise itself and vanish like mist before the sun.

Nobody will do such a meditation. Even Arjuna, who saw this Cosmic Form, could not tolerate it. He said, "Sufficient! I don't want this anymore." The personal ego tells, "I do not want the Virat because you are trying to abolish my existence. Nothing is more dear

than my existence. If I myself am not to be, then what is the good of anything else being? Let the Virat be there, but I am not there.” This fear catches hold of us. Therefore, this meditation should not be attempted by anybody unless there is a competent teacher. This is the solution for the problem finally, and it is a much greater solution than suggested by Freud, Adler and Jung.

GOD, BUDDHISM AND ATHEISM

Visitor: The concept of God, is it the same thing like the Atman in Hinduism or it's like something else?

Swamiji: We have concluded that God is complete, outside which nothing can be. Therefore, it is inside you also. When you consider that Complete Being as present in you, it is called Atman. And it is present here also, there also, so it looks like there are many Atmans, but there are not many Atmans. The One is present in every person. Suppose there are one hundred pots of water. The sun will be reflected a hundred ways. The hundred reflections are of the one sun only, but yet you can see them as a hundred suns if you go on looking at the pots. So the Atman is only a conception of the presence in each person of the same Complete Being. When you do not think of these independent individuals in which the Atman is present—you think of the complete original Absolute itself—it is called Brahman. By itself it is Brahman, Universal Completeness, but when you think it as present in everybody's heart, it is called Atman. It is one and the same thing. There is no difference. One thing is considered in many ways.

Visitor: And how do you know there is a Brahman? That the whole complete universe—it's like you feel it, it's a faith? What is the...

Swamiji: I am not your Guru. You are not my disciple. This is a very big question. You have to study very deep, very deep. What you have studied in Jewish language may not be a complete thing. You are asking a great philosophical question, and I should not spend my time in arguing all these matters just now. I have no time also. And I am glad that you are raising such questions. That means your mind is very pure. I am happy to see that.

How do you know that you are existing?

Visitor: I don't know. I exist.

Swamiji: How do you know? What is the proof?

Visitor: You don't need it.

Swamiji: Philosophers always want demonstration and proof.

Can you demonstrate that you are really existing, and not merely imagining? Are you imagining in your mind that you are existing, or you are really existing?

Visitor: You don't need for this a proof. You just know that you exist.

Swamiji: Then why you want proof for God? [Laughter]

Visitor: No, I'm asking you how you think about God, about this kind, like you think yourself.

Swamiji: As we have concluded already, God is nothing but complete. Why should a complete thing require a proof? Only an incomplete thing requires a proof. You have already accepted that you don't require a proof because it is very clear, you said. And that complete thing is only a universally expanded form of your certainty that you are existing. An individual's certainty is making you feel it is self-evident; it does not require any proof. If you simply expand this consciousness into the universal dimension, it is Brahman, the Absolute; and in the same way as you don't require a proof, it does not require a proof because it is not outside you. It is an enlarged form of your own being, and a miniature of that is yourself. So if you don't want a proof, it also doesn't require a proof because it is just this only. The dimension is enlarged. The enlarged dimension of this thing which does not require a proof does not require a proof also. You understand me?

Visitor: Yes, I understand.

Swamiji: If you think like this too much, you will become a saint. [Laughter] Then you will not go back to Israel. [Laughter] I don't want to make you a saint so quickly. But your heart thinks very pure, your mind is very clear. You're a young man but your thought is very clear. Anyhow, something I have told you. I have told you something very interesting, which you must think deeply. And you will not find this in any book. The way in which I spoke, which has somehow brought you some satisfaction, cannot be found in books. Many books you take, but this will not ring properly. It requires a person. It is to be learned from a person only, not from a book. Anyway, I am glad we had a very happy talk, and you have improved something yourself. You are an improved man now. Okay? You can

see me tomorrow also.

Visitor: Okay thank you very much.

[Next day]

Visitor: When I was in Dharamshala I talked with a Buddhist monk, and he told me that there are different kinds of religions. There are religions with God and there are religions without God, and Buddhism is a religion without God. I want to know if you also accept this concept, and if you don't accept it, how do you explain that the holy man that all the time does meditation doesn't believe in that basic thing, the basis of the world?

Swamiji: So what is the whole thing you are telling finally? I can't understand what is the final conclusion.

Visitor: I'm asking, what do you think about Buddhism? How do you see Buddhism?

Swamiji: It is a very good psychology. Buddha is a great psychologist, and he has analysed the human mind thoroughly and concluded the inner constituents of the mind so deeply, more efficiently than any psychologist has done. He is one of the topmost psychologists the world has produced. He has analysed the mind to such depths and completeness that he found finally there is no mind at all.

Here is a cloth. It is made of threads. If the threads are not there, there is no cloth. Remove the thread, each one, and dismantle it. You will find little fibres. Again you break it little by little, little by little, little by little; you will not find the fibre also. The thread has gone, the cloth also has gone, so the cloth does not exist finally, though it looks as if it is existing. Likewise, this whole world, which is perceived by a mental operation, if it is probed into very deeply, threadbare, in its constitution, you will find it does not exist. Neither the mind exists nor the world is there. It is only chaos and a kind of fluctuation, fluxation, a momentary phenomenon which looks like it is existing but really does not exist. So it is a wonderful thing. You are studying Buddhism?

Visitor: I also studied Buddhism. But do you think Buddhism is equal to atheism, or it doesn't talk on another subject, and it doesn't exclude different things?

Swamiji: You cannot call it atheism because atheism means God does not exist. Here it is something more. Not only God does not exist, nothing exists. Even the person who speaks does not exist. So he is not an atheist. The whole thing is completely gone. Even the person who says there is no God, he also does not exist. Then what do you call that religion?

Visitor: Super-atheism. [Laughter]

Swamiji: It is something beyond the ordinary concept. You can study it, very good. So this is what you want to ask me?

Visitor: Yes. I also want to...

Swamiji: There are many kinds of Buddhism—many kinds, not one. Four, five sects of Buddhism arose after Buddha. They are very deep, very interesting philosophical investigations which will make your mind very bright. Every philosophy has got some very interesting points to tell you, only you must be able to find out the truth behind all these varieties. Even if a hundred people tell a hundred things, you can find out the essence of all these people if you are intelligent enough. You have got so many philosophies in Western history, so many philosophies. You have got Greek philosophy, you have got German philosophy, you have got medieval philosophy, you have got theological doctrines of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, and all that; you have got Jewish philosophy and Arabian philosophy. Everything has got some great point in it, but it is up to the student to find the truth of the whole thing, the essence of it, the common denominator.

The whole effort of the human being is to attain perfection. Yesterday we were discussing about the Complete Being. The entire philosophy is there only. Your whole life is centred round this longing, this aspiration to attain complete being. Now you are unsatisfied because you are not complete. You are finite. You are sitting in one place, among many other people. Because other people are there you look very small, so it is called finite. What you are searching for is the transcendence of the finite in the infinite completeness. The whole of philosophy is only this much. You may call it religion, philosophy, mysticism. Call it by any name; they are only different ways of expression which mean one and the same

thing. The whole world is aspiring to become infinite completeness. This is all. Religion or no religion, that is a different matter. The whole thing is a scientific process. It has no name. Automatic action of the whole universe in its process of evolution towards ultimate infinite completeness—that is all anybody wants. The whole thing, entire literature, is only this much. Okay?

But it is very difficult. You will forget the whole thing. You don't read one book also, and afterwards you forget. You must stay in one place for many days to understand these things. Sometimes in Dharamshala, sometimes here, sometimes in Madras, sometimes Calcutta—this is all no good. You are travelling, you are gathering some information here and there in all places, but that is not sufficient. If you want to gain knowledge, real knowledge, wisdom, you must stay in one place for as many days as possible, under one teacher. If it is the Dalai Lama, you can go to the Dalai Lama. If you want any Buddhist teacher, you can go to a Buddhist teacher. If you want Sankaracharya, you can go to Sankaracharya. You can go to anybody, but if you want to know their mind and their teachings, you must thoroughly investigate and completely understand what they are saying from beginning to end, in depth. So don't travel too much if you are searching for knowledge. As a tourist you can go anywhere, you can see mountains, rivers, but knowledge cannot come like that by moving.

Visitor: From what I have learned and heard, the Hindus say that the Vedas are something like eternal, and it's just how people heard it, heard the Veda. That's how they came.

Swamiji: The Vedas are a very difficult subject. It is not merely Veda, it is a theory of sound. You know what is sound?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Sound produces the formation of words. The word that you utter is motivated by a sound that you are producing in your articulation, your vocal cords, and sound is only a vibration. There is no sound, finally. All sounds that you hear are not exactly as they appear to our ears. They are vibrations. There is one universal vibration, like electric force. When vibration strikes the ear, it looks like sound. When it strikes the eye, it looks like colour. When it

strikes the skin, it looks like touch. When it strikes the nose, it looks like smell. When it strikes the tongue, it looks like taste. So why are there so many varieties of feeling? There is another example. When electricity works through a stove, it becomes hot. When it works through a refrigerator, it becomes cold. When it touches an electric blade, it moves. So electricity does not move. Electricity is not hot, it is not cold, but it can perform all these functions by contact with a certain medium which is responsible for the diversity of function.

So ultimately the whole universe is vibration, energy. This vibration, or energy, is the beginning of the universe. There was a central vibration before creation took place. Religious people call it God thinking. Scientists call it astronomical potential, which existed like a cosmic atom. Do you know something about modern physics?

Visitor: Yes, I know something, the Big Bang.

Swamiji: The Big Bang. The Big Bang produces small bangs afterwards. Before the Big Bang took place, there was no world like this. What was there before the Big Bang took place? Only a tremendous vibration. It concentrated itself at a point, and something happened there. That vibration, which divided itself into the various phenomena of nature, has no space and time. We are seeing space, distance, and time. It does not exist at that time. It is a compact, indivisible eternity, you may call it. So every sound, every vibration is based on Eternal Substance, Eternal Being.

Have you read the Bible?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: In the beginning was the Word. This is St. John's Gospel: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This is something similar to the Veda theory of the Word being eternity. The Word is not eternity, but the vibration behind it is the Eternal. The vibration can take any shape. I gave you examples of how electricity takes many shapes.

In deep meditation when sages contemplated certain ideas, the energy manifested itself as Word in the language which they spoke. The Veda can be in Sanskrit or it can be in Hebrew. It can be in English or in any language. It can take any form, but in India it so happened the language was Sanskrit so this eternal vibration, which

was the object of contemplation by the great masters, was conceived as Sanskrit manifestations. But if a Hebrew sage contemplates, it will come as Hebrew only. It won't come in Sanskrit. It can take any shape. So the eternal Word is not only Veda. It can be any potential of spiritual expression, ultimately. In religion you may call it God's thought or the separation of the Eternal. In that sense only you can say the Vedas are eternal. It does not mean the printed word is eternal. It doesn't mean that. It is a potential which is universal in its nature.

THE ATMAN AND REINCARNATION

Visitor: After a man dies, he forgets his life when he is reincarnated again. So if the Atman doesn't change, and the Atman didn't make his sins, so why does he suffer from the...

Swamiji: The Atman does not take reincarnation. Reincarnation is not done by the Atman. It is all-pervading; it cannot take birth. It is only the mind that reincarnates. There is a difference between the mind and the Atman. The Atman is a universal existence; mind is an individual existence. It is the individual that reincarnates, not the universal. The Atman is universal; it cannot undergo transmigration. Wherever there is individual consciousness, there is finitude, and the finitude always struggles to become the infinite. This struggle is carried on by repeated transformations of oneself in the process of evolution. As a matter of fact, birth and death are only processes of evolution. Whenever there is an evolutionary process, the previous condition dies and the new condition starts. It happens everywhere, not only in human beings. The whole universe is dying every moment, and gets renewed for a better condition every moment. As long as there is finitude anywhere, whether it is outside or inside, this transformation must take place. But the universal Atman cannot transform itself. Reincarnation is only for the individual, finite consciousness until it becomes infinite. Then there is no reincarnation. It is perfect blessedness, called salvation.

Visitor: John Locke says that the personality is his memory, and...

Swamiji: Personality is not memory. It is a consciousness of one separate existence. The consciousness of one isolated existence is called individuality. Memory is only a part of it—memory and intellect and subconscious, and all sorts of things, you can say. It is a simple thing. The consciousness of one's being isolated as an individual, that is the whole trouble. From that, memory starts, everything starts. The problem is isolated individual consciousness. That is the problem. It has to become universal. Then there is no transmigration, no reincarnation. There is perfect blessedness, salvation. It is called salvation.

Visitor: To judge me for a back reincarnation, it's not a judgment because I don't see myself, who I had been before. It wasn't me because we had different memories.

Swamiji: It is not necessary to know what you were before. Why do you want to know that? Nobody can know that. And you cannot even know what is tomorrow. That also you cannot know. You can know only the present. The point is useless. The question is simple. Why are you complicating matters? I said the whole purpose of life is to become Universal Existence and be free from birth and death, and for that you should not talk of yesterday, tomorrow, memory, and past, present, future. These are all irrelevant matters. It has no connection at all. It requires deep meditation, prayerfulness and concentration on, as I mentioned to you last time, the wider realms of being, and your meditation should be on the infinitude of your finitude. This is a simple matter. All religions, spirituality, yoga, everything, is only in one sentence I have told you. All other things are useless commentaries. Don't think of memory, and all that. There is no meaning in that. You should not think of past, present, future—nothing. There is no use of thinking all these things. There is no benefit.

Visitor: Good people that suffer in this world because they had...

Swamiji: Good people suffer because they have done bad things in the previous birth.

Visitor: So everything in this world here is fair?

Swamiji: Everything is fair because everything is well adjusted, a perfect balance. The universe is a perfect balance, and nobody can understand that because you are separately sitting outside as an individual, so the cosmic operation cannot be known by an individual mind. When you enter that, you will feel everything is okay. The whole universe is beautiful. But when you see it, it looks ugly and hopeless. You must see it properly.

Another visitor: We Christians consider... You were talking about Buddhism the other day, and one question I'd like to ask you is Hindus say Buddha is an incarnation of Vishnu, and Buddhists say they don't believe that to be true.

Swamiji: No, they do believe. They believe in the incarnation of Bodhisattva. They are believing in the same way, only they call it by different names. There are many big incarnations, Bodhisattva and Avalokiteshvara, Maitreya Buddha. They are all Buddha's incarnations only. They believe exactly as Hinduism, but in a different way. Their language is different, and their description is different. Especially in Mahayana Buddhism, there is liberalism. Their concept is very wide, humanitarian and cosmopolitan. The incarnations of Buddha are accepted by Mahayana Buddhism in particular.

Visitor: So they're not irreconcilable. They are the same.

Swamiji: Every moment the Universal Being is incarnating itself. It does not require Hinduism and Buddhism and all that. It is a process of what we may call scientific evolution. There is evolution and involution taking place in the universe. When there is a coming down of the higher level to the lower level, you call it incarnation. When it is an ascending of the lower level to the higher level, you call it movement towards salvation. One is an activity from the centre to the circumference; another is an activity from the circumference to the centre. In modern language we may say they are centripetal and centrifugal forces. One moves away from the centre. That movement is called creation. The other way is the movement towards the centre. It is called involution. These processes go on continuously, endlessly, eternally. That's what you are asking?

Visitor: Yes. Thank you. One difference seems to be that Buddhists say there is no creator God.

Swamiji: Buddhism is a doctrine of phenomenalism. Everything is momentary; nothing is static. In the evolutionary process of the cosmos also, nothing is static. Everything moves. The question is, to where does it move? In what direction? Everybody should answer this question whether there is perpetual fluxation, movement, as Buddhism accepts and anybody will accept. You should not stop with that statement merely. You cannot say, "I am going." Unless you know where you are going, the meaning of going has no sense. You say, "I am going to England, I am going to Delhi." But if you simply use the word 'going', it loses sense.

So Buddha, in his great wisdom, said that everything moves, but it moves towards nirvana, the ultimate blessedness. And what the nature of that blessedness is, he was not prepared to explain because the human mind cannot understand what it is. He believed in that old saying: “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Today’s problem is sufficient for us. Why should you drag tomorrow’s problem unnecessarily? When you go near it, you will understand. Each time you take one step, and you cannot know the further steps. Buddha is misunderstood mostly because of his silence on certain matters. When he is silent about a thing, it need not mean that he doesn’t know things. Even Christ said, “I know more things than what I am speaking.” It does not mean prophets should go on saying everything. They will say only as much as is necessary for the kind of public which they are addressing.

Everything moves towards an ultimate destination. So everything moves, is a fact; therefore, everything is phenomenal, but it leads to a state which is beyond the phenomenal existence, ultimate freedom. As long as you are caught up in phenomenal movement, there is no freedom. When there is cessation of this movement after the attainment of the ultimate aim, then there is no such question. Buddha calls it nirvana, in Hindu religion they call it moksha, people call it salvation, people call it attainment of God; all mean one and the same thing.

Visitor: Can you answer the question: Why the universe came into being?

Swamiji: It never came into being. Ultimately you will find it does not exist at all. They gave an example in Vedanta philosophy. Sometimes in twilight a rope looks like a snake. You are asking me since when the rope started looking like a snake. Is there a beginning for that? It never behaved like a snake at all, but it is perpetually a snake. You can go on seeing it, and every time you see it, it looks like a snake only. So it is a perceptual defect. The existence of the world as a real solid substance outside is a phenomenon arisen out of a defect in perception itself. By itself it is not there.

DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITY AND MEDITATION

A visitor: Right now I am reading Yoga Vasishtha.

Swamiji: What do you understand from Yoga Vasishtha?

Visitor: That everything is unreal.

Swamiji: Unreal? But something must be real.

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: You pursue that. The Yoga Vasishtha has given a complete picture of what a person should do in one's life.

Visitor: But also, at this moment I'm talking to you. Day after tomorrow I will be in Lucknow or Delhi or wherever. That's also unreal or real, or I don't know what it is. I have to take decisions, I have to do things, which doesn't...

Swamiji: What are you finally asking me? I cannot make out. You asked me a question. What are you telling me?

Visitor: I'm asking a question. I'm not telling you. The question I'm asking is that day-to-day actions...

Swamiji: Every day you go on with your activities, no objection. It is perfectly all right. Any work is good. No work is bad. But meanwhile you do something for your blessedness also, along the lines indicated by a scripture like Yoga Vasishtha—deep meditation and prayer, collecting of yourself, the strength of your sense organs, keeping your mind calm and quiet, having some leisure early morning or evening, being alone to yourself. Everybody should be alone to oneself for some time. You should not be in the midst of family and people and all that. For one hour be alone to yourself. Don't talk to anybody. For one hour don't speak to any person, don't see any person. If you have got a private room in your house, close the door and sit. Don't use telephones, etc., at that time.

Be alone to yourself and feel that you are alone existing in this world. Nobody exists anywhere, and one day you will realise that this is the truth. Though you imagine that there are many people around you, a day will come when you will realise that there are no

people around you. You will find that you are alone in this world. One day you will realise that nobody wants you, and nobody cares for you afterwards. When you came, you came alone from the mother's womb. Now you have created many friends. Multitudes are around you, but slowly these multitudes will diminish; they will evaporate. They will find there is no worth in this man. When your money has gone, your factory doesn't work properly, you cannot pay salary to the workers, they will slowly leave you. When money is not there, when you have no property, even relations will not like you. "It is a good-for-nothing person," they will say. Brother or sister or relation, or whoever they are, will slowly distance themselves afterwards; further on you will find you are diminishing in your importance, and then you will find that you have nobody. Why should you wait for that time? They say when there is a going, it is good to go honourably. You don't have to be pushed out. Why should you wait for that time? Go honourably like a gentleman, not like a poor, unwanted person.

The world may not want you. Actually, even just now it doesn't want you. In Hindi they call it *matlab* friendship. All have got some motive behind being friendly with you. If they can get nothing from you, who will talk to you? When you have got possessions, then there are friends, but how long will you have possessions? There is a limit for that also. And when the time for the completion of the sojourn in this world is over, the world will not want you. You will be transferred to another world. When you are transferred to the other world, you do not carry luggage with you. When you go from one country to another country, you carry your luggage. Without luggage you cannot travel. You cannot carry even your body there, let alone luggage. There is a pure, uncontaminated, unbefriended, single loneliness when you depart from this world.

Sometimes before passing, people feel, "I have wasted my life." People come here crying and weeping, "I am a big officer. I have committed my pension to my children. They don't want me in the house. I am helpless. I want refuge in the Sivananda Ashram." I asked him, "What have you done with your earnings?" "I have given all to the wife and children." "What are they doing now?" "They don't want me anymore." Then he is repenting. "I have shared all my property with brothers, sisters and family. Now they are showing

ungratefulness to me. I want to stay in Sivananda Ashram.” People come here like that. Why should anyone reduce oneself to that condition? You are a strong man and a well-built personality now. Continue that, and develop an inner strength. When nobody wants you, still somebody will want you. Catch hold of that person. There is somebody who wants you always. This is your duty, my dear friend, and don’t forget that. Okay? This is my answer to you.

Visitor: In the pursuit of Self-realisation, or blessedness, can one draw up a checklist to function in a manner in this business or whatever, so that one doesn’t go out of line in the pursuit?

Swamiji: Tell me exactly what you are thinking about a checklist. What is the meaning of ‘checklist’?

Visitor: Ideally it should be emptiness; one should focus on emptiness ideally.

Swamiji: I do not believe in emptiness because everything is filled with something. There is no such thing as emptiness. It is a word without any meaning. The mind that thinks of emptiness is itself emptiness, so the mind has no existence at all. So this is a wrong philosophy of certain people who do not catch the truth properly.

When they ask, “What are you doing?” you say, “I am meditating on emptiness.” There is no such thing as that. Everything is existing. There is no such thing as non-existence. It exists in some form, in a lesser degree or a larger degree. Non-existence is inconceivable, so emptiness cannot be conceived. There is no such thing as emptiness. It is a lesser degree of fullness.

Articulate your question. What is the trouble you have got now in this matter? You are not able to reconcile between Day-to-Day Activity and Meditation. Is it so?

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: Who told you that meditation and day-to-day activity are two different things? How this idea came to you?

God has not created meditation. God has not created activity also. He has created the world, and you are inside the world. Whatever you call activity is the activity of the world. It is not your activity. If you say, “It is my activity,” you will be shunted out of the world.

The world will say, "I am doing all things, and you are saying you are doing." There is only one activity, and that is the activity of the world. The whole nature is active, the entire creation is active, the whole universe is active, and you are not outside the universe. So when you say 'day-to-day activity', it is a part of universal activity.

It is up to you to understand how your activity can be the same as universal activity. This is called spiritual education. A person who does not know how one's own activity is the same as universal activity is not properly educated spiritually. That person is thinking like an ordinary villager. If you bestow a little thought over it, you will find it is a very simple thing. As you cannot exist outside the universe, your activity also cannot be outside the universal activity.

There was a villager who was travelling in a railway train. The train was moving, and the man who was sitting inside also started running inside it. People asked, "Why are you moving?" "I am increasing the speed of the train," he said, "because if I add to the speed of the train, it will go faster." This is the mentality of people. You cannot increase the speed of the train by running inside the compartment; likewise, however much you may run about, you are not adding a whit to the cosmic activity. That one cannot understand this is the cause of sorrow in the world.

Actually, it is not necessary to be in a state of sorrow. God does not expect you to be in sorrow. He is a blissful being, and He has created a blissful universe, in which you are included. From bliss the universe has come, by bliss it is sustained, and to bliss it will return. This is what the Taittareya Upanishad says. But the fantastic, contorted thinking of the individual thinks it is like the villager running inside the compartment: "I will also do something. Let God do, but I will also add something to God's activity." What can you add?

All activity is not a personal action. It is only a participation in the cosmic work. You are cooperating with the activity already going on. When the whole mechanism is working, every part also is working simultaneously. The part is not doing an independent work. It is contributing proportionately to the total output of the mechanism itself. Every action is a participation, and not an individual's doing. That this cannot be appreciated and cannot be understood is the

sorrow of the human ego. The attachment to isolated individuality, which is called egoism, is so hard like flint that any amount of teaching is like pouring water on a rock.

Everybody should have sufficient time to think. A person should not be so busy that he cannot think properly. Day and night he is working in a factory, and in the evening he comes tired. He takes some food and sleeps, and the next morning he takes breakfast and runs. What is the use of this activity? What purpose? You have to earn money enough to maintain your life. All people are justified in doing as much work as is necessary to survive in the psychophysical individuality. You need not have to earn more than that. Needs are sanctioned by nature; luxuries are not sanctioned. A luxury is a theft in one way because to have something more than what you require is like taking away what belongs to another person. You convert another person into a poverty state by yourself becoming rich. Nature will not permit that. It will punish you if you do that.

However, coming to the point, there is no such thing as personal activity. If you say there is a personal activity, you are cutting yourself off from the cosmic life. You are separating yourself from God Himself. You are saying, "God is doing some work. I will also do some work," so you are adding to the work of God. So there is no conflict between daily routine... Even a little bit that you are doing, like washing your face, cleaning your teeth, taking bath, they are not unnecessary things. They are part of the cosmic activity. You cannot even lift your finger and clean your teeth unless the centre of the universe operates. The central point of the cosmic operation tells you, "Lift your finger, clean your teeth." Otherwise, it will fall down with paralytic stroke. Nobody can do anything in this world. Everything is done by that.

But your wisdom consists in realising that everything that you do is done by it, and your action is not somebody's action. Whatever you do justifiably, necessarily and in the manner it is required is sanctioned by the law of the universe. Then the world will take care of you; God will take care of you. Who will take care of you? That will take care of you of which you are a part. The whole will take care of the part. The part cannot add anything to the whole.

So your question is answered. There is no conflict between Day-

to-Day Activity and Meditation. Meditation is the assemblage of the parts of the mind into a total whole, of which the activity is also an integral part, so that everything is one completeness, call it activity, call it meditation. Existence and action are identical. They are not two things. If you know this, you will be happy in one instant, just now. You will have nothing to tell afterwards. You will feel a relief in your mind. You will feel that problems are solved and everything will be taken care of by the powers that be. But, there is a 'but'. The ego will say, "Be careful. You are losing everything."

Visitor: But with such Absolute knowledge, sir, why there are so many management schools opening up right from Harvard to the Indian Institute of Management? Nobody provides us with this knowledge in that education.

Swamiji: You can open anything, provided it participates in the cosmic activity. But for that you must know what is cosmic activity, towards what end it is moving. The whole universe is moving towards self-recognition in the Absolute, and if Harvard also is a part of that, okay, go on, no objection. So be happy.

GIDDY WITH GOD

A visitor: I was at the Vasishtha Cave this morning, my first time there. I went inside and sat for a while, and it felt very natural and nothing special—just very natural and good, but nothing extraordinary. I left the cave and suddenly felt intoxicated. What was the difference? It would seem that if you went into the cave you would be intoxicated, and when you leave you would not.

Swamiji: What did you feel when you were intoxicated? Did you feel giddy?

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: Then what is intoxication?

Visitor: A fullness. I can't describe it.

Swamiji: Fullness? You call fullness as intoxication. Okay, all right. Fullness also can be intoxicating. There have been saints who were giddy with God. They became giddy because of God entering. You understand me? They are called God-mad people, God-mad. It is a different kind of madness.

It is believed that this cave was once upon a time the residence of a great spiritual master called Vasishtha, a great mastermind with cosmic powers. That vibration perhaps influenced you, especially if your mind was receptive, if you went there in a receptive mood. Be happy. Who else wants to talk to me?

Another visitor: He just asked a question I was really wondering about, which is about these blissful experiences. It seemed to me that the blissful experiences could be some kind of distraction.

Swamiji: Blissful experience is a distraction? What do you mean by that?

Visitor: Well, I mean whenever I have a blissful experience or light or something like that I become...

Swamiji: Distraction is a state where one is out of contact with the centre, and a person who is out of contact with the centre cannot be blissful. So there is nothing called distraction due to blissfulness.

It is a contradiction in terms. It cannot be. When a person is out of contact with the centre, there is distraction, and only when you are united with the centre you are blissful, so bliss and distraction cannot go together. They are two different things.

Visitor: The question is more to do with the fact that when the bliss wears off it seems to bring unhappiness, because I just want to have that bliss again. So perhaps that's more the thing. So sometimes it seems it's better not to have the bliss than the desire for the bliss.

Swamiji: I am telling you, bliss is not distraction. It is unified experience. Only when your experience is unified and centralised, you feel blissful, and if you are distracted there cannot be bliss. You will be only disturbed in the mind. In distraction you are out of yourself; in blissfulness you are in yourself. That is the difference.

Visitor: So you're saying what I'm talking about is not bliss.

Swamiji: What you are talking about is distraction. That has no connection with centralisation of oneself. They are two different things. Distraction is an aberration and a moving away from the centre of one's being, and blissfulness is centralisation in one's own self. The more you are yourself, the more are you blissful. The more are you not yourself, the more are you distracted.

Another visitor: Are thought and imagination the same thing?

Swamiji: No. Imagination is one function of the thought. Many other activities are going on in the mind. Imagination is thinking without a content. If there is thinking with a content, you can call it thinking of something. Imagination is just thinking without a content inside—bare abstraction. It has no purpose. So what is your problem?

Visitor: How to just discriminate between... I have a strong imagination.

Swamiji: About what are you imagining?

Visitor: What you said like a rope and a snake, my imagination can be strong.

Swamiji: What are you imagining?

Visitor: Now nothing. I'm talking to you.

Swamiji: Why are you raising this question unless you have some imagination?

Visitor: If I try and keep my mind still, then thoughts come up and then they can just go in many directions.

Swamiji: That is because you have no aim. You have not chosen any particular aim on which you have to concentrate. You are allowing the mind to go anywhere without any chosen purpose. What do you want the mind to do?

Visitor: I want it to be better trained and focused.

Swamiji: Trained for what purpose? To think something deeply?

Visitor: So that I have better awareness, so that I can use my mind more wisely with greater awareness.

Swamiji: There is no need of knowing your mind, because you yourself are the mind. How can you know your mind when you yourself are the mind? It is like mind knowing itself. The whole personality sitting here is nothing but an embodiment of mind. It is the mind speaking to me, not Mister so-and-so from England. The mind is speaking. And so you are saying, "How will I know my mind?" It is the mind saying, "How will I know myself?" Have you got any problem in your meditation?

Visitor: No, not as such. I just do a short meditation.

Swamiji: Do you study anything?

Visitor: I've studied Buddhism and Yoga.

Swamiji: That is general reading. Anything concentratedly for the purpose of disciplined meditation, are you doing something towards that?

Visitor: A little. I can see I can do a lot more.

Swamiji: Everybody should have an aim, finally. So many things are being done, everybody is busy, everybody is active, they go on doing all kinds of work, but they do it with a purpose. That ultimate purpose should be clear to your mind. There may be a temporary purpose, but what is the ultimate purpose? You go in some direction

because you want to reach a place. The moving in one direction has a purpose of reaching a place. But why do you want to reach that place? That has another purpose. You want to achieve something there, and do some work. Why do you want to do that work? So that has another purpose. Like that you go on finding out purpose behind purpose, purpose behind purpose, cause behind cause. Finally you will find there is an indescribable eluding purpose which is haunting the mind of every person, which easily cannot be grasped without the guidance of a competent person.

Nobody can outright give an answer what is the ultimate purpose. There will be always some confusion. The ultimate purpose nobody knows. “Everything is okay. I want this, I want that,” but why you want to do this thing and that thing? What is the final thing? If everything goes, what remains? To achieve that is the purpose. Just imagine—you were just now mentioning about imagination, so have imagination. Just imagine everything is going, nothing is there. All ground under the foot is shaking. At that time, what do you want? Then the mind will concentrate. Go slowly. Don’t be in a hurry.

Visitor: Ok.

THE BENEFITS OF HINDUISM

A visitor: I am a retired journalist here to learn about Hinduism, and I am particularly interested in how Hinduism benefits your society more than, say, Christianity or Islam would benefit their societies.

Swamiji: You repeat that sentence once again.

Visitor: I'm interested in what ways Hinduism makes your society better, and in what ways it falls a little short in affecting the whole society as compared to Islam, Christianity or others.

Swamiji: We do not consider any religion as defective. They are all various degrees of the perception of Truth. Every religion has some good point. You cannot say that one religion is superior and the other is inferior. We do not say that. There are levels of approach in the perception of Reality, and every level should be respected. Just as every stage in the development of the human personality is an important stage, right from babyhood, adolescence, adulthood, maturity, and the state of genius, all these are developmental processes of a human personality, and each stage is important. Babyhood is as important as the developed condition of a genius. In a similar manner, the perception of Truth, which is what we call religion, is valid from different angles of vision, from different levels of reality, and in different degrees.

This is an ashram founded by a great saint, called His Holiness Swami Sivananda. He had a universal gamut of perception. He did not stand for Hinduism or any particular religion. He stood for humanity in search of God, and in this context you may consider him as a leader of the people throughout the world and a friend of all religions, and highly sympathetic with every viewpoint in its own level.

You are asking me in what way Hinduism has made us better. I am mentioning to you briefly the concepts of Hinduism. The aim of all evolutionary process, the very purpose of human existence, is the attainment of ultimate perfection. The purpose of human existence, the aim of life of every individual, is the overcoming of the finitude of personality and moving towards the infinite perception of God.

This is the aim of every human being, whatever be the religious denomination one may be adhering oneself to. This is the wide vision of the founder of this institution, Swami Sivananda.

Coming to the point, Hinduism as it is to be understood, not as it is misunderstood, is a comprehensive approach in one's life. Our life has to be comprehensive, integral, total, and multifaceted. It should not be a fraction. The acquisition of material values, imbibing emotional values, and the attainment of eternal value, these are the three requirements of human nature. You require material facility, emotional integration, and spiritual perfection. These are the things that we are aiming at. The law which operates in this universe is the very same principle that integrates these three kinds of aspiration: material, aesthetic or emotional, and spiritual.

The spiritual is not to be considered as something segregated from ordinary life. It is the consummation and perfection of the otherwise-inadequate levels of our existence as human individuals. Everything that we do, every thought that we think, every manner in which we are living is good enough from its own point of view, but it is inadequate, and therefore, nobody feels completely happy. The development of these inadequate values into their pinnacle of complete realisation is what is called spiritual life or, rather, the planting of the element of God in the realisation of the values of life is spirituality.

So if you have understood the meaning of these few words that I have spoken, you would be able to find an answer to your question how Hinduism supports, maintains and enriches the life of people. But if you consider it as one religion among other religions, then it is not a correct understanding of Hinduism. I have already mentioned in the very beginning that it has the capacity to absorb within itself the value of every religion, every cult, every level of existence, and it is supposed to be a friend of all the values of life.

The word Hinduism is a misnomer, really speaking. That is not the real name of this perception in India. The word Hindu—please listen to me—the word Hindu does not appear in any of the Hindu scriptures. It is something that has been imported under historical circumstances. You know Indian history or world history? In the early period of Indian history, Persians came here. They saw a river

which they had to cross, which today is called Indus River. It is called Sindhu in Sanskrit, Sindhu River. The Persians do not pronounce the word S. They pronounce it as H. So Sindhu is pronounced as Hindu, and they considered all those people beyond the river as Hindus. So it is a word coined by them, not necessarily explicatory of the people of India. Then later on Greeks came, Alexander came, Alexander the Great. The Greeks pronounce S, H in a different way. They converted, according to their own linguistic parlance, the sound H into I. Hindu became Ind, so the word India came from that word. So it is a historical concomitance and, really speaking, this religion cannot be designated by any particular word. It is the religion of God, if you want to call it that—the religion of God.

So, coming to the point once again, when understood properly, Hinduism is a friend of all, and in that sense you have answered your question how it benefits people. But it can be distorted as one of the narrow-minded religions, and completely disconnected from other cults and faiths. Then it is a misuse and abuse of religion. Swami Sivananda, our great founder, does not want to misuse or abuse the word. It has to be understood in its proper context. This is a brief answer to your question.

Another visitor: I'm an educator and writer, and my question is: What is the difference between the personality of one individual and the stages of life for a profession? For example, if somebody has a predominantly contemplative personality, does that person have to go through the four stages?

Swamiji: It is not obligatory. If a person is well integrated in oneself, sufficiently perfect in the alignment of one's inner constitution, and is ready to concentrate the mind on God Almighty, then these things that I mentioned are not necessary. But when a person is not prepared for it, then as an educative and disciplinary method, these methods have to be followed.

YOGA AND RELIGIONS

A visitor: My question, Swamiji: Yoga started in Hinduism, and now, in India, how is it going with the other religions? Hinduism and other religions, how is it going? What is the relation with other religions?

Swamiji: Yes, it has got an impact on other religions also. Every religion has its impact, but different religions understand it in different ways. Yoga is not a religion. Religious people will understand it in a religious manner only. It is a system of discipline of human personality. A human being does not belong to any religion because even if no religion exists, a human being will exist. So we should assess the human individual in an impersonal manner with no association with any culture, religion, or any kind of background. But it is a very difficult thing to dissociate oneself from one's cultural background, language, community feeling, etc., without which the fruits of yoga will not be fully realised.

A student of yoga does not belong to any country. A student of yoga belongs to the whole universe. Otherwise, if there is a background of limitation of human personality in terms of language, religion and any kind of anthropological restrictions, it will act as an impediment in the practice of yoga. Yoga is concerned with the whole world, and the world does not consist of merely human beings. So, truly speaking, yoga is not just a human exercise. It is something more than human. It is a science of establishment of one's relationship with the world as a whole. It is ultimately an art of attunement with the world. Since the world is not just human in behaviour, the idea of limitations to human consciousness should be overcome, and we must expand our feeling of a larger unity with the world, which is impersonal in its nature.

Human beings are friends of some human beings and enemies of some other human beings, but the world is not a friend of anybody nor is it an enemy of anybody. So here is a difficulty in understanding the meaning of yoga. This difficulty should be appreciated seriously if one is honest in pursuing it to its in-depth implications. If these serious, rather super-individual and super-normal implications of

yoga are not appreciated, yoga will end in just physical exercise and breathing. It will lead to nothing afterwards.

Visitor: If yoga is not merely exercise, if it is being one with the Universal Being, I think here in the Ashram it is not only exercise, and with this philosophy they are doing sadhana?

Swamiji: Correct. You have understood.

Another visitor: As far as I know, pranayama is connected with the body and the mind. Would you please explain to me in detail how it is connected with the mind and body.

Swamiji: The prana cannot move unless the mind moves. The mind is like the sun, and the prana is like the rays of the sun, so unless the mind is controlled, the mere practice of pranayama will not benefit you. An example is like a clock. Inside there is a mechanism, and outside there are pointers. These pointers are the prana, and the mechanism is the mind. People try to control the mind by control of prana. It is something like this. If you touch with your finger the pointer of the clock, the mechanism stops working. In the same way, so long as the breath is held, the mind will not work. The moment you lift your hand from the needle of the clock, it will start working once again, so by merely pressing the pointer, you have not controlled the mechanism. But if instead of pressing your finger on the pointer you press the cogwheels inside, in the centre, then the pointers will stop automatically. That is the connection between the two.

Another visitor: When we are doing meditation all together—some people are all together—at that time the condition of the mind and the body is similar with all the people? The meditational experiences, whatever experiences we get during meditation, whatever we feel, is it similar for all the people meditating together?

Swamiji: No, it is not similar. It will become similar only in the last stage. During the earlier stages of practice, everyone's experience will differ from everyone else's. When people go to the capital of India, Delhi, after reaching Delhi they will see the same thing, have the same experience, but on the way they can reach Delhi from twenty directions. On the way they will see different things, though in the end they will see the same thing. So in the final stage they

will have the same experience, but in the beginning stages each will differ.

VEDANTIC MEDITATION

Swamiji [to an ashramite]: Imagine that there is a pure cloth; that is Brahman. A painter stiffens the cloth with starch; that is Ishvara. Then he draws outlines of the proposed painting; that is Hiranyagarbha. Then he fills it with colour; that is Virat. This Virat is a wonderful thing, and Hiranyagarbha, and Ishvara, stiffened, everything. And the background is cloth only. If that is not there, the whole thing will go away. So in order to make a layman understand what is actually Brahman, Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat, this analogy of a painted picture he has given. So at the back of every stage, the cloth is there. Without the cloth, nothing will be there. And this Virat includes the whole five elements: earth, water, fire, air, ether, and the forces inside, *tanmatras*, and all the material out of which our body and mind are made. So we can imagine who we are. In one second you will be stunned to realise who you are. This is one way of meditation. I'm not saying everybody should meditate only in this way. There are so many ways, even *bhakti* also. One of the methods is this Vedantic meditation, the highest type of meditation.

When we go from this world, we must go smiling that everything is fine. You should not repent: "What have I done? I have done nothing. It is all useless, suffering. Where I go, I don't know anything." Like that you should not think. If at all such ideas come, it is better to finish it now itself, and when you go, go with a clear mind because the law of this world will not operate in the next world, just as Indian law will not operate in America. When you go to America, American law will apply. The other world is a different thing, so unless you are friendly with that law also, you will not be accepted there. You will be kicked out. There are so many levels of reality through which you have to pass, so that we must know the law of every level of reality. We have to belong to the whole universe itself in one way. We have to become a citizen of the world, as people say. We have to become a citizen of the cosmos. Then instantaneously help will come. Unasked it can come.

Swamiji [to a visitor]: What exactly is the way in which you meditate? What method are you adopting?

Visitor: Basically the one that Ramana Maharshi gave out.

Swamiji: Oh, Ramana Maharshi. What is the method?

Visitor: Who am I.

Swamiji: Who are you? Tell me.

Visitor: I was hoping you would tell me.

Swamiji: No, but you have already understood something. According to your present perception, who would you be? Who are you? You said, "I am coming from Israel." That is one kind of I: "I have come from Israel."

Visitor: My body.

Swamiji: But Ramana Maharshi will not say, "I have come from Israel." What do you say? You speak to me in the language of Ramana Maharshi, and not in the language of an Israelite. So who are you, possibly?

Visitor: I don't think there is an intellectual answer to this question.

Swamiji: You give me any other answer, not intellectual.

Visitor: Okay, I will tell you what I read. *Aham brahmasmi*.

Swamiji: Ramana Maharshi does not say like that, to my knowledge. He does not say *aham brahmasmi* and all that. He has got some other method. He is telling you who you are. What is this I? Now somebody has come from Israel, isn't it? Is it true that somebody has come from Israel? Are you hesitating? Now who has come from Israel? Brahman?

Visitor: No, the body came from Israel.

Swamiji: So you are a body. Then who has come from Israel?

Visitor: I used the term 'I' because it is easy in conversation.

Swamiji: You may have some means of communicating, okay, but what do you feel in the heart of your heart? What do you feel? In your own conscience, what do you feel you are? Let the books say anything, let Ramana Maharshi say anything; in your own conscience what do you feel you are personally?

Visitor: I don't think I can put it into words what I am.

Swamiji: But something, some idea you have got.

Visitor: I am something which does not change.

Swamiji: Something which is not changing. Have you seen anything in the world which does not change?

Visitor: Not in this world, no.

Swamiji: Then something which is not in the world is that which does not change.

Visitor: Yes.

Swamiji: So you are not in this world.

Visitor: No.

Swamiji: So where are you? I am driving you into a corner slowly.

Visitor: I'm not anywhere, and I am everywhere.

Swamiji: I have extracted some good words from you, good words, but I had to take some time to do that by digging like that, little by little. These last words you uttered are a wonderful thing. These last words you uttered are really wonderful, and if you can go on thinking this continuously, you will really become wonderful, and grand, majestic. Oh, glorious! Then you will have no difficulties afterwards. These words that you have uttered should go into your mind very deep, and if possible, don't think in any other manner. Think only in this way. Don't go on thinking Israel and all that. You say this is another thing altogether.

Another visitor: I don't see there is a God, maybe within ourselves, maybe not. I don't know. I haven't found the answer yet.

Swamiji: Usually the popular concept of God is of an Eternal Being which has created this universe. The Creator of the universe is called God. So if you logically develop this thought from effect to cause, you will be able to appreciate the nature of God. What you call the world, the universe, which is supposed to be a creation of God, is so vast and incomprehensible in its extent and content, that logically, when you deduce facts, you would conclude that the Creator must be

a larger thing than the whole created universe. If the created object itself is so big and inscrutable, the Creator must be more inscrutable and larger in extent and more profound than the world is.

Can you conceive the universe in your mind? Forget God for the time being. Look at the skies and the stars and time-space, and the whole process of evolution going on in the universe biologically, organically, geologically, astronomically, whatever it is. Stupendous activity is going on in this large atmosphere called the universe, in which you are involved, so this whole universal activity is taking you also inside its process of activity. You are part and parcel of this whole universe. If that is the case, your idea that you are coming from some country may have to be modified. You are, for the time being, for practical purposes, perhaps coming from a country on this earth, but if you consider that you belong to the whole cosmic structure, the universe that has been created, you will find that you are a citizen of the whole universe, not of any country. You may not be even a human being—something more than that—because the universe is not made up of human beings only. It is an impersonal organisation where human species and other species are only insignificant specks, as it were.

So by this analysis you would be able to appreciate your own dignity of existence. You have got a great dignity. You are not a small person. You are not just somebody or nobody among many other people. It is not like that. You have the support of the whole universe. When I mentioned you are a citizen of the universe, the government of the universe will take care of you. Okay? This is the thing. If this is the case, God also will protect you because the universe is the body of God.

This is only preliminary words I am speaking to you in order to introduce you into the ultimate spiritual concept of the practice of meditation. There are various techniques of meditation—meditating on the breath, meditating on some part of the body, on the middle of the eyebrows, on the heart, on anywhere. All kinds of techniques are there, but the highest thing is this kind of contemplation that I am introducing to your mind. This is the highest kind of spiritual meditation. If this has entered into your mind and you are appreciating it, you will feel a kind of elation in your own personality that you are

in a friendly world with forces around which are going to cooperate with you, and you are a friend of God Himself. This idea will come to you. You will feel comforted, you will never make complaints, and you will feel one day or other the kingdom of God will open its gates for you. With these prayerful moods you carry on your prayers and meditations. This is, briefly, something I am telling you.

MANAGING THE MIND

A visitor: I don't know my mind enough as to know how to manage it properly.

Swamiji: Why do you want to manage the mind? You manage the whole world. [Laughter] That is better than this. The mind is a little puny nothing. Why are you worrying about that?

Mind is an epistemological medium. It is an instrument. It is not a reality by itself. It is an individualised projection in the context of space and time of the universal light inside, which is the supreme Absolute, you call it Atman, peeping through the sense organs in the direction of objects outside. This is the mind. It is a conduit pipe, as it were. If you connect the end of a pipe to the ocean, though the ocean has so much of water, through the pipe only so much will pass as is the opening in the tube or the pipe. So though there is a reservoir of light and consciousness inside in the Atman, only that much of it will be allowed to pass through the mind as the comprehending capacity of the mental structure.

The function of the mind is to project this limited conduit pipe-like consciousness towards the objects outside, through the sense organs. So there is no great value in knowing this process of the mind. It is an agent of the intellect, which judges the value of things according to its appreciation of the nature of objects outside.

The mind is concerned with only indeterminate perception, and the intellect is determinate perception. Suppose you are walking on the road in twilight. You see something standing. The mind says there is something in front of you. It may be an electrical pole or a human being, or it may be a stump of a tree; it may be anything. The mind has indeterminately conceived the presence of something as existing, but when you go near you will find it is a tree only. This is the judgment of the intellect. It is called determinate perception. And then, having perceived something, you keep the memory of it in the subconscious.

If you see a thing through this process that I have described, an impression is formed in the mind which it carries with it, provided that the object that has been perceived has some value for you. If

it is a valueless thing, you will not remember it at all. If it is an electrical pole, it has no meaning for you. Let it be there or let it not be there. But if it is a mango tree full of fruits, or something else which delights you, you will keep a memory of it. So indeterminate perception through the mind leads to determinate perception by judgment of the intellect, which, finally, congeals into a memory of that experience in the subconscious. So we may say the mind has several levels: the conscious level, the subconscious level, and even an unconscious level where the deep-seated memories lodge themselves for a long time when they have no opportunity to come out in actual experience.

This is briefly the analysis of the mental structure. Are you satisfied? Then what else you want to know? But this is not of any use to you. This kind of analysis is not going to benefit you. It is only a scientist's curiosity. If I say this cloth is made up of so many threads, the threads are made up of little fibres, fibres are made up of still finer things, how are you benefiting by hearing all this? This is the analysis of the cloth, and similarly I have made an analysis of the mind. The purpose of the question that you are raising evidently is to know why the mind is functioning like that. What is the purpose? That is a metaphysical question. It is more than psychology.

Another visitor: There is a conflict between traditional people and secular people taking place all the time.

Swamiji: What is the conflict?

Visitor: The conflict is that people want to impose their own views upon other people, the religious views they believe are right and given from God, and other people believe they have the right not to believe in certain things; and this gives rise to conflict.

Swamiji: So it is a religious conflict, religious?

Visitor: Theoretically it is religious. I think it is just an ego trip, most of it.

Swamiji: So theoretically it is religious. What is the actual reason?

Visitor: I think people have a tendency to try to make other people like themselves, believing that their way is always right, and other people think the same thing, which automatically gives rise to

conflict.

Swamiji: So you mean religion is not a good thing.

Visitor: I think the essence of religion is good. I think religion as it is applied today is not very good.

Swamiji: So why not go to the religion in its essence? Why do you want the outer form of it?

Visitor: I personally don't, Swamiji. I don't follow the outer form.

Swamiji: Because the form attracts, the essence repels, so nobody goes for the essence. Form always attracts. We always go for appearances, and not for the essences. Everybody in public appears to be an important person. Nobody in public will present himself or herself as an unimportant person: "I'm an important person." But when you are alone in your house, you look like a very small, unimportant person. You never feel that you are a big man in your house. What do you say? When you are in your kitchen, in your bathroom, and when you are sleeping, where is your importance? You go to sleep like an animal sleeping. All the importance vanishes when you go to sleep. In your bathroom, what is your importance?

So the essence is that no one is important. When everything is taken away, they look funny and like a nobody, but in public they put on an air of importance. Everybody commands respect from other people, but who is going to respect you when you are in the bathroom, when you are your real self? That is your real nature. When nobody sees you, when you are literally alone to yourself, you look like a nobody with no importance. But when others are there you say, "I am an important man." So is the case with religion also. When you make it a public affair, and a question of performance and doing, there are conflicts. But the essence of it is simple.

Religion is a very simple thing, and very easy to understand, but people want to complicate everything, and then unnecessary conflict arises.

THE MIND

A visitor: I want to know what is the test to know that you are genuinely seeking God and not...

Swamiji: What is the test that it is daytime now and not midnight?

Visitor: That you can see the sun.

Swamiji: Then you can see this also. The daytime does not exist because you are seeing the sun. Even if you don't see it, it is daytime only. Just because you close your eyes and don't see the sun, does it become night? It is day only. Your conscience will tell what it is. Your conscience is your teacher. Your deepest heart of hearts will tell what is the position. There is no need of reading books, and all that. There is what is called the inner voice. It tells you the truth. You may hear anything from anybody, but that is not sufficient. Finally, you have to go to your inner voice: What does my heart say? That is the correct answer. Am I on the correct path, or am I treading a foolish way? Your heart will tell that.

Visitor: The reason why doubt comes is sometimes the mind is confused. The mind enters in and makes all these arguments.

Swamiji: The mind is not wanting... There is no mind. You are the mind. Where is the mind? Is the mind sitting inside like a small ball? You yourself are the mind. Somebody is speaking to me; the mind is speaking to me now. There is no you, and all that. The mind—the whole thing that I am seeing is the mind only. It is a big shape of mind that is sitting here. It is the mind that is talking. Why do you say 'my mind'? There is no such thing as 'my mind'. It is the mind only talking.

Visitor: Sometimes the consciousness of God is there, and sometimes the consciousness of something that feels separate from God is there, so when that alienation is there, then I think what caused my mistake.

Swamiji: Go on chanting the name of God continuously. Then the alienation will not take place. Go on repeating the name of God the whole day, either mentally or verbally, as the case may be. Then

there is no alienation. You should not sit and wool-gather. Then it won't come. Repeat the word again and again, again and again, again and again, again and again. Din that name into your ears, and then it will prevent all alienation.

There is no such thing called 'mind'. You yourself are the mind. The whole personality is only a hardened, concretised form of mind. You should not think, "I am here and the mind is somewhere else." This is a poor village boy's answer: my mind. If the mind is somewhere and you are somewhere, what is the connection between the two?

Visitor: It seems that there's different layers to who I am, and the mind is one of them.

Swamiji: They are different layers of you only, not different layers of mind. You yourself are the mind. The whole thing that I'm seeing in front is the mind taking the shape. And there may be layers of it; it is okay.

Visitor: So, layers of mind.

Swamiji: Layers of you. Again you are making a mistake. Who is speaking to me just now? You are speaking or the mind is speaking?

Visitor: I am speaking.

Swamiji: Where is the mind then? Again I am telling you, you are making a mistake. The mind is not sitting outside you, nor is it inside you. You yourself are the mind. That you cannot understand it is the tragedy of the whole thing. There is no use of arguing all these things. You chant the name of God.

Another visitor: My question is, I'm in Rishikesh just for a very short time, a week, and then I have to go home to the West. So many people come to Rishikesh from the West and they spend much time here, or a little time. I'd like to know in your opinion what I'm supposed to take with me from Rishikesh back home, because this is not my home. I can't stay here.

Swamiji: What do you want to take from Rishikesh? Rishikesh is the place where there is abundant knowledge. There is nothing else in Rishikesh except knowledge and the holy vibrations of great

Masters who lived in this place many centuries back.

This is called Rishikesh. *Rishi* means 'sage, great Master'. Many *rishis* were living here. This particular locality is called Muni-ki-reti. *Muni* means saint, *ret* means sand. This is the place where the sands have been trodden by the great saints of yore, so it is a holy place. Any amount of irregularity of behaviour of people cannot counteract this holy atmosphere, just as even if you spit on the sun, the sun does not become impure. You abuse the sun, call it names, spit, what does it matter? The same glory of the sun will continue. So whatever be the irregularities, stupidities, foolishness of people, which you will also find here, it cannot contaminate the great divine vibrations that are here in this place. They will be eternally here. Even if you simply breathe the air, that is sufficient. It will benefit you. So that is one thing that you can carry from here.

The other is, there are people of knowledge in Rishikesh, and that knowledge you have to take: the knowledge of the fact that a thing called God exists. And since that thing which is called God is an all-pervading presence, it includes you also. So you are perpetually immersed in God. It is a great thing to hear all these things.

But though you are immersed in God, you do not seem to be in any way benefited by that immersion, in the same way as a spoon that is thrust into a pot of sweet porridge cannot taste the sweet porridge. Tasty dishes are there, very sweet. You thrust a spoon into it. The spoon does not know that it is inside that sweet dish. So that is the case with hard-boiled individual egos of people, who are perpetually immersed in that omnipresent Being, but because of that hardened, steel-like, spoon-like ego of the individual, this immersion doesn't help. People take bath in the Ganga so that they will attain salvation. Huge stones are already inside the Ganga. Will they attain salvation? Fish are swimming inside the Ganga. Will they attain salvation? They will not. So it is not enough if you simply immerse. It depends upon what you are immersing.

This knowledge you carry. I told you only a few words: the sanctity and the vibrations of the holiness of this place, and the wisdom of God.

AFTER REACHING THAT

Swamiji: You cannot say that you will be everywhere and always and permanent and omnipotent. These words should not be used because they are all connected with space, time and objects. 'All-powerful' means you must have something over which you have to show power, so that definition is not all right. And eternal—that is, you are connecting it with time. Everywhere—you are connecting it with space. So everything created after the creation, in terms of that you are describing it. But Nachiketas' question was: "What happens when you reach That?" Mind-boggling. You cannot say you are everywhere, you cannot say you are always, nor can you say you are all-powerful. What is it? Afterwards, what is it?

An ashramite: Swamiji, sometimes it comes to me that from where God came? He is such a lucky person that from where actually He came?

Swamiji: This is all some... Great devotees sometimes make fun of God. When they praise God, sometimes they... *Ninda stuti* they call it. *Ninda stuti* means it appears as if they are condemning Him, but actually it is a praise. Some devotee says, "O God, people say You are all-knowing. I don't believe it. You are not all-knowing because You don't know who is your father. Then how can You say You are all-knowing?" So this is a kind of *ninda stuti*. You are praising Him, and yet it looks as if you are condemning Him: When you don't know your own father, how can you say you are all-knowing?

But this is a serious matter. It shows the human mind should cease in order that you may appreciate that. That is why Yama did not give an answer to Nachiketas' question. Nobody can answer it. "Even gods cannot answer this question," he said. *Devair atrāpi vicikitsitam purā, na hi suvijñeyam, aṇur eṣa dharmah:* "Impossible to answer this question. Even gods cannot answer it," he said. It requires a tremendous self-sacrifice from our side. Self-sacrifice means it is abolishing your existence itself. Unless this is attempted, you cannot have any hope.

Some little bit of attachment will be there for us. Finally, the attachment is to our own selves. Though we may not have attachment

to property, relation, etc., we will be attached to ourselves. That is the last property that we have got. We will not be prepared to give it up. "If everything goes, okay, let it go, but I must be there. If I am also going, then it is inconceivable." The greatest fear is the loss of one's own self. You don't have any fear of losing property. "If it goes, let it go. But if I go, no."

The greatest punishment is death. Taking away all the property of a person and making him poor may be a punishment, but people are not worried about that. Capital punishment is the worst. It abolishes the existence of the man himself. That is the worst thing because existence is the dearest thing, and you are abolishing the dearest thing. The dearest thing is not property. The dearest thing is yourself only. That you cannot give up, but that you must give up; otherwise, there is no hope. That's why the question cannot be answered. It is a serious situation, very serious. We cannot go on joking like that.

Another ashramite: Swamiji, the mind, it doesn't... When it goes to that, it is unable to think anything. It becomes blank.

Swamiji: It is not supposed to think at all. You have to *be*. You are not *thinking* God; you have to *be* God. Such a Visvarupa was shown by Bhagwan to Arjuna. He said, "I cannot bear it!" because in the presence of that he was like a moth looking at a flame. He could not tolerate it anymore. He said, "We don't want it. Sufficient. Come down!"

Ashramite: Visvarupa should go also.

Swamiji: You are not seeing Visvarupa; you are the Visvarupa. At that time, what will you think? The other day I was telling the *brahmacharis* it is all-seeing but not seen. Here is the Visvarupa picture. It is seeing, but it sees what? It sees itself only. Can you imagine that condition where you are only seeing but there is nothing to be seen? You may say we are seeing her, we are seeing him, but they are seeing also. They are also seeing, so why don't you say there is only seeing? The thing that you are considering as the seen is also seeing. So you must be a little more charitable. Instead of converting a thing into the seen, convert it into seeing. That which you are considering as the seen is also seeing, so there is only seeing; there is only self. And the total seeing is the universal Self.

Then all the attachment will stop. If there is something that is seen, then you can be attached, but if it is only seeing just as you are seeing, then there is no attachment. The question doesn't arise. There is no object there to be attached to because everything is as good as yourself. It is a masterstroke of detachment. This one little recipe is sufficient to cut off all attachment.

But there again is a little crucial point. When we say to cut off all attachment, there is a feeling that you are losing something. No, it is not like that. You are getting everything. All those who are seeing as you are seeing will be you. That which you want to possess is also seeing, so the thing that you want to possess is yourself only. So the question of possessing doesn't arise. This idea of possessing is a disease. It is a malady in the brain. Why do you want to possess? If you yourself are the thing which you are thinking of possessing, then how will you possess it? So desire is a malady; it is a disease which has to be cured by a proper technique of adjustment of thought.

Ordinarily it is not possible. When the thing that you want to possess itself is yourself, why you are possessing it? Are you possessing your own nose? What kind of desire is it? But there is a subtle voice which says you will lose everything. When you give up all attachment, you have lost that thing to which you are attached. That is not correct. It is not like that. You are getting it. The separation that you are maintaining between yourself and the object is the cause of your not getting it; but if you are identical with it, it will come to you. It is a very subtle matter.

Day and night you have to brood on this. If you cannot have time to think of your own welfare, then for whose sake have you got time? You should not say, "I have no time." All the other things that you are doing are part and parcel of this *sadhana*. Somebody asked me, "Is there any benefit in doing work?" Now, that question should not arise because that which you consider as work is a part of your *sadhana* only. *Sadhana* is a universal comprehension. It is not only sitting in a room and doing some *japam*. It is a universal pervasion of thought; that is *sadhana*. In that, the work also goes inside. All the waves are already in the ocean, so the ocean cannot ask a question whether the waves are good or not. "Can I have waves, or should I not have waves?" Like that if you ask me, what can I say? It is itself.

The waves are the ocean only. So the question whether what you do is *sadhana* or not has no meaning. It is a part of your Universal Being.

It requires great sincerity, honesty to one's own self, and you must actually weep and cry for that. Great mystics used to cry, cry. They cannot control themselves. Even the least separation from That, they cannot bear. When, when, when, how, how, how, when, when? It is a very serious matter because it concerns us directly. What can be more serious than our own welfare? 'Our' means not the individual I. It is the Universal I's welfare, which includes everybody's welfare also. Very subtle concept. We think 'I' means this Mister so-and-so. No, it is not like that. It is not Mister so-and-so that is the I. It is the whole thing, because everybody is an I only.

MATTER AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Swamiji [to a visitor]: What are you supposed to do in this world? You answer this question.

Visitor: Duty is in so many things: duty to God, duty to the world...

Swamiji: You should not say like that. You must speak like an engineer or an architect. You will touch every aspect of the structure. You ask the architect: “What are you supposed to do for building a house?” “Dig the foundation and raise the wall and put a *chhat*.” Like that if you tell, it is not all right. There are so many technical matters.

It is very difficult to answer this question. First of all, you tell me what you are made of. What is the substance out of which you are made? You cannot answer this question.

Visitor: Everything is involved in matter—life, everything.

Swamiji: Are you made of matter? Who was talking to me now? Is it matter talking, or Ajit talking?

Visitor: But starting point...

Swamiji: Who is talking just now? Matter has no brain; it has no consciousness.

Visitor: But matter is the starting point.

Swamiji: No, who was speaking to me just now?

Visitor: Developed matter.

Swamiji: Developed matter? No. You are a materialist. Matter cannot be developed into consciousness. If you boil sand, it doesn't become milk. Any amount of boiling of sand is sand only. Do you think milk will come out of sand by boiling it? Matter cannot exude consciousness. It is a foolish idea of the materialists. That which is not in the cause cannot be found in the effect. The cause is dead matter, and the effect is consciousness, you are saying. How is it possible?

So you are not matter. Matter cannot speak. It has no tongue, it has no intelligence, it has no brain. It is like a stone. A stone cannot

Speak. That is an example of matter. So you require much training. You require further training.

Visitor: The world at the beginning...

Swamiji: I am not worried about the world. You find out yourself.

Visitor: I am trying to explain my point. The world—at a point of time it begins. Provided we agree with the hypothesis, we need to begin at a point of time.

Swamiji: Why do you want to agree to it?

Visitor: If you say eternity, there is no end to it, of course.

Swamiji: No, why are you worried about the world now? I'm talking about yourself.

Visitor: I was trying to substantiate that when it started, first matter, then only...

Swamiji: It never started, really speaking. That is also a wrong thinking. It never started because to start, time is necessary. Without the time process, there is no starting. But time is a part of the created universe, so creation cannot start in time because the cause will have to enter the effect so that it may create. So the whole theory of creation is false. It cannot be accepted at all. Without time, creation is not possible, but time is a part of the created effect, so there is a contradiction in the very doctrine itself. Without time, creation is not possible. The entry of time is called creation. But the time, which is necessary for creation, is a part of creation itself, so who created the world? Whoever has created the world should be outside of time. Can you imagine such a thing? If He is inside time, He cannot create because He Himself is involved in the process of the created object.

Visitor: He is above time.

Swamiji: Then, in that case, His connection to time also you must explain. The other problem comes: What is the connection between that Person who is outside of time, and time itself? They are two contradictories. There is a gap between time and the Person who is not in time. How will you connect destruction with construction? They cannot go together. Time is a process of destruction, and that

which is above time is beyond destruction. The connection between God and the world is a mystery because it is a connection between eternity and time. It is a connection between health and disease, in some way. What is the connection between health and disease? They are working in the same person.

Great subject, great subject. You have to become a disciple of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Are you agreeable? Don't be afraid. Swami Sivananda will not harm anybody.

Visitor: They only help the world, and everybody in it.

Swamiji: There was a yogi called Milarepa, in Tibet—a very great yogi. He went for initiation with some Master. This Milarepa was a sorcerer previously, black magic. He has learned black magic. He will do something and destroy anybody. He was a little child His father died early and his uncle usurped all the land, so they were living in utter poverty. This boy was playing outside. Children play. Poor people's children or rich people's children, it doesn't make any difference. They all play equally. He was going and jumping, and his mother slapped him. "We are in a wretched condition. Your uncle has taken away all your father's property. In that condition you are laughing and jumping." she said. "This is not the occasion for laughing and jumping like that. You retaliate, and finish him. Give the uncle a lesson." She pushed him to learn black magic. He went to a Guru. He learnt it. Then he went like this [Swamiji gestures] and a hailstorm fell on the uncle's land, and everything was destroyed, crushed, and all died. Afterwards he repented that he had killed everybody, so he went to a great Master, a spiritual hero, who said, "You have killed so many people. Go!" Anyway, it is a long story.

Milarepa went to another person, the nephew of this great Guru, for initiation with him. The Guru said, "What do you do?"

"I know nothing, only black magic. I killed everybody," Milarepa said.

"Killed everybody? I see. I've got some enemies. You kill them also," he said.

"No, I have come to expiate and not to do any further..."

"No, you do it. You see, so many birds are there. They are chirping and flying. Destroy them. Let me see your strength," said the Guru.

Milarepa did like this, and all the parrots and peacocks and sparrows fell dead completely. “Oh, I am sorry. I am doing another mistake.” Then that Guru did like this [Swamiji gestures] and all the birds got up and flew away.

“You are not understanding properly,” the Guru said. “There is a remedy for everything. Nobody can kill anybody, because they are alive even if they are dead. I showed you like that,” he said. Though Milarepa had killed them with black magic, that person was more powerful. He simply did like this [Swamiji gestures] and all of them got up and flew. The dead got up. Now, who is doing the right thing, and who is doing the wrong thing?

Vyasa sipped three times the Ganga water and brought all the dead people. Each one started rising up from the Ganga—Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Duryodhana, all people. And the whole night they were talking to these people. Gandhari said, “I am sorry. I want to see my children who died.” And he said, “Yes, I will bring them.” And in the Ganga he dipped, sipped three times the water and everybody descended from heaven or wherever they were, and they were talking together and having dinner in the night. What do you say for that? And the next morning they went to the Ganga and vanished from that place. What do you call this power of Vyasa? The people who were killed in war, they all came, and in the evening they were having dinner with them. What is this? Whether they were really dead or really alive, what is it? What do you say about them?

Spiritual sadhana is very difficult. We can pat ourselves like this, “We have done so many *yatras*. To Rameswaram we have gone, taken bath so many times, we are doing *japam* and all that.” But nothing will work there finally. That is a very serious...

Every thought of ours is a mistake, we will realise afterwards. Every thought that you think is a mistake. It is not in the right direction because every thought is one-sided. It excludes the other side. A comprehensive thought is not possible. When you think something, you have excluded something else. That is the mistake. So you cannot think anything at all unless you think all things at the same time, which is very difficult. Even if you try to think all things at the same time, you will exclude space and time outside. That also you must merge into. Who can do all this work? Such kind of yoga,

who will practise?

Nobody thinks like this. They think all is well. One day the prana will go away. At that time, then you realise whether all is well or not. Good people, bad people, old people, young people, healthy people, sick people—all die. At any time they can go, also; that is another thing. At any time. For any simple reason you will choke and go, so what is the good of saying that all is well? Nobody should say like that.

In one of the Upanishads it is said that it is a very dangerous situation. You must bite your teeth like this [Swamiji clenches his teeth]: “I decide to meditate properly.” It says bite your teeth hard, and clench your fists, and decide: “I shall never make a mistake from now onwards. My heart is sunk in that Truth: All-inclusive Being, pure.” I am not making a joke. It is mentioned in one of the Upanishads. We must be very firm on our own selves.

TOTAL ACTION

Swamiji: Who is allowing us to exist at all? The whole universe is working through us to make us breathe. It is total action taking place. “I have done everything,” he [Sri Krishna] says. The whole universe is breathing through your nose. Unless the entire universe acts, you cannot even breathe. You cannot even lift a finger. All action is total action. There is no ‘my action’ and ‘your action’, and all that. Even if a million processes are taking place inside the body, it is the body’s total action taking place. We are breathing, the heart is working, the brain is thinking, the hand is bringing food, and the stomach is digesting food. Everything is going on, but it is one action taking place—one organic, total action taking place. It is not that the stomach is doing some work digesting, and the nose is breathing, the heart is pumping. It is not like that. They look like different actions, but one action is taking place—a total.

[A few minutes later] A union is established simultaneously in meditation. We are not going so far as that, but at least you should not come in conflict with nature. We are always thinking of conquering nature nowadays. Nature is not to be conquered. Nature is not an enemy. You are a part of nature. You are in the world, so how will you conquer the world? The idea of conquering the world is also not a correct perspective. You cannot conquer anything. You have to be harmonious with things. You are participating in the nature of truth, and not grabbing, conquering, possessing, and all that. The whole perspective of life has to change in yoga. The thinking process itself changes. You don’t possess anything, but you participate in things. If I am fully in harmony with your existence, you are my friend. I need not possess you; I need not convert you into my servant. That idea itself should go away. We are friends. Not only friends, we are moving parallelly. As I think, you think. As you think, I think. My perspective is your perspective, as if we are one person in two bodies. Like that, if you adopt this technique with everything else, it is one soul abiding in all the forms. That soul which abides in all the forms is God. This has to be achieved gradually, stage by stage, stage by stage.

First of all, you must be healthy in your mind and makeup. There

should be no complaint or harassment of the emotions inside. The mind should be happy; then a happy mind can become happy with other people also. Then you can be happy with nature, with flowers, sunrise, sunset, rain. Everything is beautiful. Nothing is wrong in nature. You must be friendly with everything. It is beautiful. The day is beautiful, sunrise is beautiful, moonrise is beautiful, the breeze is beautiful, Himalayas are beautiful, Ganga is beautiful. Everything is beautiful in God's creation.

Then finally, the mind should remember the whole universe is created by One Being. With that you must be in harmony. Then everything will be set right. The Supreme Being is God, the final commander, and if your mind is in tune with His thought, there is no problem afterwards. You have to be in tune with everything: with yourself, with society, with nature, with God. This is a fourfold harmony that we have to establish, which is the aim of yoga.

It is not chanting mantra and going to chapel, mosque, and all that. It is not a religion at all. It is the pure science or art of adjustment with the total reality. It is a perfect science. It is not Hindu, it is not Christian, it is not Buddhist. It is simply for every human being. It is meant for human beings, not Hindus and Buddhists and so on. We must be human beings first, not anything else. If everything goes away, we will remain as human beings. One is a president, another is a prime minister, a third is an army general, and so on. One is a boss, another is a servant. These are all unnecessary complications we are creating by designating people in this manner. Finally, when everything goes, he is a human being. The boss is a human being, the servant is a human being. As human beings, they are identical. They eat the same food, they have got the same hunger and thirst, same fatigue, same emotions, same requirements. The boss is not eating gold and the servant is eating rice. They are eating the same food.

Psychological, social and statistical differences make people look different. Finally, when everything goes, everybody is just a human being, as when you were born as a child. When you are born, you are a little baby. You don't know whether it is a king's child or a beggar's child. And when a person goes, the king goes and the beggar goes in the same way. When the king goes, he doesn't go

with a palanquin. He will go to the dust in the same way as a beggar goes. So in the beginning you are nobody; in the end also you are nobody. In the middle people simply pat themselves on the back. It is a balloon only. The importance in the middle is a balloon, which has nothing inside.

Actually, your real status is that which you brought with you when you were born, and your real status is that which you will take with you when you go. And if you have no status at all either side, then there is no status for any person. It is only an imagination. Nature is final, God is final, and with them you must be in harmony.

You must be humble first. We must be good people. We should not treat others as dirt. That is not proper. There is no dirt. Even an ant is not dirt. It is as important as you. It has got a brain, it has got eyes, it has got hunger, it has got feelings, and it lives more systematically, like an army. Ants have got an army of their own. Very systematically they will be moving. When rain comes, they will all move together in a line. Birds have got their own army. They work beautifully. They have got a congregation of their own. Even monkeys have congregation. Cattle go together. Only human beings cannot go together. They quarrel because of their egoism. These natural species don't have egoism. Man is full of ego, *ahankara*, so he clashes with another.

Man is afraid of man only. He is not afraid of lions and tigers. There is fear in the heart of every person, but fear from whom? Fear from his own brother. We have guns and machine guns and airplanes and firearms and all that. Is it to protect yourself from enemies like lions and tigers? Are you afraid of lions and tigers? Nobody thinks of them. But you are afraid of human beings: "My brother will attack me, so I keep a gun with me." See the mentality of human beings! One person cannot have any confidence in another person, though we may have confidence even in a dog. The dog will follow you, but man will not follow.

So you become a human being first. Each one should realise one's own stature. When everything goes from your hand, what are you? That is your real nature. You have lost every property, every belonging, every kind of connection; still you are existing. At that time, how are you existing? That is your real nature. If you feel, "I

am still a great man in spite of all things going away from me,” then you are really great, like an elephant. An elephant does not require any kind of vote from people: “You are a very powerful elephant.” But a human being requires a vote in order that he may become powerful. With the vote comes doubt. The elephant becomes a dog afterwards.

This is a very serious matter. We are suffering from *ahankara*, egoism, selfishness and corruption, which is not to be seen in animals. Animals don't have corruption. They do not possess property. They don't grab someone's belonging. Why is it? How is it that animals are better than us in certain types of conduct and behaviour? A lion will not attack a lion, but a man will attack a man. Now, who is better? You tell me. See the situation.

So if you train yourself properly inwardly and outwardly and transcendently also, then yoga comes automatically. Yoga is your mother and father, which keeps you in tune with the ultimate realities of everybody. You become a friend of all. Thank you very much. God bless you.

PARALLEL SEEING

Swamiji: This example is of people who are prisoners tied by a chain so that they may see only the shadows cast on the walls of the prison by people walking outside in sunlight, but they cannot see who is actually walking. All the forms and the actions of this world are shadows cast by certain events taking place in the original archetypes, as they call it. But we are also included in that shadow play. Yourself, myself, everybody, everything is a shadow cast by something which is taking place elsewhere.

The solution is a simple thing: Everyone is seeing. I am seeing, you are seeing, everybody is seeing. Every atom has got eyes. Every sand particle can see. Walls have ears, people say. Walls have eyes also. Every leaf in the tree can see you. They are not dead things. You are seeing the mountain, but the mountain can see you. It is mentioned that everywhere are His eyes. *Sahasraśīrṣā puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ* says the Puruṣa Sukta: millions of eyes. 'Millions of eyes' means 'endless eyes', which means to say, every eye is His eye only. There is only seeing. See the picture of Viratsvarūpa. Everybody's head is there inside it. Everybody's eye also is there, everybody's hand, everybody's feet. Now He is seeing. What is He seeing? He cannot see anything because He is just the seer only. God is a seer without an object that is seen.

If you can apply your willpower for a while and concentrate your mind on the fact that what you are seeing is seeing you, then you don't love yourself. You don't want to possess yourself. You want to possess that which is seen by you, but you don't want to possess that which sees. That is called an object which is seen, but not that which sees.

You cannot consider any person in the world as an object of your satisfaction. They are as important as anybody else. The world is the kingdom of ends only, not of means. Nothing in the world is a means to an end. Everything is an end in itself. Even a dog cannot be treated as dirt. It has to be treated as a living being; then only it is satisfied. You cannot touch anything by considering it as an outside object. It repels you immediately, and turns away. Anything that you consider as outside your consciousness will run away from you. It

will never be caught by you afterwards.

So you adjust your mind in such a way: The whole universe is I; only it sees. Then you will have no attachment to anything, because that which you are attached to is also a seeing consciousness. Everybody is parallelly seeing, like this. The other day I gave the example of railway tracks. Two rails are moving parallelly. If you can imagine that the rail has consciousness, one rail will not consider the other rail as an object of itself. It is like two bullocks walking with a bullock cart. One bullock is not an object of another bullock. They are parallel movements. Likewise, everything in the world is a parallel movement towards its own universality. There is only universal perception, universal seeing, universal being, universal consciousness. There is no object anywhere.

Creation is a misconception of consciousness, but not a real, existent thing. Creation does not exist. It is only a wrong perception of God Himself. An example is like a snake and a rope. The wrong perception of the rope is called a snake. The rope has not created the snake by any effort. The scriptures say that God thought one day, "Let me create the world." It is like saying the rope one day thought, "Let me become a snake." The rope never becomes a snake. It cannot think like that. It is a perceptual defect that makes the rope look like a snake.

Ashramite: Who sees that, Swamiji? Who is the seer of that?

Swamiji: The seer is... Who is seeing the rope? It is like the rope seeing itself. If the rope has eyes, it will consider itself as a snake. It is a possibility. Here the rope itself is looking at it as a snake.

Ashramite: But a third person is there to perceive...

Swamiji: There is no third person there, because the snake is identical with the rope. The seer and the object are identical. Everything that you are considering as an object is a subject. Everything is as important as anything else. Nothing is your possession, or object. If something is an object, why don't you be considered as an object? If you consider me as something to be possessed, I can consider you as something to be possessed, so there will be a clash of objectivity only. There is nothing to be possessed. You cannot possess anything.

Finally, it means there is only one seeing taking place.

Everything must be considered as parallel to you, and not in front of you. Nothing is in front of you. Everything is parallel to you. That means to say you are not seeing anybody. You are only seeing, pure consciousness. You are seeing, and also conscious that you are seeing, and your consciousness is existing. The existence of the consciousness which only knows itself, that is Viratsvarupa.

You cannot get attached to anything, because there are no objects. They are also seeing centres only. They are the eyes of God, they are the brain of God, they are the hands of God, they are the legs of God. *Sarvataḥ pāṇipādaṃ tat sarvatoḥśiromukham, sarvataḥ śrutimal loka sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati.* Read this *sloka* again and again from the Gita. Everywhere are legs, everywhere feet, everywhere hands, everywhere eyes, everywhere ears. Can you imagine such a thing? Where there are eyes, ears cannot be there, but in this case ears are eyes, eyes are ears, and they are legs also, they are brains also, they are fingers. Legs can think and the brain can walk. The ears can see. Anything can be done anywhere because it is one total action. There are no sense organs in God; it is consciousness operating in any form. It is the rolling of the waves on the ocean, wherein the ocean cannot consider the waves as its object. The ocean does not see the waves as its object. It is itself rolling. So the self-rolling of consciousness is pure seeing only, *sata matra*, existence only, which is seeing itself only.

Everybody is parallel to you. Remember this. Never think that he is in front of you. Even this table is not in front of me. It is parallel to me. It is my own limb extended like this, so I cannot get attached to it. Everything—mountains, stars, sun, moon, space, time, they are all parallel to me so that they are not only my friends, they are inseparable limbs of my cosmic existence. This is called Viratsvarupa.

There is nobody in front of you. This idea must be removed. Everything is parallel to you. You go together. You may call them brother, if you like, but it is much more than brother. It is inseparables. A brother can be separated, but here is an inseparable connection of one with the other. They are limbs. Everything is a limb of one being. There is only one action, one thought, one existence. Don't look at anything like this [outside]. It should not be done like that.

You look at yourself. If you feel like seeing something, remember that it is also part of the seeing process.

You are seeing this lady sitting there; she looks like an object. She is seeing you; you look like an object. But if you are parallelly seeing, you will not see her and she will not see you. And there is nobody to be seen afterwards because everybody is the process of seeing only. This is Virat-darshan.

So a simple trick you have to play. Everything is parallel to you, and nothing is in front of you; and you cannot be attached to that which is equal to you, or parallel to you, or of the same nature as you. Attachment is to that which is not of the same nature as you, because if it is of the same nature as you, attachment cannot take place. There is an element of inferiority that you are imputing to that which you are trying to possess, and you are superior. That is a mistake. The object is not inferior. It is not an object at all. That is a mistake. You are simply unnecessarily exploiting something, which you should not do. You cannot exploit anybody in the world.

It is a difficult thing, but the simplest thing. Both things I have told.

MEDITATE ON I AM

Swamiji: 'I am'—on that you meditate.

An ashramite: Swamiji, why are they saying 'I am that I am'? 'I am' is not sufficient?

Swamiji: No, there is no necessity for 'that I am'. It is unnecessary. It is an unnecessary muddling. 'I am' only. Know that I am.

Another ashramite: So then when it is said 'I am', 'I' means 'consciousness'.

Swamiji: If you are consciousness, then 'I am' means that consciousness is saying 'I am consciousness'. But where is the consciousness sitting? Where is it located? There will be a usual erroneous habit of concluding that consciousness is inside the body. That is an erroneous notion. Consciousness is not inside the body. It is an all-pervading, soul existence. So when somebody says 'I am consciousness', you must be very careful as to who is making the statement. The whole universal total is making the statement 'I am, I am'. It is a stupid idea that we are some persons, but so much we are habituated to identify our consciousness and I with this body only, born of some father and mother, that this idiotic idea never leaves a person. It requires tremendous effort on the part of the will of the meditator to assert that this 'I am' is not this person asserting 'I am'. It is the Pure Universal Existence exerting itself as 'I am'.

Ashramite: But this Pure Universal Consciousness, does it have the need to assert itself that it is?

Swamiji: It is not asserting itself; it is knowing it is. You need not use the word 'asserting', it is aware that it is. God-consciousness is just consciousness of God knowing that He is God. This kind of thinking is impossible for the stupid mind which is attached to the body. The consciousness that is apparently hidden and restricted by this body should be made to feel this location and spread itself out throughout space, and even beyond space. This is the whole secret of the sutra of Patanjali, *bahirakalpitaḥ vṛtitiḥ* (Y.S. 3.44): Transport yourself from this location to the highest possible location—beyond,

beyond, beyond, far away, up to the boundaries of creation.

Ashramite: Are we actually transporting ourselves, or are we just knowing that we are already there?

Swamiji: It is the same thing. It makes no difference. Knowing that you are already there is actually a transporting of your being to that place by intense effort. It requires special willpower. It cannot be done easily like that. Nobody can feel that oneself is somewhere else. I am sitting here on the cot, and how will I feel that I am in the top of the sky? How will anybody feel like that? But it is necessary to feel that. Beyond the boundary of space I am sitting now. Can anybody feel like that? And I am seeing this body here, but I am actually somewhere beyond the boundary of space. Space is so large, and I am beyond that. From there I am looking back and seeing this body sitting here and meditating. Go on thinking like this: "I am not here. I am beyond space. Space is so large, incalculably wide, incomprehensibly distant, and that place is my location. I am sitting there. Millions and millions and millions of kilometres, I am far away. Endless. I have gone beyond the location of the sun also. I am looking down from there. The sun is down below. I have gone beyond the sun also. The sun is an object I am looking at from there. And this body also I am looking at. Where am I just now? I am everywhere, spreading myself. I am finding myself everywhere, in every corner of the circumference of space. Everywhere I am sitting. From there I am looking at this place, this Sivananda Ashram, this Divine Life Society, this office, this table, this chair, and all that."

So where are you now? You are not in Sivananda Ashram. You are beyond the sun, beyond the space. From there you look back. This is the sutra of Patanjali, *bahirakalpita vṛittih*: Transport your consciousness to a location which is far, far beyond your apparent physical location. This will enable you to detach yourself from this body, and you will not be attached to anything afterwards because from that location which is far beyond space, you will be looking at the whole universe, and you cannot be attached to anything afterwards.

Another ashramite: But Swamiji, in this process there are also things of subjectivity and objectivity.

Swamiji: There is no subject-object there because you are everywhere, so which is the object? You are in the object also, so why do you call it an object?

Ashramite: Because you are looking at something.

Swamiji: Why are you looking? This thing is a dead body that you are seeing, actually. The real thing is somewhere else. This is like a shadow. The sun is looking at its own shadow, as it were. This is the first step. The second point is called *sakshi*. You are looking at your own self. Then after that, there is something more. It is not simply looking. That thing which you are looking at is also yourself only. So the object has become the subject immediately. It is God beholding Himself.

Another ashramite: Swamiji, it will be done by way of thinking only, by the process of thinking that we are there?

Swamiji: It is the thinking which is not ordinary thinking. By thinking, we generally mean a process of consciousness which knows that there is something outside it. That is thinking. But here is a thinking outside in which there is nothing.

Ashramite: It is an exercise of the mind.

Swamiji: Yes, but there is the cosmic mind operating. When the cosmic mind is operating, it has no object in front because the cosmic mind includes all the objects also. So it is a different stage of thinking. It is called *brahmakara vritti*, whereas in our ordinary process we call it *vishayakara vritti*. A *vritti* is a psychosis, a way of thinking. When the ordinary mind thinks, there is a *vishayakara vritti*, there is an object in front of it, whereas in the cosmic mind, it is *brahmakara vritti*. A total thing manifests itself. It is the consciousness of the totality of existence itself which is *brahmakara vritti*, but the consciousness of something outside is *vishayakara vritti*. That is the difference between the two kinds of *vrittis*.

Ashramite: Swamiji, then how to know or feel what is space, because we know that space and consciousness...

Swamiji: If you can feel nothing outside, you have reached the highest state. You should not feel that there is a space outside you.

You must absorb that space also inside you. You are the space also, so what will you see outside you? If there is no necessity to be conscious of anything external to you, you can consider yourself as the highest state: “Now even space is not there. Space also has come inside me.” Here is a very treacherous situation where a man can fall this side or that side. If you fall this side, you fall into the pit; if you fall that side, you are in heaven.

Ashramite: How to distinguish between this consciousness and space?

Swamiji: There should be no space. The space is yourself only. You are distinguishing between yourself and yourself. That is why I say it is a very treacherous thing. How to consider space also as yourself? Then you cannot say there is anything outside because the idea of outside arises due to the space. You have become the space also. The Upanishad says you are death itself. The fear of death also goes at that time. You yourself are death. Then are you afraid of yourself? Can anybody feel that you yourself are the process of dying? Somebody is not inflicting death on you. You yourself are death. You yourself are Yama only. If I am Yama, then who will come and eat me? That consciousness feels satisfied: “I have got all power now. No interference is possible. Even the transformation process is also myself only. Birth and death and transmigration, everything, are myself only. I am rolling myself within myself like the ocean rolling within itself.” Let the joy, sorrow, wanting, not wanting, the whole thing gets cancelled immediately. It is impossible to describe what it is unless you actually practise it. It is not a theoretical question.

This is something from our prejudices. Have you got any preconceived notion about anything? You make a judgment of something because already you have got an idea that it should be like this.

Ashramite: On that basis we make a judgment.

Swamiji: What are the things that you want, and what are the things that you don't want? These also are conditioning factors. Is there anything that you want? Is there anything that you don't want? You find out whether any such thing is there in the mind. Is there anything that you like very much and dislike totally? You compare

and contrast with this. We cannot know this unless we are placed in such a circumstance. When you are not having that experience at all... Only a poor man will know what hunger is. Every day you get a meal, and you cannot tell what is hunger. Every day you get breakfast, lunch, dinner, milk and fruit, so you cannot know what is hunger. Even if you try to describe it, you cannot describe it because you have not experienced it. Only a beggar sitting on the road will know what is hunger. Similarly, it requires direct experience. The facilities and comforts that God might have given do not necessarily mean that we are thinking of Him. We may be thinking of the facilities only, not Him.

For instance, we have got comfort and security provided by the good government that we are having. We don't have a fear that something will come and attack us. There is no such fear because the government is very good. That is the consequence of the good government. But we don't think of the man who is responsible for running a good government. We don't think of him. We are not concerned with that man at all. We can walk on the road freely, and nobody will attack us. That is the security the government gives. But in some countries you cannot walk on the road also. It is serious trouble. In other places, people won't come out of the room also. They just sit there. They cannot come out of the house. Here it is not like that. You can go anywhere, walk up to Haridwar and come, and nobody will worry you. That is the security you have got.

But who is causing the security? Nobody thinks of that. We are not worried about the cause of it. We are seeing only the effect, but not the cause. I am getting food every day, but who is giving the food? That is very important. From where do I get the food? How does it come to me? I simply sit here, and food comes. But how it comes? Somebody must be working for it. Who is that somebody who is taking so much concern over our daily meals, and all that? People may say, "I have got money, so I will get food whenever I want." But from where you got the money? You had some circumstances under which you could earn money, but how the circumstances came up? There is one thing behind the other; there are causes behind causes.

How many times the thought of God enters the mind? The facility is given; that is a secondary aspect. How many times

the thought of God enters, in the right manner? This is a kind of meditation. The thought of God is the same as meditation. But you must have some means of remembering Him in the midst of our daily activities, because the activities are also thrust on you by some *prarabdha* karma, or whatever it is. Anything that you have deliberately purchased and taken on your head, that is your karma. But that which has come upon you somehow willy-nilly, due to circumstances, that is also one kind of karma. And something that you are doing for somebody's sake, that also is a karma only. In the midst of these, how will you remember it?

In the newspaper yesterday, in the Times of India, on the top, I used to tell, "Don't look in front; see sideways." I was telling people. That sentence is there on the top. "See sideways." Don't see what is in front of you; see what is beside you. You should never consider anything as being in front of you, because then it becomes an object. If it is beside you, parallel to you, it is equal to you, so there is no attachment and hatred at that time. It is with you, in the same line. If it is in the front, it is an opposition. The whole world is the Viratsvarupa, as I mentioned to you again and again, where everything is parallel to this one body. This hand is not an object of the other hand. They are parallel actions. All the functions of the body inside are all parallel actions. Simultaneously they are taking place, as if it is one action. When you see like this, you are not seeing anybody. You are seeing yourself only, because all things are parallel to you. The sun is not being seen by us. The sun is seeing, and we are also seeing simultaneously with him. He is our colleague. The sun is a colleague, and not an object that we can look at. This is also my colleague, everything. See sideways, not to the front.

Nothing is an object in the world because that which you wrongly consider as an object is also seeing you as an object. So who is the object, actually speaking? The very idea of an object is a mistake. Everything is seeing only. Everything is seeing, and nothing is seen. You cannot have a separate section of things called 'seen', and a separate section called 'seeing'. It doesn't exist. Everything sees. Even an ant sees, even an atom sees, and even a sand particle sees. But for us they are objects. A right-about-turn of perception is necessary. Then things will flow like this. Now they are repelled.

The objects get repelled. But the subject is pulled inside towards yourself. Anything that you consider as different from you, as an object outside, will run away from you immediately. This is what Yajnavalkya mentions in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. *Sarvaṁ tam parādād yo'nyatrātmano sarvaṁ veda* (B.U. 2.4.6): If anything is an object, it will run away from you. Would you like anybody to consider yourself as an object? “This man is insulting me, as if I am an object.” Then you cannot do that to others also. When you say something is an object, you are making it a servant. It is inferior. You are giving it an inferior status. Who asked you to give that inferior status to anything? What right have you? That is the ego. But others also have the ego. They will also put you in the same position. So why not be friendly, equal, and not connect anybody as an object. Then the total subjectivity is God-consciousness. It is just here only, not somewhere far off. This is the whole story.