We have been traversing through the courses of different kinds of meditation beginning with the systems expounded in the Kathopanishad, the Bhagavadgita, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the Epics and Puranas, and so forth. Today we shall have an excursion into the Upanishadic method of meditation, which is the predominant note of all these Vedantic texts. Though we have already looked into the method expounded in the Kathopanishad last time, that cannot be regarded as an example of the Upanishadic technique because it was more akin to the Bhagavadgita and the Yoga Sutras than the main current of thought in the Upanishads, which distinguishes them from other approaches to Reality.

The Upanishadic approach to Truth is out-and-out philosophical and mystical. The Upanishads take a comprehensive view from three angles of vision: the external, the internal, and another feature which transcends them both. The Mandukya, the Taittiriya and the Aitareya Upanishads may be taken as examples of this type of approach, which also receives elaborate treatment and profound consideration in the Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads. The Upanishadic method is something not unknown to students of Vedanta, but yet the Upanishads have a peculiarity of their own which demands a very acute understanding and a thoroughgoing philosophical approach from the student. This is what is generally called the *jnana* method of approach, also known as the *jnana* yoga path, wherein meditation becomes identical with understanding. It is a gradual enlightenment taking place inside and settling upon Reality. Knowledge is the undercurrent of the thought of the Upanishads. That is why they are called scriptures on *jnana, tattva darshana*. They deal with Reality, the Supreme Being.

In the Aitareya Upanishad particularly, we have what may be called the objective approach to Truth, which means to say the Upanishad here considers the universe as created out of the Supreme Being in a manifold process. The description of the process of creation in the Upanishad is given to us not so much to enlighten us about the
actual process that might have taken place at the time of creation as to tell us how we stand in relation to it. The purpose of the Upanishad is to cause liberation of the soul, not to give a metaphysical system. All creation theories in the Upanishads have this purport before them, the liberation of the soul, and this can be achieved only by a proper appreciation and understanding of the relationship of the individual soul to the Supreme Soul.

The understanding that the individual has of its relation with the Supreme Being is its status. The individual generally regards itself as standing outside creation as a creature evolved in the process of creation, as something ignorant, impotent and miserable. The creation theory, the doctrine of the process of the evolution of the universe described in the Upanishads, gives us an idea as to whether we are in any way connected with Reality at all, or we stand outside it. That we stand outside it is out of the question because if that had been the case, liberation would be impossible. If the individual soul is absolutely outside the operation and the activity of the Supreme Being, there would be no connection between the two and the soul would ever be in bondage. It would be what is called the ‘eternal damnation theory’. According to certain religions, there are some souls who are eternally damned and will never attain salvation. That would be the most uncomfortable doctrine that we evolve out of a belief that the individual stands absolutely outside the existence and activity of the Supreme Being.

Now, is it so? Is it a fact, or is there something else, a deeper truth standing between the souls and God? The Aitareya Upanishad tells us that this is not the whole truth. The objective analysis given to us in this Upanishad in the process of creation, the description of the way in which the universe has evolved, tells us that everything has come from that One. Ātmā vā idam eka evāgra āsīt (Ait. 1.1.1): The Atman alone existed in the beginning. Nānyat kiṁ ca na miṣat: Nothing living existed at that time. The Supreme Atman, Paramatman, existed. That has somehow become this cosmos. This is what the Aitareya Upanishad tells us. It has become the objective cosmos and also the subjective jiva. It has become not only the objective universe, not only the individual jiva, but also the presiding deity standing midway between the objective and the subjective sides. This is what we generally call the adhibhautika, adhidaivika and adhyatmika faces of creation. All these three are supposed to be Ishvara Himself. The Atman itself has become all this.

The objective analysis given to us in the Aitareya Upanishad tells us that the individual seeking freedom and salvation has come out from the Supreme Being Itself and, therefore, its blessedness, its final destiny lies in the realisation of its original identity with the Supreme Being. The Atman is consciousness, the Brahman is consciousness. Prajñā pratiṣṭhā praṇānam brahma (Ait. 3.1.3) says the Upanishad. This prajnana is also the essence of the individual soul. By the saman adhikarana
method, or the *bhauda saman adhikarana*, as they call it, the recognition of a common substratum being there between two entities establishes the existence of a common factor between them. The objective side as the creative principle and the subjective side as the individual soul have a common substratum called consciousness, and in consciousness they are one. *Tat tvam asi, ayamatma brahma, prajnanam brahma.* These dicta of the Upanishad bring out the truth that the sides we call objective and subjective are not really bifurcated by a negation of the specific characters of objectivity and subjectivity – *bhauda*, as we call it. We get the *saman adhikarana*, or the common basis of the two. This is *bhauda saman adhikarana*, the realisation of a common basis by a negation of the specific attributes that have accidently crept into the creative process.

The subjective side is given to us in the Taittiriya Upanishad where precisely in the Bhriguvalli we have an analysis of the individual involucra, the sheaths, *koshas* – *annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vijnamaya* and *anandamaya koshas*. Bhrigu is instructed by his father Varuna, who is also his Guru, to realise Brahman through *tapas*. Here *tapas* means knowledge, the *tapas* of knowledge. Gradually Bhrigu pierced through these various layers of his personality. From the physical he entered into the vital, and from the vital he entered into the mental and then the intellectual and then the blissful. *Präño brahma vyājānat* (Tait. 3.3.1). He realised finally that bliss is Brahman; the physical, the vital, the mental or intellectual sheaths are not Brahman.

So by a subjective entry into our own personality we come to the depths of our being. We go to the bottommost essence of what we really are and come to realise that bliss is Brahman. This is the essence of the soul. *Ananda* is our nature, not sorrow, not grief. Pain is not our essential nature; bliss is our essential nature. So from the subjective side we get into this essence of our being, which is *ananda*, and from the objective side again we enter into the supreme consciousness. The two are identified. *Vijñānam ānandam brahma* (Brihad. 3.9.28): Consciousness and bliss is Brahman, says the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Also the Taittiriya tells us *satyaṁ jñānam anantam brahma* (Tait. 2.1.1): The Supreme Being is reality, intelligence and infinity. The Taittiriya tells us that consciousness is Brahman. The Aitareya tells us that bliss is Brahman, and the Brihadaranyaka tells us that consciousness-bliss is Brahman. So all this combined tells us that Brahman is existence, consciousness and bliss.

These features of analysis given in the Upanishads are brought together into a focus in the Mandukya Upanishad, which is perhaps the most important of all the Vedantic texts from the point of view of Vedantic *sadhana*. It is said that for the liberation of the soul, the Mandukya alone is sufficient because that gives us the quintessence of Upanishadic teaching. The external and the internal are brought together here in a universal analysis. The main method of meditation according to the Upanishads is given to us in the Mandukya Upanishad. It is too short and, therefore,
difficult of an easy analysis unless it is studied together with the comparative statements made in respect of it in the other Upanishads also.

The Mandukya Upanishad is an analysis of the states of consciousness because the Vedantic meditation of the Upanishads is mainly a meditation on consciousness. Consciousness is the Supreme Being, prajñānam brahma, and, therefore, a study of consciousness is imperative in a meditation on consciousness. The bound soul is a state of consciousness, the liberated soul is also a state of consciousness, and meditation is a condition of consciousness. The whole of the Upanishadic teaching is, therefore, a huge essay on consciousness.

Thus, entering into a study of the states of consciousness, the Mandukya Upanishad gives us a beautiful exposition of at least three of the strata of consciousness, which we generally call the waking, the dream and the sleep states. These states are states of consciousness, the condition through which our essential being passes in respect of its object. There are no states for consciousness. It is eternal. But yet it appears to have states when it sets itself in opposition to its object. The three states mentioned here are really three states of conflict of consciousness with its object, a subject which we mentioned yesterday. If the consciousness is not set in opposition to its object, there would be no states at all. But there are objects of consciousness, and it is these objects that create a series of states. The difference in the states of consciousness is due to the difference in the kind of object that is presented to consciousness in the different states. When the objects change in their relationships and intensity, the consciousness also seems to change.

The waking consciousness, the condition in which we are at present, is that state of consciousness where it is in relation to physical objects. The confrontation of consciousness in the waking condition is with physical things, the physical universe. We are struggling to find a proper relationship of our consciousness with the world outside. The activities of life, all the enterprises of whatever kind in which we may engage ourselves in the waking condition, are a struggle of consciousness to recognise a balance between itself and the object. This is waking life. We are busy throughout the day in various professions and fields merely to bring about a balance of our consciousness with the outside world, in which we do not succeed. Whatever be our effort in bringing about this equilibrium of ourselves with the world, we remain a failure. No man has established a balance between himself and the world, but yet this is the aim behind the activities of the world. And when the mind is tired of this effort at striking a balance between itself and the world outside, it withdraws itself due to sheer fatigue and the inability of the bodily condition to maintain this period of tension for a long time. Then we fall back into an internal struggle similar to our struggle with the external world. This is called dream. The condition of dream is that
in which consciousness is in a state of tension similar to the one in waking, except that
the objects in dream are psychic while in waking they are physical.

The struggle continues, but with imagined objects. There is very little difference
between the waking and dreaming conditions as far as the efforts and struggle of
consciousness are concerned, and pain and pleasure are concerned. Irrespective of the
fact that there is a difference between physical and psychic objects as they appear in
waking and dream, as far as the experiencer himself is concerned, there is very little
difference. The sorrows and joys of our waking life can come to us also in dream, and
consciousness may not find itself in a different situation.

But the purpose of consciousness is to cease, to put an end to all tension with the
objects, in which effort it has not succeeded in the waking condition, and it is not
going to succeed in the dreaming condition either. Merely because we only
contemplate objects in the mind instead of actually confronting them physically, it
does not mean that the mind has ceased from its efforts. What gives pain,
inconvenience and discomfort is struggle of every kind. Consciousness falls back into
a condition of inactivity in sleep where, though it is not in a state of harmony with its
objects, at least it is unconscious of the disharmony that is there.

See the difference between samadhi and sleep. While in samadhi we have a
consciousness of harmony, in sleep there is an unconsciousness of disharmony. Quite
different and opposite they are, though they look alike. The difference is as between
the joy of a wise man and the joy of a fool. Both are happy people. A stupid idiot is
happy and a genius also is happy, but the difference is very obvious. The negative
condition into which we enter in sleep is a defeatist position of consciousness where it
has struggled but failed in its attempt. So the Upanishad tells us all these three states
are phenomenal. They are states to be traversed through, transcended, and the real
nature of consciousness cannot be recognised or seen in waking, dream or sleep. Sleep
is, actually speaking, the mischief maker. The real ringleader we will find in the deep
sleep state. The potentiality for suffering is there in a covered form even in the state of
deep sleep, like a tree existing in a seed, and it will sprout up into activities, into actual
pain and pleasure experiences, when we have the dream and the waking conditions.

So the three states – waking, dream and sleep – are only temporal efforts at the
bringing about of a cessation of disharmony between consciousness and objects, now
struggling, now turning back, and then completely forgetting the trouble itself by
exhaustion. It is like a warrior going to the battlefront, fighting, getting tired and
dreaming of the battle in his home, having returned from the battlefield unable to
conquer the enemy, and then unable to even bear this suffering, going to sleep as if
everything is okay, but waking again only to realise the fact that the battle is going on
and he has yet to face it. The whole of the samsara chakra, the cycle of births and
deaths, pains and joys of life, is a series, a circular movement, as it were, of the effort of
consciousness to free itself completely from the clutches of objective confrontation. So we are no better whether we are in waking, dream or sleep. We are equally fools in all three states.

The freedom of the soul is in its fourth state of consciousness, called turiya. This fourth state of consciousness is not really a fourth mathematically or arithmetically. It is fourth in the sense that it is not any one of the three mentioned already. It is universal consciousness, and therefore, we cannot call it the fourth. But because it is not any of these three, we categorise it as the fourth one, turiya, for our own convenience. In the waking condition we are externally conscious, in the dream condition internally consciousness, in the sleeping condition absolutely unconscious, and in the turiya we are super-conscious. External consciousness, internal consciousness, unconsciousness and super-consciousness are the states through which we have to pass.

Super-consciousness, sometimes called the supramental state, the turiya, is inclusive of all that is in the three other states of consciousness. Whatever was there of worth and meaning in the condition of waking, dream or sleep is to be found in the turiya also, only freed from the tension of it. The turiya is the goal of life. It is described as nāntaḥ-prajñānāṃ, na bahiṣ prajñānāṃ, nabhayaśataḥ-prajñānāṃ, na prajñānā-ghanānāṃ, na prajñānā, nāprajñānām; adṛṣṭām, avyavahārārayaṃ, agrāhyām, alakṣaṇaṃ, acintyaṃ, avyāpadeśyaṃ, ekātma-pratyaya-sāram, prapañcopenaśāmanāṃ, śaṃtām, śivām, advaitaṃ, caturtham manyante, sa ātma, sa vijnayah. (Mand. 7). This is how the Mandukya describes the fourth state of consciousness. We are not aware of anything outside there, as we are seeing now in front of us so many things exist, nor are we seeing things inside as in dream. In that condition we are not externally aware of anything, nor internally aware of anything, nor are we unconscious. Then what are we? We are conscious. Conscious of what? Not of external things, not of internal things. Nobody can say what it is. Prapañcopenaśāman: The world ceases to exist there. It is dissolved like a sugarball in water. The whole universe gets dissolved into it. Prapañcopenaśāman, śaṃtām, śivām, advaitaṃ, caturtham manyante, sa ātma – that is our Self, that is our essential nature.

Our essential nature is not a struggle with objects, the persons and things in the world, nor is our essential nature a condition of sleep and reverie. The essential condition is universality of consciousness.

This analysis of the three states individually experienced by every person every day is also supposed to have a cosmic counterpart, which is not very clearly set forth in the Mandukya Upanishad. The Upanishad makes the deduction that there should be a cosmic counterpart of these three states of individuals – namely, the waking, dream and sleep states. While we are individually body conscious in the waking state, the cosmic counterpart, known as the Virat, is supposed to be universally, physically conscious. Or, to explain it in another way, there is a simultaneous consciousness of all
physical existences in the cosmos. This is supposed to be the cosmic counterpart of the individual, physical condition.

Virat, or Vaishvanara, is the cosmic physical consciousness, of which the Vishva, or the individual waking condition, is regarded as a part, a segment or a section. Similarly, consciousness in the dreaming condition, known as taijasa, is supposed to have a cosmic counterpart, known as Hiranyagarbha. The individual causal condition we call sleep has a cosmic counterpart, known as Ishvara. Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat are the names given to the universal counterpart of the individual states of consciousness – sleep, dream and waking respectively, known as prajna, taijasa and visva. But the distinction is made that while the individual conditions are powerless and ignorant, the cosmic conditions are omnipotent and omniscient.

We may wonder how when the parts are ignorant, the total becomes omniscient. It is not merely a total of ignorances. When the total is made, the characteristics of the particulars change automatically because the particulars, or the individuals, are isolated from one another by the existence of tamas and rajas; and inasmuch as tamas and rajas cannot be said to exist in totality, these are completely removed, lifted up in the cosmic condition where shudha pradhana shakti is supposed to predominate. Therefore, Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat are regarded as omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, as opposed to the individual conditions of location in a particular place, ignorance and unhappiness.

The Vaishvanara aspect of this analysis receives a detailed and elaborate treatment in the fifth section or chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishad, known as the Vaishvanara Vidya, wherein the glory of the Supreme Being is described, the meditation upon which is supposed to burn up all sins. In an analogy of this Upanishad, as fire burns cotton into ashes leaving no residue whatsoever, meditation on Vaishvanara burns up all samskaras, all impressions of the mind, all sins and defects, and makes one Self-realised. From the description of the Vaishvanara given to us in the Chhandogya Upanishad we can also infer the conditions of Hiranyagarbha and Ishvara, which are not specifically mentioned but are implied therein.

So the method of meditation in the Upanishad is primarily a juxtaposition of the objective and subjective sides in order that the two may be brought together into unison in the universal state, and the universal may be meditated upon. In order to understand what actually or exactly is the meaning or the implication of the Mandukya Upanishad, you have to read, if you have time enough, the Karikas of Gaudapadacharya on the Mandukya Upanishad; or, if you have no time to read such a lengthy treatise, at least read a very short exposition of it in 62 verses given by Sureshvaracharya, known as Pranava Vartika, also called Panchikarana Vartika. How the individual is to be set in tune with the cosmic is described there. Sureshvaracharya
tells us that to abolish the perception of difference, we may regard the individual waking as the cosmic waking. This is what he says.

Thus, the Upanishads give us a purely philosophical, analytical, mystical, spiritual method of contemplation by a denial of diversity through a contemplation of the totality of things. The Mandukya, Taittiriya and Aitareya Upanishads are specifically useful for this type of meditation. An elaborate commentary on this is to be found in the Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka, as I mentioned, one giving us what is known as the saprapancha view of things and the other giving us the nishprapancha view of things. The Chhandogya Upanishad gives us the saprapancha view of Reality, which means to say, Reality as interpreted in its relation to the cosmos. This is called the saprapancha view. Saprapancha means with prapancha, with the cosmos. The Supreme Being in its relation to the cosmos is described in the Chhandogya Upanishad in its various factors. But in the Brihadaranyaka we have the nishprapancha view of reality where it is described as it is in itself without any kind of relation to the cosmos, or to anything whatsoever. So these two form complimentary teachings to us: the Chhandogya and the Brihadaranyaka, which are wonderful expositions of the secret given already in a pithy form in the Mandukya Upanishad.

The Vaishvanara Vidya is a concrete instance of the saprapancha view of the Chhandogya Upanishad, how the cosmos is to be regarded and contemplated as the body of the Supreme Being, while the teachings of Yajnavalkya primarily in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad give us the nishprapancha or the acosmic view of Reality. There is no cosmos in Reality. It is acosmic, super-cosmic. Yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati, tad itara itaram paśyati. Yatra tv asya sarvam ātmāivābhūt, tat kena kam paśyet (Brihad. 2.4.14). Yajnavalkya tells us where we have an object in front of us, we can see. Where there is no object in front of us, what do we see? Yenedam sarvaṁ vijānāti, tam kena vijānīyat: How can we see that through which alone we are able to see everything? This is the pinnacle of Upanishadic contemplation, the highest reaches of the Upanishads. With this, philosophy stops. We cannot go beyond it.

While that is the stunning super-cosmic meditation of the Brihadaranyaka, the Chhandogya gives us a more sympathetic view suited to our own weaknesses because we cannot get rid of the idea that there is a world in front of us. So the Upanishad tells us to contemplate the universe as unified in the Supreme Being. Both lead to the same goal. The study of the Upanishads is a very difficult thing. It requires a good philosophical background because they tell everything, for the matter of that. There is no school of thought which is not touched upon in some Upanishad.

In connection with the meditations of the Mandukya, special mention has to be made also of a beautiful blend that it has brought about between meditation and recitation of Pranava, or Omkara. The chant of Om and the understanding of its relation to the three states of consciousness are regarded as necessary for the practice
of this meditation. The chant of Om is supposed to be constituted of three syllables, three *morae*, as they call it, three stresses of intonation. These three stresses of intonation of the chant of Om are identified with the three states of consciousness: waking, dream and sleep. Just as there are three states of consciousness, there are three stresses of Om chanting: A-U-M. When they are put together and chanted in a blend, they become a single compound, Om, in the same way as the three states of consciousness, waking, dream and sleep, contemplated together become the Creator of the Universe, Ishvara. *Tasya vācakāḥ praṇavaḥ* (Y.S. 1.27): The name of God is Om. Just as everything that is indicated has an indicator, Om is supposed to be a cosmic indicator of the Cosmic Being. While individual names particularise individual form, the Cosmic Being is denoted by the cosmic vibration of Om.

The Om that is referred to in the Mandukya Upanishad is not merely a linguistic chant. It is not a sound that we make through the vocal cords. It is a vibration that is set up. The Upanishad wants to tell us that the universe is nothing but a bundle of vibrations. It is not made up of things, objects, substances, etc. Today people are slowly trying to realise how vibrations are ultimately the essential constituents of even solid things. Light can be converted into matter; matter can be converted into light. We do not say light is an object like a stone, but what we call a stone, or a heavy material, is only a concretisation of vibrations of force. Energy continuum is the universe. Om is not a sound merely; it is not a chant, not a language, not a word, not a syllable, but a vibration. So when we chant Om, we are not merely making a syllabic sound, but setting up a vibration in the system which harmonises the cellular constituents of our personality so that our body and the personality as a whole is set in tune with the outside object.

The whole problem of life is a problem of harmony of consciousness with objects, and this harmony is to be brought about somehow by some means. This is done by meditation. Various kinds of meditation are prescribed. One of them is this, the chant of Om wherein a rhythmic vibration is produced in the system to set the mind in tune with its object so that when such harmony is established, the three states of consciousness slowly dwindle into a single state. Om becomes *turiya* in its *anatra*, or soundless form, which means that the chanting of Om is a help in meditation. Any mantra is a help in meditation, but Om is supposed to be the mother of all mantras. All vibrations are contained within it. All the letters of the alphabet can be located in it.

Thus, taking a bird’s-eye view of the techniques of meditation in the Upanishads, we finally get from them not only a philosophical analysis and exposition of the structure of the cosmos and individuals, but also a way the individual can approach the Supreme Being. So the Upanishad is both a philosophy and a method of approach.
They are full of philosophical reasoning, psychological analysis, and practical suggestions.

These methods of meditation according to the Upanishad are not suited to common minds because they demand or require of the student a high standard of discriminative power and dispassion. The condition, the prerequisite of such a meditation is also laid down in the Upanishad itself – not in the Mandukya, but in certain other Upanishads. We have to be possessed of a Nachiketas element. The story of Nachiketas given in the Kathopanishad is a prelude, as it were, to the requirements of a student of the Upanishads. Such intensity of the spirit of renunciation as can be gathered from the story of Nachiketas is demanded of every student of the Upanishads. The Upanishads do not ask us to do anything else than merely to analyse, understand, and fix our attention on it, but with such fervour and ardour of approach as could be seen in Nachiketas. Rejecting the joys, the pleasures and the freedoms of the world that were offered in abundance, the seeker Nachiketas asked for the Atman alone. To seek the Atman is to seek the truth of the Upanishads.

In the Kali Yuga, these meditations are difficult because the minds and the wills of people are very weak. We cannot meditate like this, however much we may try. Even for a minute we cannot meditate like this because the mind will slip down, fatigued and exhausted by the very attempt. But by a very beautiful combination of the essentials mentioned here with other techniques such as those given to us in the raja yoga methods of Patanjali and the bhakti yoga methods, we can achieve some success. Tīvra saṁvegānām āsannaḥ (Y.S. 1.21): This truth comes to those whose vairagya is one-hundred-percent perfect. They want nothing else.

The vairagya that is described by Sankaracharya in one of his works is pertinent. What is vairagya? What is the kind of vairagya that we require to study the Upanishad and meditate according to the Upanishad? Sankaracharya says that we must be as indifferent even to the bliss of Brahmaloka as we are indifferent to a clod of dirt. But what is the bliss of Brahmaloka? We do not know what it is. We will become unconscious and swoon if we know what it is, such is the joy of it. We will swoon by the joy itself. We know the characterisation and the calculus given in the Taittiriya Upanishad, how the joys go on increasing in intensity as we go higher and higher. If our bliss is one, multiply it by a hundred, and then multiply it by a hundred eleven times – hundred into hundred into hundred, eleven times – that is the bliss of Brahmaloka. And this bliss we must reject, he says, as if it is dirt. Is it humanly possible? We will not reject the bliss of even a cup of tea, so Brahmaloka is out of the question. We are unfit for the study of the Upanishads; that is the conclusion. We cannot study the Upanishads, and we cannot meditate like this, but we can keep it as an ideal that it may come to us at least in the next birth, if not in this birth.
So this is the glory of the Upanishads, the meditation on the Vaishvanara, meditation on Hiranyakarba, meditation on Ishvara, meditation on Pranava or Omkara as cosmic vibration in its connection with Reality, all for the single purpose of Brahma-sakshatkara, or the realisation of the Supreme Being.

We have gathered for a discussion of the nature of meditation, the various ways that we can employ for concentrating the mind and harmonising it for the purpose of purifying it so that it may become more and more free in its operation. The practice of meditation is, therefore, a very vast and elaborate technique of dealing with aspects of our consciousness in various ways and freeing it from its relationship with objects because the thought of an object is bondage. One of the minor Upanishads tells us that poison is not poison; thinking of objects is poison. Why is it so? The reason also is given there in the second half of the verse. If we drink poison, only one life is destroyed, but if we think of objects, we may destroy several lives. That means to say, we may have to pass through various series of births.

So the meditation process is a gradual method of freedom of consciousness from its entanglement in objects, and later on an acquisition of control over the object. We get freed from its clutches first and then acquire a mastery over it. In the beginning there is a withdrawal, and then there is a return to the very same object from which we withdrew ourselves so that we may possess it in reality, not possess it artificially as we tried earlier through mere sensory perception. Possession of a thing is artificial in sensory perception, whereas it is real in realisation.

Thus, we conclude a survey of various methods of meditation. I hope you have taken points in your diaries of all these methods right from the Kathopanishad onwards, the Bhagavadgita, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Upanishads. From all these the essentials have to be culled and brought into operation according to the convenience and temperament of each person’s mind. It is not that everyone can think in the same fashion. This is a wide dish that is served before you, of which you can take whatever you like, but put them properly in harmony so that they may become fit instruments for the mental operations in your meditation.