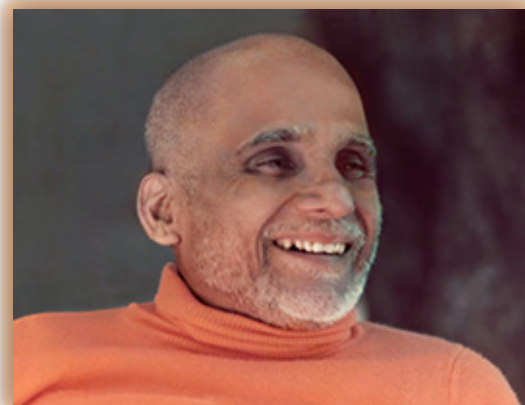


FRUIT FROM THE GARDEN OF WISDOM



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ABOUT THIS EDITION

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1. The Phenomenon and the Noumenon

You must be affectionate, kind and compassionate, serviceful, and charitable, they say. All this is very, very important indeed, but there is something more important than all these things, which is the destiny of the soul of the human individual – what happens, finally.

This world shall vanish one day, with all its humanity. If it had a beginning, it shall have an end, also. Even the solar system may not survive eternally. It would not be a wise complacency on the part of anyone to imagine that everything is fine, as it appears on the surface to the sense organs. Things come, and things go. People are born, and people die. Empires rise, and empires fall. Caesars and Napoleons have come, and many have gone, also, at the same time. Nothing remains. What is this drama?

In this mysterious presentation of the history of the universe, the history of humanity, nothing seems to be enduring, and even when something appears to be enduring for sometime, we do not know for how long it will endure. None of us knows how many minutes more we will be in this world, let alone years. There may be only a few minutes, for some reason. We have to learn by past experience, and by history.

What is the aim behind all this pageantry, this drama, this enactment of humanity? Why are we busy? What are we busy about? What for are we working and running about, having projects and embarking upon all kinds of activities, as if everything is milk and honey in this world?

Now we come to what we generally call the philosophical implication of human culture, and human

history. There is something super-physical, super-sensory, super-perceptual, super-social and super-personal. There must be something towards which the whole universe seems to be gravitating, without the acceptance of which, all that we do in this world would look meaningless.

If there is meaning in life, it cannot be on the basis of what we see with our eyes, because it is passing. It is a transition, a fluxation; it is finally unreliable. We cannot rely even on our own security for a long time. There is no security anywhere. Everything is dubious; yet, we live and work as if we are immortals. Nobody believes that tomorrow is the end, though it can be. How is it that there is a contradiction in human thought so that every one of us seems to be under the impression that we shall be living for eternity, though we know very well that this is a false assumption? How is it possible for us to entertain a false assumption, which is entertained by everybody in the world?

We think in total opposition to the facts. While the vanishing of all things is a fact, the disbelief in the vanishing of all things also seems to be a fact. Everybody has to accept that at any moment anything can happen. But, at the same time, we have a hope that nothing will happen, everything shall be fine, and tomorrow shall be a better day. We never think that tomorrow may be a worse day, though there is no argument against it.

On the one hand, something tells us that everything is insecure, and no one can say what will happen the next moment. At the same time, we feel that nothing will happen – everything is OK; tomorrow is a better day, and I

shall live for another fifty years, at least. Though I know that I shall die, I will not die tomorrow. Nobody will believe that they will die tomorrow.

Now, here are certain points for us to consider. There is eternity masquerading in this mortal frame of the human individual, the great act of the universe which is peeping through every pore of our perceptual faculties. We belong to two worlds at the same time, as it were – the mortal and the immortal. Our involvement in the body, in the space-time complex, in causation, in human society, in anything that is external, is the mortal aspect of our personality. Everything that is spatio-temporal, causally bound and involved in cause-and-effect relation shall perish; yet, there is something in us which is not so bound. We are not mortals basically, essentially, in our roots. The immortal in us summons us every moment of time. That is why we cannot be satisfied with all the treasures of the world if they are to be offered to us.

If the whole earth is to be presented to us, we shall not feel secure. If all the sky also is under our possession, we cannot be secure. Endless is our longing. We want endless wealth, endless possessions, and endless duration of life in this world. Infinity is our asking, eternity is our desire. Nobody wants anything less than eternal duration, eternal continuance. Even if one is an emperor of the whole world, taking for granted that such a thing is practicable, would that person like to live for only three minutes more? No, Even if I have all the treasures of the whole world, infinity is in my grasp, if it is only for a few minutes, that is of no use.

So, it has to also be eternal. Our infinitude should go together with eternity, also. Space and time should blend together, embrace each other in a fullness. You may call this the Absolute, if you like.

The realisation of this in actual life, the attainment of cosmic universality, which is identical with spiritual Selfhood, is the ultimate aim of life, for which purpose we are finally busy in this world. We are not busy for any extraneous purpose. We are active in this world from morning to evening, not because the earth can give us anything or offer us anything worth the while; all these services that we are rendering, all the work that we do, in any capacity whatsoever, is a preparatory process for the realisation of this universal Selfhood – you may call it God-realisation. This is, in brief, the aim and object of this ashram of Swami Sivananda.

2. Creation and Evolution

Some say the world came into existence by the thought of God. Some say it never came into existence. It is there, as it was, and nobody created it. It is there. Existence is not created by anybody. Who will create existence? To create existence, somebody else has to exist, prior to this existence, and existence is a general principle, so nobody can create existence. Existence is a word which does not require any further explanation. It has been there, and it is there. It is what it is. Nobody created it. That is one view – some kind of scientific view, we may say – the view of modern scientists, to some extent.

But the religious view is that the Absolute Supreme Being, God, willed, “Let there be heaven and earth,” and immediately, space manifested itself. Then, vibrations started moving inside space, and it became air. Friction started after that, which is heat, fire. Then condensation took place, which is water. Then solidity appeared, which is earth. Here is the beginning of creation, according to descriptions in religious scriptures.

And, inasmuch as God willed this creation, His consciousness is present in every little part of creation – this space, this air, this fire, this water, this earth, which are the five physical elements that you see before you. And, then, emerges a group of little, little individualities, which is the beginning of what you call the evolutionary process. There is, in the beginning, inanimate matter, which is described in the form of these five elements I mentioned just now. Then, there is animation starting – like fungi, amphibians, fish and so on. Then, you know the whole story of evolution; some small creatures, insects, and

animals – but animals come later. In the beginning there is only fungus-type plant kingdom, and all that. Even in the scriptures you will find that God created not man first; He created only this plantation – trees, etc., because trees are the first creation. Higher than plantation kingdom is the animal kingdom; higher than that is the human kingdom. So, we have come like that, by gradual evolutionary process, in the act of creation.

According to the traditional Indian concept, these created species of beings run to eighty-four lakhs (8,400,000) in number, in which series the human being is said to occupy the topmost position, almost completing the purpose of Nature in its scheme of evolution. The general arrangement of things in the evolutionary process is considered to be a gradual ascent from mineral to plant, from plant to animal, and from animal to man. This does not, however, mean that there are five categories separated as if in watertight compartments, for there is a countless variety even in this five fold classification – varieties in the mineral constitution, varieties in the plant and vegetable kingdom, varieties in the animal kingdom and in the different kinds of subhuman species, and varieties even at the human level. The number, eighty-four lakhs perhaps, would give a good picture of the tremendous specifications in almost unthinkable types of differentiation in the structure of individuality. From mineral to the Absolute is indeed a great sequential procedure of graduated ascent, involving millions of mutations, transformations, births and deaths through numberless ages, till the supreme Unity is reached in actual experience. It is believed that up to the

level of the animal, penultimate to the human stage, the process of the ascending series of evolution is spontaneous, without the lower species having to exert on its part or put forth any special effort to evolve into the higher level. The reason for this seems to be that Nature in its all-inclusiveness works automatically, of its own accord, in the case of the species in which the egoism of self-consciousness has not properly manifested itself. But from man onwards a consciousness of effort on one's part appears to be inseparable from natural evolution, though the universal working of Nature cannot be said to have ceased its functions even then – indeed Nature's work is not complete until the Absolute is realised in a state of Universal Selfhood.

The evolution of consciousness does not end with man, really. Man may be described as the image of God only figuratively but not truly, for there has to be a further ascent in the process of evolution from man to superman, a stage which acts as a link between man and the ultimate Godhead. Indications of the higher category of levels of life, beyond the human state, are available in the positive statements recorded in the Upanishads to the effect that above even the best of human beings there are the levels of the realms of the *pitrs*, *gandharvas*, *devas*, the higher gods of the heavens, the perfected ones almost converging in the stages of Virat, Hiranyagarbha, Ishvara and Brahman. That is to say, man has to evolve further on and he at present occupies a place somewhat midway between God and brute crossed at one point. The restlessness, the finitude, the consciousness of limitation from every side, the incessant

and resistless longings for expansion of one's suzerainty in larger dimensions of space and endless life in time, nay, even the compulsions of being born and dying, announce in loud voice that man is far from the expected perfection to be reached in Nature's scheme of evolution, and there is a long way higher up, from man to Godman, and from Godman to God Himself.

3. Religious Awakening

The stage of religious awareness which is generally known as animism regards Nature as inwardly filled with certain intelligent spirits, thus making every part of Nature a living act of some hidden purpose and intention. The awe and fear that almost always follow immediately from the recognition of spirits indwelling Nature summon a corresponding feeling of respect and adoration that one feels in regard to these angelic causes working behind Nature. The initial form in which this respect for the “above” is manifest, in practice, is ritual, characteristic of every religious behaviour.

Features known as taboo, totem and fetishism, are generally associated with the earliest forms of religious awakening, taboo meaning the prohibition to go near or come in contact with anything that one regards as endowed with a repelling power or unholy influence, totem being usually an animal connected with a community of people, or even an object so connected, determining the welfare of the community, such as the cow, the peepul tree, or a sacred stone, which are said to be endowed with powers of this kind, and fetish being an object considered as an abode of a superior spirit or power.

The stage which is known as Spiritism considers these indwelling spirits behind Nature as not just lodged in things and phenomena but having the ability to move about and work according to their will, doing good when they are pleased and harm if they are displeased. This stage effloresces into the acceptance of there being many gods in the heavenly world, a stage which historians of religion call polytheism, in which condition of the religiously oriented

mind the spirits behind the different workings of Nature are adored as the powerful gods inhabiting a celestial kingdom above the world superintending directly the phenomena of all creation. In the Veda Samhitas we find *mantras* for prayers addressed to different gods. In the Vedas, however, we can find representations of every stage of religion from the initial natural adorations to the highest conceptions of the Absolute. The multitude of gods follows from the fact of the many-sidedness and manifold workings of Nature, each performance or event in Nature being controlled by a soul-force within it, a god working through its embodied form. Many things require many controllers, and they are gods because they are not in this world, their abode being in heaven. The exploits of these gods become the sources of mythology and epics connected with an important stage in the development of religious consciousness. Mankind, even today, is in this stage of religion and we will find no religion in the world without its mythological stories and its epics glorifying vigorously the power and knowledge of its angels and gods. The human mind might feel stifled and find itself in a state of barrenness if mythology and epic are to be removed from the field of religion. Primarily, it is emotion that takes the upper hand in religious practice, and it is this that explains the need for mythology and epic literature.

In a stage which historians call henotheism a particular god is considered as the highest god, raised above all other gods in the hierarchy of the pantheon. There is also the grouping of gods (*visvedevas*) into a single body of divine power.

Theism is the affirmation of the One God as the transcendent and immanent creator of the universe. The necessity for affirming the Supreme God arises on account of its being necessary to bring the multiple gods into a harmonious relation among them, without which internal coordination the gods would remain as isolated localities of unrelated essences, not excluding even a contending and superseding tendency among them. Since the universe cannot be regarded as consisting of segregated bits of matter and spirit, the need for a universal connecting link arises. The gods cannot be really many, they have to be phases of the operation of the One God. This Great God is proclaimed in ecstatic language of poetry in the Purusha-Sukta, Hiranyagarbha-Sukta, Visvakarma-Sukta, Skambha-Sukta, and Varuna-Sukta of the Veda-Samhitas. The Nasadiya-Sukta of the Rig-Veda affirms an absolute beginning of things, the origin of the universe as being beyond the concepts of even existence and non-existence. Religion is the reaction of the total man to the total reality. There can be only one such Supreme Reality, in which every individual soul, and everything, has to find itself wholly.

The highest form of religion is known as monism, which overcomes some of the limitations involved in the concept of God as the Supreme Person, which is the way in which theism defines God. Monism is the affirmation of the Absolute which is above the Personality concept, because the concept of the Person cannot be dislocated from the concept of limitation as if in a universe of Space and Time. The Absolute can only be designated as That Which Is.

Here the religious consciousness reaches its highest peak of attainment.

4. Spiritual Research

The earliest records of spiritual research are to be found in the Rig-Veda Samhita, which consists of hymns, or *mantras*, addressed to gods, or Devas, who are considered as deities or divinities capable of controlling the destinies of people. The history of the growth of the religious consciousness from its incipency to its mightiest comprehension can be read between the lines of these sacred prayers, the *mantras* of the Veda. The trend of beholding the manifold as expressions of the One, and the One as revealing itself in the many, is unmistakably traceable to the hymns of the Rig-Veda. Through a succession of this unfolding movement of religious visualisation, the Veda-Samhita proclaims its final word on the nature of Reality.

The quintessence of the Veda Samhitas and their hidden purport is said to be codified in the Upanishads, which unveil Truth without the embellishments and formative features through which it was seen in the Samhitas. The Upanishads hold that the pleasures of the senses are ephemeral, as they wear away one's energies and tend to one's destruction. Even the longest life with the greatest pleasure is worth nothing. The only desirable aim in this world is the knowledge of the Self, the Atman. The pleasant is one thing and the good is another. Both these come to a man together for acceptance. The wise one discriminates between the two and chooses the good rather than the pleasant. The foolish one chooses the pleasant and falls into the net of widespread death. By knowing Reality, everything is known at once. One who knows It becomes It. Reality transcends the three states of waking, dream and

deep sleep. It is the cessation of all phenomena, the peaceful, the blessed, the non-dual. It is Truth, Knowledge, Infinity. One possesses all things simultaneously and becomes all things at once, and enjoys all things instantaneously, who realises Brahman as identical with one's own being.

The Infinite alone is bliss; there is no bliss in the small and the finite. Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else – that is the infinite. Where one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else – that is the finite. The Infinite is the immortal. The finite is the mortal. The Infinite is in front, behind, to the right, to the left, above, below and everywhere. It is all this at the same time. For one who knows this, everything springs from his very Self. The Universe, manifest as well as unmanifest, arises for him spontaneously from his Self and serves him without limitation of time or space.

No one loves an object for its own sake. All love is an inspiration come finally from love of the Universal Self. Things are dear because of the Infinite that peeps through them. The Infinite summons the Infinite in the perception of the beloved. Persons and things are not dear for their own sake. Though all love has a selfish origin in the world, it has a transcendent meaning above the phase of the seer and the seen. Anyone who, by error, regards anything as being outside oneself, shall lose that thing, whatever it may be.

Where there is duality, as it were, there one sees the other, smells the other, speaks to the other, tastes the other,

touches the other, thinks the other, understands the other. But where the one alone is, who can see what, who can hear, smell, speak, taste, touch, think and understand what by what? How can one know that by which alone one knows all these things? How can one know the knower? This is the great admonition, this is the treasure-house of knowledge. If one were to give the whole earth as a gift for the sake of this knowledge, one should regard this knowledge as greater than that. Lo, this is greater than all things. Whosoever has his Self awakened within himself commensurate with all things, he is verily equivalent to the Creator of the universe, he becomes the doer of all things; this universe is his, nay, he himself is the universe.

The Vedic knowledge is a blend of the highest kind of education of the inner man, through which one is enabled to possess in practical life and experience not only the glories and joys of the world in their fullest measure, but also to transform oneself into an embodiment of the highest form of righteousness and justice, and a moving representation, as it were, of God, the Almighty.

5. The Yoga Vasishtha

Philosophical mysticism reaches its culmination in a specially elaborate literature known as the Yoga-Vasishtha, a book of thirty-two thousand verses divided into six parts designated as *vairagya*, or Renunciation; *mumukshutva*, or Aspiration for Liberation; *utpatti*, or Creation; *sthiti*, or preservation; *upasana* or dissolution; and Nirvana or Salvation. The method of teaching adopted by the text is story, anecdote illustration and image, which it considers as a better way of instruction than logical argument or reasoning.

The teaching emphasises that when there is perception of an object by the seer or observer, there has to be presupposed the existence of a consciousness between the subject and the object. If this conscious connecting link were not to be, there would be no perception of existence. There cannot be a consciousness of relation between the two things unless there is a consciousness relating the two terms and yet standing above them. The study of the perceptual situation discloses the fact that the subject and the object are phases of a universal consciousness.

Creation is twofold – objective and subjective. The objective side of creation consists in the world created by Brahma, or the Original Will that projected the substance of the world as well as everything contained in it. The subjective world is the nature of the object as conceived by the mind of the perceiver, differing according to the species of the individual perceiving, such as the celestial, human, etc., and the inner constitution of the mind itself, and the different pressures and moods such as love and hatred, or like and dislike. The Yoga-Vasishtha accepts that there is

‘externally’ something in the form of the creation of Brahma, though the way of experience of this objective world by the individuals is limited and conditioned by their own psychic structures and modifications.

Ultimately, even the world of Brahma is relative and does not have absolute existence by itself, since space and time do not have any absolute meaning, being relative to the standpoints of the observing individual. Inasmuch as there can be infinite points of view of a conscious envisagement of the world by the experiencing individuals, there can be an infinite number of worlds, one penetrating through the other and yet none being affected by the existence of the other. The relativity of space and time makes distance or measurement in terms of three dimensions as well as duration of time relative to the state of consciousness wherein they are experienced. A large universe can be within a particle of sand and aeons can pass within the fraction of a minute. Past, present and future have no relevance by themselves, but are interchangeable according to the nature of their relative structure, so that one can be the other also under different conditions of consciousness. These astounding facts regarding the inner structure of the universe are propounded through illustrative stories. Space is the relation of the coexistence of ideas and Time is the relation of the succession of ideas. Since existence and succession are themselves ideas, the world has no existence independent of the mind. Though the Yoga-Vasishtha, in its mental theory of the creation of the world, may appear to land one in the doctrine of extreme subjectivism, this predicament is avoided by a

simultaneous pronouncement that the individual mind is essentially inseparable from the Cosmic Mind. The relativity of the cosmos is in the end capable of being traced to the working of the Cosmic Mind itself, Brahma dreaming the world, as it were. The universe is regarded as a cosmic dream distinguishable from the individual dreams only by way of the length of their durations. But even this difference in length is just a relative concept, as can be observed in the long years through which one can live in a dream though the dream lasted for only a few minutes from the standard of the waking consciousness. As the dream world vanishes in waking, the waking world vanishes in the experience of the Absolute.

The relativity of the cosmos implies the existence of worlds within worlds and worlds interpenetrating one another without the one necessarily being conscious of the existence of the other. The different worlds are constituted differently. Some of them may be almost similar in their nature, but mostly they differ and may be inhabited by different kinds of individuals ranging from the highest gods down to the lowest denizens of the nether regions. The evolution of the world goes on due to the impetus it has received from the mind of Brahma, and the process of creation continues secondarily even through the individuals.

It is impossible to correctly describe the nature of Reality, for all descriptions are determinations into form, and all such determinations mean the creation of separation or duality which does not obtain in It. In every definition of the Absolute, Brahman, it is falsely objectified

or externalised into an 'other' to the knowing consciousness. There is, thus, no such thing as 'knowing' the Absolute in the sense of anything that the relative mind can conceive. Brahman is undifferentiated existence, consciousness, bliss. Though it is everywhere, it cannot be seen, as it is not an object. It exists as the essential Seer, or the Self, in everything.

There are seven stages by which the spiritual seeker rises progressively. The first one is *subheccha*, or the good intention to pursue the right path of knowledge and virtue. The second is *vicharana*, or an investigation into the ways and means of acquiring true knowledge. The third is *tanumanasi*, or the attenuation of the mind due to the subtlety attained by it in the practice of deep concentration. The fourth is *sattvapatti*, or the realisation of spiritual equilibrium where in the light of Brahman splashes forth like lightening in one's experience. The fifth is *asamsakti*, or non-attachment to anything that is external on account of attaining the vision of universality. The sixth is *padartha-abhavana*, or the non-perception of materiality and the perception of radiance filling the whole universe, as if the entire existence is lit up with endless light. The seventh is *turiya* or the ultimate state of experience of identity with the Absolute.

The last of the stages mentioned is one of actual realisation and is known as *jivanmukti*, that is liberation while living. When the body drops, one attains *videhamukti*, or disembodied salvation. The liberated sage is a master and a Superman. His actions are universal

(*mahakarta*), his enjoyments are universal (*mahabhokta*), and his renunciation, too, is universal (*mahatyagi*).

Spiritual practice consists mainly in three processes: (1) The affirmation of the universality of Brahman in one's own consciousness, thinking only of That, speaking only about That, discussing among one another only on that, and depending on That alone, known as *brahma-abhyasa*; (2) The restraint of the mind by eliminating its desires one by one gradually, adopting as many ways as would be necessary in accordance with the nature of the desires, known as *mano-nigraha*; and (3) The restraint of the *prana* by the well-known method of *pranayama*, called *prana nirodha*. The *prana*, the mind and the spirit form the degrees of ascent as well as descent and one can start the practice from above downwards or from below upwards, according to one's temperament and predominating inclination. The most potent way, however is *brahma abhyasa*, which is the affirmation of Brahman in life, continuously, at all times, and in all conditions, as one's sole occupation, purpose and duty. This is the principal method of meditation, which restrains the mind and the *prana* simultaneously. The Yoga-Vasishtha abounds in a large number of illustrative stories which bring out vividly its philosophical position and its practical suggestions.

6. Yoga and Meditation

In simple terms, without involving technicalities, if yoga is to be defined, it can be called the system of harmony. It is nothing mystifying or beyond the conception of human understanding. But there is a great proviso in this simple definition of yoga as harmony. While it is true that harmony in every field of life is what we seek in our day-to-day existence, it is necessary to know what harmony, actually means. And when the essential of that simple fact called harmony gets imbibed into our consciousness, our personality gets stabilised. Stability of personality, equilibrium of consciousness, harmony in the walks of life, is yoga.

Now, harmony implies an adjustment of oneself with an environment that is external to oneself. When there is no proper adjustment of one thing with another thing, we call it disharmony. When there is a proper adjustment, a smooth working of one principle, one fact, one object one person with another, we regard it as harmony. Why should harmony be regarded as the essential of life? The reason is the very structure of the universe. The universe is a system of harmony. We, as human individuals, form part of this universe. We form part of it in such a way that we are integrally related to it.

There is a difference between mechanical connection and vital, organic relationship. The contact of one stone with another stone in a heap is mechanical. There is no life in this connection. If you take one stone from that heap, the other stones will not be affected in any manner. So, a mechanical group is that in which parts are so related to the whole that if some parts are removed from the whole, the

remaining parts are not affected at all. That is what we mean by mechanical relationship. But organic relationship is something different. We can have the example of our body itself. You know very well that our physical body is made up of many organs and limbs and these are so connected to one another that they give the appearance of a single whole called the body. While the removal of a few stones from the heap does not affect the remaining stones vitally, removal of a few limbs of our body will vitally affect the whole body. The very existence of the body is seriously affected. The harmony of the body is disturbed, That is why when a limb of the body is cut off, there is intense pain, agony and a dislike towards it. We dislike any kind of interference with the limbs or organs of our body, because the limbs are vitally connected as a living whole in the system of our personality.

We are vitally related to the cosmos, Our connection with the universe outside is not like the connection of a stone in a heap, so that we may do anything we like without affecting the world outside. That cannot be. Our connection, our relationship with the world outside is such that it can be compared to the relationship of the limbs of the body to the whole system of the body. Any meddling with the system is not warranted, nor called for. To conceive what the Universe would be, you have to conceive what a human individual is. In Indian Vedic mythology, we have the concept of what is known as Purusha, the Supreme Being. "Purusha" means man, the human individual. But when the Vedas speak of the Purusha in the cosmos, they mean the concept of the Universe as a single individual, a

Cosmic Individual, whose relationship with the parts of the cosmos is similar to the relationship of an ordinary limited individual to the limbs of the body. Can you imagine, for a moment, what it would be to remain as a cosmic Individual? Suppose you are the consciousness animating the Universe, how would you conceive this possibility? For that, again, you have to bring the analogy of the human body. Do you know that you are an Intelligence, or a centre of consciousness? You know that you are a complete whole called Mr. so-and-so, Mrs. so-and-so, and so on. When you say, 'I am such and such a person', what do you actually mean? What do you refer to? To the hands, to the feet, to the nose or any part of the body, or all the parts put together? What do you mean by saying 'I', or the individual that you are? On a careful examination of the situation you realise that when you refer to yourself as so-and so, you do not really take into consideration the limbs or the organs of the body. Because, if a hand is amputated, you do not say that a part of yourself has gone. You still remain a whole individual. The individual never feels that a part of his personality has gone, He will say that a part of his body has gone, but a part of himself has not gone. He will still think as a whole being. Otherwise, if the limbs of the body were to be an essential part of the personality, then, when the legs are amputated, for example, a person would be thinking, in a lesser percentage. There would be half-thinking, one-fourth thinking, thirty percent thinking, and so on. But that does not happen. There is whole thinking, whole understanding, the entire consciousness is kept intact in spite of the fact that the limbs are amputated. This

shows that you are not the limbs of the body. You are something independent of these limbs that constitute your external form called the body. You are a centre of consciousness which animates this body on account of which the amputation of the limbs does not in any way affect your personality. You are essentially consciousness.

Now, the concept of the Virat-Purusha or the Cosmic Being, which I mentioned as stated in the Vedas, is only an extension of this concept of the individual consciousness to the cosmos. Can you close your eyes for a few seconds and imagine that instead of your being a centre of consciousness animating this small body, you are a centre of consciousness animating the whole universe? Can you expand your imagination to this extent? It can be done with a little effort of the mind. I shall tell you the technique. The consciousness which you are, which animates every part of your body – hands feet, fingers, nose, eyes etc. – this consciousness that you are, which indwells your individual body, is so uniformly present in every part of your body that you may be said to be present in every part of your body. You are present in your fingers, you are present in your toe, you are present in your nose, and so on. You, as a complete whole, are present in every part of your body. Now, can you extend this analogy, or comparison to the whole universe? Just imagine your consciousness is not merely your finger or your toe, but it is also in this table that you see in front of you, it is also in the chair, it is in the mountain, in the sun and the moon, in the galaxy, etc.

If you can extend your imagination in this manner, if your consciousness can exceed the limits of your bodily

personality, and if you extend this pervasive character of consciousness beyond the limitation of your bodily personality and concentrate it on every other object in the world, you become a Cosmic Individual. This is Yogic Contemplation. Meditation in the highest sense of the term. This is the apex which you reach after many stages of meditation.

This is a difficult technique, because you will not be able, ordinarily, to extend your consciousness to other objects in the world. We have a prejudice, an old habit of thinking that the objects are outside us. But, do you know that your ten fingers are outside you? They are objects; you can see them as you see any other objects in the world. If these ten fingers (i.e. these objects) can become part of your personality, then why should not other objects in the world become part of your personality? They do not become, because you have limited your consciousness by an old prejudice of thought. Prejudice is irrational, it simply asserts itself, it is not amenable to reason. Why should you limit your consciousness to your small body? What do you gain? Why not extend it to other persons? Why not feel that all people seated here are part of a wider, social individual (just as you imagine you are a human individual)? Why limit your consciousness to people seated here, go further to the vaster world and imagine you are the world-individual! This world-individual is what religion means by God.

7. Mantra Shakti

The Name of God, especially when it is given to us in the form of what is known as a *mantra*, is a power by itself. It has a Shakti of its own, and this is the reason why *bhaktas*, sages and saints have told us that even a mere repetition of the Name of God has the capacity to produce an effect of its own, though you may not be really meditating, though you may not be in a position to contemplate the actual meaning hidden behind it. The *mantra-shakti*, or the power of the *mantra*, arises on account of the fact that is beautifully and scientifically described in a science known as *mantra-shastra*, which is akin to the science of chemistry in our own ordinary life. Chemical elements act and react upon each other. You know the action between an acid and alkali, for instance. Sometimes the chemical reaction is such that it can produce a tremendous effect. *mantras* produce such effect, similar to the reaction of chemical elements, because of the peculiar combination of letters. The *mantra-shastra* is a secret which tells us that every letter of the alphabet is a condensed form of energy. Sounds are really energy manifest. The sound is not merely an empty form of verbal manifestation, but energy that is made to express itself in a particular shape. And when this packet of energy, this tied up form of force, which is a particular letter of the alphabet, is made to come in contact with another packet of energy called another letter, they collide with each other, act upon each other or fuse into each other, so that the utterance of a group of letters, which is the *mantra*, produces, by the process of permutation and combination of these letters, a new form of energy which gets infused into our system. Because it has

arisen from our own mind, thought and the recesses of our being, we get charged with that force, as if we have touched a live electric wire. There is special name given to this science, as *gana-shastra*, in *tantrik* parlance. Words are forces, thoughts are things. They are not empty sounds. It is because of the fact that thoughts and expressions are powers by themselves, that the words of saints take immediate effect. The words that a saint or a sage utters are not empty sounds that he makes. They are forces that are released like atom bombs, and they can manifest themselves in the physical world, and events can take place. That is why people go to a Mahatma for *asirvada*, or blessings. His words are forces, powers that he releases to take immediate effect, or even a remote effect, as the case may be.

The utterance of a *mantra* is the release of an energy, not only inside our own personalities, but also in the outer atmosphere of which we form contents. *Japa sadhana* not only brings a transformation in your own inward personality, but also sympathetically produces an equal effect in the society of which you are a part. So *japa sadhana* is also a social service. It is not merely a personal *sadhana*, inwardly practised by your own self in your *puja* room, but it is a great Seva that you do to mankind also. An aura is produced around that *sadhaka* who takes to *japa sadhana* honestly and sincerely. You purify not only your nature inwardly but also you purify the atmosphere outside. You become a source of inspiration to people when you actually take to *japa sadhana* with concentration of mind and with real faith in the efficacy of the practice. God's Name is a wonder. It is a miracle by itself. "More things are

wrought by prayer than this world dreams of,” said the poet. The prayers that you offer to God are definitely capable of producing the desired result. What works is not your personal strength or your individual thought, but that which your thought is able to rouse into activity and which is omniscient.

Your prayers or the invocations that you make through *mantra sadhana* or Japa are converted into an impersonal force, which is the power of God, and the miracle is worked by God Himself. You cease to be the ultimate agent of the action. Your agency is only incidental. What really works is something higher than yourself. God Himself seems to be doing *sadhana* for ourselves. Who can do things in this world other than God? The whole universe is divinity, resplendent, gorgeous in its glory and abundance. We have forgotten that we are an integral part of it. And in *japa sadhana*, particularly, we try to attune ourselves, attune our inner psychological constitution with that Omnipresent structure of the cosmos which is *ishvara shakti*, or Divine Will operating. You can appreciate how important *japa yoga* is. In the Mahabharata, in the Shanti Parva an entire chapter is devoted to this exposition of *japa sadhana*. *Japaka Upakhyana* is worth reading. No wonder that Bhagavan refers to this system of yoga as the best, in the Bhagavadgita –*yajnanam japayajnosmi*.

May I request you, brothers in the spiritual field, to take to this *sadhana* sincerely, wholeheartedly and stick to it tenaciously. You will see for yourself, that it makes you a different person. You will be surprised how things take shape without your knowing what happens. The

atmosphere will slowly change. Prayers are powers, please remember this. It would not be an exaggeration if I say that you will be doing the greatest service to mankind, if you honestly offer prayers to God from the bottom of your heart. God will hear your prayer through His All-Pervading ears; *sarvatah panipadam tat samatokshi-siromukham* – “everywhere It has ears; everywhere It has eyes”, your prayers will be heard, and this would be a service that you do to your own Atman, your soul, for its salvation. Not only that, it will be a great service that you do to humanity itself. May I repeat the request once again, that you take to this *sadhana* honestly, with intense faith, and you will see wonders, miracles manifesting themselves.

8. Bhakti and Jnana

I have been telling you sometimes that there is some secret meaning behind the last words in the Eleventh Chapter of the Gita when we are told that *bhakti* is supreme. The *bhakti* that Sri Krishna speaks of here is not ordinary obeisance to an idol. It is not a mass you perform in the church. It is a meeting of your being before one Absolute. Therefore Bhagavan Sri Krishna says “Not charity, not philanthropy, not study, not austerity, is capable of bringing about this great vision that you had, Arjuna! Only by devotion can I be seen, contacted. Only by devotion am I capable of being known, seen and entered into”. These three words are used in the Bhagavad Gita at the end of the Eleventh Chapter - *knowing, seeing and entering*. Arjuna knew and saw, but never entered into It. Therefore, he was the same Arjuna after the Bhagavad Gita also. He never entered into the Supreme Being.

Now, religion is knowing, seeing and entering into. Knowing is considered by such thinkers like Ramanuja, the great propounder of the Visishtadvaita philosophy, as inferior to devotion. Knowledge or *jnana* is not equal to *bhakti*, says Ramanuja. And Acharya Sankara says that *jnana* is superior to *bhakti*. It may appear that they are quarrelling with each other. Really, they are not. They have some emphasis laid on different aspects of the same question. Why does Bhagavan Sri Krishna say that nothing can make you fit to see the vision of God, to behold Him, except *bhakti*? It would seem that He speaks like Ramanuja and not like Sankara. But they are only speaking in different languages ...the same thing. There is no contradiction between them. “Knowing, seeing and entering into”

signifies the process of contacting God by degrees. There are, in the parlance of Vedanta, two types of knowledge - *paroksha jnana* and *aparoksha jnana*. *Paroksha jnana* is indirect knowledge. *Aparoksha jnana* is direct knowledge. "God exists" is indirect knowledge. "I am inseparable from God-being" is direct knowledge. Now, we do not feel that we are inseparable from God-being. That knowledge has not come to us. So we have not entered such a height of religious consciousness as to be convinced that we are inseparable from God's existence. But we are convinced enough to feel that God exists. He is, but we have not gone to such an extent to feel that we are inseparable from Him. That is a little higher stage. *Jnana* has come, but *Darshana* or vision of God has not come. We have not seen the *Virat* in front of us, notwithstanding the fact that we are seeing *Virat*. The whole cosmos is that, but we have somehow segregated our personality from *Virat* consciousness. A cell in the body is seeing the body as if it is outside it.

What would be the condition or the experience of a cell in our own body notionally isolating itself from the organism to which it belongs and considering the body as a world outside it? You can imagine the stupidity of it. This is exactly what we are doing. We think the world is outside of us, though we are a part of the world. So, the idea that the *Virat* is an object of perception, that the world is external to us, is notional, not realistic. All our difficulties are notional in the end. They have no reality or substance in themselves.

By *bhakti* Ramanuja means that love of God which supersedes intellectual activity or a mere knowing that God exists. And when Sankara says that *jnana* or knowledge is

superior, he means knowledge which is identical with being and which is the same as Para *bhakti* or the love of God where the soul is in communion with the Being of God.

The highest devotion is the same as the highest knowledge. *jnana* and Para *bhakti* are the same. The *gauna bhakti* or secondary love of God, which is more ritualistic and more formal, is inferior. But Ramanuja's *bhakti* is the surging of the soul and the melting of personality in God-love as we hear in the case of Spinoza, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Mirabai and Tukaram. Their *bhakti* was not simply love of God as that of church-men or temple-men. It is a kind of ecstasy in which the personality has lost itself in God-love and God-being. That is *jnana* and that is *bhakti*. So there is no difference between Ramanuja and Sankara in the ultimate reaches. And Bhagavan Sri Krishna's dictum is also of a similar character.

By gradually losing attachment to this obsessional notion that we are this little Mr. or Mrs. Body and that we are located in a part of the physical world called India or America or Japan or Russia, we slowly try to become citizens of a larger dimension which is wider than this earth, perhaps larger than even the solar system and this physical cosmos.

When we enter into the true religious life, we become real children of God.

9. Renunciation

Universality transcends all things. Transcendence does not mean negation of something. We are not rejecting some reality and then going to God. It is not like that. We are acquiring everything that we want in a more abundant manner than we could get otherwise. We are not renouncing the world for reaching to God, as people generally say; you renounce nothing. You are renouncing only the lesser characteristic and the inadequate form of it for the sake of a higher inclusiveness.

There is no such thing as renunciation, if it is to be properly understood. You are renouncing only an inadequacy and not a reality. You can renounce for the sake of God – become a monk and anchorite, and all that. Sometimes the idea is not clear – what are they renouncing? When you say, “I have renounced,” what have you renounced? You cannot renounce a building or a wall or a brick; it is not your property. What are you renouncing when nothing can be regarded as your belonging?

It is only the renunciation of an inadequate idea that you have about things, for the sake of a higher, more adequate achievement. It is a renunciation of a lesser degree of consciousness for the sake of a larger, more inclusive consciousness, so that it is not renunciation at all - it is only a growth into a higher realm. In such renunciation you lose nothing; but, ordinarily, when we speak of renunciation, it looks as if we have lost money, land property, relations, etc. But that is not the correct way of grasping it. Renunciation is detachment of consciousness from every form of its externalisation.

If you have left your home and come here, it doesn't mean that you have renounced it. The thing is still there; it has not gone anywhere else. Your idea about it has to be renounced. The world is nothing but an idea, and a big idea it is. The universe is an idea ultimately – one thought. There are no substances; solid things do not exist. It is only an idea that is operating in the cosmos. Here we are agreeing with what Plato said in one way, that reality is an idea, a universalised consciousness.

But, nobody can swallow this hard truth. People will not understand what you mean by saying that the universe is an idea. A little education along these lines is not enough. People will think that you are talking nonsense, though it is the fact. One thought is there, that's all. There is nothing else anywhere; and That Is. This is what they call "consciousness existence." Thought is *chit-sat*. That is all. And all these hard things like brick and mortar and the entire stellar region, the universe of solidity, melt into 'such stuff as dreams are made of,' as Shakespeare would tell us. All the solidity of the rocky mountains in dream will melt into airy nothing when you wake up. That will happen to you in regard to this world also. All these things will melt into one, single, thought – call it God, if you so like. This is what the Veda says, this is what the Upanishads say, this is what the Gita says, this is what prophets have said, this is what any religion will finally proclaim. "God created the heaven and the earth." says the Genesis. But what was God before He created them? He was Thought, Idea, Consciousness, Being.

You must try to think God minus this world. God must have existed even before creating, and how was He existing? Where was He sitting? He had no place to sit because space was created afterwards. Then where was God before creation? No question – the question cannot be raised at all. It was just Pure Idea. That is God. Call it Consciousness. Once you utter this, you have said everything. Further than that, you cannot speak. Being-Consciousness, *sat-chit*. Thought. Thinking Itself – all these are the messages of our philosophers. One Thought is; One Idea is; One Person is. Let this go deep into your feelings, and you will require nothing else. All shall be well.

10. Asti, Bhati, Priya

There are said to be five characters in all existence *nama, rupa, asti, bhati* and *priya*. *Nama* and *rupa* are name and form. *Asti, bhati* and *priya* mean existence, illumination and the character of pleasurable-ness. Existence, illumination and satisfaction seem to be permeating *nama* and *rupa*, whatever be the place or the time of the *nama* and the *rupa*. We are all constituted of *nama* and *rupa*, name and form. Everyone has a name and a form. There is name-form complex and, therefore, the world is called *nama-rupa-prapanca*, the network of names and forms. But, notwithstanding the fact that we are in a position to perceive only names and forms, and nothing beyond, we are impelled by the urge of something else beyond name and form, which fact comes into relief in our hectic activities of day-to-day life, wherein we express a desire not merely for name and form but for something more than name and form. Why do you act, why do you think, why do you engage yourself in any kind of work? There seems to be a purpose behind all these endeavours, and the purpose is not merely a contact with a name or form, but a utilization of name and form for a different aim altogether. All our activities hinge upon a single objective, that is, relationship with externals, contact with objects, but for a purpose higher than the objects themselves, the putting into use or harnessing the object, including persons, for bringing about an effect which we regard as beneficial to ourselves. This effect is the final objective, and not *nama* and *rupa*. You pursue in this world not some persons and things, but certain effects, consequences, which you want to follow by your contact with persons and things.

If these consequences do not follow, you reject the persons and things. It is not that you want persons or things; you want certain consequences to follow from the contact with persons and things. If they do not follow, you do not want them. Your friends become enemies or at least things of indifference when the consequences desired from them do not follow, and your desires become aversions when the required consequences do not materialise. So, it is not name and form or objects as such that we long for, but a desired consequence. What is that consequence?

The ultimate longing of all aspiring centres is to bring about a release of some tension. The release of tension of any kind is equal to pleasure. You are unhappy when you are in a state of tension, and you are happy when tensions are released. There are various kinds of tensions in life which place one in a state of anxiety and agony. The release of tension brings satisfaction and one works for that satisfaction. There are inner tensions which are of greater consequence than the outer ones – the psychological tensions caused by a variety of circumstances. These circumstances in the psychic set-up of our personality form a network called the *hridaya-granthi*, in the words of the Upanishads. This is the *granthi* of *avidya*, *kama* and *karma* – ignorance, desire and action; this is the tension of *vasanas* or *samskaras*; this is the tension of the sub-conscious or unconscious mind; this is the tension of unfulfilled desires and frustrated feelings. This is ‘personality’ in its essential nature. We are a network of these tensions. This is *jivatva*. It is made up of a group of tensions. That is why no *jiva* can be happy. We are always in a state of anxiety and eagerness

to find the first opportunity to release the tensions. The *jiva* tries to work out a method of release of tensions by what is called fulfillment of desires, because, ultimately these tensions can be boiled down to unfulfilled desires. It appears on the surface that by a fulfillment of the desires the tensions can be released and we can enter into *asti-bhati-priya* by coming in contact with *nama* and *rupa*. It is true that desires have to be fulfilled, and unless they are fulfilled there cannot be release of tension. But we adopt a very wrong method: therefore, we never fulfil our desires completely, at any time, in all the births that we take. The desires cannot be fulfilled by contact with objects, because a contact excites as further desire for a repetition of the contact which, again, in turn, excites an additional desire, and this cycle goes on endlessly – desire for things and things exciting desires. This cycle is the wheel of Samsara. By contact with things, desires are not fulfilled. On the other hand, desires are ignited, as it were, into a state of conflagration by such contact. Desires arise on account of an ignorance of the structure of things. Unless this ignorance is removed, the tension is not going to be released. And, what is this ignorance? The ignorance in the form of the notion that multiplicity is a reality, and that by an aggregate of all the finite things constituting the multiplicity, we can have the infinite satisfaction that we long for. A total of the finites is not the infinite, and therefore contact with finite things cannot bring infinite satisfaction. *Nama-rupa-prapanca* is, therefore, not the way to the realisation of *asti-bhati-priya*, which is what beckons us every day in our activities.

We want perpetual existence. We do not want to die. This is the sense of *astitva*, being, in us. We want to be called intelligent at least. We do not want to be regarded as stupid. This is the urge of *bhatitva* or *chit*, consciousness, in us. And we want happiness and not pain. This is the urge of *priya*, bliss, in us. The urge for perpetual existence, if possible immortal existence, is the urge of *asti* or *sat* – existence. The urge for knowledge, wisdom, illumination, understanding, information, is the urge of *bhati* or *chit* – consciousness. The urge for delight, satisfaction, pleasure is the urge of that infinite delight of existence-consciousness, *priya* or *ananda* – bliss. It is this threefold blend of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss that reveals itself even through *nama* and *rupa*, and it is not the *nama* and the *rupa* or the name and the form that we really want in our life. In our contact with things, or names and forms, we seek *asti*, *bhati* and *priya*. We seek *satchidananda* through *nama-rupa*; we seek Reality in appearance; we seek the Absolute in the relative; we seek Brahman in all creation; we seek Ishvara in the world. That is what we seek. In all our activities, whatever be the work that we do, the purpose behind is the seeking for a final release of all internal tension and an acquisition of unlimited satisfaction.

11. Reincarnation

At the time of death, the individuality does not get dissolved, though the physical constituents may be separated and dissolved. What is it that takes rebirth? It can not be the body, because it is discarded and it is dissolved into the physical elements of which it is composed. It cannot also be the Atman, because the Atman is a Universal Presence which cannot be said to be subject to transformation of any kind, such as transmigration. What else does transmigrate?

The peculiar thing called the individual is neither the body nor the Atman. It is a strange admixture of localised self-affirmation in terms of space and time, and this principle of self-affirmation is impossible to define except as a peculiar pressure-point or force which is generated by the influence of space-time upon consciousness which by itself is indivisible, This point of pressure spatio-temporally occasioned is in fact the centre of what is known as the psyche, often called the mind, sometimes known as the Chitta or the Antahkarana, in the Sanskrit language.

This pressure of consciousness causing the individual self-sense may be broadly understood as having three levels of empirical expression, viz., the conscious, the sub-conscious and the unconscious. Only the conscious level operates when a person is awake, the sub-conscious operates in dream, and the unconscious in deep sleep. The conscious impulses and activities of the individual are limited expressions of the desires which seek to fulfil themselves by way of contact with sense objects. When the pressure of desires is too much and they cannot be easily fulfilled under conditions prevailing in the waking state,

they operate as reveries in dream as a sort of satisfaction of strong impulses incapable of operation during waking state. But the desires of an individual are so immense and complicated that their satisfaction cannot be really achieved in a single life. Such unfulfilled longings get wound up in unconscious states, a specimen of which is deep sleep. It is the power of unfulfilled desires that acts like a projectile and drives like a rocket this complex known as the individual pressure-point in the direction of manufacturing a new apparatus for their fulfilment under expected conditions, this new apparatus being called the newly formed body. Here is the interesting background of what is known as rebirth.

As a realised soul has no desires, it has no rebirth. Hence the passing away of an ordinary person and the disappearance of a person like Lord Krishna have nothing in common. The energies which are elemental that go to contribute to the formation of a new body in the case of an individual with unfulfilled desires do not operate in the case of a realised soul, because rebirth is caused by the magnetic pull exerted by the desiring centre of consciousness upon the physical elements, the forces of Nature outside. Such a desire being absent in realised souls, they have no rebirth. They merge into Universal Being. The legacy which acts as the link between the here and the hereafter is desire, which causes reincarnation. The legacy so-called is a mysterious admixture of consciousness and desire, which is the causative factor behind rebirth. It is neither the physical body formed of the five elements, nor the Atman which is all-pervading. It is not true that in death the apparatus

through which thinking and feeling act is destroyed; it continues in spite of the body being destroyed. The screen of the television which projects the picture of individuality is the point of consciousness-desire, explained above, and it is not destroyed when the body is destroyed. It is true that in a way, our waking life is also a reflection of some other anterior existence, which we do not remember now, since we are now in this world in a different space-time continuum, totally different from the space-time complex of the previous life. It has to be reiterated that death does not destroy the link between this life and the other life, because death is only of the physical body, and everyone knows well that a person is not exhausted by the physical frame only. There is something more in man than what appears to the eyes, or to any sense organ.

The modern theory of evolution from matter to plant, from plant to life, from life to mind and from mind to intellect is but a corroboration of there being a continuous link from one state of life to another. Else, there would be no evolution and there would be no meaning in any form of life at all.

The theory of *karma*, or the principle of reaction, which conditions the notions of good and bad etc., is not supposed to apply to the sub-human species since they do not have the self-consciousness of personal agency in action and are just guided by the natural forces of evolution. Suffering cannot be attributed to an individual as long as it is free from personal agency in action. The sub-human species evolve in the same way as there is rise of life from matter to the vegetable kingdom, etc., as mentioned. This is

not caused by *karma*, but by the very pressure of universal evolution.

12. Where is the Soul?

There was an old lady who could not see properly. She was almost blind. She was living in a small house without light, in a village with no electricity. She was poor and was living by sewing cloth with a needle. That was her profession. One day she lost that needle. It fell inside somewhere, and because it was dark, she could not see, as the eyes also were not good. She went outside into the bright sun, and started searching for the needle. Some people who came that way asked her what she was searching. She said that she was searching for the needle that she dropped somewhere. "Where did you drop it" they asked.

"I dropped it inside," she said.

"But why are you searching for it outside, in the sun?"

"Because inside there is no light. Outside there is light, so I am searching for it here," she answered.

This is the story of the soul. It is lost somewhere, but the searching is elsewhere. Where do we search? We look for it in enjoyments of life in living a comfortable existence; in trying to lengthen our physical life; in making more and more money; in increasing name, fame, authority, and power; in becoming king, minister, dictator, and all that. This is the way we try to find the soul, but we have lost it somewhere else.

This whole world of perception is the light of the sun, and we are searching for the soul by moving from place to place, here and there, like the old lady who searched for the needle in the light of the sun; but the needle is inside, in the dark corner of one's own heart.

But, we are not finding it in the dark corner. It is dark; there is no light inside. In the heart, there is no light. The light is outside in the sense world. We have electric light, sunlight, moonlight and starlight. So, why not enjoy the light that is already there, and search for the soul outside? Thus, you go everywhere, travel the whole world twenty times, and try to find the soul, like the lady searching for the needle outside, but it is in the dark corner of the heart. You can meditate on the soul.

13. Archetype/Prototype

Do you know what is archetype? The archetype is the original of a thing. The original is called the “archetype” and the shadow of it, reflection of it, or image of it, is sometimes called “prototype”. Often people consider the prototype as the original, but in as much as the archetype is to be considered as the original, you may regard the reflection of it as the prototype.

Suppose you see yourself in water. There are two persons there: one is yourself standing on the bank of the river of water, and something is seen reflected in the water. You are the archetype, you are the original. And that which is seen in the water is the shadowy duplicate. You are now here as a reflection of what you are really as an archetype in heaven. Your real nature is still in heaven only; it is not in this world. That is why you are pulled up every minute to something beyond yourself. Every minute you are unhappy; every second you are unhappy in this world. There is not a single moment when you can be wholly secure or entirely happy. The reason is that you are not in yourself here; you are in another place, and that locality (where you are really) pulls you with such intensity that you cannot have a moment's rest here in this prototype existence, the shadow.

The archetypal existence of all things, even of a little leaf in a tree, is in heaven. Or to make it more clear, you may give the analogy of the stone structure being formed of molecules, the molecule of atoms, the atom of electrons, or something finer. The invisible subtle inward power is the heaven of the stone. The stone is the earth, and the rarefied form of it inside (which appears as the stone, and which is its reality) is the archetype. There are realms of being to

which you belong actually in different levels of association by ascent and descent. You are not entirely here. You are now only a fragment of what you really are; and even that fragment is not a real one, it is a reflected fragment. Therefore, there is a dual defect in the human personality. One defect is that it is not the original. The original is somewhere else; therefore, it is restless. And even as a fragment it is not genuine, being a reflection.

You are not just a part of the real substance; if that were the case, you would be a little god in this world. People say that man is part of God. It is not so exactly. It is not so simple like that; otherwise, a man would be a little god moving in this world. He is not a little god, he is something totally different. He is a topsy-turvy reflection, as your reflection in the water is topsy-turvy. So many difficulties are there. Firstly, it is a reflection, and therefore, there is no substance. Secondly, it is not even a correct reflection; it is topsy-turvy. You see the up as down and the down as up. That is why in this reflected condition you see the world as outside you, though the world is not really outside.

14. Ontological Existence

The value of a thing cannot be appreciated unless the mind is on a level equal to the value of the object which is to be evaluated. I told you the example of a gold necklace put on a cow's neck. It does not mean that the gold necklace has no value, but the cow cannot appreciate it. You cannot want a thing unless you are needing it. If your needs are already attended to by other means, you will not ask for something irrelevant.

The mind which is involved in the physical body and social relations requires a diet which is physical and social. Unfortunately for us, God is neither physical nor social. Our needs are physical and social at present – to some extent, psychological. God is none of these. How can God attract us? If you are not merely a physical entity, not a social unit, or merely a mind that thinks, but an ontological existence, then you will not have such a problem, doubt or fear.

“Ontological” means concerning “pure being”. One cannot be satisfied by anything but ontological existence. Only then love for God and need for God is felt. Your ontological existence is buried deep under the debris of physicality and sociality and psychological and political associations and that which is buried cannot act. So we do not feel the need for that which can be felt only by that which is deep within. All present we are not wholly ourselves; we are only partially ourselves. We are on the tip of the iceberg of our personality, and we are thinking through that tip on the top; and the larger base, which is heavy, is beneath the conscious level.

Our real personality is deeper than the conscious level, but we live only in the conscious level, and therefore, we are really not living in ourselves. Hence, we do not want God at present. This is the problem. But when you go deep beneath your conscious level, beneath your subconscious and unconscious also, further down, deeper than the unconscious even, you enter the metaphysical level, the ontological being.

Go deep, deeper than what you seem to be. What is inside the body? You will find the mind. What is inside the mind? Intellect. What is inside the intellect? In deep sleep, the body is not there, the mind is not there, the intellect is not there. But are you there? In deep sleep; are you there, or are you not there? You are there. Have you a doubt? Are you existing in the state of deep sleep, or are you not existing? Are you alive or dead in deep sleep? Very alive.

How do you know that you are alive? Who told you? When you had no consciousness of your existence in sleep, how do you make a statement that you are alive there? It is a hearsay, or real fact? Now you are stumbling on something which is the mystery of your being. That which you were in the state of deep sleep is your real personality – not intellect, not mind, not the senses, not the body, not relations, not friends, not enemies, not gold, not silver. Without anything you existed, and let us know what it was that existed at that time. That is your ontological status.

15. The Balance of Nature

Spanish Visitor: There is so much suffering, and struggle; a war is going on because of egoism, power, pride...

Swamiji: You see, sometimes you sneeze, sometimes you have pain in the stomach, sometimes you have fever; are these good things or bad things? These things are not called good things, but why do they happen, if they are not good? Why do people vomit sometimes? Why do these things happen?

The reason why these things happen is also the reason why the other things happen, to which you made reference. It is a cosmic dislocation making internal adjustments. These things, sneezing, stomach-ache, fever etc., are internal adjustments of the body to maintain its balance. It passes through certain peculiar painful adjustments for the purpose of maintaining a balance of health. Otherwise, unnecessarily, why should you vomit and all that? No purpose is served. Nature maintains a kind of balance where certain extremes take place, which maintain the balance.

When you eat too much, you will have a loose motion. Now, it is not a bad thing that is happening, though it is certainly not a happy thing. It is necessary for the maintenance of the health of the body. You have done some extreme thing by overeating. You have walked in the rain, which is an extreme thing that you have done, so you developed sneezing and fever. You have not slept properly, because you travelled too much for days together.

Mild dislocations are set right by mild adjustments. Serious dislocations may lead to surgical operations. Then,

destruction, flood, earthquake, war, and wholesale wiping out of humanity in certain parts also can take place, as when some extreme illness has crept into the system, some limb of the body may have to be severed by amputation. It is not a bad thing, because it is necessary for maintaining the balance of your system. It is a painful thing, but it is a necessary thing, also.

You have to see as Nature sees, not as one person sees. A limb that is severed by amputation may not like to be amputated, but you must not see it from the point of view of the limb only. You must see from the point of view of the whole organism, then, you will see the necessity for it, though it is a very unpleasant thing. So, unpleasant things are not always unnecessary things.

We cannot have a cosmic eye, and we cannot think as Nature thinks. The total eye of Nature alone can see the total need within its constitution, which includes people like us. We are also a part of Nature only. So, when it does something for maintaining its own internal constitutional balance, and it does it for its own purpose, which is the well-being of the whole, we as isolated individuals, who cannot think as Nature as a total thinks, find that some odd thing is taking place; it looks like it is not very good.

Nature never does a bad thing. There is no such thing as a bad thing for Nature. It looks unpleasant, because we are outside Nature, psychologically. If we are one with Nature, we will see nothing improper taking place. We are looking at things by standing outside nature. That is why we cannot see things properly and impartially.

We are parts of Nature. Every one of us is a part of Nature. And every part is supposed to be in harmony with the whole. A part should not be in disharmony with the whole; otherwise, the whole will take action against the part, and set it right by doing something, which is what I mentioned in some detail, and that something is the thing that you see with your eyes.

We are in disharmony with Nature, disharmonious with God Himself. We are asserting our individuality too much, which Nature abhors. No limb of the body can assert independence totally out of harmony with the organism; then, pain will start, aches and all sorts of illness will arise. That illness is rectified by Nature's medical activity; the medical activity may be bitter medicine, or it may be a surgical action, which it does, as all these events that you see in the world taking place. It can be a thunder, it can be a flood, it can be anything; it can do whatever it likes for its purpose.

In the same way as you do not complain against anything that is happening within yourself, you will not complain against anything happening in the world, if you are one with the total whole. You do not go on complaining against yourself. You know the reason for it, you do not complain, you simply see that it is rectified. Similarly you will not make complaints against anything if you are one with Nature, and if you can think through the mind of Nature and see it with the eyes of Nature. Now we are not able to do that; we are thinking individually, so we do not understand what is happening. The lower whole has to be sacrificed for the higher whole.

16. Spirituality and Materialism

It seems that the world is moving away from Spirituality towards materialism. Will we be able to reverse this trend? Why this has happened?

The need for material prosperity and acquisition, when it is over-emphasised, takes a person in the direction mentioned. Does it mean, then, at least from the point of view of such people who are in this condition, that working for material comfort and acquisition is more important than working for the spirit? If anyone thinks like that then there is something basically wrong in the very outlook of that person. He is totally misconstruing the very structure of life. To put it shortly, he requires a fresh education altogether.

India has the blessing of God, somehow. It has not died like other nations and it does not appear that it is going to die easily. India has suffered due to one mistake that it has committed. It lost its independence for some centuries because it discredited the value of earthly existence, and gave too much credit to a transcendental existence. That is, your love for God was not equally commensurate with your duty to the world. This is what Sri Aurobindo says (in his book 'Foundation of Indian Culture'). So the worldly forces attacked, and God did not come to help because people segmented God Himself into two parts – the Creator and the created. The country suffered economically, militarily, and even in its concept of spirituality. Yet, in its aspiration for the transcendent, though it was not conceived properly in an integral fashion (it was segmented because it was separated from world's existence), the intensity of the longing for the transcendent was such that its soul is still

surviving, though economically, and from the point of view of defence forces, it is not possessed of much that can be admired.

Most of the religious people in India asserted the importance of the transcendent Creator, and it was not so easy to bring together into a state of harmony the world and God. The two always appeared to be different things, and they will appear to be so always, as long as the mortal brain thinks in a mortal manner. The total thought of the integration of Being, wherein the Creator and the created become one – that was the true spirituality of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. But nobody in India lives in the spirit of the Upanishads or the Bhagavad Gita.

All that you call Hinduism today is conditioned by the dictates of the Puranas and the Epics, with a lot of ritual and mythology. The One God has become the many gods, and we worship all the gods, not necessarily knowing that all these gods are aspects of the One God. The concept of the One Absolute cannot easily enter the mind of the human being because of the dichotomy created in the mind between man and the world, and between world and God. At one time only the extra-cosmic Soul was emphasised, and the body was neglected. Now, we are taking care of the body very well. We have all the requirements for it. But, the soul is perhaps going under the cloud, which we hope will riot be for all time to come.

Mostly, people who are not properly oriented are enamoured of the external facilities available by contact with a Western way of thinking. This overemphasis that they are laying in their life is due to a misconstruing of the

nature of the aim of life, which should not happen, especially in an Indian, who is supposed to be living in the cradle of ancient culture.

Externals cannot make a human being. It is the total that makes you what you are. I do not say that external facilities and comforts are unnecessary, but you are not made up of mere externals. Though externals are necessary, they are only an appendage to your total personality. Emphasis excessively laid on one aspect of the personality alone will be like thinking of one side of human nature and completely ignoring the other side.

You are a physical body, a social unit, a political individual, a biological structure, a psychic entity, and intellect, a reason, a spirit. All these aspects of the human personality have to be fed properly with their own required diet by what we call real education. Any aspect which is ignored will set up a reaction and make life miserable.

Education, which is actually the way in which you live in this world, should be the procedure that you adopt every day, every minute, every moment of time, taking into consideration every aspect of your relationship to the world. This is to see that you are integrally growing from the lower level of your personality to the higher dimensions of it, until you reach the highest dimension of your being, which is Universal Existence. This is my concept of real education, and of the aim of all life.

Swami Sivananda's dream was the integration of the human personality for the purpose of social integration and finally, what you may regard as cosmic integration – which is virtually the realisation of God Almighty. From a lower

level, the human personality has to be taken up to the higher level, and then the highest integration, which is universal. He worked for that, and the entire mission of the Divine Life Society is centred in that noble objective.