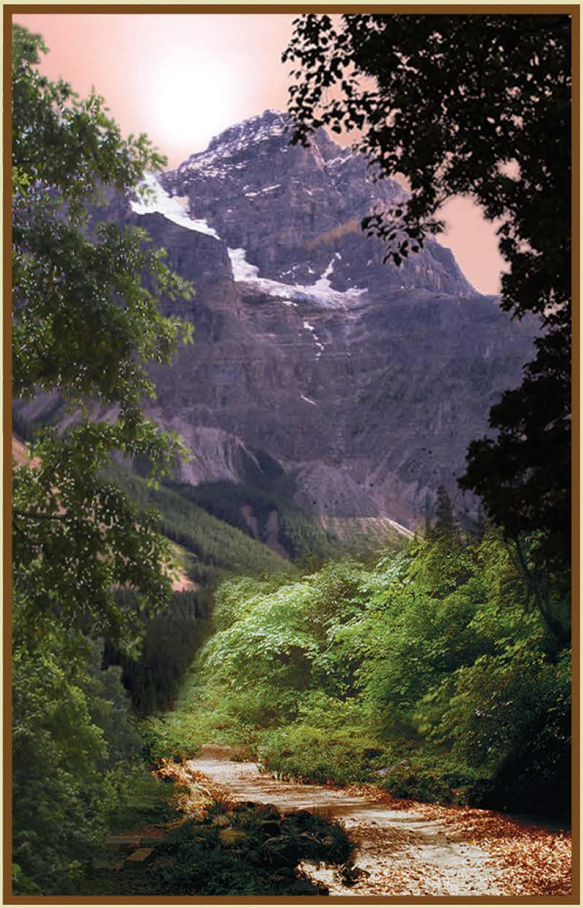
THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF YOGA

An Exposition of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

Volume I



SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF YOGA

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AN EXPOSITION OF PATANJALI'S YOGA SUTRAS

VOLUME I - SAMADHI PADA

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

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FOREWORD

This is a compilation of the 110 lectures that Swami Krishnananda delivered on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali between March and August in 1976. Patanjali's Yoga Sutras are a manual on mind control, meditation and mental discipline—a manual for spiritual freedom. Crisp and pithy in rendition, the Sutras have an aphoristic quality and urge deeper reflection and dedicated application.

Across various philosophies the denotation of yoga varies. Patanjali uses the term 'yoga' to denote a complete cessation of mental modifications so that consciousness rests within itself in the state of *moksha* or liberation. This teaching has been delivered through emphasis on practice rather than mere philosophy, and this is verily a manual for us to operate the mind and thus our life.

The Yoga Sutras are divided into four *padas* or chapters. The first chapter, the Samadhi Pada on which this volume is based, focuses on concentration of the mind and the practical aspects necessary for attaining *samadhi*, or meditative absorption. The second chapter, the Sadhana Pada, is about attaining and holding that single-pointedness through reining in the agitations of the mind by cultivating dispassion, discrimination and dedication. The third chapter, the Vibhuti Pada, focuses on the technique of *samyama* which is the combination of concentration, meditation and communion for the liberation of the spirit, while the fourth chapter, the Kaivalya Pada, is a metaphysical disquisition which deals

with various subjects as a sort of explanation of some of the themes dealt with in the earlier chapters.

It is fitting to draw the reader's attention to the clarity and simplicity with which Swamiji Maharaj comments on these Sutras. Swami Krishnananda was the living embodiment of that awareness to which the Yoga Sutras and all spiritual texts guide. It is commonly said that Sanskrit, the language of the gods, is by far the only language that has transcended, to some extent, the limitations of vivid expression and bears in it the ability to express the nuances of spiritual processes and the resultant experiences that the great sages and masters have experienced and conveyed to us. That Swamiji is able to bend the limited English language to yield to his knowledge is a completely humbling experience.

These Yoga Sutras of Patanjali spoken by Swami Krishnananda are being made available to the public for the first time. It is our desire to retain the original lectures in their spoken form as much as possible. The are some unique twists of phrases and application of words that are uniquely Swamij's in origin and it has been sought to allow those to be as they were intended, without undermining the respect to the English language. Consequently the lectures have been edited in very few places to render them the way Swamiji spoke them.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

October 30th, 2006

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THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF YOGA

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VOLUME I

SAMADHI PADA

Chapter 1

THE AIM OF YOGA

The whole of our life is a successive series of efforts—whether it is the effort that I put forth, or that which someone else puts forth. All these efforts have a common background, although the efforts of human beings are variegated and there is also an apparent diversity of the aims behind the efforts. The farmer's effort is towards producing harvest in the field; the industrialist's effort is towards production of goods and such other items in his field; the effort of the schoolmaster or the professor is in another direction, and so on and so forth. We have an apparent diversity of aims, motivated by a diversity of efforts.

But this is a great illusion that is before us, and we live in a world of illusions which we mistake for realities. The illusion arises on account of our inability to see beyond a certain limit of the horizon of our mental perceptions. The farmer forgets that the production of the harvest in the field is not the only aim, or rather the ultimate aim, of his efforts. It has another aim altogether connected with certain others, and so on and so forth, in an endless chain which cannot easily come within the comprehension of an untutored mind. The stomach does not eat for its satisfaction. We know very well why the stomach eats. The stomach may say "I eat", but it does not eat; the eater is somebody else, though it is thrust into the stomach. The legs do not walk for their own sake. What do the legs gain by walking? They are walking for some other purpose —somebody else's purpose, not their own. Nor do the eyes gain anything by seeing; the eyes see for somebody else.

Likewise, there is an inherent and underlying basic aim which is transcendent to the immediate purpose visible in front of any particular individual who puts forth effort, just as the legs do not walk for their own sake, the eyes do not see for their own sake, the stomach does not eat for its own sake, and so on, and they seem to be functioning for some other purpose. They can miss this purpose, and then there is what we call dismemberment or disintegration of the personality. When the aim is missed, the effort loses its motive power and it becomes a fruitless effort, because an effort that has missed its aim cannot be regarded as a meaningful effort. Also, it may be possible that we may be conscious of an immediate aim before the effort, but the aims that are further behind or ahead may not be visible to our eyes.

I will ask a question. We eat food every day so that we may be alive. But why do we want to be alive? Is there a purpose behind it? This question we cannot answer. Here is a question which is beyond ordinary logic. Why should we work so hard, and eat, and maintain ourselves, and exist? After all, we are doing all this for existing. Why do we want to exist? Suppose we do not exist; what is the harm? These kinds of questions will be pressing themselves forward when we go deep into the aims of the different activities of our life. Finally, when we press the aim to its logical limits, we will find that the human brain is not meant to understand it.

We are limited individuals, with limited capacities of understanding, and we can have only limited aims in our life—but we have unlimited desires. This is a contradiction. How can unlimited desires be fulfilled with limited aims? Life is a contradiction; it has begun as a contradiction, and it ends as a contradiction. This is the reason why no one has slept peacefully, or woken up peacefully, or lives peacefully. There is a subtle contradiction in sleep and a pressing contradiction when we wake up, and an annoying contradiction throughout

our daily activities, so that there is only contradiction. There is nothing else in life; and all effort is meant to remove this contradiction. But if the very effort at removing contradiction is itself involved in a contradiction, then we are in a mess, and this is exactly what has happened to Tom, Dick, Harry—whoever it is.

The whole difficulty is that the structure of life is arranged in such a pattern that the depth of human understanding is incapable of touching its borders. We are not simply living life—we are identical with life itself. One of the most difficult things to define is life itself. We cannot say what life is. It is only a word that we utter without any clear meaning before our eyes. It is an enigma, a mystery—a mystery which has caught hold of us, which extracts the blood out of us every day, which keeps us restless and tantalises us, promising us satisfaction but never giving it. Life is made in such a way that there are promises which are never fulfilled. Every object in the world promises satisfaction, but it never gives satisfaction—it only promises. Until death it will go on promising, but it will give nothing, and so we will die in the same way as we were born. Because we have been dying without having the promise fulfilled, we will take rebirth so that we will see if the promise can be fulfilled, and the same process is continued, so that endlessly the chain goes on in a hopeless manner. This vicious circle of human understanding, or rather human incapacity to understand, has arisen on account of the isolation of the human individual from the pattern of life.

This is a defect not only in the modern systems of education, but also in spiritual practices—in every walk of life, in every blessed thing. When the individual who is living life has cut himself or herself off from the significance of life, then life becomes a contradiction and a meaningless pursuit of the will-o'-the-wisp. Why do we cut ourselves off from the

meaning of life and then suffer like this? This is the inherent weakness of the sensory functions of the individual. The senses are our enemies. Why do we call them enemies? It is because they tell us that we are isolated from everything else. This is the essence of sensory activity. There is no connection between ourselves and others, and we can go on fighting with everybody. This is what the senses tell us. But yet, they are double-edged swords; they tell us two things at the same time. On one side they tell us that everything is outside us, and we are disconnected from everybody else and everything in this world. But on the other side they say that we are bound to grab things, connect ourselves with things, obtain things, and maintain relationship with things. Now, these two things cannot be done simultaneously. We cannot disconnect ourselves from things and also try to connect ourselves with them for the purpose of exploiting them, with an intention to utilise them for our individual purposes. Here again is an instance of contradiction. On one side we disconnect ourselves from persons and things; on the other side we want to connect ourselves with persons and things for our own purposes.

The ancient sages and masters, both of the East and the West, have deeply pondered over this question, and one of the most magnificent proclamations of a solution to these problems is found in the Vedas. Among the many aspects of this solution that are presented before us by these mighty revelations, I can quote one which to my mind appears to be a final solution—at least, I have taken it as a solution to all my problems—which comes in the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda. In all the four Vedas it occurs: *tam eva viditvā atimṛtyum eti nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya.* This is a great proclamation. What is the meaning of this proclamation? There is no way of escape from this problem, says this mantra, other than knowing 'That'.

This is a very simple aphoristic precept that is before us: knowing 'That' is the solution, and we have no other solution. Now, knowing 'That'—what is this 'That'?

Knowing has been generally regarded as a process of understanding and accumulation of information, gathering intellectual or scientific definitive descriptions in respect of things. These days, this is what we call education. We gather definitions of things and try to understand the modes of their apparent functions in temporal life. This is what we call knowing, ordinarily speaking. I know that the sun is rising. This is a kind of knowledge. What do I mean by this knowledge? I have only a functional perception of a phenomenon that is taking place which I regard as the rise of the sun. This is not real knowledge. When I say that I know that the sun is rising, I cannot say that I have a real knowledge of the sun, because, first of all, the sun is not rising; it is a mistake of my senses. Secondly, the very idea of rising itself is a misconception in the mind. Unless I am static and immovable, I cannot know that something is moving. So when I say that the sun is moving, I mean that I am not moving; it is understood there. But it is not true that I am not moving. I am also in a state of motion for other reasons which are not easily understandable. So it is not possible for a moving body to say that something else is moving. Nothing that is in a state of motion can say that something else is in motion. There is a relative motion of things, and so perception of the condition of any object ultimately would be impossible. This is a reason why scientific knowledge fails.

All knowledge gathered through observations, whether through a microscope or telescope, in laboratories, etc., is ultimately invalid because it presupposes the static existence of the observer himself, the scientist's capacity to impartially observe and to unconditionally understand the conditions of what he observes—very strange indeed, really. How does the

scientist take for granted or imagine that he is an unconditioned observer and everything that he observes is conditioned? It is not true, because the observing scientist is as much conditioned by factors as the object that he observes. So, who is to observe the conditions of his own observing apparatus: his body, his senses—the eyes, for example, and even the mind, which is connected to the body? Inasmuch as the observing scientist—the observing individual, the knowing person—is as much conditioned and limited as the object that is observed or seen, it is not possible to have ultimately valid knowledge in this world.

All our knowledge is insufficient, inadequate, temporal, empirical—ultimately useless. It does not touch the core of life. Therefore, we will find that any learned person, whatever be the depth of his learning, whatever be the greatness of his scholarship, is miserable in the end. The reason is that life is different from this kind of knowledge. It is an all-comprehensive organic being in which the knowing individual is unfortunately included, a fact which misses the attention of every person. It is not possible for anyone to observe or see or know anything, inasmuch as the conditions which describe the object of observation also condition the subject of observation. The Veda points this out in a mystical formula: *tam eva viditvā atimṛtyum eti nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya.* Now, when it is said, by knowing 'That', every problem is solved, the Veda does not mean knowing this object or that object, or this person or that person, or this thing or that thing, or this subject or that subject—it is nothing of that kind. It is a 'That' with a capital 'T', which means to say, the true object of knowledge. The true object of knowledge is to be known, and when 'That' is known, all problems are solved.

What are problems? A problem is a situation that has arisen on account of the irreconcilability of one person, or one

thing, with the status and condition of another person, or another thing. I cannot reconcile my position with your position; this is a problem. You cannot reconcile your position with mine; this is a problem. Why should there be such a condition? How is it that it is not possible for me to reconcile myself with you? It is not possible because there is no clear perception of my relationship with you. I have a misconceived idea of my relationship with you and, therefore, there is a misconceived adjustment of my personality with yours, and a misconception cannot solve a problem. The problem is nothing but this misconception—nothing else. The irreconcilability of one thing with another arises on account of the basic difficulty I mentioned, that the person who wishes to bring about this reconciliation, or establish a proper relationship, misses the point of his own vital connection—underline the word 'vital' —with the object or the person with which, or with whom, this reconciliation is to be effected. Inasmuch as this kind of knowledge is beyond the purview or capacity of the ordinary human intellect, the knowledge of the Veda is regarded as supernormal, superhuman: *apaurusheya*—not created or manufactured by an individual. This is not knowledge that has come out of reading books. This is not ordinary educational knowledge. It is a knowledge which is vitally and organically related to the fact of life. I am as much connected with the fact of life as you are, and so in my observation and study and understanding of you, in my relationship with you, I cannot forget this fact. The moment I disconnect myself from this fact of life which is unanimously present in you as well as in me, I miss the point, and my effort becomes purposeless.

We are gradually led by this proclamation of the Veda into a tremendous vision of life which requires of us to have a superhuman power of will to grasp the interrelationship of things. This difficulty of grasping the meaning of the interrelationship of things is obviated systematically, stage by

stage, gradually, by methods of practice. These methods are called yoga—the practice of yoga. I have placed before you, perhaps, a very terrible picture of yoga; it is not as simple as one imagines. It is not a simple circus-master's feat, either of the body or the mind, but a superhuman demand of our total being. Mark this definition of mine: a superhuman demand which is made of our total being—not an ordinary human demand of a part of our being, but of our total being. From that, a demand is made by the entire structure of life. The total structure of life requires of our total being to be united with it in a practical demonstration of thought, speech and action —this is yoga. If this could be missed, and of course it can easily be missed as it is being done every day, then every effort, from the smallest to the biggest, becomes a failure. All our effort ends in no success, because it would be like decorating a corpse without a soul in it. The whole of life would look like a beautiful corpse with nicely dressed features, but it has no vitality, essence or living principle within it. Likewise, all our activities would look wonderful, beautiful, magnificent, but lifeless; and lifeless beauty is no beauty. There must be life in it—only then has it a meaning. Life is not something dead; it is quite opposite of what is dead. We can bring vitality and life into our activity only by the introduction of the principle of yoga.

Yoga is not a technique of *sannyasins* or monks, of mystics or monastic disciples—it is a technique of every living being who wishes to succeed in life. Without the employment of the technique of yoga, no effort can be successful. Even if it is a small, insignificant act like cooking food, sweeping the floor, washing vessels, whatever it is—even these would be meaningless and a boredom, a drudgery and a stupid effort if the principle of yoga is not applied.

In short, I may conclude by saying that happiness, joy, success, or the discovery of the significance of things, including the significance of one's own life and the life of everyone, would not be possible of achievement if the basic structural fundamentals are missed in life and we emphasise only the outer aspects—which are only the rim of the body of life whose vital soul we are unable to perceive, because we do not have the instrument to perceive the soul of life. We have the instruments, called the senses, to perceive the body of life, but the soul of life we cannot perceive, because while the senses can perceive the bodies and the things outside, the soul of things can be perceived only by the soul. It is the soul that sees the soul of things.

When my soul can visualise your soul, then we become really friends; otherwise, we are not friends. Any amount of roundtable conferences of individuals with no soulful connection will not lead to success. Ultimately, success is the union of souls; and yoga aims, finally, at the discovery of the Universal Soul, about which I shall speak in some detail later on.

Chapter 2

THE FOUNDATION OF THE DISCIPLINE IN YOGA PRACTICE

Once upon a time, people held the conviction that parallel lines can never meet. But today, some extraordinary people say that under extraordinary conditions parallel lines can meet. Also once upon a time, Euclidian geometricians, the geometricians of the world, were cocksure that the three angles of a triangle make two right angles, and that nobody can controvert this truth. But today, this is not regarded as ultimately true. Under other conditions than conceivable by the ordinary mind, the three angles of a triangle need not make two right angles. Likewise, yoga is something which will take us by surprise and require of us to cast aside our usual workaday notions—even the notion of God, the notion of things, and the world, and persons around. When yoga comes in its true form, it will be a marvel to the tradition-ridden mind. We will be required to cast aside all the ideas of God which we have been holding in our minds up to this time. We will be required to cast aside our idea of society and the world. We may be required to dispense with the idea of our own person also. Whatever we have been regarding as worthwhile will become worthless before this great knowledge. Whatever has been regarded as usual, ethical and moral may become meaningless before this great requirement. Whatever we have been regarding as sacred will become absolutely devoid of significance before it. All this will come, one day or the other, before the seeking soul.

Nobody imagined that the earth goes around the sun. It is difficult to imagine that the earth goes around the sun.

Everybody thinks that the sun is going around the earth because we can see the sun moving; so naturally, why should not the sun move? Can we not believe our eyes? And may I ask a question to you? If you cannot believe your eyes and say that the sun is moving, how can you believe anything else in this world, including myself sitting here and yourself sitting here? If you cannot believe one thing, well, perhaps the same rule may apply to many other things. If we cannot believe our eyes for a commonly accepted phenomenon like the rise and set of the sun every day, how can we believe that there is a tree in front of us, or there are people in front of us, or there is anything at all meaningful in front of us?

Why I state all these things is because we have been rooted in prejudices—ethical and moral prejudices, social prejudices, personal prejudices, philosophical prejudices, and religious prejudices. We are born in prejudice and we will die in prejudice. Yoga is a cleansing medium which will rid us of all this dirt of prejudice. Even the prejudice of the most sacred and holy has to be cast aside.

I told you even the idea of God may have to be thrown away when true yoga comes in front of you. You may be wondering how I can cast out God. Well, you are not casting out God; your idea of God must go because yoga has come, and must come, to give you the necessary medicine to cure the illness of the soul. The soul's illness is more terrible and more difficult to understand than the illness of the body or any other type of malady.

In the Katha Upanishad, the great master says that this knowledge cannot be imparted by an ordinary person. Rather, a person cannot speak this knowledge. The person who teaches this, or expounds this knowledge, cannot be regarded as a person at all—*ananya-prokte gatir atra nāsty aṇīyān hy atarkyam aṇupramāṇāt* (Katha I.2.8). Extremely subtle is this point, beyond the comprehension of even the subtlest

understanding. Human thought cannot comprehend it and, therefore, human beings cannot teach it. Even one who receives this knowledge, a disciple, cannot be regarded as a human being, really speaking. Neither is the teacher a human being, nor is the disciple a human being when we come to the actual point on hand.

Yoga is a superhuman principle working for a superhuman purpose, through a superhuman medium. We cease to be ordinary persons before this masterly science. When we enter the field of this knowledge of the ultimate science of the mystery of life, we do not enter it as a man or a woman; we do not enter it as a human being at all. We enter it as a principle. We know that there is a great difference between a person and a principle. We are always fond of persons and not principles because we cannot see principles; we see only persons and things. But persons and things do not exist, to tell the truth. It is principles that exist. It is a law that exists. It is an order of things which ultimately is the constituting factor of even things. We are told even today that things do not exist, but only forces exist. What we call things and persons are only forces. There is no such thing as things and persons. But yet, we are wedded to this notion of persons and things to such an extent that we will die hard, indeed, in clinging to this notion of persons, things, and located objects. There are neither located objects nor persons and things —there are only powers, significances, meanings, which are impersonal ultimately and not abstract in the sense of what our understanding may regard as abstract.

To us, the concrete is that which we can sense—what we can touch is the concrete, and what we cannot touch, or cannot see, is abstract. This is not true. On the other hand, under certain conditions it will be seen that what we cannot sense is the real. What we sense is not the real. What we touch, what we see, is only a reaction produced by the operation of the

forces in a particular manner. Can we regard a reaction as a substance? The tangibility of an object, the visibility of things, cannot be regarded as substantial from its own, or their own, point of view. These things are illusions in the sense that they are certain experiences caused by contact of certain types of located force with certain other types of force in the world. Yoga now comes as the revealing science which opens up the portals of a knowledge that is super-mundane.

As it was said, usually yoga is defined as 'union', and we are, again, traditionally bound to the idea that union means one thing coming in contact with another thing; but, no such thing is yoga. It is not one thing coming in contact with another thing. It is a union in the sense of transcending the lower in the higher. A dream-object getting united with the waking consciousness cannot be regarded as a union of one thing with another thing. It is an overcoming of the impediments to a real expansion of consciousness. It is impossible for two things to come together in real union, because that which is dissimilarly constituted cannot come in contact with another thing which is also characterised by conditions different from its own constitution. We cannot come in contact even with God if our nature is different from that of God, because the principle is that dissimilar features cannot unite. If our characters or features are different entirely from those of God, there is no question—there cannot be any possibility—of our uniting ourselves with God. That there is such a chance, that such a possibility seems to be there, implies and ought to indicate that there is implanted in one's own heart and soul something which is characteristic of God Himself. It is very strange, indeed, to understand this. So, it is not real union even with God. It is a manifestation of the potentiality that is in one's own self.

Lastly, we may say that it is a union in the sense of a child uniting itself with the adult that it is going to be. When a baby

becomes an adult, can we say that the baby has united itself with the adult? Is there union of the baby with the adult? It is nothing of the kind. There is only a growth and a maturity—an expansion and a becoming of a more profound reality. That is what is going to happen in yoga. We are not coming in contact with anything; we are growing into a wider perspective of our own lives and becoming something larger, not in the sense of an absolutely new thing altogether, but that which is already rooted in our own selves, like a seed becoming a large banyan tree. The seed does not unite itself with the banyan tree. There is no union; it has become the banyan because it is the banyan. So likewise, we become the Reality because we are the Reality.

This is an introductory remark that I make, which is usually regarded as startling to common understanding. But, all medicines are bitter. They do not come as honey and milk, because they are forces which are intended to rectify a deep-rooted, erroneous thinking and, therefore, a hard effort is necessary to become ready for the reception of this knowledge. Apart from the actual realisation or experience, even to be prepared to receive this knowledge we have to undergo a tremendous training. Even to become a disciple, a great training is necessary, and I am not talking of becoming a master or a yogi.

Religious texts, scriptures on yoga, have pointed out the necessity of these preparatory disciplines again and again, to which most of us are likely to turn a deaf ear because we are more concerned with the aim rather than the means. This is unfortunate because while the goal is important, the means to the realisation of the goal cannot be regarded as less important. But we are not prepared to undergo the necessary discipline which is the means for the manifestation of the goal in one's experience.

Truly speaking, the goal is nothing but the evolution of the means. They are not two different things. If the destination of our journey, say a place like Delhi, is to be reached by a means, namely, vehicular movement along a road, we may say the road is not identical with the destination. Delhi is something; the road is another thing. While this is so under ordinary circumstances, it is not so in the spiritual field. The goal and the path are inseparable. It is the goal that is manifesting itself as the path. And the path that leads to the goal is nothing but an indicator of the nature of the goal itself. So, one who seeks the goal has to live a life which is to become a means commensurate with the nature of the goal.

What is the nature of the goal that we are aspiring for through the practice of yoga? What are its characteristics, its definitive features? Those features have to be seen in an adequate measure in the means that we are adopting, in the life that we are living, and the attitude that we are holding in regard to all things—including God, world and soul, and individual and society.

I was quoting a passage from the Katha Upanishad: *ananya prokte gatir atra nāsty.* There is no hope of achieving anything unless it is taught by a superhuman person—this is what the Upanishad says. No amount of study is going to help us, because knowledge that we gain by study of books is something like drinking water from the Ganga seen on the atlas. The atlas also contains the Ganga. We have got the Mississippi and the Amazon and the Pacific and the Atlantic—we can see them in the atlas. But our ship will not drown in the atlas-Atlantic and we cannot drink the waters of the atlas-Ganga. Though we have got tremendous knowledge of the entire physical features of the world by the study of geography and have a wonderful Ph.D. in geography, we cannot drink a drop of water from the Ganga that we have studied in our books.

Likewise is the knowledge through books. It is all wonderful, no doubt, but it is of no use when we come to the question of the practice of yoga. For this the Upanishad mentioned *ananya prokte gatir atra nāsty*: we cannot have the means of quenching our thirst for real knowledge unless it is imparted by one who is '*ananya*'. This is a very peculiar term used in the Upanishad. A person who is united with Reality alone can teach, because, as the Christ said in one context, "It is not words that I speak; it is Spirit that comes out." The words of Christ were Spirit manifest—energy, force of divinity that was revealed. They were not merely sounds that he made in the sense of language.

Likewise, the knowledge that comes from a spiritual master is not information that is gathered from books, but a vitality that is issuing from himself on account of his contact with Reality in his personal life. The Upanishad is emphatic that no other hope is there: *gatir atra nāsty*—no other alternative. We cannot find an alternative, and there is no hope of success unless this knowledge comes to us from a living being who is rooted in contact with Truth. All this is a great difficulty, no doubt; but naturally, yoga is a difficulty. How can we have another difficulty greater than this? All difficulty is nothing before this difficulty. This is the master-difficulty we have in life, namely, the reception of the knowledge of Reality. We have no other difficulty; this is the only difficulty we have. And when this difficulty is solved, every other thing also gets solved automatically, because this is the root-malady, the root-illness, so when that is obviated, everything else vanishes.

This is the caution that has to be given to every sincere student of yoga, that one may not take it slipshod, in a casual manner, as if everything will drop from the skies. It will not drop from the skies unless there is strenuous hard practice, as if we are melting our flesh, which is something unthinkable

for the human being. Who can boil one's own flesh? But this is what will happen to us when we actually enter into this strenuous army discipline, as we may call it if we like; something worse than that or more difficult than that is the practice of yoga. There is an old saying that one who is in search of knowledge has neither sleep nor happiness. He neither wants to eat nor sleep, because his mind is concentrated on how to acquire this knowledge. And, as the Bhagavadgita again and again reiterates, it looks very bitter at first, hard and impossible to stomach in the initial stages, because all training is a painful process in the beginning. Nobody likes to undergo training of any kind, because training or discipline implies the restricting of the movements of the human individual, the ego-ridden individuality, which is, of course, very painful. The ego does not wish to be limited, restricted or disciplined in any manner whatsoever; but this is precisely what is called for. Bearing in mind that the means to the goal is to be of the same character as the goal and cannot be divested of its nature, it is to be kept in view that a commensurate discipline is to be undergone. For this, a place is necessary, conditions are necessary, the Guru is necessary, and a willing, yearning, aspiring, seeking spirit in the disciple is necessary. All these conditions are obligatory.

Again, it has to be pointed out that this is the supreme science of life. It is not one of the branches of learning, like physics or chemistry, where we can choose any branch of learning that we like in our educational career. This is not a branch of learning which we can choose at our discretion. This is the master science which is the root of all other branches of learning, from which ramify every other form of knowledge; and therefore, when this knowledge is acquired, we have known everything. In the Upanishad the query is raised, "What is it, by knowing which, everything else can be known automatically?" It is this. If this is known, everything else

follows. Everything automatically follows—we need not go after other sciences. Every other science is included in this science, because this mystery includes every other mystery. And this power that one acquires, that comes to a person due to the practice of this discipline, is inclusive of any other power that we can think of in our minds.

With this clarified perspective before us, we have to gird up our loins and take to it with the determination—do or die. This is the final decision that we have to take: either we do it or we die, that is all. There is no halfway between. As a saying goes, there is no such thing as half-living. Either we are living, or we are not living. We cannot say, "I am half alive." Likewise, half-yoga is unthinkable; either it is, or it is not. To take to yoga is to dedicate one's whole being to it. Even at the initial step, the first stage, we are confronting Reality in its totality. Even in the fundamental, the first, the most initial stage of yoga, the whole of our being is confronting the whole of Reality. It is not a part of our being facing a part of God—nothing of the kind. The density or the degree of manifestation of God may be less in the initial stage, and likewise, the degree of the manifestation of the totality of our being may be of a lesser degree, a lesser category—that is a different issue. But our total being is manifest for the purpose of confronting the total Reality that is the universe. So totality or wholeness is imperative, though the degree of manifestation of these two may be less. It is a rise from a lower degree of totality to a higher degree of totality, but totality is there. It cannot be partial, so that we cannot give half of our mind to it, or a portion of our mind. Even if one is not a genius and is in a lower state of understanding, it does not matter; the whole of whatever one has must be given, and it should confront the whole issue and not only a part of it.

So, this is the foundation of the psychological discipline necessary and called for in the practice of yoga. It has, truly

speaking, endless stages of ascent. One cannot visualise, now itself, how many stages of ascent there are, though mystics speak of a certain limited number of stages, broadly outlined before us. The experiences and the disciplines one passes through also vary in detail from person to person, according to the structural peculiarity of the constitution of the individual, though, generally speaking, we can lay down certain broad outlines of the features of the experiences and disciplines that one has to pass through, wherever one is and whatever one be. Yet the minor details are so complicated that it is impossible to tread this path without a Guru; and our preparation for it also should be whole-hearted.

With these few remarks I close now, and request you to ponder over these meanings of yoga that I have placed before you, and take to it in right earnest.

Chapter 3

A BROAD OUTLINE OF THE STAGES OF YOGA

The practice of yoga, which is the main *sadhana*, has to bear resemblance to the goal because, as it was pointed out, the means and the end are not cut off from each other; rather, the goal is finally going to be realised to be an evolution of the means itself. There is a continuity of process right from the beginning till the end. The path and the destination have the sympathy of nature. The path begins right from the place and the time where and when the disciple finds himself or herself. Whatever be the condition in which we are, just now at this moment, is the first step in yoga. Therefore, the first step may not be of the same character in different individuals, inasmuch as there are various types of individuals on account of the difference in the levels of their condition of evolution. Nevertheless, each one should take the first step from the level in which one is, and not from a step above the level of one's present condition.

The point to be remembered is that a living connection should be maintained between one step and another step. There is no such thing as a jump or a sudden rise, with a disconnection between steps. There is a vital continuity, like the gradual growth of a person from babyhood. We do not jump from childhood to the adult condition. There is a very, very slow growing process with a tremendous continuity, with no gap whatsoever. The processes in yoga are of a similar nature—a gradually growing, evolving, blossoming procedure of the practice of consciousness. Here we come to a

very interesting and important essential in yoga. It is an education of consciousness that is called yoga.

Every practice in yoga, even the first step, is a method of educating one's consciousness towards the attainment of that which it is seeking in the process of this enfoldment. It has been said by educationists that education is the systematic procedure of evoking the perfection that is already within. Everyone has perfection within oneself, but it is hidden beneath, covered over by accretions of various types. In education, knowledge is not imported from outside. The teacher becomes an instrument in the bringing out of the potentialities of wisdom already hidden in the recesses of the heart of the disciple. Knowledge is inseparable from 'being' and, therefore, the knowledge that one is to acquire has to maintain this character of inseparability from the being of the disciple, right from the beginning itself.

In the most initial of stages, this identity of knowledge with 'being' takes the crude form of body-consciousness and attachment to one's own individuality. It is from this level that the evolutionary work of education should start. At every step it should be remembered that knowledge should not be isolated from being. In our modern systems of education a mistake is committed—namely, the isolation of knowledge from being, so that the student's knowledge need not have any connection with the personal life of the student. So is the case with the teacher, the professor. The knowledge he seems to have acquired, the education that he has passed through, the career of education which he regards as his achievement, does not bear a resemblance to his being, so that he is one thing in his personal life and another thing in his profession. This is the defect of modern education, and the defect of both the teacher and the disciple. Hence, we find that we are unhappy after all the knowledge that we have acquired, wherever it is and in whatever form it might be acquired.

But yoga education is of a different nature. One must be very cautious that knowledge does not become a profession—far from it. The practice of yoga is neither a religious tradition nor a profession of the academy. It is a way of living, a condition of our being, to put it very, very precisely. The condition of our being is the knowledge that is really worthwhile, and any other knowledge is an external growth which can be washed away by a bath with soap; therefore, it will not help us. But that knowledge which has become a part of our being—the knowledge which we are living, the knowledge which is inseparable from what we ourselves are—is worthwhile, and that is to grow into greater width and depth in its profundity.

The initial misconception of human consciousness is that it is a single individual in a society of beings. This misconception has been taken as the right attitude to life, because the feeling that one is a single, isolated individual among many others has come on account of one's weddedness to the perceptions through the senses. Our senses are our masters, unfortunately, and they have led us into this quandary of insisting that we are individual units, and that we are not in a position to continue in this condition of an individual unit for a long time—it has to be exceeded and made good by other means, such as contact with other individuals by way of social relationship, activity, etc. If individuality had been real, there would have been no necessity to establish relationship with other people. The very fact that we feel a necessity of relationship with others shows that we are imperfect. If we are perfect individuals, why do we want contact or relationship with anybody else? The individuality of a person is a restless incompleteness, and this incompleteness is mistaken for completeness. The inherent inadequacy of this individuality expresses itself in an urge for contact with other conditions in life—persons, things, situations, etc.—so that the lack in one's

own individual make-up is made good by acquisition of characters from the external world, characters which do not belong to one's own self and cannot be found in one's own self. The individual is in a transitional process. That is why there is growth, change, decay, death, and birth.

There is a continuous movement of the structure of the individual, and this is called evolution. Bluntly put, it is the process of birth and death of the individual. Why does the individual die? Why should there be rebirth? The reason is simple: there is incompleteness in the very nature of the individual, in the very structure of personality, and evolution is nothing but an attempt of this individual to become more and more perfect by an increasing growth of its nature, by repeated experiences through several processes of birth and death, until it reaches a state of completeness where there would be no further need to establish relationship with externals. As long as there is a perception of what is outside, the necessity to connect oneself with that arises automatically because there cannot be mere perception, an empty perception without any significance behind it. The significance is that one lacks something—that is the essence of the whole matter. Otherwise, the perception itself would not be there. This perception compels the individual to maintain a contact of a positive or a negative character with that external condition, person or thing. The positive contact is called love; the negative contact is called hatred. Sometimes it is a state of indifference also when there is an ambivalence between love and hatred.

This is the philosophical background of the very practice of yoga and, therefore, the need arises to view the practice of yoga in a very scientific manner, bereft of all prejudices of creed, caste, religion, colour, etc., and take it in a very impersonal, dispassionate manner, so that it is a matter of life and death for every one of us. Thus in the practice of yoga it

comes to this: the nature of the goal has to reflect itself in the means adopted and, therefore, to the extent we are able to comprehend the nature of the goal, to that extent our means also would be perfect and commensurate with the nature of the goal. What is the goal of yoga? What is the aim before us? What are we struggling to achieve in the end? That would be a sufficient indication of the nature of the means that we have to adopt. Is it rice that we want, or wheat, or cloth, or vegetables, or fruit? If we know what it is that we need, we can go to that particular shop. Likewise, we are first of all to be clear in our minds as to what it is that we are seeking through thinking, or speaking, or doing anything. What is our aim? What is our end? What is our purpose?

As I mentioned sometime back, the purpose may not be very clear always, because we are used to pinpointing an immediate purpose and forgetting the purpose that may be beyond it. If we were to ask a person who works very hard, with a purpose, from morning to evening, "What is the purpose of working?"—the common man's immediate answer would be, "I must work very hard to earn my livelihood." What does he mean by "earning my livelihood"? "To maintain my social group and eat my daily bread." But why does he want to do this? "So that I may live." Why does he want to live? He has no further answer; it ends with that. Why do we want to live? Nobody knows. "I want to live, that's all." Now, the purpose takes us one beyond the other, gradually, until we come to a point of halt, and that halt is due to the incapacity of the mind to conceive the main purpose of one's existence. But that is the inscrutable point which determines every one of our activities, and forces us to behave in a particular manner in our life.

All of our activities are motivated by a condition and a purpose which is impossible to understand by the very person who does those actions, so that we are like blind people driven

by blind forces, as it were. The forces are not blind, though they look blind because we cannot understand them. But yoga requires action with open eyes—not blind action. It is not the blind leading the blind. It is necessary that our minds should be vigilant, and eyes kept open every time, at every step that we take. If a particular step is not clear, it is better that we do not take that step. Just as in the movement of an army, if we do not know what is in front of us, it is better we do not hazard going forward until we understand what is there. First of all we should be clear as to what is there in front of us, and then take the necessary step. When a particular stage comes when it is all dark, oblivious, and clarified understanding is impossible, it is better for us to halt and then try to investigate into what is ahead.

Here comes the need for a Guru. "I am in a dark condition and everything in front of me is black. I cannot see beyond the screen that is hanging in front." With that condition the disciple approaches the Guru, who will tell us what the darkness is about. The darkness may be due to various factors. Hundreds of factors can be the causes of this impossibility to proceed further. So, until we reach the last or the penultimate step in yoga, we require the guidance of a Guru. It is impossible to walk unaided, because we cannot see what is ahead of us. We always see only one step—we cannot see a hundred steps ahead of us. There is a sense of insecurity and uncertainty because of the impossibility of piercing through the future, and it is then that we need confidence and comfort from a competent master.

Now we come to the main disciplines in yoga. We have been trying to understand them in as impartial a way as possible, as applicable to every human being in whatever condition he might find himself. The system of yoga is a method of establishing unity with the atmosphere around, harmony with all things with which one is apparently

connected—even invisibly, remotely. Ultimately, yoga has been defined as a harmony, an equilibrium. *Samatvaṁ yoga ucyate* (B.G. II.48): Harmony is called yoga. This force or system of harmony operates everywhere in nature, outside as well as inside. And if we go deep into it, we will find it is this principle of harmony that works as gravitation in the external physical world, as chemical affinity among the elements of matter, as that which brings into unity the various thoughts of the mind and makes us feel that we are compact individuals. Otherwise, our thoughts will be dismembered, with one thought having no connection with another thought.

What is it that compels one thought to be related to another thought so that there is a system of ideas and a feeling of unity of one's personality? It works as a necessity for social collaboration and social brotherhood, harmony in external society. It works as the logical principle in the intellectual world so that we can deduce conclusions from premises. How can conclusions follow from premises unless there is a connection? The system of harmony present in the logical universe of discourse is also a manifestation of this ultimate principle of harmony, and it is this force which works as love and hatred. It is that principle of harmony that manifests itself as love and hatred in the world, without one's knowing how it actually works. We are simultaneously pulled and repelled by the very same force for different purposes, leading to the ultimate purpose of reconciling ourselves with all things around us. The pull of our individuality, with a vehemence that is unthinkable, towards things outside is due to the presence of this principle of harmony. Even the repelling forces—that force which cuts us off from certain things in the world through a dislike—even these forces are ultimately the negative operations of the same force of harmony. It adjusts and readjusts itself in various phases for the purpose of bringing about ultimate harmony.

This principle it is that is before us, not merely as an abstract legal formula like a law operating in another concrete world, but as the very system and order of things in which we also find ourselves, with which we are inseparably connected, so that in the practice of yoga we become at once friendly with all things and all conditions, in various degrees of comprehension. *Maitri* or friendliness becomes the principle of action in the practice of yoga of consciousness where, by the various modulations of adjustment and readjustment, by inclusion and exclusion at various stages, the intention behind it is to bring about a complete inclusion of all factors so that there would be no further necessity for the individual to feel a sense of incompleteness in itself, and it rests in a state of perfect harmony or *kaivalya*, as they call it—absolute freedom and independence achieved through a harmony which does not see a necessity for further evolution.

Therefore, in the very first and initial step, it is necessary to visualise the presence of the goal, just as in the psychology of education the purpose of education is kept in view even at the kindergarten stage. It may be the ABC of learning that the child has just started in the elementary or primary school, but the teachers are fully aware of what they are doing and why these things are being done at all. In the same way, even the most rudimentary discipline that is prescribed in yoga has a connection with the ultimate aim that is in the mind of the teacher.

One of the defects of individual life is an inherent feeling of exclusiveness, and this feeling of exclusiveness is called egoism in its various manifestations. We feel as if we are totally different from others, and this feeling, when it asserts itself with great force, becomes the principle of self-affirmation or egoism. Therefore, egoism is not a virtue. It is a defect of personality, which on account of its false feeling of exclusiveness, resents any kind of assistance from

externals, though it cannot exist without such assistance from externals. So, the principle of egoism is a contradiction, and it brings sorrow to the person. It cannot exist without assistance from others, and yet it resents assistance from others because it asserts its own completeness. The knot of this exclusiveness has to be gradually untied by systematic inner discipline —such as intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual educational processes.

To give a very prosaic, common and very broad outline of the stages of yoga—I am not referring to the stages of Patanjali's yoga which, of course, are a different thing altogether—it may be said that there are four stages. The most fundamental and the immediate stage would be the need for social collaboration and adjustment of personality with society. One cannot be an enemy of society and then live in it. The method, the degree or the nature of this adjustment of oneself to society is an art by itself. This is a very important thing to remember, even by those who think that their aim is God-realisation and that they have nothing to do with temporal events. It is not true that we have nothing to do with temporal events, because the temporal is the face of the eternal and not simply cut off from it. There is some connection even between our dream life and waking life, though they are poles apart in their character. Therefore even yogis and teachers of yoga like Patanjali insist upon this necessity to bring about the needed harmony of relationship in one's social existence so that there is no insecurity and unhappiness caused by social factors. Each factor has to be very carefully and intelligently manoeuvred by us, independently if possible, otherwise with the guidance of a master.

The second stage is individual self-discipline, which is still a higher stage. After social adjustment comes individual discipline, which is a very clear and palpable step that we have taken in the direction of spiritual achievement. This personal

or individual self-discipline is, of course, a very difficult thing to conceive of and practise. It has many sides and many aspects to consider, and it takes many years to achieve certain concrete and tangible results. The intention of this is to reach the third stage, which is very advanced. Most people cannot even conceive of what it is—namely, a consciousness of universal interrelatedness. That is the third stage we reach in yoga. The last one is, of course, absolute oneness. That is what we are driving at, finally.

So from external diversity, we gradually rise to greater and greater harmonious wholes of achievement by disciplines which look individual in the beginning, but they assume greater and greater universal character as we proceed further. Thus we have a very symmetrical and systematic science before us which touches every little act and function of our life, so that in the practice of yoga we have no such thing as something unimportant or an unconnected event or affair. Every little thing seems to be connected with our goal, and the smallest thing will demand recognition—a fact which will come to our notice as we go further.

Chapter 4

INDIVIDUALITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Contact with the Eternal, being the aim of yoga in its successive stages, requires non-contact with temporal things simultaneously. This is something very essential, and is perhaps the main feature of all practice. Contact with the Eternal necessitates non-contact with temporal things. The reason is this: the character of the Eternal, which is supposed to be reflected in the practice, as it was pointed out earlier, is such that it cannot be reconciled with any type of externality, isolation, physical location or separation of any type. The Eternal is not something external.

The Eternal is a very peculiar something which what we call the normal human mind cannot comprehend, and therefore it is so hard to concentrate one's consciousness on its Being. But whatever may be the intrinsic structure of the Eternal Being, it calls for a non-contact from particular features visible to the senses, because the one very important character of the Eternal is that it is not an object of the senses. So, anything that presents itself as an object of the senses has to manifest characters different from that of the Eternal. Eternality and externality are not identical; they are two distinct characters of the realm spiritual and the realm temporal.

The concept of the Eternal does not enter the mind because of the attachment of the senses to externality. The mind follows the senses. It is only a servant of the senses, and though often we think that the mind is superior to the senses and a master of the senses, that is only in theory. In practice, it

is a servant; it is a slave. It only decides cases according to the reports of the senses—like a judge who is, of course, expected to exercise personal discretion, has to depend on evidence from external sources. He cannot use his discretion quite contrary to the reported evidence. Something like that is the condition of the mind and also of the intellect. The intellect merely decides a case upon the particulars gathered by the mind in terms of sense-perception. So our entire life in this world is something non-eternal, in its internal nature as well as outward form.

Yoga is a process of turning the tables around, as we may call it—a revolution to be brought about in our perceptive consciousness, and an effort to insist upon the presence of the Eternal in the non-eternal. Yoga is the persistent attempt of consciousness to interpret everything in terms of the Eternal, though this is done in various stages. But, even at the first stage, the fundamental requisite for a non-externality in attitude is demanded. This is a very simple fact to state but a very difficult thing for the mind to accept and for the personality to take up for practice, because life is nothing if it is not external. Everything is external. Even our body is an external object because it can be seen in space and time. The individual perceiver or the seer, the bodily personality, is as much an object of sense in space and time as any other object of sense. So we live in an objective world, in a very uncomfortable situation, really speaking. Everything is an object; and if everything is an object, then who is the subject? This body is an object and everything that is outside also is an object. Who is the subject? The subject is missing. It is like a drama without actors; the actor is missing but the drama is going on.

The real deciding principle, which is the knowing subject, seems to be missing in this world of perceptions, and this is the reason why there is struggle and infinite effort on the part of

people to achieve something whose nature is not clear to their minds. What we are trying to achieve in life is nothing but the realisation of the subject which we have missed in the world of objects. We see only objects, including our own body, and we cannot see the subject anywhere. Yet, we know there cannot be objects without the subject. The subject is absolutely necessary in order that it may give meaning to the very perception of objects. But it is eluding the grasp of the mind since the subject cannot be grasped by any means, because the subject is the grasper. Just as we cannot see our own eyes, we cannot know the subject. "Who can know the knower?"—is the question of the Upanishad. Who can see the seer, and who can know the knower? Nobody can see the seer, and nobody can know the knower, but this is precisely the great question of life. How can there be meaning in anything unless there is somebody who knows things and sees meaning in things?

So, the practice of yoga is an attempt at self-recognition in various degrees. It is not a contact in the sense of one thing impinging on another, but a self-awakening, by degrees, of the subject who has missed itself in the conglomeration of perceptions of objects which it has mistaken for realities. They are not realities, because their reality, their meaning, their significance or value depends upon their connection with the subject, whose absence will remove all significance from life. Sometimes it is said that any number of zeros makes no sense, but if we put one figure in front of them, it may become millions. All zeros assume a tremendous importance the moment we put one figure in front of them; otherwise, they are an empty series of zeros. Likewise, all these wonderful objects of the world are like many zeros without any sense. They are millions and millions in number. They are like millions of zeros. What is the use of millions of zeros? They mean nothing. But if we add one figure in front of these zeros, we

will know how vast is our wealth. Such is the meaning that objects assume, the world assumes, when we add 'one'; and that 'one' is the subject. But where is the subject? Great poets like Kabir Das have sung, "People search for it in Brindavan and search for it in Ayodhya, and find it nowhere." We search for the subject in all places, and it cannot be found anywhere. It cannot be found anywhere because it is not any object.

We know the story of ten people who tried to cross a river, and afterwards they tried to find out if all had crossed the river or if someone had drowned. One of them started counting to see whether all ten were there or not. He made all the people stand in a line and he began to count: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine—the tenth was not there. He forgot that he was the tenth man, that the counter himself was the tenth man. He said, "Only nine are there. Oh, one is gone!" Then he said to someone, "You count, you count." So, another man came forward and the previous man stood in the line, and the other man also said, "Only nine are there. Oh, one is gone!" Then he said to someone, "You count, you count." A third man came forward and the second man stood in the line, and again it was found that only nine were there. So everybody said, "Nine." They started weeping, "Oh, one brother has gone. One of our brothers has been drowned in the river." They hit their heads until blood started flowing and they were in pain, and cried, "My brother is dead!" They shaved their heads for sorrow of their brother's death.

Then one gentleman passing on the way said, "Why are you all crying?" They replied, "One of our people is dead; he drowned in the river while crossing it." "Is it so? How many were you?" "We were ten." "Ten? But you are ten." "No, we are nine," one man said. "Now see," he said and counted again; and again there were nine. "My dear friend," said the gentleman, "you are the tenth man. You have forgotten to count yourself!" "Oh, I see. Now it's okay." The bleeding and

pain had gone, and he did not cry any more. He recognised that the counter had to be counted as well; he could not be excluded.

This person who comes like a good Samaritan and says "you are the tenth man" is the Guru. We are unnecessarily crying, "I have lost everything!" We have lost nothing, because what we have lost is ourself only. That is what we have missed, and we have forgotten that we have lost ourself under the impression that we are one among the many things in the world. The awakening, therefore, is of the subject, by the subject, for the sake of the subject—a principle which is impossible for the logical intellect to understand or the common mind to comprehend, because this subject is not a grammatical subject. The grammatical subject is different from the metaphysical subject or the spiritual subject which we are speaking of.

In Indian philosophical parlance, this subject has been referred to by various terms such as the *purusha*, the *atman*, etc. But these are, again, only words for us which cannot be understood unless their connotation is properly explained and grasped. What is the use of chanting '*purusha*', or '*atman*'? We can chant anything, but it makes no sense. These are only explanatory devices to convey the meaning of what the real subject is. As I mentioned, it is not a 'subject' in grammatical sentences, but a principle that determines the significance of all perceptions and experiences. Our experiences have no meaning if the subject is absent. The whole of philosophical studies may be said to be an unravelling of the nature of the subject of knowledge, whether it is of the East or the West. And the various schools of thought and philosophy are only systems of discovering the characteristics of the subject from different angles of vision, from various standpoints.

Yoga takes up this subject and girds up its loins to solve this mystery of the lost tenth person. The tenth person, to give

the analogy already cited, is the very same person who observes, calculates and experiences the world of objects. The meaning that we see in the world is due to the presence of the subject reflected and focused through these objects of the world by means of the media of space and time. The light of the mirror does not belong to the mirror—it belongs to some other shining object. The mirror does not shine. If we keep the mirror in darkness, we will not even know that it is there. But if we keep it in the sun, it will shine and we cannot see the mirror at all. There will be only a reflection and a tremendous piercing light emanating from the mirror. The mirror will be invisible due to the glare which is reflected through the mirror.

Likewise, the light of the Supreme Subject—which is consciousness reflected through the medium of the various things of the world, including the mind and the intellect—creates a kind of confusion, just as there can be confusion between the light and the mirror. One cannot see the mirror at all because so much glare of light is passing through the mirror. The subject, which is consciousness, permeates the world of objects through and through, from top to bottom, so intensely that one thing is mistaken for the other. The object is mistaken for the subject and the subject is mistaken for the object. This is called *adhyasa* in Sanskrit terminology, or the superimposition of one character upon another, mutually exclusive of each other. When we say, "I am tall, I am short, I am happy, I am unhappy," etc., what happens is that we transfer the characteristics of the body and the mind to the *atman*. The *atman* or consciousness cannot be tall or short, nor is it happy or unhappy. Some characters which do not belong to it are transferred from the bodily encasement and the world of objects to consciousness, and then we say, "I am such-and-such, I am so-and-o," etc., etc. Conversely, we transfer the character of consciousness to the body, and then we say, "I am here, I am conscious, I exist." When we say "I exist", we

transfer the consciousness aspect of our being to the body aspect.

Existence and consciousness are not the qualities of the body; they belong to something else altogether, which is the real subject. But that is transferred to the body and we then say that the body exists, that the body is conscious. The body neither exists, nor is it conscious, but the mutual interposition of characters has created this confusion called world experience. The practice of yoga attempts to carefully distinguish between these two factors of subjectivity and objectivity in experience and analyse these threadbare, to the root, until the true nature of both these aspects is carefully known.

As we proceed higher and higher in the analysis of the nature of the subject, we will realise that two things happen—two events take place, two types of experiences begin to manifest themselves. Number one: the subject slowly expands its ken of perception and experience beyond the limits of the body and intensifies itself in quality, simultaneously widening the perspective of the jurisdiction of its knowledge. Two: the objective world slowly diminishes in importance, because the more the subject expands, the more also the object diminishes in quantity. Why does the world look so big? The world looks so big because we are so small. Suppose we become big—the world will look small. As the subject goes on expanding further and further, the world of objects will become smaller and smaller comparatively, so that when the subject becomes all-comprehensive, the world will vanish altogether. There will be no world at all because all of the objects will be comprehended within the subject. This is a far, far end in view, to be reached after very much effort. The purpose, the central aim of the practice of yoga, is to make one absolutely independent—almost omniscient and omnipotent, deathless,

immortal, as the scriptures have been telling us again and again.

The practice of yoga requires us to undergo certain disciplines—disciplines that are necessary in the light of the vision that we have in front of us. The vision is of the Eternal, and as it was pointed out, all characters of externality, which have assumed such an importance in our present-day life, have to be seen through to their true colours. It is the perception of externality that is responsible for the distraction of the senses and the agitation of the mind. Yoga, therefore, attempts primarily at a subdual of all distraction and a removal of agitation of every kind. There are various types of agitation, and in systematic expositions of yoga such as the one given to us by the Sage Patanjali and exponents of that nature, we are told that agitation is of various types and of various degrees, and that every agitation has to be subdued.

Agitation is the cause of restlessness, unhappiness, and even birth and death, ultimately. We have to subdue all types of restlessness, distraction and agitation—right from the bottom to the top. Immediately, what we observe is that our body is restless. We cannot sit at any place for even five minutes—this is our main malady. No one can sit for half an hour or one hour at one place. The body jumps from one place to another place due to restlessness. Sometimes we do not know why it is that we are moving from place to place. We are simply driven by a habit and an incitation of the muscles and the nerves. Muscular and nervous agitation has to be subdued. Internal to the physical structure of the muscles and the nerves, we have the senses and the *pranas*; they are also restless. There is agitation of the *pranas*. There is an upheaval which causes arrhythmic movements in the flowing of the breath. Simultaneously with the agitation of the *pranas*, the muscles and the nerves, there is agitation of the senses. The eyes want to see many things, the ears want to hear many

things; they want variety. We do not want to go on seeing the same thing for the whole day. The eyes also want variety, so we look here and there in twenty places as we walk; that is agitation of the senses. Why do we look in twenty places? What is the purpose? We gain nothing—it is a kind of habit of the distracted senses. So, the senses are agitated; the mind is agitated; the intellect is agitated. Finally there is an agitation of consciousness, which is the cause for all these lower agitations. The master himself is agitated—the commander-in-chief is restless, and therefore the whole army is restless. Yoga takes up this matter in right earnest and wants to control these distractions and agitations perfectly, to the very core. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the types of agitation which makes us unhappy.

Ordinarily we cannot know that we are agitated at all. We say, "I am perfectly all right; what is wrong with me?" because we have become one with the agitation. As our minds and consciousness have got identified with the restless condition which we have mistaken for our real being, we cannot detect that there is some mistake in us. When we have become one with the mistake itself, how will we know that it is there? We are an embodiment of blunder, mistake, error, misconception and miscalculation; and how are we to know that such a thing has happened unless there is somebody to observe, point out and tell us something is wrong with us? Here is the necessity for a spiritual guide, a master, because one who is involved in agitation, restlessness, and illness of this character cannot recognise that such an event has taken place. It is, therefore, necessary to find out circumstances and conditions which are conducive to the scientific method of discovering the character and the nature of these agitations which constitute, ultimately, what we call the flux of individuality.

Our so-called individuality is not a static being, just as a flowing river is not static. The river Ganga is not a static body

of water; it is a moving series, and yet it looks as if it is there permanently. Just as we do not see a single picture in a film in a cinema but see a series of passing pictures—which we cannot know because of the incapacity of the eyes to catch up to the speed of the movement of the pictures—the consciousness has got identified with a transitional movement of the structure of this body, and so it is unable to discover that there is a movement of the constitution or structure of this body. The whole individuality is nothing but a bundle of agitations. This is true not only from the point of view of science and physics, but also from the point of view of psychology. The great discovery of Buddha was nothing but this: that everything is a set of agitations, movements, transitions, and it is all phenomena—there is nothing noumenon in this world, but we cannot discover this truth because we have got identified with the phenomenon that is the world.

It is necessary to find the circumstances under which we have become identified with this set-up of transition, process. The individual body, which is a little bit of the process of universal movement, is mistaken for a located, centralised, physical object because of the selective habit of consciousness which excludes certain characteristics that are not necessary or relevant to its attachment to this location called the body, and centralises or pinpoints itself on a group or set of agitations and considers that as its own body. If we put blinkers on both our eyes and do not see either side of the river, and see only a little bit of the river, it looks as if the river is static. We cannot see the motion of the river. We see only one inch of the river and cannot see the movement even though there is such a big torrent flowing, due to the blinkers that we have put on, which is the limitation of our consciousness to a pinpoint in the vast process which is called the flow of the river.

Likewise, the consciousness has got tied up to a pinpointed location of this entire process of universal evolution, and that pinpointed location is this body. But this is a big mistake. A set of agitations has been mistaken for a static object, a reality by itself, which is 'being'. 'Becoming' has been mistaken for 'being'. The true Being is something different from what we mistake for being. The world of objects is not static—not even this body is static, as it has been analysed. Nothing in this world is permanent. Everything moves. Everything is in a state of hurrying forward to a destination which the mind cannot comprehend at present. This universal movement of forces towards a destination is not grasped by the consciousness on account of its tethered condition to a location called the body or individual objectivity. Then there is a consequent transference of property from object to subject, from subject to object, etc., by way of *adhyasa*.

The control of this entire process, the mastery one gains over these agitated conditions, right from the body up to the spirit, is the process of yoga. *Asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana* and *samadhi* are only technical names that yoga mentions for these techniques of subduing the agitations of imagined individuality by a consciousness that gains control, gradually, through a process of discrimination and concentration. Therefore, it will be clear now that yoga is a very scientific process calling for intense discipline in right earnest, with a wholehearted ardour of dedication and surrender to the cause, which, when it is achieved, is supposed to solve all the problems of our life.

Chapter 5

THE PRACTICE OF BEING ALONE

The Supreme Being, in mystical language, has often been referred to as the Alone, the Independent, or the Absolute. The aloneness of Reality is of a strange character, quite incompatible and incomparable with the aloneness that we as individuals feel when we are away from human society. The aloneness of a human individual is due to isolation from human society or society in general. But the aloneness of the Supreme Being is due not to isolation, but to all-inclusiveness. Because of an incomprehensible inclusiveness of the nature of the Supreme Being, it is symbolically and metaphorically designated as the 'Alone'. It is the Alone because everything is in It—nothing is outside It. Inasmuch as nothing is outside It, It is not a social being. There is no society for God because God is the One, Single, Incomparable Existence.

This aloneness is reflected in the lower degrees of manifestation also, and on rare occasions we, too, like to be alone. When circumstances in life so arrange themselves that nothing pleases us, and when a time comes that we seem to be fed up with all things—we have had enough of everything—then we would like to be alone. "Don't disturb me," people say. "Let me be alone." At the time when we are alone, we seem to be happier than when we are in the midst of people. The spirit of renunciation takes possession of a person under rare conditions, but such a spirit does not come to us when we are immersed in worldly activity and mistake social relationship for ultimate reality. Many a time we get caught up in the network of relationships to such an extent that our real nature is totally obliterated, for all practical purposes. What

we really are gets immersed in what we are not, so that we can be said to be living a false life of external relationships, completely oblivious of the true life which is really ours. As I mentioned, it is on rare occasions, under extraordinary circumstances, that we like to be alone—otherwise, we always like to be in the midst of people.

The desire to be in the midst of things is due to a false sense of values. It is not our true nature. We get identified with the false bodily personality so intensely, its various kinds of limitations and shortcomings speak in such a loud noise, that it is impossible for us to exist without social relationships. It is our sense of intense limitation that compels us to be in the midst of society. The more we are limited and finite and inadequate, the more we require relationships with other people and things. But this state of affairs will not go on for a long time, because the truth will assert itself one day or the other.

It is not true that we are social individuals. It is not true that we are finite. It is not true that we are limited in any manner whatsoever. The sense of limitation is an imposition on our real nature due to various factors. The singleness and the unitary character of our being asserts itself sometime or other in each one's life. No one has been born in this world who was fully satisfied with human society. Each one has died with a curse and a complaint against human nature and society. Everyone thought that it is gold, but finally died with the feeling that it is rusted iron. This is the history of mankind right from creation to this day, and we do not know how long it will continue. The reason is that there is a miscalculation of values due to the weddedness of consciousness to the senses and the dependence of our consciousness on the reports of the senses.

The practice of yoga takes into consideration, takes note of the essential character of 'being' reflected in some measure

in one's individuality, and taking its stand on this pedestal, rises above to the next step of a more expanded condition of being. As it was pointed out, the stages of yoga are the stages of expansion in the dimension of consciousness which is, at once, a dimension of being. Consciousness is 'being'. They are inseparable. So the more we expand the dimension of our consciousness, the more also we expand the dimension of our being so that every step in the practice of yoga is a rising into higher levels of being—which means to say higher stages of inclusiveness, comprehensiveness, totality, and adequacy. Towards this purpose the constituents of our indivduality have to be disciplined. The various factors that make up our nature, as it is today, have to be brought into a focus of concentration, organised systematically and arranged methodically for the purpose of an onward march into the higher levels of being and consciousness.

For this purpose, as it is in the case of a laboratory worker or a scientist, leisure is necessary. We should not be busybodies throughout the day. Leisure—time to think and freedom to ponder over the nature of things—is essential so that the necessary steps may be taken in the direction of a further achievement. We should not be always in a condition of muddle and confused relationships. We should not be like automatons or puppets which are driven by powers external to themselves.

Every step in the practice of yoga is a step towards greater and greater freedom—the freedom not imposed upon us by social contact, but the freedom that arises on account of inclusiveness in a larger and larger measure of our own being. So the freedom that we achieve here is not dependent on external factors. It is not like the freedom of a minister or a king, which is a false freedom tentatively erected by social factors which can fall down and crack at any moment when these factors disintegrate. Spiritual freedom, the freedom

achieved through the practice of yoga, is another name for expansiveness of being itself, so that there is no question of its cracking or falling down. And it is a permanent freedom, whatever be the measure or extent of its realisation.

So, first of all, let there be a little leisure to think and to be with one's own self. This is a very important factor to remember. One has to be with one's own self for some time every day. Mostly, we are with other people; we cannot be alone. We are always with some friends. This irresistible pressure to be in the company of other persons and things is a disease of the mind, ultimately, from the point of view of our real goal and purpose. How is it possible for a person to be so involved in externals that one forgets one's own self, loses oneself, and takes what one is not for what one is, so that one seems to be gaining everything and losing one's own self? "What does it avail you if you gain the whole world and lose your soul?" said Christ. The meaning of his teaching is that we may gain the entire world of objects and lose our self as the central subject. What does it matter to us? How does it benefit us? We will be like decorated corpses looking like human beings but without any life in them. When the subject is withdrawn from the object, it is a corpse looking like a living body—but there is no life in it, really speaking. So to depend on externals is to depend on a corpse for the values of life. The stages of yoga are stages in the rise of vitality and true living. We die to externals in some sense so that we may live in the Universal. Die to live. We die first, and then live afterwards. We die to that which is false, counterfeit, makeshift, external, and then live in a percentage of the Eternal, which is inclusiveness, totality and indivisibility of being.

Every day it should be possible for any sensible person to find a little time to be absolutely alone. This is a very essential prerequisite in spiritual practice. People who are in a house of many members should also find time to be alone a little while,

away from the house. We should not always be in the workplace—that is not advisable. We constantly live in a false, externalised atmosphere where there is always noise, always crying, always relationships, always saying something or the other. This difficulty should be obviated, to some extent at least, even in the initial stage. If we live in a house with many people, we should go out of the house for one hour in the day—somewhere a mile off, or at least a little away from the atmosphere of social conglomeration—and sit for awhile. Either we should close our eyes or keep them open, whatever we like, and think for a moment, "What is it that I actually need?" Philosophical questions arise in the mind by contemplation of possible future experiences, such as one being deprived of relationships. That one can be deprived of external relationships is a possibility, not necessarily remote. The study of human history will reveal that this is perhaps a condition through which most people have to pass.

There cannot be but very few people in the world who have not been deprived of something or the other. Suppose we are deprived of everything in this world—persons and things and property and whatnot—and we stand alone, unbefriended, uncared for, not being looked at by any person. What is our duty at that moment? When we were born into this world, we did not come with friends. Who did we bring when we came to this world? Who will we take with us when we go away from this world? How many friends will come with us? Not one will come with us. Not a needle will come with us. Not a strip of cloth will come with us. We will leave this world in the same way as we came to this world. And when do we leave this world? After five thousand years? One hundred years? It can be the next moment. The breath can stop. The heart can stop its beat. We know we have no control over these factors. It is futile to imagine that one can live for a hundred

years, for two hundred years, and can rule the world. All these are the empty imaginations of an untutored mind.

If we are good students of history and psychology, we must be able to appreciate a condition which can befall us any moment of time. What happened to another can happen to us also. If suddenly a circumstance takes hold of us where we are unbefriended and our life itself is totally in danger, what is our duty at that moment? It is difficult to conceive what our duty would be at that moment. We are totally helpless, confounded, and woebegone—awful is the condition. Why is it that we feel so awful and wretched in a state where we seem to be disconnected from all external values? It is so because all the while we have been living in a false realm of values, and suddenly we have been possessed now by reality which has come and stared at us: "Here I am. You have forgotten me for years together. Today I am coming before you to demand my share of your life." If reality begins to look at us and stare at us, we shall be frightened. We are happy because we are living in a false world. It is false values that make us happy and, therefore, our happiness also is false.

We are stupid people, if we properly analyse ourselves. We have no wisdom in ourselves, because when our happiness is properly analysed, it will be found to be based on erroneous notions, illogical conceptions, and untrustworthy factors. These things make us happy. But sometimes the earth gets shaken and the reality will come up and then we find that we are nobody—nothing. This situation arises on account of a manifestation of truth in the process of evolution. What is truth? As I mentioned, the sense of aloneness will come and press upon us one day or the other. The Supreme Being, which is the Universal Alone, will be reflected in us in a measure, calling for a sense of aloneness in our life, bereft of all the false relationships of society which we have been mistaking for truth and the real sense of values.

Yoga does not want us to be threatened like this; it wants us to understand things beforehand. It is better to quit a house honourably than to be asked to get out by force. Why should we be asked to get out? We ourselves should go honourably. "Yes, I am going before you say so." But if we do not understand this, we will be taken to task by powers which are the real rulers of this world. The rulers of this world are not presidents and ministers. The rulers are something else, of whom we have absolutely no knowledge, whom we cannot see with our eyes, and whom we do not want to think about even for a moment of time. The world is controlled by forces which are not human. Human beings are only strings which are operated by other powers, of which human beings have no knowledge.

So yoga takes us by the hand, leads us along the path of right knowledge, and tells us where we really stand: "My dear friend, this is your situation." A real friend will tell us what our defects are. He will not go on praising us unnecessarily, that we are endowed with two horns and four eyes, etc. We have no two horns—nothing of the kind. We are bereft of horns. The friend will tell us, "You have no horns." Why do we think we have got horns? We have no tails. There are all sorts of things about which we will be taught by the lessons of life.

The wisdom of life is the practice of yoga in its essentiality, and every step in yoga is a discipline in this direction. By discipline, we should not understand any kind of imposed hardship or torture. Generally people are afraid of discipline because they think it is a kind of imposition of restriction upon oneself by somebody else. This is the usual definition of discipline or the working of law and order. This is because we are not used to discipline. We are always accustomed to a kind of life of abandon—license, rather than freedom—a kind of urge from within to live as one likes according to the whim and fancy of the conditions of the mind

as it occurs, without any control over one's own self. But discipline does not mean that.

Discipline is the arrangement of our thought or consciousness according to the laws that operate basically in life—laws which are not imposed upon us from outside, but rather the laws which constitute the nature of the world itself. The world is ultimately made up of laws and principles rather than things and objects, and we are a part of that. So, to obey a discipline—a principle of order or regulation—does not mean subjection to somebody else. The following of a discipline does not mean becoming a slave of somebody, but an acceptance of the true values of life—which means to say, the value of our own being. Ultimately, discipline is alignment with one's own personality, and not subjection to somebody else. We are not being threatened by somebody when we are asked to follow discipline. It is our own true nature that calls for adjustment of our self with our Self. *Ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ* (B.G. VI.5), says the Bhagavadgita: You yourself are your friend, and you yourself are your enemy under different conditions.

We can be our own enemy when our real nature cannot be reconciled with the false nature in which we are today living. When we have identified with our false level of being, which is not the truth of things, naturally it comes at loggerheads with the higher order of life which is our higher nature. So there is a fight between one's lower nature and one's higher nature; there is a war in one's own self. This is what is called psychological tension. A tension, psychologically felt, is nothing but a battle that is waged between our own higher nature and our lower nature. It is not somebody else fighting with us; we ourselves are fighting with ourselves inside, in the two levels of our existence. When we are intelligently educated in the lines of the higher nature of our own being, we do not merely subject ourselves like servants to its laws,

because we cannot be servants of our own selves. It is a voluntary acceptance of the true sense of values. It is recognition of what we really are in our fundamental nature.

Yoga is, therefore, also a process of education. There cannot be a greater system of education than yoga. There is no greater psychology than yoga. There is no greater science than yoga. There is no greater philosophy than yoga. There is no greater system of living than yoga. Therefore, to set one's foot in the line of the practice of yoga would be to step into the realm of Being as such, the realm of Reality, the realm of Truth or *satya*, which is supposed to triumph or succeed in the end. The discipline that we are called upon to undertake—voluntarily of course, not as an imposition from outside—is to be exercised at every level and at every stage.

As I said in the beginning, the first discipline would be to find leisure, to find time to be alone. I requested you to find time, at least to the extent of an hour every day, when you will not be likely to see anybody, you will not talk to anybody, you will not have dealings with anybody, and you will not even think of anybody. Can you find one hour like that? That would be your first achievement in yoga. Sit alone for one hour every day, not seeing anybody, not talking to anybody, not having dealings with anybody, and not even thinking of anybody. If this can be done, you have stepped into the kindergarten stage of yoga. But even this much is difficult for most people. "Oh, I cannot find one hour—even five minutes is very difficult. I am always busy." Busy in heading towards death—what a pity! You are all busy towards that end only, heading towards your doom. This is the world, and it is made up of this nature. You have no time to be alone a little to find out what is your aim in life and what is your real duty.

After having been blessed with this rare opportunity of finding at least one hour in a day to be absolutely alone, seat yourself in a comfortable posture. By comfortable posture, I

do not mean crossed legs. It can be any posture which is easy and free from muscular, nervous and psychological tension. You can even sit on an easy chair. You can even lie down on a bed for a few minutes in the beginning if you are very tired. You can occupy any kind of physical posture which would not necessitate your thinking of the body at that time. The meaning of a comfortable posture is that position of the body which will not demand thought of the body. Suppose you sit in a distorted position—you will feel some kind of muscle strain or pain somewhere in the body, and so you will be thinking about a part of your body. The point here is that you should be in such a mental mood and condition where it is not necessary for you to think of the body. You are poised in such a way that the harmony introduced by that physical posture will free you from the thought of the body, for the time being at least—at least for an hour. So be seated, or be occupying such a physical posture which would not necessitate thought of the body. And then, what do you do?

For some days you need not do anything or even think anything. Let there be at least a satisfaction that you are able to sit alone for an hour every day. Even if you are looking at the empty space or the open sky, or gazing at the stars, it does not matter. For a few days, do not think about anything. After some days you will find that the mind becomes accustomed to this kind of aloneness and freedom from, or subjection to, false relationship with externals, and then the power of concentration will gradually develop. The mind is unable to concentrate on anything because it is always used to a life of distracted perceptions. We see a hundred people and a thousand things, and think many a thought every day, so that we have never had the occasion to think of any one particular thing for a consistent period.

This chance given to the mind to be alone for some time enables it to adjust its ideas in such a way that thoughts begin

to flow in a particular direction rather than in a hotchpotch manner, in all directions. The purpose of sitting alone, being alone, is to learn the art of concentration of mind, channelisation of thought in a given direction, and thus energising the mind for the purpose of the higher practice.

Chapter 6

SPIRITUAL LIFE IS POSTIVE, NOT NEGATIVE

It is our experience that things to which we are accustomed, rightly or wrongly, look normal and usual, and those things which we are not used to, to which we are strangers, appear frightening and non-promising. The practice of yoga has a double aspect to the seeker. There is an initial feeling of confidence, enthusiasm, and even a sense of success, but it is followed by a sudden diminution of enthusiasm and a sense of helplessness which comes upon one due to certain psychological reasons. One who is not a good psychologist cannot face these problems, because the most difficult thing for one to understand is: what happens to one's own self? While one can observe and study others' minds as a good professor of psychology, it is not easy to know one's own mind because the mind is identified with one's personality and individual being, and vice versa. All students of yoga will pass through these stages.

The lowest condition of human existence is one of material attachment and immersion in social values, imagining that the world is all and nothing is beyond, and that sense-life is the real life. This is, perhaps, the lowermost level of earthly existence, where the bodily pleasures and sensory attachments are mistaken for the true values of life. But a day must come when one is shaken up from this conviction and a sense of the beyond peeps into one's life. It is then that people like to go to ashrams, monasteries, go on pilgrimage, see Mahatmas, Saints, Gurus, or resort to sequestered places for the purpose of isolation, peace of mind, etc., as it occurs to

their minds. Then comes a feeling that there is something superior to earthly existence or worldly life—that a life divine, a life of discipline and ethicality, morality, a life of love of God perhaps is the aim of life, and one has to take these higher aspects of life very seriously. Life in the world is not all. This is the stage of the seeker, the *sadhaka*, who works himself up into an emotional enthusiasm of love for God, practice of *sadhana*, discipline, austerity, diminution of physical pleasures and enjoyments of life; and this can go on for a protracted period. Sometimes this period can extend to several years.

One may be practising *sadhana* for years and years with a tremendous enthusiasm of spirit. But there must come a time when there is a sudden feeling of sinking down, as if everything is going. There is a leakage in the ship and the whole ocean is entering into it, to drown it forever. This has come upon the lives of all saints and sages, and it must come upon the life of every one of us. This is what they call the condition of a *trishanku*—where we are hanging in the middle without any support and no perception of the next step that is to be taken. On one side we have lost the values of earthly life, and on the other side we have found nothing that is beyond. There cannot be a worse condition than this. The world has gone because we have left it as something non-essential, and God has not come—perhaps He is not willing to come. So, what is our condition? Most miserable.

This condition of helplessness is a dangerous situation where anything can happen to any person. The condition of vacuum is not a safe one. The wind can blow from any side, and we do not know from which side it will blow. It will simply blast us in a direction of which we cannot have any kind of idea at the present moment. This situation of vacuum, a sense of emptiness and hopelessness, arises on account of a peculiar psychological reaction that is set up by the mind on

account of a protracted control of the senses and practise of austerity for years together. We cannot have an action without a reaction. This is very important to remember. Even the action of *sadhana* will produce a reaction—it must. Well, one may ask, "Is there no *sadhana* which cannot produce a reaction?" Perhaps there may be a type of spiritual attitude which may not produce such reactions, but it is only a possibility and not a practicability.

For all practical purposes, reactions must be produced, because it is impossible for a human mind to take into consideration every aspect of *sadhana*. Whatever be our wisdom, we will miss some points, and those missed points will react upon us with a tremendous vehemence and force. This is a condition of mind which one should expect at any time. If the austerity and self-control that we have been practising has been very intense, the reaction also may be intense, and it may come quicker than one would expect. But if it is a slow process, a lumbering movement of a seeker who is not able to devote much time to the *sadhana*, the reaction will not be set up for years and years. Sometimes nothing will happen at all; one will die without seeing any result. That is also possible because of the slowness of the concentration of the mind. But if one is earnest, the reaction must be set up.

Now, coming to the point, this reaction is a very important feature to consider. We will not find a single person who has not experienced this reaction at some time or other. There is no individual seeker who will escape this peculiar action of the mind. But mostly what happens is that when the reaction is set up, it cannot be known. No one will know that the reaction has been set up and, therefore, that we have to do something about it. What generally happens is that we get identified with the reaction, and that comes to be seen as a normal condition. We think that this is a thing that is quite in consonance with the nature of things and nothing abnormal has taken place. A

vigorous sensory activity may be a reaction of subduing the senses for years together. But when that vigorous activity starts, we will not know that it is due to a reaction, because the mind is very treacherous. It is wise enough to dupe us into the feeling that everything is normal and nothing unusual has happened, because if we can discover its tricks, its methods will fail.

So the enemy is not always a fool; the enemy is also wise. We should not be under the impression that all enemies are fools, and that we can dupe them. It is not true. Sometimes the enemy can be equally wise, or even wiser than us. Thus arises the difficulty of facing this battle of life. And finally, our enemy, or friend, or whatever it is, is the mind only. On one side it is our friend; on the other side it is our enemy. Why does the mind set up reactions? It sets up reactions merely because it has been ignored. When we ignore a friend, the friend is hurt. If we do not talk to a friend for days together and turn our face away, naturally there is a feeling of dissatisfaction in the mind of the person. "He has been ignoring me and not talking to me, not paying any attention to me." We know the result of this kind of attitude.

So is the attitude of the mind. We have not paid any attention to its needs. The mind and the senses have needs. They want something, and we have been telling them, "I am not going to give you anything." We would not like to see; we would not like to hear; we would not like to eat; we would not like to sleep; and we are not going to give any kind of satisfaction to the temporal pattern of our physical existence. This is what is called *sadhana* usually speaking, in common language. When we do something contrary to the normal demands of body and senses, we regard it as a kind of religious life—austerity. If usually we have breakfast, lunch and dinner, and we cut off the breakfast and the dinner and have only lunch, we begin to feel that we are becoming a little

religious. We begin to feel that a religious consciousness is arising because, "I am taking only lunch; there is no breakfast, no dinner. If I have been sleeping for eight hours, I am now sleeping for four hours. I have become more religious, and I am diminishing social relationships."

Now, the steps that we take in the direction of cutting off the requisitions of the mind and the senses are to be taken with great caution. A religious life, or a spiritual life, is not any kind of action that we take against the mind. It is because we mistake an action against the mind as a spiritual value that the reaction mentioned earlier gets set up. The mind is not averse to spiritual consciousness, but it is averse to any kind of punishment that we mete out to it. This is the case with any schoolboy or student. It is difficult to believe that anyone would be averse to education. But one does not want that kind of education which involves punishment of some sort or the other. What is punishment? It is a deliberate and persistent refusal to give what one feels is an immediate necessity. The difficulty of the spiritual seeker in this respect is immense. We are not omniscient people. We cannot know everything at one stroke. So we are likely to commit mistakes in the attitude we have towards our own mind and the way we chalk out our daily programs.

One of the defects of the general approach to life spiritual is the treading of a beaten track of tradition, which has been driven into our minds right from our childhood as the proper approach to things. It is not true that what society says is always the right approach to things. There is a peculiar social conduct which is regarded as normal by humanity—humanity in general, whether of the East or of the West. Human nature has a peculiar way of assessing values, personally as well as socially. These customs of human society have been allowed to percolate into the very blood corpuscles of the individual, and we live a kind of traditional mode of conduct which we

are compelled to regard as final in its worth and value, merely because we have been taught these lessons right from our childhood.

We have been brought up under these conditions. We have a list of what we call the 'do's' and 'don'ts' of life. We should do this and we should not do that. Parents tell us, "Don't do that. Don't do that. Do this. Do this." Right from babyhood we are told, "Do this and don't do that." We are frightened right from childhood, and we are reared in a state of fear. We are never told the reason why it should not be done. Also, we are not told the reason why it should be done. Parents and teachers tell us, "It should not be done. Very bad. Don't go there. Don't do this." And also they say, "You must do this. If you don't, you will get this punishment, even of hell." This fear of religion often becomes the basis of our approach to God, and we know very well how harmful it is to a positive approach to anything whatsoever.

Though restrictive discipline is essential so that the unwarranted clamours of body and sense should be directed in a systematic manner along a given channel, it is also necessary, at the same time, to remember that every step in the line of success is a positive step. Anything that we call success is positive; it is not negative. It is true that we must be hungry before we take our meal. The feeling of hunger is a negative condition which should precede the positive intake of the meal. It is true that negative conditions should be there—without hunger we cannot eat. But the negative condition is not the whole thing. The essential feature is that it has to be followed by a positive action. When the positive action is missing, and merely the negative condition prevails, it becomes an unhappy state.

If we analyse our spiritual practices—we may refer to our own selves here, in this very institution or in this very hall—what is the type of spiritual practice that we are engaged

in every day? What is it that we are doing? Is it a following of the system of 'do's and don'ts'? The monastery says, "You should do this, and you should not do that." So we are following a rule that has been imposed upon us by a system of living. Is this the type of practice that we are following? Or is there any kind of urge, felt from within, towards something very substantial and positive from our own point of view? Or, to put it more precisely, do we feel that every day we have gained something in our practice, or are we only in a restricted, punitive atmosphere, like a jailbird?

If a monastic life, or a life in a cloister, is a life of a culprit or a jailbird who has somehow been caught in that atmosphere and has to undergo a system of unhappy discipline which the mind is deeply resenting at every moment—if that is the condition, definitively it is not spiritual. It is something very unhealthy, and this will produce a serious reaction one day or the other. The condition of our mind will tell us whether we are spiritual, or whether we are unspiritual. Are we happy or are we unhappy? Is our *sadhana* making us unhappy? What a pity. Do we feel this about ourselves? "I have been caught up in this unhappy set-up of affairs; this could have been better for me." If we feel that this could have been better, and this is not all right, then this will pinch our heart and one day or the other it will speak in a language which is very annoying. To underline what I have said already, a sense of positivity and satisfaction should precede and accompany anything that we do as a spiritual practice.

The life spiritual is not an imposition either from a Guru or from a monastery; it is a thing that we have undertaken voluntarily, of our own accord. Nobody compels us to lead a spiritual life. Any kind of compulsion is unhealthy. Neither does the monastery require it, nor does the Guru require it. It is we ourselves that want it for our own purpose, for our benefit and welfare. So every moment, every day rather, one has to

watch one's mind. "Is this spiritual practice an imposition upon me by the Guru, or the monastery, or society, or somebody else? Or is it something that I have been voluntarily doing and I am perfectly satisfied with it?" If there is any kind of external pressure and an unhappy feeling, whether it is justified or unjustified, that unhappy feeling is the reason why there is a reaction one day or the other. So ultimately, the reaction is caused by our unhappiness. How long can we be unhappy? We can bear it for one day, two days, three days, one or two years, five years, ten years. But eventually this pressure on the nerves caused by the unhappiness of our mind will burst like a bomb and devastate us. This is what is called 'the fall' in yoga, or any kind of fall for the matter of that. So the spiritual seeker must be very cautious, and must be a real spiritual seeker, not a disciplinarian or a hard taskmaster who will extract the blood of other people. This is not spirituality, because there is spontaneity in approach of anything that is spiritual. What we are aiming at finally is a development of our own inner nature, which is the highest spontaneity.

Nothing can be more spontaneous than what we ourselves are. There is no compulsion or restriction imposed by us on our own nature or our own being. We feel that we exist in a spontaneous manner. But to feel that one is a minister or a policeman or a collector is a little bit unnatural. We are not that, really speaking. So we have to pose and put on an air of circumstances to act like a collector, or a minister, or an officer, or this or that person. There is no difficulty in feeling what we really are. For example, we are not collectors when we are in the bathroom—we are just like anybody else. When we go to bed, we are just normal human beings. We are not ministers going to bed—that attitude will disturb the mind, because it is an attitude put on under external pressure and circumstances which are not normal and usual to our intrinsic make-up. So if spirituality is like this—that which has been

put on, that which has been made up, that which has been created artificially by circumstances, deliberately or otherwise—then it is not going to help us. It is better to give up spirituality if it has become an imposition, a kind of torture, a suffering, a sorrow, and something which the mind resents.

What is to be emphasised here is that the life spiritual is positive, undertaken by us on our own and not imposed upon us by others. We want it because it has some value for us, and every discipline that we are practising is undertaken by us of our own accord, deliberately. We need it and we know why we need it. We should not do it because somebody tells us to do it—then it is external and we may not like it. So, it is no use to jump to the skies in a sudden artificial enthusiasm or buoyancy of spirit created by circumstances external to us. One penny that is our own is much better than a million dollars which is not ours. What is the use of a million dollars? It is not ours. We are only holding it for somebody's sake. But one penny is really ours. So even a little that we do—really, positively and genuinely, with joy—is of greater worth in our life than many things that we do in a day without joy in the mind.

Many spiritual seekers find themselves in an unfortunate atmosphere on account of mistakes that they make in the choice of the type of life that they have to live, and the mistake is committed on account of an enthusiasm which is not directed by understanding. We are driven by emotion rather than by intelligence, and this happens to everyone in the beginning. We suddenly cry for God, as if God is going to jump from the skies in a minute. That looks very wonderful in the beginning. "Oh, how religious is the person, how spiritual, how yearning, how pure, how genuine." But this will not work for all time, because while God is love, God is also law. He will not break a law merely for the sake of love, notwithstanding the fact that He is infinite love.

It is here that we find a combination, inextricably related, of law and love. Tremendous disciplinary restrictive law combined with infinite spontaneity of affection and love—all these we will find in God. And so, in the approach to God, we have to take into consideration this peculiar feature of God, though nothing can be regarded as more congenial to our nature than God's presence. No one can be regarded as more affectionate than God, and no one can be regarded as stricter than God. He is the strictest of all conceivable beings—yet He is the most compassionate. These two features are blended there in a Single Unitary Being. And so, as God's nature is reflected in the stages of *sadhana*, the disciplinary aspect or the restrictive feature of *sadhana*, which is voluntarily undertaken, has to go hand in hand with a spontaneity of approach and a positivity of feeling and satisfaction.

To reiterate, spiritual practice is voluntary. It is we that move towards God. We are not pushed from outside or from behind by some motive. Forces can assist us, but they should not compel us, because anything that is of the nature of a compulsion is extrinsic in nature—whereas the spirit is intrinsic, and spirituality is the manifestation of this intrinsic nature of our own being. It is possible, therefore, to avoid reactions in *sadhana* by a judicious observation of the various factors in our present state of affairs. We should be very humble and dispassionate in judging our own selves as we are just now, and not as we ought to be in the future. "Today, just at this moment, what am I? What are my senses saying? What is the body telling? And what are my involvements speaking to me?" We cannot avoid any of these things. If we have involvements, these involvements must be properly tackled. The involvements may be psychological, emotional, social, monetary, economic, political—they can be anything. But these involvements are important things because *we* are involved—it is not somebody else who is involved—and so

they have some meaning in the way in which we live. Our involvements, therefore, have to be properly encountered, and their questions answered in a satisfactory manner. Also, the needs of the body and the senses are not unnecessary things when they are actually there.

Nothing that is visible can be regarded as unnecessary. But it has to be properly approached and intelligently harnessed for the purpose of an onward progress in *sadhana* rather than kept aside as a hobgoblin of which we are afraid always, not knowing when it will pounce upon us. Every external factor should be converted into an internal feature of our *sadhana* so that all our external relationships, whatever be their nature—whether of a family, or an institution, or a whole nation—these external factors should be transformed into an internal feature necessary in the transformation of the total personality, because the individual's personality is not an island. "No man is an island," as a poet wrote. We are not like islands, completely cut off from other portions of the land.

Every individual is connected to every other thing in the world, in some way or the other, so it is not possible to have a totally isolated individual approach, oblivious of external factors. When these factors are visible, especially when they are very pressing in their nature, they should be taken note of in their proper place, giving due respect to the position they occupy, and then converted and transformed into a motive force for the onward movement of the spirit towards God.

Chapter 7

INITIAL STEPS IN YOGA PRACTICE

It is generally believed by people—often wrongly—that the sitting posture or *asana* is a simple affair and that it is, perhaps, a non-essential in the practice of yoga. It is not true. Sitting in a single posture is not a simple affair, because it is not practicable for all people. If we actually do it, we will see the difficulty. The *asana* is not a non-essential. It is very, very important and essential in the practice of yoga, because the body—the muscles, the nerves, the *pranas*—are all essential parts of what we are. How can we say that the body is a non-essential in our personal make-up? It is an essential; and our individuality, our personality—whatever we are, here and now—is inseparable from this physical set-up. Hence, a systematisation of the workings of the physical body becomes not a non-essential, but a very important feature of personal discipline. We have been referring to this subject of discipline, and in this context we had occasion to observe that discipline is not a force exerted on us by somebody else. It is not a compulsive activity we are undertaking under the pressure of some external power.

Discipline, at least from the spiritual point of view, is a voluntary, dedicated attitude adopted by me, you or anyone, which is deliberately undergone like a medical treatment for the purpose of gaining true health. The initial stage, called the physical posture for the purpose of meditation, is very important, and its importance will be realised if we actually try to sit for a protracted period. How many of you can sit for an hour or two without jerks and shakes and agitations felt in your body? There will be uneasiness in the mind even at the

very commencement of this practice. Suppose you are told, "Now sit for two hours and do not get up." The moment I say this you will feel a sense of uneasiness. "Oh, he is asking us not to get up for two hours; it is better to go away now itself. We don't want to sit here." The mind is restless because of being asked to do something to which it has not been accustomed and which it cannot regard as its normal activity. The normalcy that the mind feels is really a kind of chaos; it is not a real normalcy. We are accustomed to chaotic activity. We never stick to time; we never stick to principle; we never stick to any kind of method either in our speaking, or thinking, or acting. We are used to such a kind of life. We get up at any time; we eat at any time; we walk at any time; and, at any time, any work that we do is done in any manner whatsoever, which is the usual habit of the mind that is marked by an absolute absence of punctuality. Now we are telling such a mind that things cannot remain so. There must be a system in every bit of its activity, right from its physical level.

To reiterate, this discipline is not a kind of imposition on the mind or the body, but it is a necessity. If the doctor tells us that we must take a capsule or a tablet at a particular time in a day, in such a quantity, he is not intending to impose upon us any kind of torture—definitely not. It is a kind of method that he is introducing into our life for the purpose of regaining health. An introduction of a method cannot be regarded as a torture. It is not a compulsion and, therefore, discipline in this sense is not only necessary but indispensable, considering the nature of the goal that is before us. Why then this insistence on system, method, organisation, punctuality, tenacity, persistence, etc., in the practice? The reason is that it is the nature of the goal itself. The goal of life is the ultimate point of system.

Nothing can be more systematic than consciousness itself. The highest method that can be conceived is deducible

from the structure of consciousness, the nature of existence, the pattern of life—everything is methodical. The whole of nature works in such a systematic manner that it is impossible to conceive chaos as a part of natural activity. Chaos means an indeterminate causative factor operating behind the effects visible in life. Any cause can bring about any effect—this possibility would be regarded as chaos. But that is not the way in which nature works. It is not that any cause will bring about any effect. Particular causes, arranged in a particular manner, will bring about particular results at a particular time and in a particular intensity. All this is decided and laid down due to the structure of things, the nature of life itself. The pattern of life is finally an organised whole and, therefore, organisation, which is another name for method, becomes a necessity in the practice of yoga. Just as we have social or political organisations, we have here an organisation of activity, conduct, procedure, and way of life.

The simple features called for, or the factors contributory to success at the outset are, to mention only a few, having a definite time, a particular place, and a chosen method for sitting in meditation. When we are students of yoga, it is necessary to choose a definite time for the sitting. This is a very important thing to remember. We should not change our timings according to the whims and fancies of the mind or the changing conditions of social life. Whatever be the difficulties in our external life, a certain amount of insistence on a chosen time for sitting should be regarded as essential. If we find that a particular time cannot be chosen on account of the kind of life that we are living, it is better to choose such a time when all our commitments are over. Generally, though people say that the early morning is good for meditation, it has one disadvantage: that we have got an anxiety in our minds about the future work. We will not be free in the mind in the early morning, especially if we are social bodies. If we are

absolutely *alakniranjan*, that is a different matter—nobody bothers about us, and we can sit as long as we like.

But if we are social bodies with commitments and duties, a subconscious itching will be there at the bottom: "I have to start work at eight o'clock." And that will be worrying us, though we will not be aware of it. The subconscious activity of the mind is a terrible activity and, therefore, when we actually start sitting for meditation, it is necessary that the period be a little before this time of commitment for catching the train, going to the court, etc. These commitments should not be very imminent or just near. The period of sitting should be such that it should be removed as far as possible from the point of activity which is of a distractive nature. And if it is towards the later part of the day when our commitments are over and the only commitment left is that we have to go to bed and sleep as there is nothing else to do, then the agitations will be a little less because we have no other thing to do except to go to bed. Whatever it is, these are only minor details which have to be chalked out, each for oneself. The point is that there should be no feature, condition or factor that will even remotely cause distraction to the mind and draw attention away from the point of concentration. Thus, a particular time has to be chosen.

Yoga scriptures tell us that we must also choose a particular place, as far as possible—not that today we meditate in Haridwar, tomorrow in Delhi and the day after tomorrow in Benares. That is not all right if we want real success. We must be in one place. As a matter of fact, people who practise mantra *purascharana*, or disciplinary chanting of mantras for a chosen period, do this—and what can be a greater *purascharana* than meditation? So when we take to exclusive spiritual practice as a very serious affair and not merely as a hobby, it would be necessary, I would say, that for beginners a period of at least five years is called for. If we are very serious and in dead earnest about it—not taking it

only as a kind of educational procedure for informative purposes and not being very earnest about achieving anything substantially—we may have to stick to one place for five years continuously, and not less than that. If our point is to achieve something substantial, concrete and definite, then this amount of discipline is called for, which is a definite place, a definite time, and a chosen method of meditation—a definite system, arranged in one's own mind, which should not be changed continuously.

Whenever there is repeated persistence in one given direction with reference to any chosen point of attention, we will see that some sort of success results. If a laboratory scientist is to analyse the structure of an atom, he will analyse the particular atom repeatedly by bombarding it with various kinds of light rays, but he will not go on changing the atoms—today this atom, tomorrow that atom, today a hydrogen atom, tomorrow some other thing. That will not lead to success. A particular object will be taken up for consideration, observation and analysis, and a repeated attempt will be made to go deep into its structure until its mystery is revealed. So for this, great leisure is necessary, persistence is necessary, energy and willpower are necessary; and there is no need to mention that we must be free from all other outward distractions. When one takes to the practice of yoga, there should be no distraction of any pronounced nature. Minor distractions may be there, but serious distractions which will divert our attention markedly from the point of attention should not be there.

A fixed place, a fixed time, and a fixed method of concentration are called for. In one of the aphorisms of the *sutras* of Patanjali, which is very relevant to this point, it is said that the practice should be for a long period: *sa tu dīrghakāla nairantarya satkāra āsevitaḥ dṛḍhabhūmiḥ* (I.14). If we want to establish ourselves in yoga, some

conditions are to be fulfilled. One condition he mentions is that the practice should be for a protracted period—I said at least five years, and not less than five years. It should be repeatedly done every day, without missing even a single day. Even if we have a temperature, fever or a headache, we should not miss it, because these are obstacles. The more we try to exert our will in the practice of concentration, the more will the body also try to revolt. It will create all kinds of complications—we will have indigestion, we will have a stomachache, we will have a headache, we will have fever—all sorts of things will come. As a matter of fact, it is specifically mentioned in the Yoga Sutras that we will fall sick. It will be an obstacle, and we should not think, "Today I am sick. I will not meditate." That is what it wants, and then it has succeeded. So, first of all, a little guarded way of living may be called for to see, as far as possible, that we do not become so ill that we cannot even sit for a few minutes of meditation. By a regulation of diet and living in a climate that is not too extreme, etc., one can be somewhat free from the anxiety of falling ill to the extent that it would prevent us from doing anything at all in the spiritual field.

Dirghakala is a protracted period of practice. *Nairantarya* is practice without remission of effort; that means to say, it has to be done every day at the same time. The third condition is that we must have great love for it. We must have immense affection for our practice. We know how much affection a novelist has for his own work; how much affection an artist has for the painting that he does; how much affection a musician has for his *ragas*. Every artisan, every engineer, every artist, and every professional has immense affection for his own or her own profession. One cannot have disgust for a profession and then succeed in it; nor should one take to it as a kind of suffering or pain. Suppose an artist feels, "Oh, this painting is a great torture and suffering for me";

then a good painting will not come forth, because there is no love for it. So, the practice of yoga will yield fruit only if we have a real love for the practice; and if we have love for it, it will also have love for us. When we protect it, it will protect us. It is said in the yoga *shastras* that yoga will protect us like a mother—it will feed us and take care of us, protect us in every direction at all times, visibly as well as invisibly. *Sa tu dīrghakāla nairantarya satkāra āsevitaḥ dṛḍhabhūmiḥ* (I.14). Then we get established.

To come to the first point once again, the maximum time possible for sitting should be selected. I do not say that it will be a common directive for everyone. It may vary from person to person according to circumstances, occasions, etc., but under the prevailing conditions one can choose the maximum period possible. For certain types of professionals or workers in social life, sitting for more than half an hour may be impossible. Well, okay, we shall take it for granted—sit only for half an hour, or I would say even for fifteen minutes, but let it be a regular feature. Sit for fifteen minutes every day, and later on, perhaps after a few years of sitting like this, conditions will change automatically.

Circumstances adjust themselves mysteriously when there is persistence in the practice. These circumstances are internal as well as external. The more we advance, we will find that conditions will become more and more congenial. We ourselves will get adjusted, inwardly as well as outwardly, and we will find that conditions change suitably. This is something very interesting. We will be wondering how external conditions will also change. They will change because, for the world, there is no such thing as external and internal. There is only one Universal, and so when a change occurs in one place, it will be felt sympathetically in corresponding places relevant to it. So there is no need to be

afraid of conditions in life as being non-conducive to the practice.

The difficulty is only in taking the first step; then afterwards, we will be carried by the stream. The sitting for a chosen period is regarded as essential, because it is the first tap that we strike upon the vital point in our personal life in bringing about some sort of a harmony between the body and the mind. All stages in yoga are stages of bringing about harmony. Instead of confusion and unmethodical movement, there would be a more methodical and harmonious adjustment of the various units of life.

Life is very large; it is not confined only to our little room or to our body, and so this adjustment may have to be effected in all the fields of life with which we are directly connected. Though it is true that we are ultimately connected with everything in the universe, for the time being it is enough if we take into consideration those visible factors with which we are immediately concerned in our practical life. These factors have to be adjusted with our life, and vice versa. These factors are, of course, of various kinds. What are the factors in life with which we are connected? There are many things —physical, geographical, social, political, moral, and intellectual. All these, of course, are things with which we are connected. It is no use, therefore, laying emphasis only on the personal level while the person is also connected externally to the geographical, the historical, the political and the social aspects of life.

The principles called *yamas* and *niyamas* especially, or the *sadhana chatustaya* as they say in the Vedanta philosophy, are intended to bring about the necessary adjustment of personality with those conditions and factors which are going to affect one's life, especially when they are meddled with or interfered with. Things look all right when we do not interfere with them. The moment we touch them, they then show their

real nature. So it is necessary not to oppose these forces or really meddle with them. We are not going to meddle with them. We are going to adjust ourselves with them in the beginning, and later on we will find that they will adjust themselves with us. When we become friendly with one aspect, that aspect becomes friendly with us also. Later on there is a mutual adjustment of values. All these things are difficult for a single mind to understand at one stroke.

A novitiate cannot comprehend all these things, because generally we are fired up with a kind of sudden enthusiasm. That is all—we don't know anything else. "I want to realise God in this very birth—now itself, if possible." This is all we say. But what are the things necessary for this purpose? How many difficulties are there? These things will not come to the mind easily, because every little event in this world is connected with many other events and conditions. There is no single, isolated event in this world. This is why we say that steps in the direction of the practice of yoga particularly should be taken only under the guidance of a competent teacher, one who is an expert in this field. It is more dangerous and more difficult than flying an airplane, because we cannot know what is ahead of us. We also cannot know what influence our past will have upon our present, what effect external conditions will have upon us, and what sudden reactions will be set up from factors within. Nothing of the kind will be clear in the beginning. When we take a few steps in the practice of yoga, an all-round change will take place. There will be internal change, external change, and even a feeling that God Himself is getting related to us in a more tangible manner than it appeared earlier.

Even after we succeed in sitting for awhile in a particular posture, the mind will refuse, after a time, to continue the practice. We will not find anyone in this world as clever as the mind. It is very clever in everything. It will look quite all right

for some time and the path will appear rosy, but after awhile there will be resentment of the mind even to sit, and it will produce excuses. There will be rationality behind our inability to practise, and we know very well that rationality is the highest thing that can justify anything. When there is reason brought forth in a very judicious manner, justifying our inability to sit for some time and the worthlessness of the practice itself, then there is no argument against it. The greatest danger is rationality, when it is used as a weapon against what is good for us. It is a double-edged sword. It can cut us this way and can cut us that way also; such is reason. Reason can justify what is good for us, and it can also justify what is dangerous or what is not good for us. Many *sadhakas* justify themselves in a wrong way altogether, by bringing about reasons which try to point out that the way of life they are living is quite inevitable and unavoidable. "If it is unavoidable, what can I do?" This is what the *sadhaka* will say. But it would not be unavoidable if proper precautions had been taken. We make initial mistakes without proper thought, and then these small mistakes look very big and, like a mountain, they stand before us. Later on I shall have occasion to refer to the mistakes we generally commit initially, without proper understanding.

We have a wrong notion about everything, including our own self. And with this wrong notion we go headlong into such a serious practice as is meditation because, just as a small sand particle getting stuck in the eye causes us annoyance, so too a little mistake in the beginning will loom large and become a serious obstacle in the end—a factor which can be studied from the history of institutions and the lives of saints, sages and *sadhakas*. These small mistakes look like normal things, and not serious obstacles, because they do not stand against us. They appear to be unconcerned externals; but there is no such thing as an unconcerned external. Every external is

connected with us, and the very fact of our perception of it will be enough reason why it can take action, for or against us, one day or the other.

So, we have to chalk out very carefully, as in a spiritual diary, the little mistakes that a person can commit by injudicious thinking, an irrational analysis of conditions due to a false view of life, a false judgement of things, and due to a woeful lack of knowledge of human nature and psychology. These are the difficulties that arise due to ignorance of the true nature of things that drives us into committing small mistakes, which will stand before us like devils one day and prevent us from going further. These mistakes must be avoided, and we have to consider them in some detail.

Chapter 8

THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-AFFIRMATION

The next step is what we may call "taking stock of our situation" before we actually embark upon the great adventure of whole-souled meditation. What do we mean by "taking stock"? Every businessman knows it. We just try to find out what things are there. How much is there on the credit side, or how much on the debit side? How much we owe others, and how much others owe us will be revealed from a stocktaking process. It is said that the true inner structure of a person never gets revealed in ordinary life as long as the mind is pulled in different directions. We know very well that if our right hand is pulled by someone and our left hand is pulled by someone else, and if everyone starts pulling us from all directions, we cannot assess our true state of affairs on account of the diversion of our attention in the direction of the pulls exerted upon our personality. Our psychological personality receives the impact of these pulls every day in our life so that we are never ourselves, even for a few minutes of the day. We are always artificial personalities, a fact which will not come to the daylight of understanding because we have never been anything other than that. This artificial personality of ours may become so strong and impetuous that it may persist even in sleep, so that we are artificial even in sleep. The true nature will not get revealed because of the heavy impact of this artificial set-up of our life.

The moment we wake up in the morning, we generally tune ourselves to external conditions rather than be ourselves and go deep into our own needs—our weaknesses and our strengths. We are placed in this world under such conditions,

fortunately or unfortunately, that we have not a moment's rest from the pressure exerted upon us by conditions outside —external circumstances. We are always something in terms of something else; we are nothing by our own selves. This is very unfortunate and is going to be a great obstacle before us. We are either a brother or a sister, a father or a mother, a friend or an enemy, an officer or a subordinate, this or that. All this is a false personality because in our own selves we are neither brothers nor sisters, neither fathers nor mothers, neither bosses nor subordinates or servants, or any such thing; all these are only foisted relationships. But these are the things that make our life, and we are only that, and nothing but that. How happy a person feels when he has the opportunity to go on brooding, thinking and contemplating the social status that he holds. He would not like to think that he is a puny animal, bereft of these relationships, when he is divested of all these contacts.

The status that one occupies in human society is not the true nature of that person. The status need not necessarily be a social imposition—it can be a psychological circumstance also, and it can even be biological. All these keep us in a state of subconscious tension. If very deeply studied psychoanalytically, we will find that every human being is a patient—not psychologically healthy, at least from a very profound point of view—a patient in the sense that there is something external grown as an accretion upon one's true nature which has covered up and smothered one's own freedom of existence. All these various types of fungi that have grown around us in the form of the biological, psychological and social relationships keep us in a fool's paradise—a fool's paradise in the sense that we live in a world which is totally false and which is not true or compatible with our real nature.

The practice of yoga is very cautious about all these internal structural devices, which have been manufactured by nature to keep the individual under subjugation by brainwashing him from birth until death and never allowing him to think of what these devices are. If we want to subordinate a person and keep that person under subjection always, we have to brainwash that person every day by telling him something contrary to what he is, repeating it every day—every moment in every thought, every speech and every action—so that there is a false personality grown around that person, and he becomes our servant. This has happened to everyone, and this trick seems to be played by the vast diversified nature itself, so that everyone is a servant of nature rather than a master. This is the source of sorrow.

Human suffering is due to a kind of subjection exerted on it by forces about which one cannot have any knowledge, truly speaking; also, one would not be allowed to have any kind of knowledge of it. This is what we call an iron curtain hanging in front of us, so that we will not know what is ahead of us, or behind us, or even by the side of us. Let anyone find a little time to brood over this subject and weep silently if the truth comes out. They say that when a person is drowning and has lost everything that can be regarded as worthwhile in life, or when a person's life is in danger—death is yawning before him and is imminent—in such conditions, the mind reveals its true nature. It is said that when there is asphyxiation caused by drowning, all the memories of the past, sometimes even of past lives, will be unrolled before the mind for a flash of a moment due to the horror of impending death and the nervous pressure felt at that moment. Similar experiences are known to have happened in situations when a person has lost everything.

These are things which cannot be learned theoretically by the study of books, because very few people have lost

everything; we always have something with us. But to experience that moment of reckoning, we must lose everything, even our last strip of cloth; no one should want to even look at our face, as if we are the worst perhaps in the whole of creation. Such should be the condition to come upon us—nothing to eat, no food of any kind, no place to lie down, no raiment on the body, everything is horrible—at that moment the true nature of a person comes out. Otherwise, whatever self-analysis we will do, it will be an analysis of the false personality. Psychological analysis or yogic investigation conducted by a false mind will produce only false results and, therefore, a very superior type of Central Intelligence Division agent, who is not involved in the case on hand, is necessary to investigate into the mind—someone quite different from and outside the purview of the operation of the involved mind. Such a mind is called the higher mind, which is in us. It is this higher mind that has to do what is called the stocktaking of one's own condition.

When a person seriously takes to the practice of yoga, a thorough analysis or stocktaking may have to be done, taking into consideration one's experiences during the past many years, of whose nature a little may be still present in one's current state of affairs. Memories of the past sometimes evoke present experiences, and we must also take note of those experiences and factors which can evoke memories of the past. According to Patanjali, memory is one of the obstacles in yoga. Many people think that memory is a very good thing, and even complain that they have no memory. Well, that is all right for the workaday world, but from another angle of vision memory is regarded as an obstacle because we are repeatedly made to think of something that has happened in the past, so that it goes on annoying us constantly even though that event has passed and has no connection with our present life. Both pleasures of the past and pains of the past can evoke

conditions which may force us to repeat those experiences, positively or negatively.

We have to wipe out memories of the past, especially when they have no connection with the type of life which we are going to live in the future. Whatever experiences we have passed through that are unrelated and irrelevant to our future aim should be brushed aside and cast out by exorcising them like devils, and then not allowing them to enter into the ken of the mind by emphasising in our understanding that: "They mean nothing to me. They are only something like the experiences I had in my dream. Why should I think of them now? They have no meaning, though they had a meaning at that time."

But more difficult than the work of wiping out past memories is the adjustment of oneself with present conditions. We shall not think now about what is ahead of us in the future. The present condition is a reality more vehement than the past memories because we see it with our eyes, and nothing can be worse than that. These things which we see with our eyes every day and with which we have some sort of connection or the other, at least remotely, have some say in the matter of our own personal life. They have to be harnessed for the purpose of the practice of yoga, harnessed in the sense that they should be made contributory in some way or the other to the aim before us.

It is also necessary here to make a distinction between the necessary and the unnecessary aspects of life, or the essentials and the non-essentials, we may say. We have umpteen kinds of perceptions and relationships in life. I see a tree in front of me, I see the Ganga flowing, I see the sun rising—these are all perceptions. But I need not worry too much about these perceptions since they are indeterminate to a large extent, and except for the fact that they are cognitions and perceptions of certain facts outside, they do not mean much in my personal

emotional life or volitional undertakings. In two important *sutras*, Patanjali draws a distinction between 'indeterminate perceptions' and 'determinate perceptions'. The determinate ones are those which have a direct connection with our daily life—we cannot avoid them, and they control us to a large extent. The indeterminate ones are like the tree in front, for example. It is merely a perception and a knowledge of something that is there, but it is not going to harass us or control us in any visible or palpable manner.

These perceptions—or we may call them cognitions—of the determinate and indeterminate character are designated in the language of Patanjali as *vrittis*. Sometimes they are equated with what they call *kleshas*. A '*klesha*' is a peculiar term used in yoga psychology meaning a kind of affliction. Unless we enter into the philosophical background of yoga, it will be difficult to appreciate why a perception is called an affliction. We shall look into the details of this subject as we proceed further—why every perception is a kind of affliction upon us, why it is a pain and not something desirable.

The determinate perceptions or the directly involved factors in our life are love and hatred, self-assertion, and fear of death, which is equivalent to love of life. We are terribly fond of our own personal life, and we dread death. The physical individuality is to be protected at any cost—by hook or by crook, by the struggle for existence, or as our biologists say, by the application of the law of the survival of the fittest. By struggle, by competition, by any method, we wish to survive. If it is a question of one's survival, one would not mind even the destruction of others, because it is a question of "my life".

This is the argument of the central principle of individuality called the ego, or the *asmita* or *ahamkara*. The protection of this ego is the main function of our psychophysical individuality. Its existence and its operation

have two sides or aspects of emphasis—a like for certain things, and a dislike for certain other things. We may be wondering why it is that we like certain things and dislike certain things. Is there any reason behind it? The reason is not easily available, though it is available if we go a little deeper. A like, a want, a love or an affection is that pattern of the movement of our consciousness towards an external object, whose characteristics are observed by the mind for the time being to be the counterpart, the correlative of the present condition of one's individuality—so much so that when the condition of our personality changes, our like or love will also change. We cannot go on loving the same thing for eternity, nor can we hate a thing for eternity.

Loves and hatreds change when our condition changes, so that likes and dislikes, loves and hatreds are the reactions set up in respect of certain external objects by the changing pattern of our own personality or individuality. If it is summer, I like to drink water; if it is winter, I like to drink hot tea. My liking for hot tea or for cold water has some connection with what is taking place inside me in my biological and psychological personality. When there is drying up of the system due to heat, there is a need for water—I would like to drink cold water. But when it is freezing cold due to the wintry atmosphere, I would like to have hot tea. So our like of hot tea and dislike of cold water in winter is caused by a peculiar condition of our body—coupled with the condition of the mind, of course. In summer we would not like to drink hot tea. We would like a soda or cold water, etc., and dislike anything that is hot; we would not like to have hot coffee or hot tea in such climate. "Oh, it is so hot. I will take cold water." We dislike during summer that very thing which we liked in winter. What has happened to us? Why did we like it that day and today we dislike it? It is not because there is something wrong with tea or something wrong with water. They are the

same things; nothing has happened to them. But something has happened to us. So today I like that which I disliked the other day, and today I dislike that which I liked the other day. What is the reason? The reason is our own selves. What has happened to us? Something has happened to us. If one can very carefully go into the deepest recesses of one's nature, one would know why loves and hatreds arise in one's mind. We project upon others, by a peculiar process called a defence-mechanism in psychoanalysis, the counterpart of our own nature. That which will not fit into our present condition is not liked by us. By 'present condition' I mean physical, biological, psychological, social—everything. Anything that will fit into our present physical, biological, psychological and social condition is liked or loved by us. Anything that is outside the need of this condition is disliked; it becomes an obstacle. "I don't like it," we say. Why don't we like it? We do not know. "I don't like it—that is all." But if we are good physicians of the mind we will know why it is that we like it, and why it is that we do not like it.

Asmita or egoism, which is the principle of the affirmation of a particular condition of individuality, is the reason for a particular love or hatred under given conditions. This affirmation of individuality is a peculiar thing, which cannot be understood by the intellect, by ordinary logic. Whatever be the condition with which consciousness identifies itself, that is affirmed by the ego, so that the ego does not have a set pattern—it goes on changing itself. "Today I assert myself as a collector; tomorrow I assert myself as a minister." Though the principle of assertion is the same, the way of its function is different. The principle, and not merely the function, has to be tackled. It is not important to know what kind of food we want. We may want *chapatti*, or rice, or *dal*, or bread, or jam, or butter; that is not important. What is important is why we are feeling hungry—that is the principle

behind eating. What we eat is a minor detail, but it is why we eat that is important.

Likewise, what type of assertion we are making is a different matter; it is a detail. But why we are making this assertion at all is the subject for analysis in yoga. Why is it that today we identify ourselves as *sannyasis*—"I am a *mandaleshwar*"—and we go on asserting that we are *mandaleshwars*; we are officers; we are such-and-such; we are this and that. This principle of affirmation is a peculiar twist in consciousness that has got identified with a changing condition. Every condition changes. We cannot have a permanent condition in life, so the affirmation of the ego also goes on changing. How do we know what we were in the previous birth? We had a different type of affirmation at that time. Who was our father in a previous birth? Who was our mother? And what has happened to that father and that mother? We have completely forgotten them. We now have another father and mother. In the next birth, what will happen to us? We will have some other father and mother. How many fathers? How many mothers? How many sisters? How many brothers? How many friends? How many enemies? So, who is our friend and who is our enemy? Who is our father and who is our mother?

The ego does not want all these questions to be raised; it cannot answer these questions. It is a terrific sword that we brandish before it, to put these questions to it. It will become mad if such questions are put. It doesn't want to listen to all these things; it will affirm a particular condition only. Immediately there is a ramification with two tentacles—on one side there is love and on the other side there is hatred. They are automatic manifestations of the principle of individuality. The moment we assert ourselves in a particular condition, love and hatred must be there, because love is an

automatic projection of the mind in respect of the counterpart of our present condition, which also explains hatred.

Patanjali mentions that these are terrible obstacles in our spiritual progress. We are caught up and we do not know how we are caught up. First of all there is the self-affirmative principle which reinforces itself, like hard concrete, by repeated hammering upon loves and hatreds throughout the day and night; and the love of this individual life and the consequent fear of the death that may come upon it are natural consequences of this ego-ridden individuality. Therefore, we can say the whole problem of life is the ego of man. This has to be tackled with caution.

Chapter 9

PERCEPTION AND REALITY

In the previous chapter we were discussing a very important subject which every student of yoga should remember: how the two types of perception, about which Sage Patanjali tells us some very important aspects, tell upon not only our personal and social life, but upon our efforts towards spiritual perfection. The determinate aspects of psychological experience were touched upon briefly as consisting principally of self-affirmation or egoism, which projects itself as love and hatred. Also, we had occasion to go a little deep into the mystery of love and hatred—as to why they arise at all. Generally this is the type of life that the individual lives in the world, getting identified with these psychological processes to such an extent that one cannot know that one is so involved.

The worst thing for a person would be to get involved in something and not know that it has happened, because in such a case, observation, experiment, and analysis would not be possible. There should be some sort of a possibility for objective observation by a state of mind which will act as a witness of these conditions which are to be observed. But when these conditions to be observed get identified with the witnessing consciousness itself, then observation is not possible. So, self-analysis is a very difficult process. It is a difficult process because in the self which is to be analysed, the subject and the object cannot be distinguished, and we are used to only those types and kinds of analyses where the objects of observation stand outside the subject of investigation. Self-investigation is difficult merely for this

reason. One cannot know oneself, analyse oneself, study oneself, examine oneself, or treat oneself, for obvious reasons.

Why has this situation arisen? Why this vehement affirmation of the ego, this assertion of the mind in respect of a particular condition which is passing, transitory, phenomenal? The attachment of the mind to a particular condition is the principle of egoism. Why does it happen? Why does it breed the further problems of like, dislike, love of physical life, individual life, fear of death, etc.? This happens because of a background which is still deeper than this particular psychological involvement. The very belief in the reality of externals is the cause for this calamity, because the moment we have a conviction that an object of perception is real, we have to develop a real attitude towards it. The perception of the object as something real is the beginning of the trouble. The trouble then intensifies itself as a compulsive activity towards the development of an attitude towards that object. The precondition of this attitude is egoism.

To describe the series or the successive stages of this development—there is, first, a perception of the object, such as a tree, for example, in front. I perceive an object in front of me such as a tree, and I am convinced that it is a real tree. The tree is really there; it is not an unreal perception. The existence of the tree is real. It is really there outside me. The 'outsideness' of the tree is also real. The tree is real, its externality to me is real and, therefore, I am now compelled to develop a real attitude towards it.

Now comes the second problem. What is this real attitude that I have to develop towards it? The force that urges this real attitude towards the object is egoism. It is the breeding ground for the impulsive power which drives the consciousness out towards that object which has been regarded as real. It is not possible to merely perceive an object and have no attitude towards it, because the very consciousness of an object is the

demand of the object to be recognised in a certain manner, and this recognition is called attitude. Therefore, we now have to find out the reason for this perception of the object itself.

We are going from the lower stage to a higher stage, from the immediate experience of a concrete trouble to the causes thereof. We have a complex problem in the form of like and dislike for objects, and we want to maintain this condition of like and dislike. Therefore, there is love of life and fear of death, which, of course, requires the affirmation of the individual subject maintaining this attitude. We have now arrived at the stage where we understand that the reason behind all this psychological activity is the perception of an object as a real something, external to oneself. Why do we perceive the object? We are not deliberately, or of our own accord, perceiving the object; here also, we are forced. Ultimately we will find that everything that we do is under a compulsion. Though people parade under the notion that they are free people and they can do whatever they want, it is not so. There is no free person in this world. Everybody is a slave of an urge, a force, a compulsion that is at the back of all these psychological activities. Just as we cannot see our own back, we cannot see the existence of these forces—they are behind.

The perception of an object is caused by a subtle activity that has taken place in the cosmos itself. We have to go back to the Upanishads and texts which are akin in nature. The human mind is not made in such a way as to be able to comprehend what has happened, ultimately. This is what they call the cosmological analysis of human experience. Why do we exist at all as individuals, and then are compelled to perceive objects, and then to have to undergo all this tragedy and suffering of positive and negative attitudes, etc.? This is a mystery for the human intellect. While we may be able to understand and explain what things are like in the world, we will not be able to explain to ourselves—why we are what we

are. Can we explain why we are what we are? "I am what I am; that is all. It has no reason behind it." But there is a reason, which is the reason behind the reason itself. Here we go back to a condition beyond human intellect. Great masters like Acharya Sankara, Ramanuja, etc. tell us that here we land in a realm where intellect should not interfere. The intellect has a boundary, and beyond that boundary, it is useless.

Now I am touching upon a realm where intellect will not work—and it is not supposed to work at all because this is a cosmic question, and intellect is made in such a way that it cannot understand cosmic relationships. The reason is that intellect is an individualised endowment; it is not a cosmic principle. It is a function of the individual psychological principle. This is what we call the intellect and, therefore, it will work only in terms of the affirmation of individuality. The intellect will always take for granted that the individual exists. But now we are trying to find out why the individual exists at all, so we know why our intellect will not work here. The intellect cannot work here because of the simple reason that we are trying to find the cause of the intellect itself—so intellect fails, as it has to fail.

Here we go to a realm where the revelations of the ancient masters, which are embodied in the sacred scriptures, become our guide. Otherwise we shall be blind—we will know nothing. The great masters who are the Gurus of mankind, who had plumbed the depths of being and had vision of the cosmic mystery, tell us something which the intellect cannot explain inductively, logically or scientifically. Our individual existence is caused by something which is prior to the manifestation of individuality and, therefore, let not the individual intellect interfere with this subject.

The masters, whose records we have in such scriptures as the Upanishads, for example, tell us that there is a cosmic mystery behind this operation of individuality—namely, the

diversification of the Comsic Principle. We cannot ask as to why it happened, because the intellect is interfering here. We are asking the reason why the intellect is there at all, and why individuality is there at all. That question cannot be asked because this intellect is an effect of individuality, and now we are trying to find the cause thereof. "Unbridled intellect is an obstacle," says Sankara in his commentary on the Brahma Sutras, because the intellect will insist that there is diversity. It will oblige us to accept that individuality is real, objects are real, our relationships to them must be real, and so forth. So we should not take the advice of the intellect hereafter. The mystery of cosmic manifestation, which is the diversification of the cosmic principle, is regarded as the controlling principle behind the existence and the functioning of the individual.

Nowadays, our scientists also have conjectured the possibility of the universe having once upon a time been constituted as a sort of a cosmic atom. One scientist said, "The whole cosmos was like an atom." By "an atom", he means an indivisible something. The whole universe originally was like an atom, and that atom split into two parts. This is also mentioned in the Manu Smriti, prior to the declaration of this scientist. In the first chapter of the Manu Smriti we find the process of creation described, and instead of an atom, Manu says "*anda*"—it was like an egg. Well, the scientist says "an atom". Does an atom not look something like an egg? It split into two parts. This original split of the atom into two parts is the cause of all our problems today. And it goes on, splitting and splitting—two became four, four became eight, eight became sixteen, a millionfold, and uncountable in number. These little split parts are the individuals—you, me, and everybody included. We are struggling to become the original atom once again, as something unnatural has happened to us.

While the physical scientist thinks that the atom has really split into a millionfold parts, the sages tell us that really it has not split itself like that—it is only an appearance. Really there is no split, because if it has really split, we cannot go back into the original, just as curd cannot be converted into milk once it has become curd since the change is irreversible. But that is not the case here. If that had happened, there would be no urge of the part to go back to the whole. If we really have been cut off, then it is finished; the matter is over. Why do we urge to unite ourselves with the whole? That means a real split has not taken place. A kind of mysterious bifurcation has taken place.

To put it in modern psychological terms, a kind of cosmic schizophrenia has taken place. In schizophrenia the person does not become split, but looks like a split personality. In this condition, which sometimes is compared to a dream split of consciousness, a real isolation does not take place. This is another analogy. Our personality splits itself into the observer and the observed world in dream. But are we really split? No. Otherwise, we would not wake up as a whole individual. The perception of real objects in dream, by a real subject dreaming, and a real attitude of like, dislike, etc., which that subject projects towards the object—all of this drama looking very, very real is not truly real, because if that had really taken place, there would be no waking up of the individual into a wholeness of consciousness. So this is explained only as a mystery beyond human comprehension.

This universal condition which has ramified itself, as if in dream, into the individual segments, is the cause for the affirmation of individuality and the perception of objects, and the likes and dislikes and the sorrows of this world. Our very sorrow is due to our loss of identity with the Cosmic. Otherwise, there would be no sorrow in this world. We are suffering due to an agony felt on account of our isolation from that Cosmic of which we are a part. So, the philosophical and

spiritual advice in this context is that the mystery of life cannot be explained, and the sorrow of life cannot be obviated unless the original cause is discovered and it is dealt with in a manner which is requisite. This requisite manner of dealing with the ultimate question is yoga. As I mentioned earlier, yoga is a gradual process of identification of the part with the whole.

Now, analogically speaking, if the one has become two, and two has become four, four has become eight, etc., so that we are today what we are, in this condition, the reverse process of returning to the original unity would be by a successive recession of the very same process, stage by stage, missing not a single link. These are the stages of yoga. The steps in yoga, or the stages of knowledge, are the process of receding the effect into the cause—i.e., that condition of the effect in which one is 'A' or 'B' or 'XYZ'. So we have to determine our present condition, and from that condition we must retrace our steps back—not suddenly to the topmost unity, but to the condition immediately above. The step that is next to us, the condition above us, the stage ahead of us, is our goal for the present or the time being, with which we have to get united in meditation, in yoga. And that second step would effect a further stage ahead, and so on and so forth, until the final unity is achieved.

So, it would not be judicious on the part of any individual to vehemently assert that the physical perceptions of the world are all-in-all. The materialist's conception is, therefore, not correct, because this conception arises on account of a miscalculated attitude towards everything. This is the reason why, in the practice of yoga, expert guidance is called for, because we are dealing with matters that are super-intellectual, super-rational. Here our own understanding is not of much use, nor are books of any use, because we are treading on dangerous ground which the mind has not seen and cannot

contemplate. We are all a wonder, says the scripture. This is a mystery, a wonder. It is a wonder because it is not capable of intellectually being analysed. The scripture proclaims that the subject is a great mystery, a great wonder and marvel; and one who teaches it is also a marvel, and the one who receives this knowledge, who understands it—the disciple—is also a wonder, indeed, because though the broadcasting station is powerful, the receiver-set also must be equally powerful to receive the message. The bamboo stick will not receive the message of the BBC. So the disciple is also a wonder to receive this mysterious knowledge, as the teacher himself is a wonder; and the subject is a marvel by itself.

Thus arises the need to be cautious in the adjustment of the mind and the judgement of values in life. The *sutras* of Patanjali that I referred to give only a hint, and do not enter into details—the hint being that the *vrittis* or the modifications of the mind are of a twofold character, which I translated as determinate and indeterminate, and have to be gradually controlled. This control of the *vrittis* or the modifications of the mind is regarded as yoga: *yogaḥ cittavṛitti nirodhaḥ* (I.2). Yoga is the control of the modifications of 'the stuff' of the mind, the very substance of psychological action. Not merely the external modifications, but the very 'stuff' of it, the very root of it, has to be controlled, and this is done in and by successive stages. We have always to move from the effect to the cause in the manner indicated in this analysis that we have made.

Ultimately it comes to this, that our perceptions are our problems. They become a problem because we pass judgements on these perceptions. Mere perceptions as they are, left alone to themselves, would be a different matter altogether. But we do not simply perceive an object and keep quiet. The moment we perceive something, we pass a judgement on it. "Oh, this is something. This is a snake." This

is a perception. “Oh, it is dangerous.” This is a judgement. “I have to run away from it.” This is another judgement. “This is a mango.” This is one judgement. “It is very sweet.” This is a second judgement. “I must eat it.” This is a third judgement. We go on passing judgement after judgement of various complex characters on an object of perception. So, judgements become subsequent effects of the perception of an object.

Now, perceptions are of two kinds: real perceptions and unreal perceptions. When we perceive an object in the world, like a tree, it appears to be real; we cannot say it is unreal. Why is it real? What is the definition of reality? This is another very interesting philosophical subject. How do we know that any object is real? If we are asked how we define reality, what we mean by ‘real’, what is our idea? If we are asked to define reality, define the character of anything being real, we will find that it is difficult to define it. If I project my fingers and attempt to touch it, I must have a sensation of touch—then it is real, isn’t it? The sensation of touch should say there is a hard object, and then I say it is real. Is this the definition of reality? So we want only a sensation of hardness. The moment that sensation comes, it is real. And it has to be corroborated by the eyes; they must also say, “Yes, we are seeing a shape.” The eyes can see only a shape. But how do we know that the shape is real? The fingers will tell us, “We are feeling solidity—a hardness and concreteness.” If it has a smell and a taste, etc., then it becomes real. We have passed judgement—it is real. So, the nose should smell, the fingers should feel the concreteness and solidity, the eyes should see a shape, etc.; then, the thing is real. Is this a definition? This is a dangerous definition, but we cannot have any other definition.

The reason behind our feeling a solidity, concreteness, hardness, etc. of an object and a shape perceived by the eyes, is because the condition of the senses which perceive and that

of the mind behind the senses are on the same level as the constitution of the object. That is why we can see this world and not the heavens, for example. We cannot say that heavens do not exist; but why do we not see them? Because the constitution of the objects of the heaven is subtler than, less dense than, the constitution of our present individuality—the two are not commensurate with each other. Or, to give a more concrete example, why don't we hear the music when the radio is not switched on? Somebody must be singing at the radio station now, but our ears are unable to hear; they can't hear anything because the constitution, the structure, the frequency, the wavelength of the electrical message that is sent by the broadcasting station is subtler than the constitution and the structure of the eardrum. It is not possible for the eardrum to catch it because it is gross. But if you talk, I can hear, because the sound that you make by talking is of the same level or degree of density as the capacity of the eardrum. I can hear your sound, but not the sounds of radio waves, music, or the message, because of the dissimilarity of the structure of frequency, wavelength or density of structure.

So, the world need not be real merely because of the fact that we are seeing it. It only shows that we are as much fools as the things are. We are in the same level or degree of reality as the atmosphere around us. This is not a great proof for the reality of the world. If I agree with you, it does not mean that our agreement is based on any judicious judgement. Suppose you have an opinion and I agree with that opinion; it does not mean that this opinion is correct. Merely because I agree with you, it need not be correct. It shows that my way of thinking is similar to your way of thinking, that is all. But it does not mean that it is a correct opinion; a third person may not agree with it.

So, merely because our mental make-up and sensory constitution agree with the structure of things outside, it does

not mean that the world exists or that it is real. It only indicates that we are on the same level, that is all. Here is a word of caution: we have to be on guard in our attachment to things and our taking them for ultimate realities. We have to withdraw ourselves into higher, more judicious judgements for the purpose of higher unity.

Chapter 10

SELF-CONTROL: THE ALPHA AND OMEGA OF YOGA

It has been discovered now, therefore, that perceptions are due to a segmentation of consciousness. This is the secret behind our life in this world. And inasmuch as our perceptional experiences are involved in a condition of consciousness which is inseparable from our own being, we cannot know the reason why we see things. Consequently, we cannot know why we like things or dislike things. Our knowledge becomes half-baked, inadequate and erroneous when the conditions of all knowledge lie behind our capacities. Thus it is that often it looks as if we are completely under the control of pressures that are exerted from above and behind, from the right and the left, from every direction—a fact of which we cannot have any awareness. It is, therefore, useless to apply scientific methods of knowing or investigation in regard to matters which are the very conditions of knowing.

This is something which goes deeper than even psychology, because all knowledge—even of the mind, which is what we know as psychology—is gained by an observational technique employed by the mind in an objective manner, as if it is observing somebody else, and the only thing that the mind cannot do is to know itself or to know the conditions of its own functioning. The relationships of the mind and the conditions of knowledge determine the very existence and the character of the mind, and therefore it is that we find ourselves in a helpless condition. The practice of yoga becomes all the more difficult when it deals with conditions

prior to our present state of existence, when it deals with causes rather than effects, and especially causes that lie 'behind' us which are precedent to our present physical and social condition.

What we call self-control, sense-control, mind-control, etc., is nothing but the attempt of consciousness to go back to its cause. When an effect puts forth effort to return to its cause, that would be self-control on its part. It becomes self-control because in order to understand the cause of an effect, the effect has to withdraw the ramifications of action, thought, feeling, and relationship. We may wonder why such a kind of withdrawal is called for on the part of the effect for the sake of the knowledge of its cause. If I feel hot and the cause of this heat is the sun that is shining in the sky, and I have to know the cause of this heat as the sun, I need not withdraw myself to know the cause of this heat. I can simply look up and see the sun blazing in the sky and say, "Here is the cause of heat." Where then arises the need for self-control on the part of the effect when it has to know the nature of the cause of its very existence and action? The reason is something very peculiar. The cause of this effect we are speaking of is different in every way from external causes, such as the sun causing heat, etc. A wind may blow and cause chilliness, and a wrong diet may cause a tummy upset, etc.—these become causes of certain effects in the form of experiences. In the matter of all these causes, knowledge of the causes does not necessarily involve self-control, because all these causes are outside the effect and they exert an external pressure on the effect.

Therefore, it becomes practical for us to employ observational techniques of a scientific character where causes are outside the effect, or external to the effect. But here, we are speaking of certain other types of causes, where the cause is inherent in the effect, and not outside the effect. The cause, in this case, does not have a spatial existence outside

the effect, standing externally like a master stands outside the servant. The master is not inside the servant; he is not inherent in the servant. He is absolutely an external cause, operating on the servant with no intrinsic force in respect of the servant, whereas here the type of cause we are referring to is intrinsically operative in the effect, and not merely extrinsic. That which is the cause of this effect is present immanently in the effect, and not merely transcendentally. This means to say that the very pattern, the structure, the existence, the make-up, the substantiality of the effect is constituted by the nature of the cause which has become the effect by a greater density of its structure.

When gas becomes water by a particular form of permutation and combination, or when water becomes ice, the water that has become ice does not stand outside the ice; it is inherent in the ice. The water which is the cause of the ice is not extrinsic to the ice; it is intrinsic, so that the water is the ice, we may say, in all respects. However, for practical purposes, and for explanatory reasons, we may say that the cause is the water, and the effect is the ice. Here, the cause and the effect are inseparable; we have to melt the ice in order that we may find the water there. There is a complete transformation or modification of the effect called for, in order to know the nature of the cause thereof.

The effect here, which is our own personality and individuality, is projected by certain conditions as causative factors which do not operate outside our individuality, but are the very constituents of our individuality; therefore, what is called for is a very unusual type of transformation on the part of the effect, for the sake of the knowledge of its cause. All logical and scientific methods fail here because of a completely new type of technique that is expected to be employed. The observing scientist here is not sitting in a laboratory with some instrument to observe the effect, or to

know the nature of the cause of a particular effect. The observer is involved in the very act of observation, and herein is the difficulty. The observer is involved in the act of observation, so that the condition of the observer determines the condition of the observation and the nature of the observed effect.

The effect, which is this individuality of ours, is nothing but a spatial and temporal projection of a particular condition called the cause. The more we become externalised, the more we become spatial and temporal. The more we go towards the cause internally, the less is the pressure exerted on us by space, time and relevant conditions. But the more we proceed further and further in an external direction towards space, time and objects, the more we become automatons, more and more enslaved, more and more helpless, more and more puppets, as it were. We become more and more free and autonomous the more we withdraw ourselves from spatial and temporal conditions and tend to be what we are in our own selves. The causes of our existence as individuals are not capable of being known by the mind, because these causes drive even the mind in a particular way for its function in space and in time.

The whole of yoga is self-control—in one word, 'self-mastery'—in the sense that the rays of the mind and the senses, the projecting powers of individuality, have to be brought back to their source in order that there may be consciousness of the cause. There cannot be a consciousness of the cause as long as the cause is not the object of consciousness, inasmuch as the latter is involved in the externalised activity of the mind and the senses. We cannot know an object unless the consciousness follows this cognitive act and enlivens the senses, activates them towards the object which is seen, cognised or perceived by them. On account of this engagement of consciousness through the mind and the senses in respect of objects outside and in all acts

of perception and cognition, it finds no time to revert to its cause. We have no time. The consciousness cannot find time to become aware of its own background, inasmuch as it is heavily engaged and is very busy throughout the day and the night in attending to the needs of the mind and the senses in their activity of projection externally to objects. So, to become aware of the cause would be to enable the consciousness to revert itself in that direction—inwardly—for which purpose it has to be withdrawn, tentatively at least, in an appreciable measure, from its engagement in objective perception through the mind and the senses.

All perceptions are, therefore, engagements of consciousness, which prevents it from knowing its own background and conditions of action, so that when we are busily engaged in the perceptions and cognitions through the mind and the senses, we cannot know our own background, and we look helpless. The necessity for self-control arises merely because of the fact that the object of our quest is inherently present in the very act of our individual experience, and it cannot be observed by the ordinary means of an academic character or a scientific nature. Here we need no instruments, no types of apparatus either for observation or knowledge, because the object here is the background of our own self. There are causes behind causes, extending one behind the other, and lying one behind the other in larger and larger expansiveness—one implying the other, and one inclusive of the other. The causes that are precedent are inclusive of the causes that are succeeding, so that when we go higher up we do not lose anything that is lower, but get everything that is lower in a refined form by transcendence.

Transcendence is different from giving up. When we transcend a condition, we do not reject that condition as something necessary or unnecessary, but absorb that condition into a higher nature, include it in our higher

condition and make it a part of our experience, so that nothing is lost but everything is found in a more real form. So in the practice of yoga, nothing is lost. *Nehābhikramanāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate* (B.G. II.40), says the Bhagavadgita. There is no loss in the practice of yoga; always there is a gain. And no question of sin arises here. If we do it well, so much the better for us. If we cannot do it well, there is no sin in it; the only thing is, we have not got what we wanted. Such is the impartiality and the genuine character of this wonderful practice called yoga.

Previously we were touching upon the nature of perceptions of objects, and these were explained as the reasons behind our attachments and aversions, our love of individual physical life and dread of death, etc. It was also discovered that self-affirmation or egoism becomes a necessary link, an intermediary between the external acts of cognition, perception, attachment, aversion etc., and the ultimate cause of the appearance of this phenomenon, of which we have no knowledge. This phenomenon was explained also as having been caused by a vast multiple manifestation of the Ultimate Reality in the form of what we may call 'located individuals', as if one is not connected with the other, so that each individual—which was originally an inseparable part of the Ultimate Truth or Reality, enjoying the status of pure selfhood or subjectivity—got distorted into an object of the cognitive act and perceptive action of the senses, so that it is possible to regard any person and any object in this world either as a subject from its own point of view, or as an object from another's point of view. It is this peculiar double character, or dual role, of persons and things in this world that has made life difficult. Which is the correct attitude: to regard things as subjects, or regard them as objects? Well, the correct attitude would be to regard everything as it ought to be regarded from the point of view of what it really is.

Can we look upon anything, any person, any object for the matter of that, as something which is to be utilised as a kind of instrument in perception or cognition, or has it a status of its own? What we mean by a status of one's own is a capacity to exist by oneself, independent of external relations and dependence on others; this is the nature of subjectivity. Everyone, you and I included, has a status of one's own. It is this status that gets distorted later on into what they call egoism, pride, etc., what is called *ijjat* in Hindi—a kind of stupid form which it has taken, though originally it was a spiritual status. Our status as pure subjects is incapable of objectification, and it is not intended to be used as a tool for another's activity or satisfaction. It is not in the nature of things to subject themselves into objects as vehicles of action and satisfaction for somebody else, because every individual, judged from its own real status, enjoys subjectivity. It is an end in itself, and not a means.

That is why everyone is egoistic, and everyone wants satisfaction for one's own self. When we analyse all our actions, we will find that there is no such thing as unselfish action, finally. Every action is selfish, if we very closely define the principle of selfishness. The element of self is present in every act, every perception, every cognition and every effort, because when the self is isolated, all things lose their meaning—the whole world looks empty. What we call unselfishness is only the presence of a higher type of self as an element in our act of perception, cognition, etc. It does not mean that the Self is absolutely absent—that is not possible. We only mean that a higher, more expansive kind of self is present rather than a lower self. What we call selfishness is nothing but the interference of the lower self in our actions, and what we call unselfishness is the presence in the same way of a higher form of self, but Self is there—it cannot be absent. There is nothing in this world where the Self is absent. The

whole universe is pervaded by the Self. It is present in everything, and nothing can exist without it, because that is the only existence.

The act of self-control is the return of consciousness to a higher selfhood from a lower one. It is a rise from self to self, we may call it—from the self that is involved in externality and objectivity, to a self that is less involved in this manner—a return from objectivity to subjectivity through higher and higher degrees of ascent. But this process becomes extremely difficult on account of our weddedness to the senses. We have been habituated to looking at things only through the senses, and we have no other way of knowing or judging. We immediately pass a judgement on anything that is seen with the eyes—it is there in such-and-such a condition, it has such-and-such a value, it is real in this percentage. Our judgement of value and reality depends, therefore, unfortunately for us, on our sense-perceptions, so that external relationships are mistaken by us as realities. A reality is not a relationship; it is an existence by itself. So, self-control is a return of consciousness from its life of relationships to a higher form of life where relationships become less and less palpable.

The whole difficulty is in self-control, and this is the alpha and omega of yoga—everything is here. It is practically impossible for ordinary people, because consciousness is involved there. If anything else had been involved, we would have done something. We ourselves are involved—that is the meaning of consciousness getting involved—and if we are involved in mistaken activity, how are we to rectify this activity? We are involved in this wrong action, and who is to rectify this wrong action? Not someone else—that someone else cannot do anything in a matter where we are involved. This is the difficulty of self-control. It is not control by somebody; it is control by the self. It is control of oneself by

oneself, and nothing can be more difficult in this world than this effort. But once we taste the joy of self-control, we will not like to taste even milk and honey in this world.

Self-control is not a pain; it is not a suffering, as people may imagine. The moment we talk of self-control, people get frightened. They think it is a kind of *tapasya* that is being imposed upon us contrary to the joys that we are expecting in life. Not so is the truth. The joy of self-control is greater than the joy of sense contact—very important to remember. The joy of sense-control is greater than the joy of sense contact with objects. One may ask why. The reason is that in sense contact an artificial condition is created, whereas in sense-control a real condition which is commensurate with our true nature is generated. In sense contact a condition is generated which is not commensurate with our true nature. We become sick in sense contact, and a kind of illness takes possession of us. And the distorted joy ('distorted' is the word to be underlined), the perverted joy—reflected, limited, and distorted joy—which we are supposed to acquire by every kind of sense contact, is far, far removed from the true joy of which it is the reflection, distortion, etc.—a state of affairs which can be known only by direct practice. There is a vast difference, as between health and disease. How unhappy one is when one is sick, and how happy one feels when one is healthy. But if we are perpetually sick and we do not know the joy of health, it is difficult to make it clear to us. What health is cannot be explained, because we have not seen what health is.

Sense-control, or self-control, is causative of a greater happiness than anything conceivable in this world, because it is a return of consciousness to its own self that is motivated by this effort. The more we return to our self, the more are we happy. The more we are away from our self, the less we are happy and the more we are miserable. So, in all externalised perceptions and contacts, likes and dislikes, etc., we are in a

diseased state of mind and consciousness. We are not what we are. We are other than what we are: *asvastha*—not in our own self. We are outside our self when we perceive anything. *Svastha* is one who is healthy—one who is situated, located and rooted in one's own self. One who is established in one's own self is *svastha*, and that condition is called *svastha*—health. When we are outside our self, we are *asvatha*.

Self-control is yoga, and that is the return of consciousness to its own cause, which is nothing but its own higher nature. This cause that we are searching for is not another thing outside consciousness. It is a higher expansive condition of its own being, so that we rise from our self to our self in a more expanded form. When we rise to the cause from the effect, we do not grow from one thing to another thing, or rise from one state to another state as if they are two different states. We grow from a lower condition of inadequacy to a higher state of greater adequacy, greater comprehensiveness and reality. It is like rising from lesser and lesser abilities of cognition and knowledge to higher and higher abilities. It is like waking up from deep sleep to the dream state, and from dreaming to waking. We are not rising from one world to another world, but from one condition of consciousness to another condition of consciousness. So it is, after all, a treatment of one's own self by one's own self. Here, another person, another thing or any external instrument is of no use, and so great caution and persistence in practice is necessary.

If we miss the practice even one day, we will miss the link of action, because it is easy to follow the course of the senses and difficult to control them and act in a reverse order. The senses have a peculiar habit. If we do not allow them to act according to their whims and fancies even on a single day, the next day they become more powerful and vehement, like a servant who has not been paid his salary and will not do his

work. He will murmur, grumble, and he will say all kinds of things because we have not paid his dues. He will say, "I'll go. I will do this or that." Likewise are the senses. They are like servants who have not been paid their dues because of our act of self-control, so they murmur, grumble, and threaten us and tell us, "One day we will do something to you." And they may even do that, if we are careless. They may finish us and see that we are done for ultimately, if as masters we are careless with the servants. So, even for one day we cannot miss the practice.

It is dangerous to miss practice even for one day. Why is it so? It is dangerous because the senses will revolt, and once they revolt we cannot control them. They will gain the upper hand and we will be finished, and all the good that we have done for months and years will be in dust. We are warned that carelessness is equal to death. It is better to die than be careless in this practice. It is like touching dynamite. One has to be cautious. So, why is self-control necessary? It is necessary because that is the return of the mind and consciousness to its own healthy condition of higher expansiveness. It is also necessary that we should not miss the practice. If we miss it for a period in the middle, the controlled senses gain the opportunity to revolt and exert a pressure with such vehemence that our whole personality will be driven by a blast of wind in a direction which is contrary to what is expected.

While self-control is extremely difficult, to miss the practice of self-control is extremely dangerous. Hence, the guidance of a Guru is called for, and earnestness of practice is also a requisite. Conducive atmosphere, suitable company, activity commensurate with the nature of the goal, and the presence of a competent master or a Guru—all these are indispensable requisites in the practice of yoga.

Chapter 11

THE INTEGRALITY OF THE HIGHER SELF

There is an important difference between what is known as value and what is designated as existence. Existence and value are not identical. What is the meaning of this *sutra*, this aphoristic principle of the distinction between value and existence? Value is a meaning that we discover by means of judgement; existence is the character of a thing as it is in itself, independent or regardless of our judgement—and they are not always identical. When we say that such-and-such a thing is good, we pass a value judgement on that thing. Our judgement does not affect it in any manner whatsoever, and neither does it mean that our judgement is correct. All judgements are partial, which is perhaps the reason why Christ made a great proclamation—"Judge not, lest ye be judged"—because all of our judgements are wrong judgements. So, if we live our life judging others, we will also be judged in the same manner by the law of existence, which is the law of God, the Absolute. Although Christ said "judge not", we do nothing but that throughout our whole life. What is called 'judgement' is simply an opinion that we hold about things. The court also does the same thing—it holds an opinion, and we call it a judgement.

Any kind of categorical opinion that we hold about anything is called 'judgement', whether it is legal, psychological, social, or moral. We get caught up by these judgements themselves because of the fact that we can mistake what is for what it really is not. The nature of existence, the character of things as they are in themselves, need not conform to our judgements. Yet, we insist that our

judgements tally with the nature of things. When I tell you that you are a bad man, I take it for granted that you are really a bad man and do not feel that I am merely holding such an opinion. I do not tell you that I hold an opinion about you that you are bad even though you may not be bad. This is not the way I think. I simply identify your existence with my judgement; and so it is with every kind of judgement. If I say that something is beautiful, it is a judgement. The thing may not be beautiful, because beauty is a character that we observe by means of a psychological judgement. Goodness is a value that we discover by means of judgement. Any kind of worth or significance that we see in things is a value judgement. But the existence of the thing is an impersonal background of the thing in itself, which is what we are going to discover by means of philosophy, and which is the goal of the practice of yoga.

Previously we made reference to the important pivot-point of yoga, namely self-control, and also we noted how difficult that is, and why it is difficult. It becomes all the more difficult because of our insistence on judging things. The judgement that we pass upon things is the method or manner by which we judge our own self also, so that we have got a uniform way of thinking which applies to our own self, together with the other things external to us. Inasmuch as the very nature of human thinking prevents an ultimately correct judgement of anything, we may be said to be living in a world of relative values and, therefore, the ideas that we hold about things are subject to modification. But no one would be prepared to accept that one's ideas are subject to modification. This is also the work of the self-asserting principle called the ego. Self-control is a gradual mastery over the ego-principle by thinning out its hard, encrusted substance through various devices such as self-analysis, austere living, and the practice of meditation.

The control of oneself, which one is supposed to exercise over oneself, is a tendency of consciousness to return to the true nature of things from the false value judgements upon which our life is usually based. The value that we attach to things and to our own self as individuals is our bondage; this is the world of *samsara*. The meaning that we discover in temporal life is a relative affirmation made by the ego of the subject (individual), and this has to be overcome by a gradual introduction of the principle of true existence into our temporal life. This is to introduce God into our social and personal life, because God is existence and not a value in the sense of an individualistic significance that can be attached by a perceiving subject.

All judgements and values are connected with the relationship obtaining between subject and object. Unless there is a bifurcation of the subject and the object, the seer and the seen, and a necessity arises to bring about a connection between the two, there would be no need for value judgements. Existence need not judge its own self. The question of judgement arises only when there is a dichotomy or a split in one's own consciousness, by which a necessity is felt to read a meaning into what is observed. The meaning that we read into objects of perception is the source of joy as well as sorrow; and self-control is a mastery over these emotions.

Joys and sorrows are the outcome of value judgements and are not necessarily expressions of the character of truth, because the truth, as it is in itself, is precedent to the action of the mind and the senses, prior to the activity of our individuality and, therefore, does not stand in need of any meaning being read into it. Existence itself is a meaning by itself; any other meaning need not be attached to it. Is existence good or bad? We cannot say anything, because the highest conceivable value is existence and, therefore, further adjectives cannot be attached to pure existence. When we

utter the word 'absolute', we have said everything. There is no need for any adjective, because there is no adjective that is going to add any meaning to it. It will only diminish the meaning rather than increase it, because this term signifies the totality, and there is no further significance that can be added to increase its value.

Self-restraint or self-control is, therefore, a return of consciousness from its meandering movements in the world of temporal events to the realm of true existence. But nothing can be more difficult than this arduous adventure. The spiritual adventure is an adventure of self-restraint. Self-restraint or self-control is not any kind of mortification of the body, as it can be misconstrued often by amateur yogis. Many of our yogis may read a false meaning into the great requisite of yoga called self-control. It is connected with physical existence and social life, no doubt, but it is something much more than our physical existence and social life. It is much more because it is connected with the attitude of our mind and consciousness. The attitude of consciousness will determine the character of austerity, self-control, or the extent of success in the practice of yoga.

Our social status or physical features do not always express the inner attitude that we have towards things, and our life is nothing but an inner attitude. Philosophy is nothing but our attitude towards things, and it is this that requires a thoroughgoing transformation from less comprehensive realms to more and more comprehensive ones. To become more comprehensive in one's attitude would be to feel less and less necessity for judging things and objects. The necessity to judge things becomes less and less on account of a diminution of the intensity of subject-object relations as we proceed further and further.

In the beginning, the subject and the object look completely disconnected from each other, as if a great effort

has to be put forth to bring them together for particular purposes in life. In the lowest level, the whole of nature seems to be so discrete and scattered in its particulars that it looks like an almost impossibility to bring these particulars into a sort of unity for the purpose of social life. It is very difficult to bring animals together to make a parliament, because they will never agree in their minds on account of an intense instinctive affirmation of their bodily individuality, to which they are wedded. In our human life also, the animal instincts are not absent and, therefore, to the extent that they are present, we become incompatible elements. This explains wars and battles and irreconcilable attitudes in human life; these are owing to the vehemence of the instincts of animal that are present even at the human level. All of these, of course, are meant to be overcome and subdued by a complete transformation of conscious attitude.

As it was pointed out, the difficulty lies in the fact that we are accustomed to certain habitual ways of thinking and action. Our thinking and action has become part of our skin and blood, and therefore to change it or to bring about any kind of reorientation in it is next to an impossibility for a layperson. No one can change one's own self, because the self is the identity of existence even in its individualistic connotation. A self-identical being cannot change itself, and the moment it changes itself it loses its self-identity. No one would like to lose one's self-identity; one clings to it with great force. Everyone resents any kind of order or mandate in respect of bringing about a transformation in one's own self-identical personality.

Philosophical understanding of things means a training of the reason—to apply reason to its objects in more and more generalised terms rather than by clinging to particular instances. Philosophy makes us more and more general in our attitude, and this, of course, is the tendency to a universal

approach to things. The intention of self-control is to establish the lower self in the Supreme Self. It is to enable the Ultimate Self to exercise a control over the lower levels of self. When the Absolute Self takes charge of our lower levels of self, we have attained the pinnacle or culmination of self-control. God takes charge of us, ultimately. This is ultimately the meaning of self-control—the Supreme Self controls us.

As I endeavoured to point out previously, self-control is relevant to the introduction of the rule or sovereignty of the higher self in our lower realms, so that what we call an unselfish attitude or a selfless attitude becomes a presence of a higher form of self and not an attitude of absence of selfhood in any way. *Ātmaiva hyātmano bandhurātmaiva ripurātmanaḥ* (B.G. VI.5), says the Bhagavadgita. In cryptic language, Bhagavan Sri Krishna says in the Gita that the self is the enemy of the self, and the self is the friend of the self. We cannot understand the meaning of this merely by stating it, but it has a tremendous meaning; perhaps it has all of philosophy contained in it. The self is the friend of the self, and also the self is the enemy of the self. The self becomes the friend of the self when we understand what this self means.

The self which is the friend of the self is the wider self which automatically imposes its law upon the lower self, not as an extrinsic force but as an immanently governing principle and the law of health operating in our body. The law of health determines the existence and function of our body. But this law of health does not work from outside, like a boss sitting in a chair externally and commanding a subordinate; it is not in this way that this law works. The law of health is immanently present in the very structure of the body. It is inseparable from the very existence of the body and, therefore, to allow the law of health to operate in the body is not to subject oneself to the rule or autocracy of another master. It is not at all a sort of subjection. It is a spontaneous allowing of oneself to be ruled

by the law of one's own higher nature, which is the health of the body.

When the higher self takes charge of the lower self and the lower self allows itself to be governed by the principle and the law of the higher self, then the higher self becomes the friend of the lower self. When we obey the law of the government, the government is our friend. When we disobey the law of the government, the government is our enemy. So the government is our friend and the government is our enemy; both are true. If we obey its law, it is a friend; if we disobey its law, it is an enemy. Likewise is the higher self. If we obey its law, it is our friend. If we disobey its law, it is our enemy. However, there is a difference between the attitude of the lower self to the higher self and the attitude of the citizen to the government. It is possible for the citizen to express an opinion regarding the law which the government imposes upon him. But no such opinion is possible here, because while the government, at least to some extent though not entirely, is external in existence and operation to the existence, action and activity of the individual or citizen, the higher self is not at all external to the lower self. The higher self is not outside the lower self, just as in the earlier analogy, the law of health is not outside the body. The body cannot say, "The law of health must change. I will bring about a revolution in the law of health and introduce a new law of health." The law of health is set according to the structure of things or the law of nature.

Likewise is the law of the higher self. We cannot say the law of the higher self should change for certain purposes. It is the eternal law, *sanatana dharma*—the eternal law of the Supreme Self, the Absolute Self, God or Ishvara, which eternally works without any need for change or modification by acts of parliament. ***Yāthātathyato'rthān vyadadhāc chāśhvatībhyas samābhyaḥ*** (Isa 8), says the Isavasya Upanishad. Eternal law has been operating eternally, from

eternal time, and it will never need any modification, because the moment it would subject itself to modification, it would cease to be eternal; it is no more *sanatana*. That which is subject to change is not eternal, and the law of God is eternal in the sense that it is the law of the very being of God Himself. To change the law of God would be to change the very existence of God, and to bring about a destruction of God. It is absurd to think in this fashion.

Thus we come to the main principle of self-control, namely, that our lower nature—the physical, biological, vital, sensory, mental, intellectual and social aspects of lower self—have to be allowed to be governed by the principle of the higher, more integrating form of self. Here, we have to also note the difference between the nature of the lower self and the nature of the higher self. The lower self is relational, whereas the higher self is integral. The lower self cannot exist without external contact. The higher self does not need any kind of contact. The lower self depends on external conditions for its existence and action. The higher self is self-existent, self-sufficient, and perfect in itself. It does not require even sense organs to act. Hence, to bring about the rule of the higher self in the lower self is to introduce a percentage of integrality and a non-relational attitude into the lower self. We become less and less dependent on things when we become more and more self-controlled. The dependence of the lower self on externals arises on account of its own feeling of finitude. The more finite we are, the more is our need for external contact, relationship and dependence.

Self-control, inasmuch as it is the introduction of the law of the higher self, makes us more and more independent. '*Atma svarajya*' is the term used in the Upanishad. *Atma svarajya* is where one becomes self-king, self-emperor. It is the real *svarajya* that one is aspiring for. *Svarajya* means self-emperorship. One becomes the emperor of one's own

self—a self-government, and not a local self-government. This is a universal self-government.

Here, in this automatic allowing of the lower self by itself to be governed by the principle of the higher self, it becomes naturally more healthy in its internal structure. There is a tendency to dissipation in the lower self, and there is a tendency to integration in the higher self. Or, to put it in common language, the centrifugal force seems to be working more in the lower self. The centripetal power seems to be working in the higher self. There is a tendency to move toward the centre when the higher self takes charge of us, whereas a tendency to move outward, from the centre to the circumference, is the character of the lower self. The lower self has a tendency to run outward to the periphery or the circumference of things from the centre, while the higher self brings this tendency back to its own centre. This centre is not a point, but a significance that is introduced into the life of the lower self.

Chapter 12

SUBLIMATION – A WAY TO RESHUFFLE THOUGHT

We have been discussing a very important principle in the practice of yoga—namely, self-restraint. I would like to touch upon another aspect of it which is an essential in the practice. Self-restraint or self-control is not a pressure of will exerted upon oneself, but a spontaneous growth inwardly experienced on account of transcendence and not by way of rejection. The term '*vairagya*' also has some relevance to the meaning of the term 'self-control'. *Vairagya* is renunciation, self-abandonment, relinquishment, etc. which is mostly interpreted as an abandonment of certain things in the world.

But *vairagya* is not an abandonment of things in the world. It is an abandonment of false values, the wrong interpretation of things, and a misconstruing of one's relationship with everything around oneself. It is this erroneous notion about things around oneself that is the reason for attachments, aversions, likes, dislikes, and whatnot. So also is the principle of self-control. A rejection of an existent value is impossible. This is very important to remember. Anything that is real cannot be rejected. If we think that the world is real, we cannot abandon it; the question of abandoning it does not arise. Anything which has already been declared to be real cannot be abandoned. How can we abandon real things? So, also, if self-control or self-restraint implies a withdrawal of consciousness from those things or values which are real and external to oneself, then it is impossible, because the consciousness or the mind which is

expected to withdraw itself from externals will insist that abandonment of real values is impracticable and inadvisable.

Here we have not merely an effort of the will, but an educative process of the understanding. Understanding plays a very serious role in every walk of life. When the understanding is clear, the will can be applied in its implementation. But, the will is not to be applied bereft of understanding. Otherwise, that which the understanding has not accepted as correct will react upon us and will have a deleterious effect upon the entire system. That which the understanding or the reason cannot accept, our whole personality will not accept, and that which we cannot accept cannot become part of our nature; and thus, a new difficulty will be created.

So, in the process of the practice of yoga, whose essential ingredient is self-control or self-restraint, what is expected is a gradual blossoming of the flower of consciousness into a deeper insight into the nature of things, tending towards a wider experience, rather than a forceful suppression of really perceived values or a crushing of desires for things which are expected to bring about real satisfaction to the individual personality. This is a very important aspect which many seekers may miss due to their enthusiasm.

In our system, the culture of Bharatvarsha, four aims of existence are always emphasised—*dharma, artha, kama* and *moksha*. None of them can be ignored. There are people who are fired up with an enthusiasm for *moksha*, and under this impulse of a love for *moksha* or salvation of the soul, an immature mind may apply the wrong technique of forcing the will to abandon the real values of life, namely *dharma, artha* and *kama*, under the impression that they are obstacles to the salvation of the soul or the liberation of the spirit. Most people commit this mistake, and so they achieve neither anything in this world nor anything in the other world—they live a

miserable life. They have not been properly instructed, and so have taken a wrong direction altogether.

The culture of yoga does not tell us to reject, to abandon, or to cut off anything if it is real, because the whole question is an assessment of values, and reality is, of course, the background of every value. What is achieved in spiritual education is a rise of consciousness from a lower degree of reality to a higher degree of reality, and in no degree is there a rejection of reality. It is only a growth from a lower level to a higher one. So when we go to the higher degree of reality, we are not rejecting the lower degree of reality, but rather we have overcome it. We have transcended it, just as when a student goes to a higher class in an educational career, that higher class transcends the lower degrees of kindergarten, first standard, second standard and third standard, but it does not reject them. Rejection is not what is implied; rather it is an absorption of values into a higher inclusive condition of understanding, insight and education.

Yoga is a process of education. The principles of *dharma, artha* and *kama* are preparatory processes for the readiness of the soul to catch the spirit of salvation. How can we get salvation from bondage if bondage is really there? A real bondage cannot be escaped; if bondage is real, we have to remain in it forever. We already take for granted that bondage is real, which is why we want to run away from it; but running away from real bondage is impossible. There is no escapism in yoga—that is impossible. There is always a conditioning of the mind to the states of understanding. Again it must be emphasised that where we have not understood a principle, we will not be able to master it.

The principles of *dharma, artha* and *kama* are temporal values. They may not be eternal values, but many religions of the world commit the blunder of imagining that the eternal is different from the temporal. All religions, we may say, have an

idea that God is outside the world and, therefore, temporal values have no connection with religious values. This misinterpretation of religion, and wrong emphasis laid on the so-called spiritual values of an otherworldly character, have led to a conflict between the social values of life and the religious and spiritual values of life.

We are not to bring about a conflict in life, because spirituality is not in favour of any kind of conflict, whether it is inside or outside. So when we are exerting to control ourselves and to educate ourselves in a higher sense, either in society or in our personal lives, we are not creating any kind of split of consciousness, either social or personal. Rather, we are rising to a higher integrated condition where we have grown into a larger personality, so that in no step that we have taken have we lost anything, nor have we created tension anywhere. All stages of spiritual practice are freedoms attained from tension of every kind. A spiritual genius, even a spiritual seeker, does not create tension anywhere, neither externally in society nor in one's own self. Whenever we feel tension, we must understand that we have committed a mistake in our practice. What is the mistake?

The mistake is in believing that something is real, and yet not wanting it on account of a traditional attitude towards it that has been religiously introduced. The tradition of religion tells us that something is wrong, though we do not believe it. This is the difficulty. "My feelings say that something is okay, but religion says it is not okay. So I have a split between myself and the religious values." The religious novitiate then becomes a neurotic, an unhappy person, because in the cloister and the monastery he has a world of his own which is in conflict with the world outside. He has been told by religion that the world outside is wrong and the world inside the monastery is right, but he does not believe it. Oh, this is a horror—that we cannot believe it and yet we are told to accept

it. This is a kind of tyranny. Religion can become a tyrant; it can become a kind of dictator's order. But religion is far from dictatorship—this is an important point to remember. Religion is not a dictator. Spirituality is not a tyrant. It is not asking us to do something because it says so. It is again to be emphasised that it is a process of inward adjustment to higher values by way of a positive education.

In the practice of yoga, in the understanding of *vairagya*, in self-control which is yoga, one should not be too enthusiastic. Over-enthusiasm is bad because it is mostly emotional, coupled with a kind of will-force but bereft of understanding, which creates a conflict psychologically and, consequently, even socially. It is better that a student takes note of all his desires: "Have I a desire?" It is no use saying, "I have no desire." If we have really no desires it is okay—very good, and so much the better—but we should be sure that we have no desires.

Swami Rama Tirtha used to make a list of his desires. He used to go into a forest with a notebook or a diary and write, "How many desires have I got? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten." Every day he would check, "How many have I finished? Or are they all still there?" To the extent of the diminution of desires, we are free in this world; and to the extent of the presence of these desires, we are bound in this world. Our bondage or freedom can be judged from the number of desires that are unfulfilled or fulfilled. If we have fulfilled all the desires and have no desires left, then we are free. But if we have not fulfilled our desires, if they are still there harassing us from inside, we are bound souls.

Before we take to a positive practice in the direction of yoga, a careful calculation of the number of desires, their nature, etc., is necessary. If there are desires, what is to be done with them? Are we to fulfil them, or are we not to fulfil them? The traditional religions tell us "don't fulfil desires".

Parents tell us "don't fulfil desires", and so on. This is all right, as far as it goes, because generally a desire is regarded as a kind of diversion of consciousness from its own centre to an object outside. So, theoretically speaking, this instruction is all right—we must control our desires and not give them a long rope. But how will we control our desires? What is the method? There is no use in merely saying "control desires". This is very good and this instruction can be given, but how do we control a desire? What is the technique that we adopt? Here, book-knowledge is of no use. Even our intellect will not help us much because it will waver—sometimes to this side and sometimes to that side.

First of all, we must determine the intensity of the desire before we try to deal with it. The desire may be very mild, or it may be very intense. If it is mild, we may take one course of action towards it. If it is very intense, another course may have to be taken. Like a fever—suppose it is only a very mild fever, 98.8°, for which we need not go to the doctor for medication, and we need not lie down in bed. It is very mild. We can fast one day—take a purgative and fast—and perhaps it will be all right. But it is not all right if the fever is 105°; then we have to do something immediately because it has risen beyond a certain limit.

Likewise is a desire. What is the degree of the intensity of the desire? Is it irresistible and impossible to control? Has it almost taken charge of us? If so, what are we to do? When the desire is very intense, what are we to do? There is only one way—we go to the Guru. "My desire is very intense. What am I to do at this time?" The Guru will tell us what step to take. If the desire is very mild, then of course we can find the solution by ourselves. Suppose we have a desire to eat a banana. We eat the banana, and the matter is closed; it is not a very serious matter. We want to have a cup of tea. We have a cup of tea and are done with it. But suppose we want to become the President

of India. This is a very serious desire. We cannot fulfil it in two or three days, and we may have to take another birth to fulfil it. We have to think very seriously about such desires. "Oh, I have such a desire. I want to become President, and it is an irresistible desire." But the means are such that it is not practicable, and so we will have to take another birth.

In the Yoga Vasishtha, it is said that there was a Brahmin couple, poor people, who were sitting on the roadside when they saw a king's procession passing. The royal man was sitting elegantly on an elephant. And the poor couple, seeing the happiness of the king, thought, "How happy this king is, and we are wretchedly sitting here." That was the desire in the mind of the couple. This desire was not fulfilled, as the Brahmin could not become a king in that birth. He was reborn as a king in the next birth and the desire was fulfilled. He was born as a prince in a royal family and he became an emperor.

If we have such desires which cannot be fulfilled in this life on account of prevailing conditions, we will take another birth. But we do not want another birth—that is another point. Do we want to go on increasing the number of births because we have got intense desires? Here comes the need for a Guru. If we have such terrible desires that are, reasonably speaking, impossible to fulfil, and yet they cannot simply be ignored from the point of view of spiritual practice, a Guru's direct guidance is absolutely necessary. The point is that desires cannot be completely neglected. We cannot simply turn a deaf ear, or close our eyes to their cries. They have to be very rationally dealt with and sublimated.

There are three ways of dealing with a desire. Psychologically, the terms used in this connection are 'suppression', 'substitution' and 'sublimation'. We can suppress a desire. Suppose we have got a desire just now, and we cannot fulfil it because we are in an audience and cannot fulfil the desire right here; we will suppress it. We will push it

inside because society does not permit it. We cannot simply start fulfilling any desire in an audience or in a parliament; it has no meaning. So we suppress it and push it inside, but this is no solution. We have pushed it inside, so it is sitting within us like a coiled-up snake, and it will show its hood when the audience is over.

Another way of dealing with a desire is substitution—instead of giving it one thing, we give it another thing. If we have a craving to smoke a cigar, we drink a strong cup of coffee instead; some milder substance is given. Or if a child is crying and throwing a tantrum, demanding a knife that we are holding, for good reason we will not give the knife to the child, so we will substitute another thing such as a sweetmeat or a toy for the knife, saying, "My dear child, this is not a good thing. I will give you something better." Instead of a knife, we give a toy. We substitute one thing for the other thing that was asked for. This is a better way, of course, than suppression, though it is not a complete solution. Merely because we have diverted the course of the river from one direction to another, it does not mean that the intensity of its flow has ceased.

The third way to handle desire, which is the only effective course, is sublimation. Sublimation is the only technique to be adopted. Sublimation means boiling, melting and transforming the desire into a new substance altogether. The desire is no longer a desire; it has become something else. The shape of the desire has changed, and it has now become something quite different from what it was. This is the most difficult of all the techniques of self-control. The emotions are the motive power behind our thoughts, will and actions. Whatever we do is generally driven from behind by an emotion, like a dynamo, and this emotion is connected with desire. The desire is inseparable from an emotion. An emotion need not necessarily be a kind of upheaval of feeling. That upheaval is felt only when the desire is very intense.

Otherwise, it is like a mild ripple on the surface of a lake. When it becomes very intense it is like a strong wave on the ocean, throwing everything hither and thither—nevertheless, it is an emotion.

What is emotion? Now we come to another subject in psychology. An emotion is a wave in consciousness. As I mentioned, when it is mild, it is like a small ripple. When it is very strong, it is like a very turbulent wave of the Atlantic which can wash away things—even elephants can be drowned if the wave comes rising up with great power. A wave in consciousness is an emotion. And what is this wave? It is a tendency towards the achievement of an objective. This wave is a frequency, and a frequency of consciousness is the intensity of consciousness. This frequency or intensity of consciousness, which rises as a wave called an emotion, is directed towards an end, just as the waves in an ocean dash against the shore or against another wave. There is a push of the body of water in the ocean in a particular direction; that push is the cause of the wave, whatever be the reason behind the push. Some pressure is felt from inside, due to the wind or some other factor, so the wave is directed in some way. Likewise, the consciousness rises in a tempestuous mood like a wave, and that is an uncontrollable emotion. This tempest can do anything if it is uncontrolled.

The point is that the difficulty in controlling an emotion arises on account of the vehemence with which it moves towards an object. The emotion is a tendency towards an object. The object may be physical, or it could even be psychological. Suppose we want to raise our social status. This is a psychological object that is in front of us, towards which we are working. Let us say that we want to become a chairman, or a minister, or some such thing. This object that is in front of us is psychological, not physical, because chairmanship is not a physical object, though it is as powerful

an object as anything else; that is the end towards which the consciousness drives itself. It can also be a physical object towards which the consciousness rushes. Why does it rush towards an object, whether it be physical or psychological? It wants to fulfil a purpose.

Consciousness does not move in a direction without a purpose; and if the purpose is meaningful, at least from its own point of view, nobody can resist it. It sees a meaning in the way in which it moves towards the object, and when the meaning is there, then naturally nobody can control it. "I see significance in it. There is a purpose behind it and there is a reason—a very good reason for my action in that direction," says consciousness. So the question of controlling the movement of consciousness does not arise. If the movement is meaningless, we may control it; but if it is meaningful, how can we control it? So, the resisting of the vehemence of consciousness in the direction of an object is possible only if the meaning that it reads into the object is sublimated.

As long as we see a meaning in a thing, there is no doubt about it, and nobody else can influence us. No law, no order will work against a meaning that is seen by a person with open eyes. If I tell you that it is midnight, you will not believe it. "Why are you saying it is midnight? You can see it is daylight." We have faith that it is daytime on account of our clear perception of daylight. We are seeing it directly, and why is someone saying it is something else? So when consciousness sees a peculiar and definite meaning or significance in an object in front of it which it regards as valuable, worthwhile and necessary for its happiness, then no law or order will operate against it. It breaks all laws, be they social, personal, or moral—any law, whatever it is—because it is the law of reality, and the law of reality is more powerful than any other law that is made by man. Why is it called the law of reality? It is called the law of reality because it is seen

physically as an indubitable something about which there is no doubt in the mind, and we cannot frame a law contrary to what we see physically and palpably as something real.

We now come to a very crucial point. All of this amounts to saying that we cannot easily practise self-control. It is not so cheap an affair; it is a terrible job. It is terrible, no doubt, but there is a way out. The way out is to reshuffle the ways in which we think under given conditions. Emotions rise up under certain conditions, and under certain other conditions they may not be so forceful. The meaning that the emotion reads into its object is to be transformed. Are we correct in reading this meaning in the object? This is a philosophical question that we have to ask ourselves. Is it correct that because we see a meaning in something we can regard it as real? This is a simple question, for which there is a simple answer. But, another question can be raised—are we sure that our perception is correct?

Perceptions need not always be correct, though perceptions may insist that as long as they are there, the object is real. As long as the perceptions are there, their objects certainly will look real. Otherwise, it would not be a perception. But is the perception correct? This is the question. Here we raise a very fundamental question which is philosophical, and even deeper than philosophical. When the emotion, the consciousness, directs itself towards an object for the achievement of its purpose, is it being motivated by a correct perception of values, or is it blundering in its attitude towards things due to certain other factors? Perhaps it is mistaken. Yet it will not accept the mistake as long as it sees things by an identification of itself with the object in front of it.

Here, we feel that the withdrawal of consciousness from its object would be something like tearing off our own skin from our body. How can we tear off our own skin? It would be

terrible, but this is what is happening when we practise self-control. We are tearing off our flesh, and it is so painful. But the pain is lessened if the consciousness is properly educated and made to reasonably accept the background of its attitudes and the incorrectness of its perceptions, for reasons which are superior to the one that it is adopting at the present moment.

Chapter 13

DEFENCE MECHANISMS OF THE MIND

The term '*indriya nigrah*' means sense-control; '*atma nigrah*' means self-control. Both these terms are often thought of as having a synonymous meaning and are used as such, but the term 'self' has a larger connotation than 'sense', as we already know. So the term 'self-control' should mean something much more than what is indicated by the term 'sense-control', because the senses are only a few of the functions of the self and not all the functions, while self-control implies a restriction imposed upon every function of the self, meaning thereby the lower self, which has to be regulated by the principle of the higher self. The self that has to be controlled is any self which is lower than the Universal Self. The degrees of self gradually go on increasing in their comprehensiveness as we rise higher and higher, so that it becomes necessary that at every step the immediately succeeding stage, which is more comprehensive, acts as the governing principle of the category of self just below. An analogy would be the syllabi or curricula of education—we do not suddenly jump into the topmost level of studies. There is always a governing principle exercised by systems of education, wherein the immediately succeeding stage determines the needs of the immediately preceding condition. The self, as far as we are concerned at the present moment, can be regarded as that principle of individuality which comprehends all that we regard as 'we', or connected with us.

The control of the self is, therefore, the refining of the individual personality in its manifold aspects, together with anything that may appear to belong to it, including taking into

consideration all of its external relationships. Our individual existence is not limited to the physical body. It also includes its physical relationships—such as the family, for example. The members of a family are not visibly or physically attached to any individual in the family, not even to the head of the family, but there is an attachment psychologically; and the self is, therefore, to take note of that aspect of its individual existence. Both the internal structure and the external relationship are to be taken into consideration, because they are inseparable. We cannot say which precedes and which succeeds, or which has to come first and which later. They have to be taken into consideration simultaneously, almost.

Our self—the individual self, for all crude, practical purposes—is the bodily self, the physical self which is hungry and thirsty, and which feels heat and cold, etc. That is the immediately visible gross self. Whether it is really the self or not is a different question, but we take it as the self because we feel a sense of inseparable identity with the body. And, anything that is inside the body is also the self, because the body acts only as an external limit of the operation of the individual self, while it has many constituents inside.

Our physical body is not our total personality. We have many things inside us which we cannot see with our eyes. Internal to the body is the vital principle, called the *prana* in Sanskrit. The *prana* is not the breath. The breath is only the external function of an energy principle called *prana*. It cannot be translated into English. *Prana* is a very subtle, ethereal principle, subtler even than electricity. It is *pranic* energy that enables the physical body to function, including the functions of breathing, digesting, and the circulation of blood. Everything is controlled by the movement of the *pranic* energy. It is also this *prana* which acts as the motive power behind the action of the senses. If the *pranas* are withheld, the senses become weak in their action. So, the *pranas* are

something like the electric force generated by the dynamo of the individual within, to project the senses externally towards objects. And the mind, which is the synthesising principle of all sense activities, passes judgement of a tentative character upon the reports brought in by the senses. Finally, there is the supreme judge, which is the intellect.

All of these are inside the body—not in the sense of pebbles in a bottle, but inseparably permeating everything that is in the body, or that is the body. We cannot separate the intellect, the mind, the senses, the *prana*, the body, etc. One is involved in the other, so it looks like a compound that has been created by these elements. For some purposes they look like different functions, but for other purposes they look as if they are a single force, acting in different ways. So, self-control would mean a judicious control exercised over every function inside, including the physical functions, the function of the *prana*, the senses, the mind and the intellect. All of these have to be harnessed in a given direction.

According to ancient systems of spiritual practice, self-control is effected by three main methods: the control of the *prana*, the control of the mind, and concentration of consciousness. These are the three standard methods of *atma vinigrah* or self-control. This is a triple method prescribed in the Yoga Vasishtha, for instance. It does not mean that each method is mutually exclusive of the other; they are connected with one another. Also, it is not possible here to say which should precede and which should succeed. Are we to control the *prana* first and the mind afterwards, or the mind first and the *prana* afterwards, or are we to practise concentration first? We cannot do all of these things in a linear fashion. They all have to be worked at simultaneously to some acceptable degree.

In the Bhagavadgita we have a hint of the method of self control where, in a very cryptic *sloka*, Bhagavan Sri Krishna

says that the senses are turbulent and cannot be easily controlled unless resort is taken to a higher principle than the senses themselves. *Indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ, manasas tu parā buddhir yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ* (B.G. III.42)—this is the verse which is relevant to this subject. The senses cannot be controlled because they are driven by a force which is behind them. As long as they are driven, pushed or compelled by a power that is behind them, they will naturally act in the direction of that push. So we have to exert some kind of pressure upon the power that is driving the senses towards objects. Otherwise, it would be like ordering the servants to work in a particular way while their master is saying something else which is contrary to our advice to the servants. We have to approach the master himself so that he may not direct the servants in a wrong manner or say something undesirable to them.

So there is a master behind the senses, and unless this master is approached, the senses cannot be controlled. For all immediate purposes, we can regard the mind as the master and the senses as the servants. The senses cannot be controlled if the mind is not properly tackled, because the mind is the force that urges the senses towards objects. But there is a difficulty in controlling even the mind, because the mind orders the senses to move towards objects on account of a misconception; so unless this misconception is removed we cannot do anything with the mind.

As discussed previously, a sense of reality harasses the mind in respect of the objects of sense, and as long as anything appears as real, it cannot be abrogated or rejected; and we cannot close our eyes to it if it has already been declared to be real. The mind will find difficulty in withdrawing its orders to the senses in respect of their movement towards objects as long as it cognises a worthwhile reality in the objects of sense. Why does the mind see a sense of reality in the objects of

sense? It is due to a peculiar situation that has arisen, which is the reason behind why the mind is accepting these perceptions through the senses.

What is this peculiar situation? The situation, to be precise, is a misplacement of the values of life by a limitation of consciousness to a location called the individual. Therefore, *yo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ*—there is something higher than the *buddhi* (the intellect) and the mind, in which we have to take refuge in order that even the mind may be directed along proper channels. Inasmuch as the mind is the general who orders the senses, if it has been instructed properly and advised well, then naturally it will give instructions to the senses accordingly. It comes finally to this: we have to take refuge in the Self—not in the individual self, but in the higher self, whose principle alone can regenerate the mind and remove the miscalculated attitudes of the mind in respect of things, consequently enabling the mind to properly direct the senses in a desirable direction.

The special term used in the Yoga Vasishtha for this kind of practice of the principle of the Self behind all things is '*brahmabhyasa*'. *Brahmabhyasa* or *atmabhyasa* is the practice of the presence of God. A Christian mystic called Brother Lawrence used to practise this technique called "the practice of the presence of God". The technique involved the practice of recognising the presence of God in everything. It is quite clear that the recognition of the presence of God in things will prevent us from going wrong because, in the presence of God, we would not do anything undesirable. So the recognition of the presence of God in all things is the final remedy for the errors of the mind, and subsequently, of course, of the mistaken movements of the senses.

In the texts like the Panchadasi and the Yoga Vasishtha, the *brahmabhyasa* is described as: *Taccintanam tatkathanam anyonyam tat prabodhanam, etad eka paratvam ca tad*

brahmabhyasam vidur budhah. Taccintanam means constantly thinking only of That, day in and day out, and not thinking of anything else. *Tatkathanam* means that when we speak, we will speak only on that subject, and we will not speak about anything else. *Ayonyam tat prabodhanam* means that when there is a mutual discussion among people, or we are in conversation with someone, we will converse only on this subject and we will not talk about anything else. *Etad eka paratvam ca* means that, ultimately, we hang on to That alone for every little thing in this world, just as a child hangs on to its mother for every little thing. If we want a little sugar, we go to mother. If we want food, we go to mother. If a monkey is attacking us, we run to mother. If we are sick, we go to mother. If we are feeling sleepy, we go to mother. Whatever it be, we run to mother. That is the only remedy the child knows when it has any kind of difficulty.

This is the sort of attitude we have to adopt in respect of the Supreme Absolute. We run to it for every little thing, even if it is such a silly thing as a small need of our physical body. We cry only before that, and we do not ask for anything anywhere else. This sort of utter and total dependence on the Supreme Being for everything, at all times and all places, is called *brahmabhyasa*. This will cut at the root of all misconceptions of the mind. But this is a very difficult practice that is meant for very advanced seekers, and not for beginners.

Hence, the Yoga Vasishtha prescribes other psychological methods of mind-control apart from this utter dependence on the Absolute, which is meant only for very advanced practitioners. Psychological techniques of mind-control are of various types. We have to determine the weaknesses of the mind first. The weak spots and the vulnerable areas of the mind have to be detected before we tackle the mind's functions in respect of objects. Everyone has some

weaknesses, and if we touch a weak spot, the person automatically becomes different from his usual self. But in the ordinary course, these weaknesses are always covered over by the veneer of social activity, public etiquette, etc. There is no one without some sort of a vulnerable spot, and that spot is the essential point to be tackled—not only in our workaday life, but also in our spiritual life.

Each one knows one's vulnerable spot. If one can carefully investigate into one's own self in a fairly dispassionate manner, this vulnerable spot can be discovered in oneself. There may be a little liking for something, and that little liking is the weak spot; like a small hole in a pot, or rather a small hole in a ship—a little hole is sufficient, and through it the whole ocean can enter the ship. Likewise, in the individual we can find a little hole which is always concealed by other external factors. These weaknesses of the mind are its pressing needs, we may say, in another sense—a need which it feels irresistibly, and also feels that it is to be fulfilled by hook or by crook, by any method whatsoever. The all-surpassing weakness of the mind is its dependence on things.

Every person is totally dependent; we are not independent, as we imagine ourselves to be. If we were not dependent, we would not be annoyed or upset, nor would we get angry. We would not be disturbed. These almost daily appearances or phenomena in the mind show that we are hanging on to certain other factors for our existence and action; and when those factors do not appear to be conducive to our way of thinking, we get disturbed. There is no independent person in this world. Everyone is dependent, and to imagine that we are independent is foolish, because if we were independent there would be no botheration or worry of any kind for us at any time. The dependence of the mind on things is, again, of various kinds, and it arises on account of the make-up of the individual personality itself.

Broadly speaking, there are various phases of the individual—the physical needs and the psychological needs experienced by us daily which make us hang on to things, like slaves. We cannot bear extreme heat; we cannot bear extreme cold; we cannot bear hunger; we cannot bear thirst. These are the immediate creature needs of the individual which make it totally dependent on external factors. We cannot control these urges by any amount of effort. There are other vital needs of the individual which press it forward towards fulfilment. The vital urges are forceful impulses which drive the mind and the senses towards their objects of fulfilment, and these are, again, the weak spots. If we are in a position to fulfil the needs of the body, the mind and the senses in any measure whatsoever, we become friends. A friend is one who can fulfil our needs; and this is, of course, how we usually define a friend. My needs have to be fulfilled, whatever the needs may be, and when the needs are analysed threadbare, the structure of the mind and the senses are automatically analysed also.

In a medical examination, the diagnosis is the more important part of treatment. Proper diagnosis precedes any prescription of medicine. So, the order for self-control, *atma nigrah*, may be regarded as a prescription for the illness of the individual, but this prescription can be given only after a thorough diagnosis of the individual's case. Although every individual may be said to be sick in some way or the other, everyone does not suffer from the same kind of sickness uniformly.

So even in self-control there are varieties. It is not the same type of technique that we adopt uniformly and universally, as previously mentioned. Though it is true that everyone is hungry and everyone needs food, universally and uniformly, it does not follow that we all have to be given the same food. The whole world cannot be served the same kind of diet merely because everyone is equally hungry. In the

same way, even though self-control is a universal necessity for the purpose of higher spiritual regeneration, the methods of practice may vary in detail according to the conditions of the individual in the stages of evolution, the circumstances in which one lives, and various other such relevant factors. The dependence of the mind on externals is also, therefore, variegated. It is not a uniform type of dependence. Therefore, each one has to investigate into the peculiar type of dependence due to which one is suffering. This requires leisurely thinking. A hurried mind cannot think so deeply on this subject, because it is not easy to detect where we are weak, and upon what things we are hanging, dependant, for our existence.

Apart from the usual and obvious forms of dependence, such as the need for food, clothing and shelter, there are other types of dependence which are secret, subtler in their nature, and these are more important for the purposes of investigation than the grosser needs, because the grosser needs are well known to everyone. Everyone knows that we will be hungry, and that we will feel heat and cold, and that we need a shelter for living. But there are other things which may not be known to everybody. We have weaknesses other than the feeling of hunger, thirst, etc., and these are the harassing factors of life. We are worried not so much because of food, clothing and shelter, but due to other things which are the secret wire-pullers of the individual's existence. These other things are not minor factors. They are made to appear as if they are insignificant and secondary on account of a trick played by the mind, because if they are brought to the forefront they will not succeed in their attempts. So, a subtle devise is adopted by the mind to succeed in its attempts.

A political manoeuvre is adopted by the mind by the manufacture of certain mechanisms psychologically, which psychologists usually call defence mechanisms. These

defence mechanisms are very peculiar structures—like bulldozers and tanks which we have in armies and public works—which the mind manufactures for its stability, security, sustenance and permanent establishment in the world of diversities. These defence mechanisms are terrible machineries which the mind manufactures and keeps secret, unknown to people, like secret weapons which one may wield, not allowing them to come to the knowledge of other people. If everyone knows what weapons we have got, then they won't be effective, because others also may manufacture the same weapons. So we keep our weapons very secret and use them only when they are necessary, in warfare or on a battlefield. Everyone has these weapons, and they are not made of material objects. They are psychological apparatuses which the mind always keeps ready at hand, whenever there is any kind of threat to the psychological security or individual happiness. The adepts who have made deep study of this subject are the psychoanalysts in the Western world and the teachers of yoga in the East, particularly Sage Patanjali; and certain other texts like the Upanishads have made a study of the subtle devices that the mind employs for the purpose of its individual security and permanent satisfaction.

These mechanisms of the mind are to be studied very well before we try to adopt the method of self-control. Otherwise, we will be involved in what they call a wild-goose chase and we will get nothing out of our efforts. The mind is a terrible trickster, and it cannot be easily tackled by open methods. Frontal attacks will not always succeed, because these mechanisms of the mind are invisible weapons; they are not visible to the eye. The reactions that the mind sets up in respect of persons outside and things around are indications of the presence of these defence mechanisms. Even when these reactions are set up by the mind in respect of externals, the mechanisms are not made visible—we see only reactions, and

not the source or the cause of the reactions. They will all be kept hidden so that the nature of a person cannot be known, and even when the person sets up a reaction, that nature is kept secret always. That is another device of the mind. Through all of our outward behaviour and conduct, we cannot be studied properly by a mere look at our faces, because we are very secretive inside, looking like something else outside. This deep-rooted secrecy of the mental structure has to be dug out and brought to the surface of consciousness before any successful effort can be made in the direction of self-control.

Chapter 14

THE INDIVISIBILITY OF ALL THINGS

We were discussing the mechanisms which the mind employs for its protection, safeguard, and fulfilment of purpose. These psychological mechanisms are very subtle devices, subtler than even electronic equipment, and are invisible to ordinary perception. Often these devices get the upper hand over the very individual who utilises them, and as a servant can suppress the master under given conditions, the mechanism itself can prevent us from having any control over it. This is what they call Frankenstein's monster. These monstrous devices will be in a position later on to get into a friendly relationship with the entire apparatus of the personality, so that they can set up a revolution against the central government of the body. But in the beginning they are utilised, set up for particular purposes as a safeguard of one's own self.

These devices are very peculiar in their nature, and their very strength lies in their inscrutability. Many things become strong when they cannot be understood. The difficult persons in this world are those whom we cannot understand. If we can understand them, the difficulty will not be there. They are so very complicated in their make-up that we cannot know the way in which they will move and the purposes which will guide their actions. There are many types of mechanisms of this kind, all of which are listed in a graduated order in the science of psychoanalysis, and it may be difficult to enumerate every one of them here. I can only give some instances of how these mechanisms work.

One important device of this nature is what is usually termed 'the principle of regression'. This is a peculiar psychological term which has a great meaning behind it. Regression is a kind of withdrawal, a return from the main objective. The mind, with the help of the senses, keeps before itself the objective which it wants to tackle, contact and utilise for an ulterior motive. But we know very well that the conditions of life are such that every motive cannot be fulfilled. There are certain desires which cannot be fulfilled for obvious reasons—physiological reasons. Our body may be too weak and incapacitated to fulfil a particular desire. We may be financially incapacitated, or socially restricted, etc., so that the main objective of the mind may not be fulfilled. So, what is the alternative? One alternative is regression.

Where an enemy is too strong, withdrawal is wisdom. Where it is wise to attack, we will attack. Where it is unwise to attack, withdrawal is better. The mind too employs these tactics of armies in war. It adopts the principle of regression, and instead of asking for 'A', it comes down to a lesser degree of asking and asks for 'B', which is the next best thing. When it is absolutely certain that the objective cannot be gained under the conditions that are present, it would then follow the principle that whatever is available under the given conditions would be acceptable. If 'B' is not available or is, perhaps, too difficult to achieve, it would then ask for 'C', which is of a still lesser degree. Thus, the mind can come down to a very low level of asking, the objective getting circumscribed almost to a pinpoint—but with the background of the total pressure of the entire force of its asking for the original objective itself. The desire has not come down, but the nature of the object has been circumscribed. Instead of working in a wide circle, it has now taken to the alternative of coming to the decision that a smaller circle would be all right under these circumstances.

Sometimes, though very rarely, it becomes totally impossible to fulfil any desire whatsoever. It is then that the mind completely withdraws itself into its own cocoon of bodily individuality. It is here that people become neurotics. A neurotic condition is the limitation of a desire for an external objective that is then directed internally, to within one's own body, when every other alternative fails. It will try its best, of course. Nobody could be wiser in this world than a desire. Yet, when alternatives are not visible at all in the near future, there is a possibility that the mind may create a world of its own within itself. The mind can create a kingdom which it can rule without any kind of limitation from outside. We can have a city built for our own self where we are the supreme master, where everything will be done according to our wish, and no law will operate against our wish. We can create such a world for our own self, and no one can pass orders against that world. This is the world of neurotics. Nerves are strained to create an inward condition of imaginary satisfaction, wherein external objects get identified with internal conditions, and concepts take the place of percepts.

These psychological states can be mistaken for virtuous and successful attainments, such as self-control. When a person is completely introverted within oneself due to forces of circumstances, the condition cannot be called one of self-control, because we have been forced to withdraw ourselves into our own bodily circumstances—not because of our wish, but because of a force which has sat upon our nerves. It is the regression principle that makes people get attached to simple and silly things like a notebook, a walking stick, a cat, a dog, etc. There are people who have no possessions except a small puppy, a cat, or if not even that, a bowl or a walking stick which is their entire property. If we remove the walking stick they will pounce upon us like lions. The walking stick is their entire life because the whole force

of their personality has been concentrated into a silly object for all outward appearances—but it is not a silly object for that particular person. When these objects are not available outside, they can be replaced by internal moods, whims, fancies and private outlooks on life.

It is then that people are vehement in their opinions and will not agree at all to any other opinion. It is not a virtue; it is a kind of neurotic condition where we are disagreeing with everybody's opinion in this world, and we do not know what has happened to us. We may be under the impression that we are very wise persons and that others are fools and, therefore, our opinions should have sway over everyone else's. But what has happened to us is that we are nervous because the desires which have been withdrawn have taken the upper hand. They have reinforced the ego and, therefore, the ego creates a world of its own, a world of self-mastery. When objects are not available for satisfaction, the ego creates subjective conditions which it wants to impose upon others as the only ruling principle of life. These unhealthy mental states which get identified with one's own individual self can be mistaken for spiritual attainments, austerities and even advanced yogic visions—which are not at all the case, and are far and wholly removed from truth.

There is another mechanism of the mind which is called displacement, where it substitutes one condition for another condition. This act of displacement may be a peculiar manoeuvre of the mind to find the object of its fulfilment in some particular physical object, or a mental state, which is nearest in characteristic to the thing that is desired. The characteristics of the object that is desired can be visualised in the immediately available object or condition. This displacement can take place externally, or it can even take place internally. Internally, it can take very atrocious forms of displacement. For example, an act of self-control may induce

us to long hours of sleep and we will not know that it has something to do with self-control at all. We will be thinking that we are great yogis, fully restrained in our sensory and mental activities, but the mind has recoiled upon this condition by inducing sleep. There is also gluttony—immense hunger and a voracious desire to eat, which is the counterpart of sleep. They work together. An insatiable desire to eat food as often as possible, in larger and larger quantities, and to sleep as much as possible are negative conditions induced by an attempt at self-control. But no one would imagine that it has anything to do with self-control at all. They would say that it is something else and has no connection with their spiritual practice, though it has a very great connection, because the only purpose of the mind is satisfaction. It has no other purpose in life, and by hook or crook—by any method whatsoever, beg, borrow or steal, whatever be the way it follows—it must find the satisfaction it seeks. Either we directly fulfil our desire, or we indirectly fulfil it.

The mind can adopt both of these methods. Displacement is the trick which the mind plays to postpone the act of fulfilment until a time when the conditions become favourable. Why do we go on sleeping, day and night? It is because sleep is a state of forgetfulness of all problems. If we have problems, the best thing would be not to think of them; but the mind, being active, will naturally think of them, at least subconsciously. It wants to wipe out the memory, or even a possibility of retaining a consciousness of the problem being there at all, by going to sleep. Or the dam can burst in some other direction altogether and there can be a desire of a particular nature which is regarded as innocuous by society. There are certain desires which society regards as harmful, but there are other desires which society, in its foolishness, regards as innocuous or harmless.

So the mind turns to those directions which the social rules regard as harmless—such as making money, for example. If we are greedy, thinking only of dollars and rupees, and have no other interest except making money somehow or other, we will be under the impression that we are going scot-free. It is a mistake of society that it has not understood what true morality is. We are going by traditions which are often wrong in the way of their working. There are fundamental desires in the human being which can take various directions of action, and society does not seem to be aware of these tricks of the mind. It has taken notice only of certain obvious ways of the action of desires, and forgotten the subtle ways in which it can work. Nobody condemns us for gluttony, for example. Nobody thinks that we are out of the way in our conduct because we are gluttons. "Oh, *bahut khata hai*." [Hindi for "Oh, he eats a lot."] They will simply make a remark and let it go. They do not think that there is something seriously wrong with it, because society is not wise enough to go so deep into psychological matters.

Society is foolish in many respects. It does not understand all the secrets; and we also follow that tradition. The greed for wealth and property, the desire to eat and the urge for sleep are as harmful, morally speaking, as any other desire which society regards as harmful. Also, a craving for fame—the expansion of the ego by its placement of social status—is as dangerous as anything can be in social life. When we are discussing ultimate principles under the auspices of yoga, we are not going to talk in terms of tradition, nor follow beaten tracks and insist that we have to drink water only from a particular well merely because our grandfather dug it. This kind of principle will not work when we are moving along the road to greater and greater impersonality of approach.

Among many other mechanisms of the mind, the mechanisms of regression and of displacement, which we saw

so far, explain the method of the mind wherein one thing is replaced or substituted in lieu of something else, under the impression that it is doing something quite outside the vision of the restrictive laws, and, at the same time, it finds a venue, an outlet, for its own private satisfactions.

There is another mechanism called projection, where suddenly one begins to condemn people for the very same evils that one has. This is a peculiar trick of the mind where people suddenly become important by detecting the evils of others. When we have no importance of our own, the best way of becoming important is to criticise a great man—and then we suddenly become important. Social foolishness is such that it cannot understand that there is a trick behind this mental activity. Sisupala suddenly became great by criticising Lord Krishna. He was an insignificant person, yet his name is remembered even today merely because he insulted Lord Krishna in public. If we can neither write anything nor understand anything, we criticise a great author, write a contrary review of a great work, and become very important. "He must be a very great and scholarly man. He has criticised Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells. He must be greater than H.G. Wells himself." He may be a stupid idiot who knows nothing, and yet he suddenly comes to acquire an importance, albeit of a negative nature, on account of his criticism of great geniuses.

This is another trick of the mind, and we practise it every day. We are not above it; we have nothing to do other than this. Morning to evening we criticise people, under the impression that we are doing great justice and are practising virtue, not knowing that the devil is working within to put us outside the track. By a peculiar mechanism of projection, our shortcomings are seen. Whatever we lack, we see as lacking in others, and this is how we get on in life. This kind of projection can be either positive or negative. Where it is

positive, our desires appear to be fulfilled in the context of other people's existence. Where it is negative, we see our own shortcomings in other people. In whatever manner we work, we will find that the mind is a mischievous imp and it cannot be easily brought to the point of real and positive self-control.

Yogis are very rare. If we very carefully investigate into the truth of things, we will find that almost no such person exists in this world. We cannot find Gurus, masters and adepts easily, because many seekers get waylaid due to the impossibility of understanding what is happening to them. This is because consciousness gets identified with every condition that one passes through. The difficulty in understanding one's own self lies in the fact that whatever be the stage that we are in, and whatever be the condition that we are passing through, it becomes a part of our nature. We become the very object that we are investigating, and so we fail in our attempts. There are countless devices which the mind manufactures for the sake of getting on in a temporal state as a substitute for a particular higher conduct that we are demanding of it, simply because the mind refuses to see meaning in the principle behind the higher conduct that we are asking it to follow.

Again we come to the point of the necessity for higher education in the field of practical life. The impossibility of the mind to read meaning into things makes it also impossible to approach them and take them as its guides or friends in life. The principles of yoga practice are the principles of the higher life, and these principles must become part of the nature of the individual so that they become instruments of higher progress. But friendliness with these principles cannot be established as long as they are not understood. Therefore, it becomes imperative on our part that every principle that we are asked to follow in our higher life is understood thoroughly and made a part of our being.

In spiritual life, 'knowledge' cannot be isolated from 'being', though in the practical life of the empirical world, such a bifurcation is seen. Our knowledge has no connection with our 'being' and, therefore, it becomes a useless burden when actual difficulties are to be faced in life. Professorial and academic knowledge is of no use in life, because it is something bifurcated from our 'being'. Our life is different from what we know. But here, in spiritual life, the contrary is the case. Every step is a step in 'being', and not merely in 'knowing' in the sense of an isolation of oneself from the object known. The ultimate aim of spiritual life is Universal Being, and every step that we take towards it also is a higher form of integrated being, tending towards Universal Being.

Now, 'being' cannot be isolated from 'knowing'. All philosophies, both of the West and the East, have racked their heads, even to the present day, in finding out the relationship between thought and being. Is thought different from being, or has it a relationship with being? There are at least three types of philosophies in the world which regard thought as separate and completely isolated from the object of its knowledge. These are the materialistic theories, or what they call 'realism' in modern philosophical epistemology. The object of knowledge is completely different from the process of thought, which knows the object. There are others who follow an intermediary course by accepting that contributions are made both by the object and the subject in an act of perception. There is an element of objectivity in the knowledge of anything, and also an element of subjectivity. But there are others who have come to the conclusion that there cannot be any kind of distinction, ultimately, between the objective condition and the subjective condition in the act or process of knowledge. Traditionally, these are the schools of Dvaita, Vasishtadvaita and Advaita. They follow the gradual stages of intellectual comprehension of the

relationship of the subject with the object. But it goes without saying that the soul cannot keep quiet until it becomes possessed of its object in an inseparable relationship.

We cannot be happy unless we are in possession of the object in an inseparable relation. We feel insecure if there is even the least chance of our being divested of the object that we have possessed. Even when we are in possession of what we have been asking for, there can be a subtle fear inside that one day we will be deprived of it. This fear can be obviated only if the possession is complete. The possession of wealth, for example, is not a complete possession, because no one can become one with wealth. Wealth is outside us, so there is no such thing as a real secure possession of wealth; therefore, every rich person is insecure and unhappy due to the fear that one day he can be deprived of all his possessions. As long as the object stands outside the subject, there is insecurity on the part of the subject and a lurking fear on account of the possibility of one being divested of one's possessions, one day or the other.

All this difficulty arises on account of an extrinsic factor still persisting in the intrinsic, imaginary possession of an object. We are aiming to understand that as long as ultimately there is a distinction made between thought and being, consciousness and its object, there will be a subtle insecurity and unhappiness subtly working from inside, for the simple reason that being cannot be divided. There cannot be a division of what is really indivisible. It is the indivisibility of things that asks for its realisation through the possession of objects. The asking for an object by the subject is an externalised projection, a symbolic manifestation, a representation of the subject asking for unity of being.

In the practice of yoga, at every level through which we have to climb there is a rise from a lesser state of being to higher state of being, where knowledge becomes identical

with the existence of the object. It is this principle of the identity of knowing and being that should guide us in our practice of self-control. Where the object lies outside knowledge, self-control would be a failure. Therefore, the positive principle of this identity of being, even with its minutest form, should be followed in order that we tread the path of wisdom by means of self-control for higher achievements in yoga, rather than getting caught up by the mechanisms of the mind which is ready to deceive us at every step of our practice.

Chapter 15

HARMONY WITH THE ESSENTIAL MAKE-UP OF THINGS

Human beings, living in a human world, can think only in a human manner. This is, of course, something taken for granted. But many things are taken for granted and become part of our very existence in this world, and yet they may not be helpful when matters come to a climax. In the practice of spiritual life, in our undertaking called yoga, we are likely to make the mistake of introducing the human way of thinking into a system which is far removed from mere prosaic human thought. Even in scientific fields involving more generalised investigations, human ways of thinking do not apply. It is difficult to understand what the human way of thinking is, though we have understood the meaning of this sentence from a grammatical point of view. What is it to think humanly and to visualise things in a human fashion? This is a peculiar characteristic of our life, not at all commensurate with what should be called the scientific way of thinking; and yoga is a science—it is not a human tradition.

We have, apart from traditions, customs and routines of life, a certain peculiar characteristic called the human attitude. Even where a particular force is working which should be regarded as prior even to the manifestation of human modes, we apply the human modes themselves for defining and implementing these forces in our life. It is impossible for ordinary thought to divest itself from the notion that there is a chair in front of it, rather than a few pieces of wood. It is impossible for us to imagine that we are seeing only a few pieces of wood. We are insistently asserting through our

minds that it is a chair we are looking at, and not merely a bundle of wood. I am giving an analogical method of finding out what it is we mean by the human way of thinking—the traditional, prosaic way of thinking, as distinct from the scientific way of thinking. To look at an object, to evaluate it in a purely personal manner, may be regarded as the human way of thinking, whereas to evaluate it by an observation from its own point of view, rather than from the point of view of a relationship that seems to obtain between itself and the observer, may be regarded as a more scientific way of looking at things.

What makes us feel a great difficulty in thinking scientifically is that there are things in this world which are called values, and these values cannot be dissected using the scientific method. For example, there is such a thing called beauty, but it cannot be scientifically analysed. No mathematical equation can understand, or point out, the significance behind a peculiar value-concept called beauty. Whatever be the extent of our imagination into the probing of this mystery, it will always remain a mystery. Just as we cannot touch the borders of the horizon however much we may proceed towards it, we will not be able to investigate into the structural basis of this peculiar significance of perception called beauty. What is science? It is nothing but mathematics and logic coupled with experimentation and inductive analysis. But no mathematics can explain what beauty is, and no logical deduction or induction can make clear what it is that is being perceived. Observation, of course, will simply make us come a cropper; it will not reveal any truth at all.

The reason is that there are very peculiar features which escape a purely temporal way of observation. This difficulty arises on account of certain characteristics interfering with our perceptions and experiences, which do not belong to the realm of pure sensation and empirical thought. It is difficult to

distinguish between these interfering factors and the characteristics of things as they really are. Man is not used to impersonal ways of thinking, because man is a person. Every human being is a person, so naturally there can be only personal ways of thinking, and impersonal ways are far, far from one's reach. What do we mean by saying that certain perceptions can be impersonal? The meaning is that the general background of the make-up of a thing is taken into consideration in impersonal observations, rather than its shape or its present context, which need not be the whole of the context.

A judgement which is relevant only to a given context, completely ignoring other associations of this context, would be more a personal evaluation rather than an impersonal one. If a doctor examines a person, he does not see a brother in that person. He does not see a father; he does not see a friend; he does not see an enemy. The doctor sees a case for examination. The doctor's eye never sees these evaluations in the patient, because his observation is intended to be connected with facts which have gone to make up the physical personality of the case and not the values which may be associated with someone else by way of relationship.

In the analytical processes and the synthetic procedures to be adopted in the practice of yoga, we have to remember that we are not dealing with human realms, human beings, or things or objects as they are presented to the senses. Most of us find little success in the practice of yoga because we apply human values to things which are not human. Nothing that is connected with the principles of yoga can be regarded as human. As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as 'human' in the whole of nature. It is only a concept of a particular type of mind that is called human. A particular characteristic of a specific type of mind is what goes by the name of "the human way of thinking", "the human way of functioning", etc.

What makes us think that we are human? This is only a way of evaluating ourselves. Our personalities are made up of certain physical substances—earth, water, fire, air and ether—which go to make up the bones, the muscles, the nerves, the marrow, etc., in various densities of structure, animated by certain forces. These forces are not human. The body is also not human, really speaking, because it is made up of the five elements. The earth element in the body cannot be regarded as human; the water element is not human; the fire element is not human; the air element is not human; the ether element is not human; the *prana* is not human. What is human in us? There is nothing called human, in the ultimate analysis. So, just as beauty cannot be understood in a scientific manner, the peculiar feature called 'humanness' also cannot be understood. But this inscrutable feature interferes with every type of observation and thinking, and it is this inscrutability that creates problems.

We have been mentioning again and again that what cannot be understood becomes a source of fear, and when it is intelligible, it then appears to be capable of mastery. We are dealing with the world in the practice of yoga, and the world is not a human being. Even the so-called human beings are not as they appear to be. They are parts of the world, projections of natural forces, and they partake of those characteristics which are present in their causes. Merely because we call a hard lump by the name 'ice', it has not ceased to be what it is; it is nothing but water that has taken a particular shape. The human being, with human attitudes, is a peculiar structure evolved out of causes which themselves are not human. The human being has not come from human characteristics, but those which are more general in their comprehension and application than the personal attitudes and needs of the human individual.

As we go higher and higher, even in our way of thinking, we have to become more and more non-human. I deliberately avoid the word 'superhuman', because it looks very frightening for a beginner. We have to become non-human in our way of thinking as we became more and more spiritual. Neither should we look upon ourselves as men or women, nor should we look at others with this eye, because there are no men and women in this world. There are only certain structures, certain configurations which are constituted by powers and not by things. These powers are not male or female. They are not even human, as I mentioned, and they are, to put it in intelligible language, impersonal. But because of our stereotyped way of thinking right from childhood, we are unable to think in this fashion. Just as we cannot see wood in the chair but we see only the chair in the wood, so too we see only a man in a peculiar structure of forces and have a peculiar attitude towards that structure, which we ourselves will not be able to understand if we go deep into it. These are our difficulties.

We have certain inborn traits which obstruct every progress on the right path, and these inborn traits are the pressing urges of the individual nature. It is impossible for one to forget that one is an Indian, or an American, or a German; or a white or a black; or from the south, or the north, or the east or the west. These traits are deeply hidden in the smallest particle of our nature, but we know how far removed they are from the truth of our nature. There is no meaning in saying that we are Americans or Indians, etc., because these are only certain nomenclatures, certain ways of deciphering persons, certain epithets employed for practical convenience in daily life, and these need not necessarily be part of our nature. There is no such thing as American hunger and Indian hunger—they are equal. Even thinking is identical. These are only to give examples of the lowest category of impersonality which is at

the background of personalities. But as we go higher and higher, these impersonalities become more generalised, and more difficult to grasp.

Very powerful analytical thinking is necessary to go to the causes of the names and forms that we see in this world as constituting the real meaning of our life. The names and the forms are not really identical with the substances, but we mix up the two. The name-form complex is identified with the substance, and vice-versa, so that we commit mistakes in every act of perception and relationship, not knowing whether this perception or relationship is in respect of a substance, or merely a name-form complex.

As in the analogy mentioned earlier, when I look at a chair, what is it that I am looking at? Is my attitude one of relationship with the wood that it is made of, or the name and the form which is what is called the chair? The chair is only a name-form complex. It is not a substance, because the substance is wood. There is no such thing as a chair, substantially. But when we touch the chair, we are touching only wood. We are not touching a chair, because if we remove the wood from it, the chair will not be there. Though wood is what the chair is in substance, we have associated a name with this structure of wood and imagined it to be almost as an independent something, though there is no independence of chair from the wood. Though this may look very simple to think about and understand, it has become a prejudice in our thinking, and that is what sets up reactions in our minds.

What is the difference between a table and a chair? The difference is very clear, and everyone knows what it is. The impersonality, which is the truth behind these names and forms, is the wood that is in the chair and the table. But the personality is that this is a chair and that is a table, and they are two things which are quite different from each other. So things that are self-identical can also be assumed to be different for

the purpose of dealing with them. That they are different is only an assumption and not a substantial truth. The same erroneous logic is applied by us in respect of everything in this world. Otherwise, there would be no attitudes at all. We cannot have an attitude towards anything if we start looking at the substance of things, and yoga is the art of probing into the substance of things.

Our attitudes become more and more impersonal and less and less palpable as we go higher and higher, and our stereotyped, ingrained traits gradually drop off like scales from the body, and our way of perception becomes reoriented. To define this new way of thinking would be difficult, and for want of sufficient words which can connote its true significance, we can only say that this is a scientific way of thinking. A scientist cannot think as a human being, though he is a human being, because he sheds his human characteristics for the purpose of impersonal observation. Otherwise, the nature of things cannot be seen.

We can never understand the difference between the substantial or the impersonal way of thinking, and the other side of it, namely, the way of thinking connected with the name-form complex and with the peculiar relationship that we have with things. Yoga has nothing to do with these subject-object relationships, ultimately. As a matter of fact, it is there only to remove the bondage created by this sort of relationship. So it is necessary, first of all, to give up the old way of thinking and start a new, refined form of thinking altogether, which will be in consonance with the nature of things.

The constituents of our personality are not human, as I mentioned; and yet we call ourselves human. Nothing that is in us can be called human. Everything has come from certain other factors, certain other forms of existence which cannot be called human. Chemically, physically and scientifically

analysed, we have nothing human in us. It is all impersonal right through, from beginning to end. Nature is impersonal. The sun, the moon and the stars are impersonal; the wind that blows is impersonal; the water that we drink is impersonal; the air that we breathe is impersonal; the food that we eat is impersonal; and our own body is made up of impersonal features, so that the whole existence is impersonal. Yet, we cling to personalities.

This is a peculiar prejudice, and it is the first thing that we have to shed. On account of this attachment to individualities and the personal notions attached to these individualities, we have fears of various sorts. Fears arise on account of relationship with persons like us, and these fears would not be there if we regard ourselves as certain forces impinging upon other sets of forces caused by certain conditions, all of which are impersonal. This is a frightening way of thinking for the type of mind that we have right from birth, but it is better to be frightened in the beginning of our spiritual practice than to be frightened afterwards, in the end, when we are about to jump into a new realm of existence altogether.

The teacher of yoga should be regarded as a very uncanny individual, indeed. As I mentioned previously with a quotation from the Katha Upanishad, the teacher of yoga, and even the student of yoga, should have an element of impersonality in order to absorb these characteristics of the goal of life, which is the highest thing that a person can conceive. We never move from person to person or from personality to personality. We move from one stage of impersonality to another stage of impersonality. Even in the lowest condition we are in a condition of impersonality, though that may be just the initial stage because, as I tried to point out, there is nothing in this world which can be called personal. Neither the atom is personal, nor the molecule is personal, nor the electron is personal, nor the cells of the body

are personal, nor the blood is personal, nor breathing through the lungs is personal. Nothing is personal; everything is impersonal.

How does this personal attitude come, then? From where does it come? This is a crotchet in the head. We identify principles with personalities. This is a mistake everyone commits, and then there is unhappiness of various sorts. There is an old saying, "You may dislike sin, but not the sinner"—but we mistake one for the other. When we dislike a sin, we start disliking the sinner himself even though the sinner is different from the sin. A sin is a peculiar condition, and when the condition is obviated, the sinner is no more a sinner. But we cannot identify the background of this condition.

We superimpose one on the other, and when I dislike a peculiar attitude of yours, I seem to dislike you yourself. What I dislike is not you, but your attitude. If your attitude changes, it becomes all right. But I cannot distinguish between these two aspects in your personality. Your attitude is identified with you. The substance and the quality get jumbled up, whereas the substance is not identical with the quality. The quality is a peculiar condition of the substance, and this quality can go on changing as the substance evolves. So, our attitude should be a permanent understanding of the substance behind these attributes which are the causes of relationship, rather than a clinging to the attributes themselves. It is this inability to think in this fashion that creates attachments, aversions, loves, hatreds, wars, prejudices, heartburn, sleepless conditions, and sorrows of umpteen types.

The system of yoga can cut at the root of all problems merely because of a single base on which it stands, namely, the impersonal attitude—not an attitude which it has created of its own, but an attitude which is the character of being itself. The being of anything, for the matter of that—your being, his

being, even the minutest conceivable object—the being of anything is impersonal. Just as it is true that we rise from a whole to a whole in wider and wider comprehensions, it is also true that we rise from lesser types of impersonality to higher types of impersonality.

The idea of something being in relation to us rather than something in itself, is to be given up at the very outset. Whenever we look at a thing, we always look at it as something of meaning to us, of what it signifies to us, and on the basis of that imagined significance we develop an attitude and take an action in that direction. But if this wrong notion can be given up with a little bit of hard thinking and a little effort on our part, then many of our difficulties can be obviated.

But a person immersed in the workaday world, who always walks along a beaten track and never exerts to think independently, will find this very difficult. Great leisure is necessary to reshuffle thought and to make it a new system of understanding. It may take years to develop this sort of thinking, but once this stand is taken on the impersonal background of everything in this world, there shall be neither sorrow nor grief, nor insecurity, nor fear of anything, because the world will take care of us when we understand it as it is. But when we misconstrue it and treat it in a way in which it should not be treated, then the cause of our fear is, of course, obvious. We have, therefore, to think, to feel and to act in a manner which is not dissonant with the essential make-up of things, and when we succeed in this way of thinking, we have also succeeded in living a true life. Success in life is nothing but success in our developing a permanent attitude commensurate with the essential nature of things.

Chapter 16

THE INSEPARABILITY OF NOTIONS AND THE MIND

It has been accepted, universally and commonly, that the practice of yoga essentially consists of the restriction and adjustment of the modifications of the mind. This is perhaps the main stronghold of Patanjali's system of yoga, and perhaps any other system of yoga. But it is difficult to gain a control over the modifications of the mind without a knowledge of the location of the mind as well as its functions, together with a knowledge as to why these modifications have to be controlled at all. Even a child would not be amenable to instructions which are unintelligible to it.

A mere mandate or an order issued by a court, whether or not we like it, may have to be followed for fear of punishment. But such an order of a judicial type cannot be issued to the mind. It is not a court order that we are issuing to the mind: "You keep quiet, and if you do not keep quiet, I will do something to you." This kind of instruction will not work with the mind. But when nothing else seems to be possible, people generally resort to this method of suppression of the desires, thoughts, feelings and emotions of the mind, not knowing the consequences thereof. The danger of suppressing anyone by force is known to us; it needs no comment. One cannot suppress with force even a servant. Though suppression can be tolerated for some time, it cannot be tolerated for all times, because there is a status of each person, and it cannot be completely denied, root and branch, especially for a protracted period of time.

The status of every individual asserts itself in the required measure, at some time or the other; and the mind itself has its own status. Perhaps its status is much greater than we can conceive in our minds. Hence, ordinary approaches of a prosaic character do not work with the mind. Going to a monastery and closing our eyes, suppressing the modifications of the mind—seeing nothing, hearing nothing, and attempting to think nothing—would be a very undesirable practice. As has been pointed out repeatedly, the evolution that is effected by living a spiritual life is a healthy growth into greater forms of expansiveness and realisation, not at all connected with mere subjugation in an external sense.

The mind cannot be controlled unless one knows what the mind is, and also what our relationship is to the mind. Who is to control the mind? Who are we to control the mind? What is our connection with it? It is a very, very easy thing to say that we control the mind. But, where are we sitting, and who are we? Are we made up of the mind, or are we something other than the mind? We cannot deal with the mind as if we are playing jokes with it, because it is the mind that makes even this decision, "I shall control the mind." Often we have a very queer notion of the mind. Even good psychologists may have a wrong notion of it—such as, that it is a peculiar fluid vibration inside the body, or perhaps a kind of droplet, like a drop of mercury moving hither and thither inside the walls of the body. Or sometimes it is also conceived as a kind of centre of force located somewhere in the body—either in the brain, or the head, or the pineal gland, or the throat, or the heart, etc.—all of which are inadequate concepts of the mind. The mind is not any such thing.

It is not located physically in any part of the body, because the mind is not a physical substance. It is non-physical in its nature. Though it controls the movements of the physical body, and it has an intimate relationship with our physical

system, it itself is not physical. Also, the mind is not any kind of ethereal substance. It is not a fluid; it is not like mercury; it is not like the flame of a lamp. It is not even a centre of force, if we regard that centre as somewhere situated inside the body—at the top, or the bottom, or the centre. It is nothing of the kind. The mind becomes difficult to understand because of the appellation that we give to it. Our language itself is defective, inasmuch as it sometimes contorts the significance of what it tries to explain. We have a grammatical way of thinking when we express ideas through sentences. There is a subject of reference in every sentence, and when we speak of the mind, we regard the mind as a kind of subject in a grammatical manner. And a grammatical subject is some 'located' something—it is some substance, some person, some thing, some object, this, that, etc.

But the mind is neither this nor that. It is neither a substance nor an object—not anything whatsoever imaginable in the ordinary manner. The mind is not anything that we have seen with the eyes. It is not even something that we can hear of anywhere in the world. It is not available anywhere in the world, and the likes of it are not seen anywhere. One cannot, even with the farthest stretch of imagination, conceive what the mind can be, because all conceptions of the mind fall short of its real nature. The mind, fortunately or unfortunately for us, is not any isolated existent object—it is neither physical in the sense of a solid object, nor non-physical in the sense of a gaseous or a liquid substance. It is a force. For the time being, we can accept this definition. But even this definition is subject to a little modification. It is not a force like electricity, for instance—it is something much more than electricity. It is an outward expression of what we ourselves are, to put it in a more appropriate manner.

The mind is what we ourselves are, only it is expressed spatially, temporally, objectively or externally. It is not

someone thinking through the mind—"I think through the mind." We do not stand apart from the mind when we think through the mind, and so this linguistic expression "I think through the mind" is not a proper way of expressing the fact. It is not 'we' thinking the mind in the sense of someone thinking something else, or through some other instrument. We ourselves are the mind, and the mind may be said to be a temporal form taken by us. Now, the difficulty is simply this much: it is we ourselves who are the mind, and so it becomes a little difficult for us to define it.

How will we define ourselves? We are the persons who define things, and we have to define our own selves. Also, when I said that it is we ourselves expressing ourselves in a temporal manner, I have to explain what is meant by 'temporal' which goes, of course, along with the concept of the spatial existence of things. We are a spatial and temporal something, and that is what the mind is. That the mind has different instruments of action, such as the body and the limbs, etc., is another matter, and we need not concern ourselves with those at present. Just now we are merely concerned with the central issue, namely, what is it that motivates action or impulse, or any attitude towards a thing? It is a peculiar situation in which we have found ourselves, or rather, we have created for ourselves. The mind is only a situation, a particular condition in which we are finding ourselves. Therefore, when our condition changes, our mind also changes, because we change ourselves. When we are defining the mind, we have to take into consideration our own selves, naturally, because it becomes difficult for us to isolate ourselves from the mind, and we ourselves seem to be the mind itself in a particular state.

I used the terms 'temporal' and 'spatial' to explain what it means to be a mind in an individualised form. To be temporal is to be conscious of a successive series, or to be aware of a

relationship with conditions that pass, events that take place, or processes in which we seem to be involved. We are perpetually aware of this state of affairs. We cannot extricate ourselves from the notion that we are caught up in a flux of events, in a process that takes place, which is what we call temporality, or rather, the condition of being in time. We are always conscious of something called 'time', though we do not know what time is.

Time does not mean the movement of a clock, because the clock is only a material mechanism which we have created to calculate a peculiar process that takes place in nature, which we call time. Time is not a physical event, because it is somehow or other connected with a state of mind or consciousness. There are conditions under which time alone can be the object of our understanding. Events have to take place, and there should be relative motion of things, such as the movement of the earth round the sun, or the solar system round the galaxy, etc. If everything stands still and there is no motion whatsoever anywhere, the consciousness of time would be impossible.

But more important than all these aspects of time-consciousness is a peculiar sensation in ourselves that we are involved in a process, a kind of a sensation in us which we identify with, which is called duration. We are aware of what is known as duration. We cannot define it even to ourselves, but we are instinctively aware of something which we express in language as a process of duration—the consciousness of there being a gap between events that take place, and on account of which we make a distinction of past, present and future. The idea of past, present and future is also connected with the procession of events; and our peculiar involvement in what is known as temporality is connected with another factor called spatiality.

We are in space, externalised in an objectified form, and we are involved in this condition. We cannot extricate ourselves from this condition. We are a part of space, we are a part of time, and we think only in this way; there is no other way of thinking. So space, time and individuality are the essence of our existence. Thought process, or the function of the mind, is a condition of ourselves which is inextricable from what we call space, time and individuality. We are simultaneously aware of all three aspects of one particular condition, namely, space-time-individuality. We do not think of these successively, one after the other—first space, then time, then individuality, or individuality first, etc. All three come into our minds at one stroke. The moment we wake up in the morning, we at once become conscious of three aspects of our being—of being spatial, of being temporal, and of being individual. Therefore, the way of thinking is inseparable from this threefold limitation of our existence. So the mind is a limited condition of consciousness, and for the purpose of our present analysis, we can say that this limitation is spatio-temporal and individual.

When we talk of mind and its control, we have to take into consideration its background. It is not something that is outside us. It is the very condition in which we are involved, and that is what we are trying to control. Understand the difficulty. We are not controlling, or subjugating, or restraining someone or something outside us—we are trying to become aware of a peculiar state of affairs which is inseparable from our very existence itself, and which we are trying to modify now for a better state of affairs. This is the implication of the control of the mind. So we are controlling ourselves when we are trying to control the mind. When we talk of ourselves in relationship to what we know as 'mind', we come to a new type of difficulty—we cannot understand ourselves in the same way as we cannot understand the mind

and its involvements, because we have various layers of our self-consciousness, and these layers of self-consciousness repeat themselves successively, one after another, under different conditions of our life, so that we are not always the same every day and at all times.

We are faced with the problem as to the exact condition of our real self. Are we physical somethings in space and time? If that is the case and the truth of the matter, then the whole question of life would be a physical one. If we regard ourselves merely as physical substances located in space and time, in relation to physical objects outside, including physical personalities, and if this is the truth, then all of the problems of life would be only physical problems. There would be no other problem in life. But that does not seem to be the whole truth of things, because life is not merely physical.

We have other peculiar desires, wants, needs and whatnot, which cannot be regarded as purely physical, because even if all the physical requirements are provided we can be unhappy for other reasons which are perhaps more important than physical conditions. I can provide you with all the physical needs, and yet make you unhappy. Then, what is the reason for your unhappiness? Unhappiness is a peculiar state in which we have found ourselves, in spite of the fact that we seem to be well-placed physically.

So, our 'self' is not merely the physical self. We have another layer of self which can take the upper hand and make us unhappy or happy under different conditions, as if it has no connection at all with the physical set-up of things. While it is true to some extent, in some percentage, that our life is physical, that our self is physically involved and our needs are physical, it is not the whole truth. So the self that we are speaking of is something more than the physical, because our joys and sorrows are not physically connected, entirely; they have some other thing restraining them inwardly. For

example, our ideas about things, and the ideas others have about us, may contribute largely to our joys and sorrows, despite the fact that we have food to eat, that we have clothing, property and money, that we have a building—that we have everything. Yet, the idea that we have in our minds may make us sorry, and the idea that others have about us can also bring us to the same condition. So we have something peculiar in us called the idea, or the mind; and ideas can sometimes rule the destiny of people, independent of physical relationships.

We have a layer of self which is a little different from pure physical relationships. Not only that—even if the physical relationships and the ideational contexts are all taken into consideration and are well provided for, some third factor can interfere in our life and then make us happy or unhappy for other reasons. There are fears and insecurities which are a little transcendent to the present idea that we have in our mind, either physically or ideationally. We have unknown fears which will suddenly grip us by surprise, such as the fear of death and the insecurity of life as a whole—not knowing what will happen tomorrow.

This has little to do with our idea about things, or the ideas that others have about us. People may think of us as very great. We are perhaps the greatest of people in the whole world, but that does not prevent us from being unhappy about impending death and the insecurity of life caused by catastrophic conditions of natural forces. One may be the world's emperor, but one can be unhappy for other reasons than social causes, even if one is well provided for physically.

What is it that makes us unhappy? We have got another condition, another situation, another layer of self which can speak in a language of its own, independent of physical, psychological and social aspects. We have different strata of self, and at different times we get identified with one or the other of the strata, and then we are this or that in different

conditions. The mind is a condition in which we find ourselves, temporally and spatially. This condition goes on changing according to the concept of self that we have, or rather, the layer of self in which we find ourselves at any given moment of time.

The control of the mind, which is the principal function in yoga, is a tremendous affair. It is not a little trick that we play, like turning on an electric switchboard. Rather, it is a very tremendous act that we are embarking upon, which is a manipulation of patterns in which we are involved, the world is involved, things are involved—not in a very intelligible manner, but in a very complicated manner. So even the concept, even the idea, even the first effort of controlling the mind becomes something which requires of us a very deep analytical background.

The very initial advice of Patanjali is that yoga is to be practised as a control of the modifications of the mind. I have only given a very, very faint outline of the various types of involvements which we have to take into consideration in our adventure of controlling the mind—not taking it as a mere hobby, or an easy joke, or an act, but as a great encounter of a complex situation, not merely connected with our isolated individual state but also connected with many other factors, even outside. Even space-time gets included here when we control the mind, because the mind is inseparable from the notions of space and time. When we take into consideration space and time, every blessed thing comes, because everything is included under these concepts. So to tackle the mind would be to tackle a tremendous universal problem before us. When we face the problem of yoga, we are facing the world and not merely a little dot inside our bodies, as we may wrongly think.

Chapter 17

OBJECTIVITY IS EXPERIENCE

As we have been trying to understand, the mind is a total force of what we ourselves are, and not something outside us requiring an external observation or an outward mode of contact. For centuries, philosophers have been trying to discover the proper relationship between the mind and the self, the mind and its object, etc., and everyone has differed from everyone else on this subject. There is rarely unanimity of opinion on this subject among thinkers, the difficulty lying precisely in the enigmatic character of the mind. It has been held, for instance, that the mind is a synthesising, intelligent element lying at the background of all sense functions. According to this doctrine, the mind is nothing but an organising power which does not introduce anything new to the reports of the senses, but merely collects them, arranges them and gives them a shape.

Generally, in the process of the knowledge of any object, three stages are involved—sensation, perception and cognition. In the beginning there is what is known as the sensation of the object. We begin to have a faint idea of something being there in front of us. We say, "I sense something." This sensation is not something merely in a psychological form inside, but is external as well. The senses themselves begin to have an inkling of something being there in front of them—very, very indeterminately, generally, and without any kind of a specific identification of the object. When this sensation gets more concretised by the intensification of attention on what is being present in front, it becomes a perception of such-and-such a thing. Here the mind

is silent, though it is sitting at the back of the senses, and when the perception is complete, the mind begins to act. It conceives, directly acts upon the senses, and connects intelligence with a bare perception of the senses.

It is here that the trouble really takes place—that when intelligence is connected to the senses, we ourselves are connected, because we are intelligence. Our essential nature is intelligence. We may call it by any name—intelligence, consciousness, understanding or awareness. All of these various names are synonyms meaning almost one and the same thing ultimately. We ourselves seem to be drawn to the object when the mind begins to cognise the object through the senses. The mind synthesises the sense perceptions in this manner. For instance, the eyes see a shape and a colour. Along with the perception of shape and colour through the eyes, there can be a connected perception of sound through the ears. The skin, or the tactile sense, may feel the sensation of touch of solidity or substantiality of the object that has a shape and a colour, as visualised by the eyes. It may have a taste, and it may have a smell, etc. One sense cannot do the work of another sense. The eyes cannot hear, the ears cannot see, but the mind can bring all these together and focus them on a single perceptual data. Then it becomes a complete awareness of such-and-such an object with so many complex characters.

The five senses act like five agents, bringing five different types of reports regarding one and the same thing. These five reports are brought together into a single consciousness of five aspects of the given object, and the mind begins to perceive that the object is one, though the reports are five. Then, of course, many other processes take place inside—judgement, etc.—which is the work of the intellect. After all, what is the purpose of this perception of the object, and what is the intention of the mind in synthesising the perceptions and sensations of the senses? The purpose is to

pass a judgement, ultimately: "What is to be done now?" Such-and-such a thing has been seen possessing such-and-such a character. "Oh, I see," the intellect says now. "It is a snake. I will run away from this place." A judgement has been passed. To find out that it is a snake, so much time has been taken by the activity of the senses and the synthesising function of the mind. Or, it may be some pleasant thing: "Oh, my friend is coming." Then we are so happy, and we go to greet the friend. If it is a tiger, we run away from that place. Varieties of judgements are passed by the intellect in various ways under different conditions, as the case may be.

The mind is a peculiar intermediate principle between the object outside and the pure self within. Many thinkers have felt that there is no such thing as the mind, that it is only the self acting directly upon the senses. But others have held that this kind of doctrine has a defect in it, because if the self is immediately connected with the senses, there would be perpetual perception of objects, and there would be no such thing as non-perception of objects. Because the self is permanently there—it has no modifications, it is of a uniform character—if it is connected directly to the senses, we will be aware of things always. There would be no time when we would not be aware of them. But there are occasions when we can perceive and not perceive, etc.

The attention and the non-attention that we bestow in respect of objects has made people feel that there is something else functioning between the essential self and the objects outside, and that can be called the mind. Now, what is this mind? Is it a quality of the self? Is it an attribute like the greenness, blueness, etc. that we see in a flower? A blue flower means a flower with blue character, attribute and quality. A heavy object, a blue flower, a sweet dish, etc. is what we speak about when we characterise things. Is the mind a character, an attribute, a qualification or an adjunct of the

self, just as blueness can be regarded as an attribute of a flower? This, again, has driven people to great controversy, inasmuch as it is difficult to come to a definite conclusion because it is difficult to conceive of a relationship between attribute and substance. This is one of the great problems in philosophy.

What is the connection between quality and substance? That peculiar term we use, namely, 'inherence', does not explain matters, because inherence is only a way of expressing the inseparability of the attribute from the substance. It does not mean that the attribute is the same as the substance. We never say that the attribute is identical with the substance. The attribute is a peculiar condition of the substance, or rather, to put it more precisely, the attribute is a condition under which the substance becomes an object of cognition. We become aware of an object under certain conditions. These conditions which are responsible for the specific perception of an object become what we call the attribute of the object. This would amount to saying that the substance has no qualities itself, because these qualities are only certain characteristics perceived by the subject under certain circumstances.

If the circumstances were to change, perhaps the attributes would not be there, or certain other attributes would be perceived. So can we judge the self and the mind in this manner, and regard the mind as an attribute of the self? If this sort of definition is to be applied, then we have to concede that there can be circumstances or conditions under which, alone, the mind could be located as existing. There are no conditions, or there is no circumstance, when the mind is absent.

Previously we were trying to find out the various levels of self, the layers of our personality, and we found that the mind is operating under every condition and on every level. Even in the deepest layer of self there is an element of mentality. The

attempt of yoga in controlling the mind thus involves many an aspect which, ultimately, is connected with one's own self. The mind cannot be controlled as long as the precise connection of oneself with things outside is not properly understood, because the control of the mind is nothing but a regulation of one's relationship with things. That itself is control of the mind. On careful analysis, we will realise that what we call the mind is only a conscious relationship with externals, which sometimes create an unconscious background, a residuum in the form of potencies, latencies—or, as we call them in Sanskrit, *samskaras* or *vasanas*. Conscious perceptions can produce memories which can lie in an unconscious condition.

It finally comes to this: any attempt at the restraint of the modifications of the mind, control of the mind, is tantamount to a proper understanding, evaluation and organisation of our relationship with externals. The very precise function of the mind is the contact with externals and the judgement of externals as certain values connected with oneself. We feel a necessity for controlling the mind, and therefore arises the necessity for the practice of yoga, because it has been observed that the usual types of relationships which obtain between oneself and objects outside are not always conducive to the happiness of oneself. All these relationships appear to be untrustworthy modes of contact and undependable sources of satisfaction.

If a particular object of sense, on which the mind and the intellect pass judgement by way of relationship and contact, is really dependable and very trustworthy for all times, then it should be so for every person in the world, and even for one and the same person for all times. It has been seen by experience, observation and experimentation that no object in the world can be regarded as having an identical or uniform value for all people, at all times, and even for the same person

at all times. It goes on changing its appeal; or rather, one changes one's attitude towards it for reasons that are difficult to understand. This means that there is something very inscrutable and difficult about one's relationship with things, which makes one conclude that there is a necessity to probe deeper into this subject.

The aim of life is freedom from sorrow, complete abrogation of all pain, and an establishment in the hoped-for perennial joy or eternal bliss. This seems to be such an impossible thing in this world, on account of the unintelligible relationship that the mind has with things upon which it pins faith and which it regards as the source of its satisfaction. Two questions arise here. Firstly, is the object of sense really the source of joy? If that is the case, there is justification in the mind hanging itself upon an object for its joy. But is it true, or is it not true? This question is to be answered very dispassionately. Secondly, why is it that an object, which the mind imagines to be the source of its satisfaction, changes its characters constantly and makes the mind feel miserable in different periods of its life?

These are very profound psychological issues. Before we try to bestow some thought upon the various methods of the control of the modifications of the mind, which is the main forte in yoga, it would be essential for us to go into the subject of whether any object of sense, upon which the mind and intellect pass judgement, is a source of joy. Is it true, or is it not true? This has to be carefully investigated. Secondly, we have to determine why there is a constant anxiety felt by oneself in respect of an object, and why there is a subtle insecurity and joylessness even at the time of experiencing a so-called joy during one's contact with an object. Even while we are enjoying an object, there is an unconscious unhappiness in the background, for reasons which the mind is not consciously thinking about at that time.

The object of sense cannot be understood easily, because there is a preconceived notion of the mind in relation to the object. It is not possible to understand anything if we already have a preconceived notion about it. We have to first shed this preconception or prejudice. We always say, "Oh, this is very good." If we have already said it is very good, then we have nothing to say about it; we will keep quiet. First of all, we have to be very dispassionate and a little more general and impersonal in our making a remark about a thing being good or bad, useful or otherwise. But the mind is not amenable to an investigation of this kind because the essence of the mind is prejudice, which is another name for clinging to objects as sources of real joy. It is born into prejudice, and it is stuck in that peculiar, prejudicial mould into which it is cast.

It becomes very difficult to investigate an object, because the mind has a prejudged notion of the object and always tells us: "It is there. The matter is closed. If it is there, why are you going to question it now and ask whether it is there or not there? I am telling you it is there, and you should not put another question." The question that arises regarding the existence of an object may be due to a doubt in regard to its existence, but the mind says: "There is no doubt. It is there. I am seeing it, and also I am experiencing a particular reaction from it." This reaction from the object, which comes through the avenue of the senses, is the cause of the conviction arising in the mind that the object is really there, outside, as a substantial something. But all of this so-called conviction of the mind in regard to the existence of an object is an outcome of a misconception, a kind of confusion, a muddle. A muddle is something which we cannot intelligently investigate into; but this is what has actually happened. The object, according to the perception of the senses and the conception of the mind, is something which would not permit logical analysis.

One of the strong points about the objects of sense is that they do not allow any kind of investigation, because if we subject them to scientific analysis or logical investigation, they slowly begin to lose their ground, like the investigation of the activities of a thief. A thief does not like to come to the forefront. He always lies at the background where he is not perceived, because any kind of investigation into the background of his life would be a source of insecurity and unhappiness for him. So the strength of the object is precisely in its inscrutability—*anirvarchaniyatva*, as they say in Vedanta philosophy. One cannot say it is there; one cannot say it is not there. In classical analogies, they give the example of the rope and the snake. When we see a long rope twined-up, lying on the road in twilight, we mistake it for a snake. We may jump over it in fear, imagining that it is a snake. We have seen a snake. If we had not seen it, we would not have jumped. Now, it is not there. So it is possible, under certain conditions, to see something that is not there; and these conditions have to be examined.

What are the conditions under which certain objects can be perceived, even if they are not there? There are various factors in the case of this analogy—lack of sufficient light, or the memory of a snake that one has seen earlier, and so on and so forth—umpteen causes are there. Likewise, there can be certain sets of conditions which can generate in the mind the perception of something outside as an object. The reality of an object lies in the conviction of the mind, which conviction has arisen out of the judicious synthesising of the reports of the senses—a process which it has done and which it regards as logically deducible from facts given. If something can be regarded as having a colour or a shape, if something can be tangible, and if something can have other characters that excite the activities of the five senses, then it can be regarded

as an existing object. But why does something excite the senses? This is a side issue that arises from this investigation.

What makes an object endowed with the capacity to excite the senses in a given manner? We have a very simple answer, and it is given in the Bhagavadgita: *guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta* (B.G. III.28). The reason why an object stimulates or excites the senses is due to a similarity of character in the structure of the senses and that something that we call an object outside. Let us go back to the Samkhya and the background upon which this statement has been made by the Bhagavadgita: *guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta. Guna* does not mean a quality, but a pattern or a structure of things which is supposed to be the substance of every object. What is intended here, in this statement of the Bhagavadgita, is that the thing out of which the senses are constituted is the very same thing out of which the object outside is also constituted. So there is a pull of one thing in respect of the other. The senses run towards the object, and the object evokes the activity of the senses on account of a similarity of structure. The same structural pattern is present both in the object outside and the senses inside.

These substances which make up the senses and the object are called the *gunas*. The '*gunas*' are peculiar technical terms in Sanskrit, meaning certain properties. The properties of these objects are also the properties of the senses. These properties are *sattva, rajas* and *tamas. Sattva, rajas* and *tamas* are *gunas* or properties, and to explain what it actually means would bring us to the substantiality of the objects and the substantiality of the senses themselves. *Rajas* is a condition of the absence of equilibrium. Any state in which there is disturbance, agitation, division, tension and a tendency to externality may be regarded as *rajas*, or what may be called kinesis. The kinetic condition of an object is *rajas*, whereas the static condition is *tamas*. In our scientific studies or studies

of physics, we talk of the kinetic or dynamic condition of things, and the static condition of things, but there is no talk about the third aspect, which the Samkhya and the Bhagavadgita speak of as *sattva*. We do not know what it means because such a thing is never seen in the world.

Sattva does not exist anywhere outside. Either a thing is dynamic, or it is static—that is all. But the condition of dynamics and statics is, after all, a condition, and we must remember that. Very aptly, the word '*guna*' has been used here, and is translated as 'property'. It is not a substance, but a condition. When we say something is inert, we refer to a condition of that something. When we say something is active or kinetic, we also refer to a condition of that something. Can we say that substances are made of merely conditions? It is very strange indeed to say that, because we always say that a condition is 'of' something, a condition is 'of' a substance. Now we are saying that the substance itself is nothing but a collocation of conditions. Otherwise, why do we use such words as 'property', '*guna*', etc.?

Both the Samkhya philosophy and the Buddhist psychology of momentariness or the transience of things have concluded, after deep thought, that the substantiality of things is ultimately inseparable from a condition in which these things find themselves. This is also corroborated by scientific analysis, as has been done these days. A condition, though it cannot be and should not be identified with the substance itself, somehow or other seems to be inseparable from the characterisation of the substance by sensation and cognition. We cannot say what a substance is, except by definition of its condition. We have never seen a substance minus its condition. Whenever we speak of a substance, an object or a thing, we always speak of a particular characteristic, or a group of characteristics, or a set of circumstances under which that object, the so-called object, is supposed to be.

So, we can safely say that though we speak of a substance, or an object, or a thing, we are really speaking of certain states, of certain conditions, of certain reactions set up in respect of our senses. Finally, the judgement in respect of the existence of an object seems to be the same as the judgement in respect of an experience that has been produced in us. What we speak of as the substance of an object is nothing but an experience of something being there. If the experience is not there, the object also is not there.

From the difficulty of not being able to differentiate a condition from the substance, we have come to another difficulty of it not being possible for us to differentiate the so-called existent object from an experience of that object. So we have a double difficulty—one objective, and another subjective. We shall think about this a little later on.

Chapter 18

THE DUAL PROCESS OF WITHDRAWAL AND CONTEMPLATION

The existence of the mind can be known only by its function, and the main function of the mind is cognition of objects. Thus, the character of the objects has something to do with our attempt at knowing the nature of the mind itself. Direct knowledge of the mind, independent of any reference to other factors, is difficult. We have been trying to determine the nature of these objects which the mind cognises by a kind of internal relationship which it establishes with the objects. If the objects exist, the mind that cognises them should naturally exist; and, to the same extent that objects are real, we may say that the mind is also real. What is the extent of reality present in objects? Are they real, or are they not real? This question, when answered, also answers a very great question about the mind itself, because we are now trying to find out ways and means of controlling the mind—restraining the modifications of the mind, as yoga puts it. One thing has a connection with another thing, and as the links in a chain it goes on, with various aspects involved in a single problem.

In order to know the nature of the object of mental cognition, we have to have a clear idea as to what we mean by an object. What is the definition of an object as far as the mind is concerned, as far as our present problem is concerned? An object, for all practical purposes, whether it is physical or psychological, is a clearly definable character in the sense that its existence and function can be specified, as distinguished from the existence and function of other things. The perception of an object, or the knowledge or cognition of an

object, is made possible through the observation of certain features which we call the defining characteristics of the object. An object is tall or short, stout or thin, red or blue, heavy or light, and so on. These are some of the features of an object. By an observation of these features, we begin to have an idea about the object.

Apart from this, it is taken for granted that the object is at a distance from the subject, though the distance may be very negligible. Even if it is touching us physically, there is still a distinction between us and the object. The object cannot be a part of our own existence; then it ceases to be an object. It has to be something separate in its location and function. It has to assume a sort of independence from the cognising subject in order that it may be an object. The very meaning of object is 'distinction from subject'. What distinguishes the object from the subject? This is another subject which we have to look into a little later.

Our main concern, at present, is that the defining characteristics of the object, which are responsible for our knowledge of objects, are certain restricting features of the object—they contradistinguish the object from other objects. So a definition of an object is also a limitation of the object, by which we differentiate that object from other objects of a dissimilar character. To give a concrete example: a blue object is some located entity whose features we call the colour blue. They occupy a limited space and do not expand themselves into the whole of space. There is a limited space, occupied by the feature called 'blueness', in that object called blue. Now, what do we mean by limitation, or the occupying of a limited space? This, again, is an involved concept. A limitation, whatever be the type of that limitation, is the capacity of the cognising principle to distinguish that limited object with those features from other factors and other objects, or an environment that is different from the object, whose features

are different from the features of the object. To put it very simply, we cannot see a blue object if there is no non-blue object. If everything is blue, we cannot see blue. If the sky is blue, the sun is blue, water is blue, men are blue, and women are blue—if everything is blue, then we cannot say that there is anything blue at all. So the blueness of an object is due to the presence of non-blue objects.

Ordinarily, we cannot imagine that the presence of non-blue things has anything to do with the blue object directly, or even indirectly. We do not take into consideration the presence of these things at all. We take for granted that there is a blue object, and that there are other things. Now, how do we know that there are other things? This is a vicious circle. The knowledge of other things, or something other than the blue object, is possible because of the presence of the blue object. We differentiate the non-blue things from the blue thing that we are seeing. So the non-blue thing is known because the blue thing is there, and the blue thing is known because non-blue things are there; there is relativity of perception. We cannot have an absolute perception of any object. All perceptions are relative.

To extend this argument a little further, in a more generalised fashion without giving concrete examples, we cannot know the existence of 'A' unless there is 'B' to differentiate 'A' from 'B' by its own features. This can be extended further: we cannot know 'B' unless there is 'C'. How do we know that there is 'B'? There is something else called 'C', from which we have distinguished 'B'. 'C' cannot be known without 'D', 'D' without 'E', etc., until we will be horrified to see or discover that we cannot know the existence of even a pinhead unless the whole universe comes into action for it to be known. The perception of a minute object, like a needle or a pin, is made possible by an invisible action of factors which are cosmic in their nature. It is really a

surprising discovery, having been logically arrived at, that even the smallest perception of the tiniest object is nothing but a cosmic perception, by an abstraction which the mind adopts for its own particular purposes, of features which are artificially distinguished from other features. Really, they should not be so distinguished.

The impact of features other than the features of the cognised object, upon the object, is such that it cannot be ignored, and it should not be ignored. There are many important things in this world whose presence we ignore. Yet, they are very important things—like sunlight. We cannot say that the sunlight is non-important, or that the rising of the sun has no meaning for us. But the rising and setting of the sun, and even the existence of the sun, is something on which we bestow the least attention, as if it is not at all concerned with us. We do not realise that our very existence hangs on the very being of the sun.

Likewise, there are very subtle operative factors and principles in our life which we take for granted, such as the working of the heart, the operation of the lungs, the breathing process, the digestive system, and even our own body. All of this is a miracle, but we take all this for granted. We do not know why the heart is functioning. Who asks the heart to function? We have not ordered it. It is not possible, even with the farthest imagination, to discover the reason behind a perpetual beating of the heart—from birth to death, without stop. Who is the impelling force behind it? We cannot understand all this because the best thing for us is to take everything for granted and never enter into scientific investigations of any sort, as this is what keeps us artificially comfortable in life. This is a dangerous position that we are taking, because it is an artificial comfort that will simply be withdrawn, at any moment, when those conditions which are

responsible for the existence and functioning of these factors are withdrawn.

The point is that we are very foolish people, indeed, to ignore aspects which are really necessary for the perception of objects, and to take a particular object as if it is everything. *Yat tu kṛtsnavaḍ ekasmin kārye saktam ahaitukam, atattvārthavad alpaṁ ca tat tāmasam udāhṛtam* (B.G. XVIII.22), says the Bhagavadgita in the eighteenth chapter, where Bhagavan Sri Krishna says that to foolishly imagine that there is a particular located object, to consider that object as everything and then to cling to that object, ignoring all other aspects responsible for the existence of that object, that kind of knowledge is the worst kind of knowledge. *Tamasa*—it is the lowest type of understanding, says the Bhagavadgita. It is the lowest type of understanding because it is far removed from the truth.

It is not at all true that an object can exist independently of the factors which are responsible for not only its defining features, but also even its structural pattern in existence. Not one wave in the ocean can rise unless it has some internal connection with other waves, although this connection cannot be seen with the eyes, because the total pressure of the ocean has an impact upon all the waves uniformly, in different degrees of intensity. Likewise, the pressure of the universe exerted on different centres of space, for reasons the mind cannot understand, is responsible for the appearance of objects. We can only say that no object can exist unless the whole universe is at the back of it. So when we perceive an object, we are not perceiving an object—we are perceiving the universe, pinpointed in one space and appearing as an isolated object merely due to the ignorance of the cognitive faculties.

What makes the mind imagine that there is an isolated object when the truth is something else? This will give us an insight into the nature of the mind itself. How reliable is the

mind? How trustworthy is our perception of things? Let us take another example. A physical object is perceived, and even a cursory investigation into the nature of its make-up will reveal that the physical object is made up of certain chemical molecules, all which come from the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. Whatever be the object—it may be a stone or it may be a mango—they are all made up of the same elements in different densities—earth, water, fire, air, ether. The mango that I see in front of me is made up of the five elements, including ether, and my body, which is the vehicle of perception through which I locate the presence of the object outside as the mango, is made up of the same five elements. But I make a distinction between myself and the mango—the mango is there, and I am here. Why is this distinction made? The distinction is made because of the space between us. But, this space is a content of the object itself.

That which distinguishes the mango from me, or the object from me, is space. This space is an element—a content in my own bodily structure, as well as in the structure of the mango outside—so that, that which appears to create a distinction between the subject and the object is also contained in the subject and the object. Hence, there is an illusion here. The perception of an object is an illusion created on account of a peculiar error in the method of cognition. When we try to control the mind—*yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ*— restrain the modifications of the mind, we have to understand how we can deal with this sort of mind, which is eluding our grasp of it by creating tricks and counterfeit conditions, and making us feel that we are secure while we are not.

The restraint of the modifications of the mind, the control of the mind-stuff, is nothing but an arrangement of the *vrittis*, or the functions of the mind, in a different pattern which is consonant with the nature of Reality rather than consonant

with its own prejudiced, artificial ways of cognition of illusory objects. What yoga requires of us is to rearrange the pattern of the functions of the mind so that they are more synthesised and ordered as a whole, rather than existing in a chaotic manner, and partake as far as possible of the features of Reality rather than the features of imagined objects.

Every step in the control of the mind is a step taken in the introduction of wholeness into the pattern of mental functions, which means to say, the introduction of the character of Reality into our personality. What is the nature of Reality? What are the characteristics of Truth? To mention only a few among the many, Truth is inseparable from Selfhood. Right from the beginning, from time immemorial, ancient adepts have been proclaiming that the secret of life is in one's own Self. "Know thy Self"—*atmanam viddhi*, says the ancient dictum, which implies that what we are aiming at is inseparable from our Selfhood.

We seem to be pursuing a distant objective even when we talk of God or salvation, but this so-called distant objective, apparently in the future, seems to be non-separate from our essential being. It has the character of Selfhood. The character of Selfhood is something not easy to understand, because we have heard the word 'self' uttered so many times that it is likely to be taken for granted once again. It is not so easy to understand what Selfhood means, and this is one of the essential features, perhaps the most essential feature, of Reality.

Selfhood is that character of consciousness which makes it impossible of externalisation or objectification in any manner whatsoever. We cannot externalise ourselves. We cannot become other than what we are—that is impossible. We are what we are. That impossibility of externalisation or alienation of oneself in any degree, even in the least conceivable degree, that indivisibility of substance which is

what we regard ourselves to be—that is the character of Selfhood. Non-objectivity, non-externality, indivisibility or divisionlessness, and a compact substantiality identical with self-awareness—all these can be regarded as the descriptions of what Selfhood can be. That is the *atman*. *Atman* is the Self, and the Self is that which cannot brook differentiation, distinction, or objectification to any degree.

If this is the character of Reality, and if we finish our definition of Reality only by saying this much, we are likely to be led into another misconception, namely, that it is present, perhaps, as the substance of every individual percipient: 'A's self, or 'B's self, or 'C's self may be conceived to be a kind of substance which is indivisibly present inside the body of the perceiving subject. To remove this misconception it is also said that anything that is individual is perishable. Whatever is perceivable is destructible. Very dangerous, indeed—anything that we can see with our eyes is perishable, and what is it that we cannot see with our eyes? All that we regard as dear and near and valuable is visible, and it is all perishable. It is perishable merely because of its individuality, because of its isolatedness. Why should isolatedness or individuality imply destructibility? This is due to the dependence of every individual on other features for its very existence.

As mentioned earlier, every object exists on account of the existence of other things. Not merely the function of an object, but even the very existence of an object is controlled by the existence and function of other things. The tendency of every individual or object to exhibit its character of dependence on others is the tendency to destruction. Death is nothing but a manifestation of this character of dependence on other factors into which it enters through the process called 'death', for re-emergence once again, putting on new features, which is called 'rebirth'—all for the purpose of fulfilment of cosmic evolution. So it is not enough if we merely say that

Truth is Selfhood, because that can lead us into the erroneous notion that it is located inside the body. It is non-individual. It is Self. It is non-individual, because if it is individual, it is perishable. To be non-individual would be to be omnipresent—all-pervading.

The terms '*atman*' and 'Vaishvanara' are used in the Upanishads to characterise the Ultimate Reality. It is *atman*, because it is the Self. It is Vaishvanara, because it is Universal. It is Universal Self. We are likely to think that Self is some object, because of the habit of deciphering peculiar meanings in the words we utter. Even when we utter or use the term 'Universal Self', we are likely to think that some substance exists there as a universal body. It is neither a body nor a substance in the sense of any physical object. It is impossible to define in any other manner. It is something that can be realised only by practical experience. The nature of Truth, the character of Reality, is of this depth and profundity.

Self-control is the introduction of some element of the nature of Truth into the perceptions of the mind, and would be the first step of control of the modifications of the mind-stuff. We cannot control the mind by the force of will. Every stage in the practice of yoga is really a positive step in the sense that there is a healthy growth into new stages of Reality, rather than merely a withdrawal from unreality. We cannot live merely by withdrawal. We have to also live somewhere, positively. A sort of negative withdrawal is sometimes adopted for certain practical conveniences, but that has to be immediately substituted by a positive introduction of a vital, healthy view of things, because we cannot live merely in a vacuum. If we go on withdrawing ourself, it will end up only as a vacuum. But Truth is not a vacuum—it is a positivity, a plenum, and a felicity—*bhuma*, as the Upanishads call it.

Hence an element of *bhumatva* or completeness is to be introduced into our personal life. In the beginning, it is our

personal life with which we are concerned. Then it goes on expanding itself in wider and wider circles. The element of Reality is, therefore, to be introduced into our perceptions, cognitions, etc., which means to say that we have to be more organised in our thinking. To be organised in our thinking would be to be able to exercise control over our thoughts, because any organisation requires control and a system of function. What happens, generally, is that the mind begins to think whatever it likes; it has no system. It will cling to whatever is presented before it, and it has a habit of thinking that every object is real in itself, independent of every other thing. This is the *tamasic* knowledge referred to in the Bhagavadgita, and is an unfortunate feature of every mental cognition.

Also, the mind has a susceptibility to get distracted by every perception. It gets distracted for two reasons: either it likes, or it dislikes. They are like the obverse and the converse or reverse of the same coin—they exist at the same time. The moment we like something, we have to dislike something else. It is impossible to avoid the other side, because the very existence of 'like' implies the existence of 'dislike'. There cannot be like without dislike. This is the peculiar way in which the mind cognises things. The moment I cognise a thing, I like it or don't like it. That, again, is due to a peculiar empathy, we may say, of the nature of the object with our own present state of affairs. 'Present state' means not merely a physical state, but also a psychological state, and sometimes a social state of affairs. All of these states are to be taken into consideration. Our present social, physical and psychological condition has something to do with the character of the object which the mind cognises, and with the restricting channel of this socio-physical-psychological factor. The mind cognises the object and evaluates the object. It is this habit of the mind that we have to control by the introduction of a deeper element

into every form of cognition. This is how we can gain control over the mind.

In the Bhagavadgita, we have also been told that the senses cannot easily be controlled unless a higher principle is invoked. In every act of control, a little bit of restraint of a negative character is no doubt called for, but, at the same time, an invocation of a higher positive principle is also necessary. These two elements are called *vairagya* and *abhyasa*. *Abhyāsa vairāgyābhyāṁ tannirodhaḥ* (I.12), says Patanjali. Or in the language of Bhagavadgita: *abhyāsena tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca gṛhyate* (B.G. VI.35). The mind can be controlled by *abhyasa* and *vairagya,* by the twofold effort of withdrawal from the non-essential and of contemplation on the essential. The withdrawal from the non-essential—the artificial, the counterfeit, the unreal, the illusory—is *vairagya*. The contemplation of the real, the positive, is *abhyasa*. *Abhyasa* and *vairagya* should be resorted to immediately. *Abhyāsa vairāgyābhyāṁ tannirodhaḥ*: The *nirodha* or the control of the mind is possible only by the practise of *abhyasa* and *vairagya*.

So, every step in yoga is a double step, a twofold step. On the one side we withdraw ourselves from the non-essential, and on the other side we positively contemplate on something essential. In medical science or medical treatment there is a *patyam*, as they call it—we do not eat something which is contrary to the action of the medicine. There is a dietetic discipline in medical treatment. If we go on eating whatever we like, then the medicine will not act. That is the *vairagya* aspect. *Vairagya* is the withdrawing of ourselves from those elements which are contraindicated in the context of the action of the medicine in the body. The actual taking of the medicine is *abhyasa*.

Likewise in yoga, we free ourselves from the clutches of habits, prejudices and attachments, etc. in respect of factors

and features which are removed from the nature of Truth, and practise contemplation on those features which are consonant with the nature of Reality. Thus, we can gain control over the mind to a great extent.

Chapter 19

RETURNING TO PURE SUBJECTIVITY

What actually happens when the mind cognises an object, is not, again, a matter of easy comprehension. A sudden miraculous trick, as it were, takes place when there is a mental cognition, and we are suddenly tripped from our balance and caught in a condition which escapes notice and eludes understanding. The cognition of an object is a miracle by itself. It is a wonder, and therefore it is not easy to comprehend. The peculiar structure, called the mind, envelopes the shape of the object, which is what is called *vyapti* in Sanskrit. Various examples are given to explain what sort of enveloping takes place. It is said that as molten lead cast into a crucible may take the shape of the crucible, or water flowing into a field may take the shape of the field—circular, or rectangular, or square, or whatever the shape the field is—the mind takes the shape of the object; and something else happens, at the same time, which is the cause of our bondage.

The mind does not merely stop with this act of enveloping the object. It drags our consciousness with it—just as when the wife goes, the husband also goes. This is a danger in all mental cognitions. If the wife starts quarrelling with somebody, the husband runs and adds to the quarrel, which makes it much worse; this is what happens. So if the mind merely envelopes the object, so much the worse for us; but something still more undesirable takes place, which is that the consciousness is pulled, together with this rush of the mind, towards the object, and then it is not merely the mind that is there in the object—'we' are there in the object. I am there in the object—finished. My doom has come immediately.

When I run from myself and sit on the object outside, one can imagine my condition. I forget myself, lose myself, snatch myself away from myself and completely destroy my subjectivity, my self-identity, my very existence. I sell myself to the object, so that I have abolished myself like a slave surrendering himself to the master under utter abnegation. The subject has become the object. This is an extreme form of clinging to objects. Why does a subject cling to the object? The subject has lost itself completely—lost its very life. It does not anymore exist there. It has transferred its location to that of the object. It is sitting in the object and has become the object. It has taken the shape of the object and identified itself with the object; its existence is the existence of the object, and it thinks through the object. The subject is now finished. This is the last consummatory condition to which the mind takes us in the cognition of objects.

This result does not come about at once; there are stages to this process. The extent of absorption of the subject into the object depends upon the extent of the meaning that the subject reads into the object, the extent of the value that the subject sees in the object, and the extent of the need that the subject feels for the object. According to the degree of the value that is recognised in the object, to that degree one transfers oneself to that object. There are degrees of affection. All affections are not the same. One may have a little love, or a little more love, or intense love, or complete self-abnegating love. In very rare cases, the ultimate stage comes. But mostly it is only some percentage of love. We have a love for our children, we have a love for our dog or cat, and so on and so forth—but all loves are not the same. They have various degrees according to the meaning that we find in them, the value that is there and the significance that we can read into their very existence in respect of our personal necessities.

Now we are considering merely the psychological processes of perception. The subject that is supposed to transfer itself to the object is not merely a process of thinking. When I say the mind transfers itself to the object by an act of enveloping, it does not mean that merely a thought process in the ordinary sense takes place, because the subject—the cognising individual—is not merely thought, but is also will and emotion. Thinking, feeling and willing—these three are the primary functions of the psychological organ. So in cognition it is not merely the thinking aspect that functions. Though thinking is perhaps the first aspect that rouses itself into activity in cognition, emotion follows.

It is very difficult to withdraw emotions from acts of cognition. In some cognitions, emotions are not involved very much. Just as when we see a rock on the bank of the Ganga, there is a mental cognition based on sensory perception of that rock on the bank of the river, but as a rock does not mean much to us—whether it is there or it is not there, it is not of great significance to our life—our emotions do not run to that rock. But if it is a rock of gold, or a diamond, then the emotions will go to it. "Oh, it is a diamond rock." We will not withdraw our eyes from the rock. We will go on looking at it because a tremendous meaning has been seen in this rock, but ordinary rocks do not mean anything as we have seen so many rocks.

The control of the mind, which is the primary function in yoga, is also a direct step taken in the restraint of emotion and will, together with thinking, because while thinking is the beginning of attachment—the identification of the subject with the object—the will and the emotion get the upper hand subsequently and reinforce this act of cognition, and make it impossible for the individual to extricate itself from the identification it has established with the object. We cannot ordinarily understand to what extent we are attached to objects, because we are shifting the position of attachment

from one object to another, every day, according to circumstances. We do not stick to any particular object from morning to evening. That is not possible, because we do not find it necessary.

There are many factors necessary to maintain our individuality in life. A single object is not adequate so the mind, in its intelligent manoeuvres, shifts itself suddenly, like a shuttle, from one centre to another, and keeps itself in contact with all the factors which are essential for its existence and security in life, just like a good politician shrewdly maintains contact with all the people concerned with his security, position, etc. He can contact even a thousand people in a day if the necessity arises—by phone, by telegram, by letter, by personal interview, etc.—because he knows that these contacts are necessary for his security and status. Likewise, the mind—the greatest of politicians conceivable in the world—plays the very same trick and sees that its security is maintained throughout life, and that nobody threatens its existence. The act of mental cognition is nothing but a continuous activity engaged in by the mind for maintaining its security in life. Otherwise, what is the use of perceiving things? Why do we want to see objects? Why do we want to contact people in the world? Why do we want friends? Why do we want telephones? It is only for security, maintenance and status, so that we may not be cut off from the ground on which we are standing. This is what the mind is doing in every act of cognition.

This is a bare outline of the psychological process involved in perception, but it is a process which completely enslaves us into conditions which go beyond our control. We can imagine the state of affairs in which a bonded slave lives. Nowadays we do not have slaves of the kind that we have heard of in ancient history. The slaves were sold not only financially and physically, but even emotionally and in every

aspect that constituted their personality. A slave is one who has no individuality or personality of his own. He has become part and parcel of the master to whom he has been sold. His existence, his will, his thought, his feeling, his very security and life itself is in the hands of the master. So is the case with an individual selling itself to the object. The object controls us, and one is a slave of that object.

One cannot know that one is a slave. In the case of mental attachments, the situation is a little different from a human slave selling himself to a master. The slave in the ordinary case may be aware that he has bound himself to a master who is controlling him in every way, so he may feel very unhappy sometimes. "Oh, what a condition is mine. I am serving under this master and he may even end my life due to the subjection into which I have entered with him." But in our case of slavery to objects, something worse is taking place. We cannot be aware that we are slaves. We are not sorry that we are attached to objects. We are immensely happy because of the attachment. Otherwise, how can there be attachment if we are always conscious of the sorrow that is involved in it? The attachment becomes a source of happiness. It is not a source of sorrow, as in the case of the ordinary slave or subordinate. It is a source of happiness because something very strange has taken place in the cognition of the object, which is the cause of this joy.

Something inscrutable is taking place. The mind feels the need, which is the need that the whole personality feels. Why is the need felt? It is a little difficult to understand merely by surface thinking. The need is biological, sociological, psychological, economical, and every blessed thing. When we are attached to something, we are not attached merely for one single reason. Many factors pull us to the object, and all these factors act simultaneously, like enemies attacking from all sides, so that we may not know what is happening to us. We

become helpless and then surrender ourselves. Similarly, the subject surrenders itself to the object on account of the attack to which it is subjected by umpteen factors from all sides —social, physical, economical, psychological, emotional, volitional, and whatnot.

The need that we feel in our personality is multi-faceted. This is what keeps us unhappy throughout the day, and to remove this unhappiness we cling to objects. We feel social insecurity, physical deficiency, emotional inadequacy and psychological inferiority—all of which cannot be set right at one stroke by a single object. It is difficult to find a single object which will fulfil all our needs—economical, sociological, physical, biological, etc. All these needs cannot be fulfilled by a single object; such a thing is difficult to find. There may be such a thing, but it is not always easy to find. So we cling to many aspects of objectivity for the fulfilment of various types of need we feel in our personality. We want social status; we want the recognition of people; we want a lot of money; we want a wife or husband; we want a very delicious dish to eat every day; we want a nice bed; we want security by army, police and friends, etc., so that nobody can attack us. We want medicines to cure us of illnesses. What untold things we require to keep us happy and secure in life! For this reason the mind keeps us distracted. It shifts itself from one thing to another thing to find out what it lacks and where it can find what it needs.

Occasionally the mind gets caught up by the preponderance of a type of need to the exclusion of others. That is what is called a mania or an intense form of emotional clinging, which rarely takes place in people, but is not unseen. It can be the state of affairs of any person under certain conditions where exclusive attachment is possible, closing one's eyes to all other aspects of one's existence. When we are about to be elected into a very high post and we are working

day and night, sweating, and moving earth and heaven for this purpose, we may have an exclusive concentration on that aspect of our life, oblivious of every other factor. We may not eat—hunger also vanishes at such times. Though at other times we may think very much about the food that we want to eat, during the election period we will not eat food. The appetite has gone because there is a shifting of emphasis on some other aspect. Also, normally we sleep because sleep is a necessity, but during the time of elections—no sleep. There is no food and there is no other biological attachment that is usually present in family life or social life. It is not cut off, but it is completely suppressed by the preponderance of an urge which has taken the upper hand at that particular moment or period. Or, when we are in an army, in a battlefield, where we are worked up into a feeling of intense emotion—do or die—we find that all other needs are suppressed, and a particular aspect of our mind gains the upper hand and directs us along a single channel.

In the practice of yoga we have to place ourselves in a practical condition by conscious analysis, and subject ourselves to diagnosis and treatment, deliberately and voluntarily, for the purpose of freeing ourselves from the chances of getting caught by these conditions in future, sometime or the other. Self-analysis is something like a vaccination, where we produce an artificial disease in our personality in order to get rid of the impending destructive disease which may threaten us. Though we may not be in a state of attachment just now, we become conscious of the possibility of such attachments in the future, because no one can be completely immune to attachments of any type. Any attachment can come to any person at any time, if only circumstances are favourable. So we should not say we are free from such these things. Nobody can be free.

That we are free from certain attachments is only because of the fact that we have laid emphasis on certain other factors, for other reasons, which does not mean that the enemy is not lying in ambush even though he is not visible now. Anything can happen at any time to any person. We should not forget this. So we have to be cautious of these possibilities and then rouse the potentialities of the mind in this connection, up from the unconscious level to the subconscious, and then bring it to the conscious level of direct attack and frontal investigation. This is self-analysis.

To revert to the point I mentioned earlier, in the act of mental cognition the mind takes the shape of the object and drags the consciousness towards it. In technical Sanskrit language these are called *vritti vyapti* and *phala vyapti*. *Vritti vyapti* is the mind enveloping the object and taking the shape of the object—the molten metal getting cast into the crucible of the structure of the object. To become conscious of it is to be in the state of *phala vyapti*, as they call it. So there is a dual role played in acts of perception and cognition—psychological and conscious—and they are inseparable.

The mind cannot be isolated from the consciousness that is animating it, just as when a mirror is kept in the blazing sun, it may itself become invisible. A glass that is in placed the sun cannot be seen because of the light of the sun that is shining through every particle of glass. The whole glass or mirror is radiant with the blazing light of the sun, and therefore we see only a glare and we cannot see the mirror. Though it is there it cannot be seen, because light has enveloped every particle of that matter. Likewise, we cannot know that some peculiar perceptional involvement is taking place, on account of consciousness enveloping every fibre of thinking. We may say the mind is something like a mirror. Sometimes we may call it is a prism. Sometimes we may call it a plain glass, or it may be called a stained glass through which consciousness

passes like light and takes various shapes. Inasmuch as consciousness envelops the total structure of the mind in acts of mental activity, we cannot isolate ourselves from perceptional processes—we become the process. We become the process, and we become the object towards which the process is directed, and then we are the object.

Samsara is the subject becoming the object, and *moksha* is the object becoming subject, to put it very plainly. When we become the object, we are a *samsarin*. When the object has become us, we are liberated. They are simple things to say but most difficult things to swallow because the mind is not an object of perception, as we have been noticing in our earlier analysis. It cannot be studied in the usual manner because here we are studying our own self, and so every act of self-control or mental control involves subjugation of oneself by oneself. *Atma vinigrah* is another word which is very aptly used in this connection. One controls the self, which means oneself as one is at present, by the introduction of the principles governing the higher values of life or the higher nature of the self. The higher self includes the immediate vicinity of objectivity which usually the individual self regards as external to it; and every stage of rise to the higher degree of self is also a rise to a greater inclusiveness of objectivity in subjectivity, so that in every higher stage the subject becomes larger in its comprehension, and the objectivity gets lessened. The more we rise higher, the less is the objectivity involved in awareness, and the greater is the subjectivity.

In the final consummation, which is the goal of life, there is only subject, and no object. All the objects are drawn into the subject, in the largest comprehensiveness of the subject. That Supreme Subjectivity, which is All-Comprehensiveness, in which every object is subsumed, is Ishvara or God.

Chapter 20

THE WORLD AND OUR WORLD

The subject of our discussion is the mental cognition of objects. In the experience of an object, does the mind influence the object, or does the object influence the mind? This is the central issue in all philosophical schools, which has led to various divergent doctrines such as idealism, realism, materialism, subjectivism, etc. There has been very little progress towards an answer to this query because, just as we cannot know whether the beauty that we see in an object is in our own mind or if it is really in the object, so there is the question—is the mind influencing the object, or is the object influencing the mind? The difficulty arises on account of the position of the perceiving subject itself. To hold that the mind entirely influences the object, that it determines it in every manner, would be another way of saying that we have created the world and everything is in our hands—which does not seem to be the truth of things.

Everything does not seem to be in our hands. We cannot change the pattern of things. We cannot make the sun rise in the west merely because we think that it should be so. So there seems to be something which is outside the jurisdiction of mental operations, to which the operations of the mind should accord, and whose law the mind has to follow. We cannot suddenly imagine that a cup of milk is identical with a stone. The stone and the milk are not identical, and the mind cannot change one into the other by any amount of thought. So, the hard reality, in the form of an external something which the world presents before the mind, has led many to conclude that the mind cannot determine the objects. On the other hand, the

objects have a reality of their own and they influence the mind, so that the mind subjects itself to the conditions of the object rather than conditions the object by its own laws.

We are in a world of interrelated facts and figures, and Eastern thought has tried to solve this question by positing a Creator for the world, independent of individual percipients. We have standard expositions on this theme in such texts as the Panchadasi, Vichara Sagara, etc. on the basis of certain proclamations in the Upanishads. Nobody has seen the Creator. Nobody can imagine that a Creator can exist, or must exist, or does exist. But the necessity of thought, the conditions of thinking seem to demand the presence of such a thing as a Creator for the world; otherwise, we cannot explain perception. The very fact of the perception of things—the inherent meaning that we see in objects of perception —compels us to accept the existence of a prior cause behind the objects of perception, and it seems that the world could exist even if we do not exist. We have arguments by modern scientists—biologists and evolutionists—who tell us that once upon a time the world was unpopulated; there were no percipients of the world. According to the astronomical theory, the world, the earth, is only a chip of the block of the sun, and was boiling and incandescent in its original state, so naturally no human being or no living thing could have existed at that time, not even a plant or a shrub. But did it exist? The earth did exist. So the earth could exist even if there was nobody to look at it or observe it.

These assumptions have led to the conclusion that the object exists independently of its being perceived, and the universe was created much earlier than the creation of the human individual. This theory gets confirmation from the expositions in the Puranas, the Epics, etc., wherein we are told that God created the world. He did not create man first; man is perhaps the last of creation. Even in the Aittareya Upanishad,

on which perhaps the Panchadasi, etc., take their stand, we are given to understand that man was not the first creation, and that perhaps nothing perceiving was ever existent. Nothing perceiving, nothing thinking, nothing willing, nothing conscious ever existed except that One which willed Itself to be many, and the world was so created, etc., is the doctrine.

Basing themselves on this scriptural proclamation, exponents tell us that there is a distinction between what they call *Ishvara srishti* and *jiva srishti*—the creation of God and the creation of the individual. There are two kinds of creation. *Ikshanadi-praveshanta srishtir ishana kalpita; jagradadi-vimokshantah samsaro jiva-kalpitah*—says the Panchadasi, in a famous passage. The meaning of this passage has reference to the Aittareya Upanishad and such other relevant passages in other Upanishads, and makes out that God willed to be many, and manifested Himself as this vast creation, projected individualities, and entered the individual by an immanence of His own nature. This is another way of describing the traditional process of creation through divine manifestations usually known as Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat—all of which are precedent to individual manifestations, and prior to the existence of human beings. But there is also what is known as 'individual's creation'. A lot of detail about it is given in the Panchadasi, especially in its fourth chapter called Dvaita Vivek—how duality-consciousness arose at all, and how perceptions can bind us though they need not necessarily bind us.

The point is that the perception of an object *need not* bind us, though it *can* bind us. It need not bind us, because we can correctly perceive the existent object as it was created by Ishvara, merely reflecting in our minds the character of the object as it really is in itself from the point of view of the Creator. Then, perceptions would not be binding. For instance, a human being, tentatively speaking, may be

regarded as Ishvara's creation. A human being is not created by another human being by the will of creativity. The object in front of me—such as a tree, or a mountain, or the shining orb of the sun, and the moon and the stars—may be regarded as parts of Ishvara's creation. We can simply perceive them as such.

But I can perceive a human being in another way altogether by which I can bind myself—namely, this human being is my father; this human being is my friend; this human being is my enemy; this human being can do something for me, this way or that way. This is what is known as *jiva srishti*, which is an attitude of subjective appreciation and evaluation which an individual projects in respect of an external object. A woman is a human being, but the moment that woman is regarded as mother, or a wife, or a sister, that attitude becomes *jiva srishti*. A relationship that seems to obtain between one individual and another in a subjective manner is the projection of the mind of the *jiva* or the individual, which is the cause of joy and sorrow in the world and is the essence of *samsara*—bondage.

But *Ishvara srishti* is pure existence of things. A lump of gold is a lump of gold; but, that it is a valuable substance, that it has great worth and, therefore, can be taken away or stolen—these ideas are projections of the mind of the individual. So in the perception of any given object, two factors are supposed to be involved—*jiva shrishti* and *Ishvara srishti*. This is a conclusion safely arrived at to obviate any kind of extreme position that people generally take, either from the objective side or from the subjective side.

There are those who think that the object alone is real and the mind is only a stupid something, which merely reflects the nature of an object as it is. This is the realistic, materialistic attitude. They do not give any place for the mind in the scheme of things. It is only a kind of exudation of material existences.

This is one extreme view—where the objective world alone is the determining factor of every situation in life, and the mind has no place in the scheme of things. The other extreme is that the mind alone is the determining factor of everything and the object has no place in the scheme of things—everything is on account of our thought. This is the extreme idealistic point of view, contrary to the extreme materialistic point of view of certain others. The via media, the middle course, would be that both contribute a percentage of meaning in the perception of objects. And so the act of mind-control, the restraining of the modifications of the mind, would not mean an abolition of the existence of objects—at least according to thinkers such as the author of the Panchadasi—but is a withdrawal of those special modifications of the mind, on account of which the mind reads particular subjective meanings in objects.

The author of the Panchadasi tells us that if an abolition of objects were a condition to liberation, then liberation would not be possible, because nobody can abolish the existence of objects. Or, if merely a non-perception of the objects of the world were to be regarded as liberation, then sleep would be a condition of liberation because we do not perceive anything during sleep. The actual event that is taking place outside may also not be the cause of joy or sorrow, says the author of the Panchadasi, who gives the following analogy. Suppose there is someone in a foreign land whose mother is here, far away from the person, and his mother receives false news that her son is dead. One can imagine the condition of the mother. Though the son is alive, healthy and hale, and everything is all right, false news can create a real heartbreak for the mother. On the other hand, if the man has been dead for ten years but his mother has not received any news, she is happy.

So, the birth or death, the life or the extinction of a person, is not the real cause of the joy or sorrow of a person. It is the reaction that the mind sets up in respect of a particular event as

it is conveyed to it subjectively which is considered as being the cause of its joy and sorrow. This is another interpretation. With all our thinking, we cannot come to a definite conclusion about the nature of things. We cannot say whether our mind is largely responsible for our joys and sorrows, or whether objects also have some say in this matter. The difficulty arises on account of a relativity of action and reaction between subject and object, and no one has answered this question properly. Similar to this is the question of the perception of beauty in things. No one can say, even today, whether the beauty is present in the object outside, or present in the mind inside. Somehow we reconcile ourselves by saying that both factors coincide, and there is some truth in this side and some truth in that side.

The difficulty is simply because the mind cannot think both ways, and the truth lies neither on this side nor on that side. The isolation of the individual from its relationship with the pattern of things is the cause of its difficulty in understanding anything. The whole universe is an organic structure in which the percipient is included as a vital part. For instance, we cannot study the nature of the heart of a human being by removing it from the body. Though it is a fleshy substance and can be examined pathologically, medically, etc., studying it like this would be meaningless because the moment the heart is removed from the body it ceases to be a heart and becomes only a lump of flesh. The heart has to be studied in its connection with the body in its working condition, and not by isolating it from the organic relationship it has with the body.

Likewise, we should not wrest the object from its connectedness with things in our perception, which is another way of judging it. A similar mistake has been committed by us—we have wrested ourselves away from things. We have stood outside the scheme of things in our judgement of values,

while we are already a part of the scheme of things. All perceptions, judgements and evaluations become inscrutable mysteries on account of this initial difficulty that has been created, namely, a separation of the percipient from the object with which it is organically connected, basically. For instance, a finger of the hand becomes aware of another finger of the same hand. If we were to take for granted that a particular finger of a hand has a consciousness of its own, and we conclude that it can perceive the existence of another finger of the same hand—what would be its attitude? What would be the real relationship between one finger and another finger, given that one finger can see another finger outside it? We know that one finger is different from another finger. But the consciousness of one finger in respect of another finger would be charged with its basic awareness of its connectedness with the whole body, which it cannot look upon as an external object, so that even the other finger which it perceives cannot be called as a real external object, though it is an object for all practical purposes because it can be seen.

This is perhaps the significance of perception from an organic point of view, while what happens in our case, at present, is that this organic connection between the seer and the seen is lost sight of, and we have only a mechanised form of perception where there is a false evaluation projected on the object by the mind which is perceiving it, on account of its losing contact with the vital issue which is involved in perception, namely its connectedness to the object. Whether in attachment or in aversion, the mind is not properly related to the object. It has an improper relationship with things, both in love and hatred. The impropriety of this relationship arises on account of its false disconnectedness from the object, and we cannot properly understand the way of controlling the mind if we cannot understand the relationship that the mind has with the object. It has a twofold relationship. On the one

side, it stands as a perceiver of the object and is obliged to regard the object as an outside something, which is the very meaning of perception, of course. But, on the other side, there is a basic similarity of nature between the seer and the seen, which is the reason why there is the very possibility of perception at all. A consciousness of the object would be impossible if the seer of the object is basically disconnected from the object. Basic disconnection would not be permissible. An utter isolation of the subject from the object would defeat the very purpose of all perception.

Consciousness of an object implies a basic connectedness between the subject and the object. It is this connection that pulls the object towards the subject, and vice versa. We have an undercurrent of unity among ourselves, on account of which we sometimes feel a necessity to sit together and work in a unanimous manner. We have the urge of unity from one side, and the urge of diversity on the other side. The diversity aspect is emphasised by the senses, and the unity aspect is emphasised by the nature of our consciousness. The essence of our consciousness is unity par excellence. It is the basic existence of a unity of consciousness behind all perceptions that is responsible for the perception itself, and is also the reason for loves and hates. But the emphasis given by the senses is the other way round. They assert diversity of things and make externalised perception possible. So in the attraction that the subject feels towards the object, two elements work vigorously—the diversity aspect and the unity aspect. The attraction is possible basically on account of the structural similarity between the subject and the object. But the need for being pulled by the object, or getting attracted towards the object, arises on account of the perception of diversity, or the duality of subject and object.

If unity is the whole truth there would be no need of perception, and the question of attraction would not arise,

because the subject has basically become one with the object, and is one with it. Where there is an utter unity of the subject and the object, neither would there be perception, nor any kind of love or hatred. If there is utter isolation, even then there would be no perception. If we are really disconnected from all things, we can neither see anything, nor can we have love and hatred towards things.

If we are really one with things, then also it is the same thing. So either way, whether we emphasise the unity aspect or the diversity aspect exclusively, we find that there is no perception, and no love and hatred. Perception and love and hatred are hybrids born out of a mixed-up attitude that has arisen on account of a transference of values, by which what is meant is, a little of the unity aspect is transferred to the diversity aspect, and a little of the diversity aspect is transferred to the unity aspect, so that we live in a very utterly false world of created counterfeit circumstances. Neither do we live in unity, nor do we live in diversity. Then, where are we living?

We have created a world of our own—that is *jiva srishti*. Utter diversity is not possible; utter unity is also not possible. So we have created a world of our own, like *trishanku svargam*, and here we are ruling like masters. But inasmuch as it is not based on facts and cannot be substantiated finally on logical grounds, it shakes from the very bottom, and so we are very unhappy right from the beginning. We are unhappy when the objects are not with us, we are unhappy when the objects are with us, and we are unhappy when the objects leave us. So when are we happy? Unhappiness is there because the object has not come. Unhappiness is there because the object is there, but the fear is that it may go. So even when it is there we have a fear, "Oh, how long will it be there? I may lose it at any moment." And when the object has gone, of course, there is unhappiness. There is an undercurrent of joylessness in every

experience of the individual, because the very existence of the so-called individual is itself an illogical something. It is an unwarranted assumption and something that cannot be finally justified, either logically or scientifically.

What is an individual, which we call the percipient? It is an abstracted group of characters, tentatively isolated from a larger set or group of characters to which these former really belong—an act that has been perpetrated mysteriously for the purpose of playing a drama, we may say. We have falsely isolated ourselves. Even that isolation is not a real isolation, because a mere abstraction of a few characters from a group of larger characters cannot be regarded as real. It is only a closing of one's eyes to certain existent conditions. We can ignore the presence of things and conditions which are not conducive to our present purpose, but why this purpose itself has arisen is a very difficult thing to answer. This is *maya*, as they call it, a peculiar jugglery that has been projected by no one. Neither can we say that God created it, nor can we say that we created it. It is somewhere; and how it has come, neither can we say, nor can anyone else say. The inscrutability of the relationship between the individual and the cosmic, the difficulty in ascertaining the connection between appearance and reality—this is called *maya*. To put it in more plain terms, the relationship between the subject and the object is itself difficult to understand.

We cannot understand what our connection is with anything at all, and so we are in a helpless condition. Therefore we cannot even control the mind, because controlling the mind is an adjustment of the modifications of the mind in respect of the object of its cognition, and the object of its cognition is not properly understood because of its unintelligible character. Everything then becomes difficult, and our efforts become a source of failure in the end. Success

does not seem to be forthcoming because it is not clear to us what is the right direction that we have to take.

What is the mind to do, what are we to do, what is anyone to do in this prescription of yoga called mind-control? Are we to subjugate the object, destroy the object, absorb the object into ourselves, or abstract the mind from the object and not cognise it? In an act of mind-control, what is to be done? Are we satisfied if we merely become unaware of the existence of the object, which is what is usually known as abstraction of the senses and the mind from objects, or is there anything to be done in respect of the object itself? This question arises on account of the necessity to understand the extent of influence the object exerts upon the subject, and the extent of influence that the subject exerts upon the object.

For all practical purposes, we can agree with the author of the Panchadasi and conclude that we need not interfere with the scheme of things from the point of view of Ishvara's creation. People can be there, and things can be there—they have to be there. We have to change our attitude, which means to say we have to reorganise the method of the working of our own mind inside, in respect of existent objects outside. This is only a tentative answer, and not the final answer, because we have not yet finally given the judgement as to the nature of things. We have temporarily accepted the existence of a world outside us, just as we temporarily accept the meaning of an 'x' in an equation in algebra. Though the 'x' itself may have no meaning ultimately, it is a necessary assumption which solves the question, and afterwards it cancels itself.

So, in the end, we will find that while the acceptance of the existence of things independent of the mind by way of what is known as *Ishvara srishti* may be necessary for the solution of our problem, the world also will modify itself accordingly when the individual advances further, because all spiritual advance is a parallel advance both from the side of

the subject and the object. It is not only one side that is evolving. The evolution of the individual is, at the same time, a corresponding evolution of all conditions in which the individual is involved, including society and the world.

Chapter 21

RETURNING TO OUR TRUE NATURE

Ātmanā vindate vīryaṁ (Kena II.4), says the Kena Upanishad: Energy comes through the Self. This is a very significant saying of the Upanishad. We gain strength through the Self. Energy does not come merely by eating food, but it comes through the Self. The Self is the source of energy, and all energy is identical with the extent of 'being' that we occupy in our consciousness. The amount of 'being' involved in our consciousness is the thermometer with which we can read the energy that we have. What amount of 'being' is identified with our consciousness? That is the amount of strength that we have within ourselves. But, at present, the amount of 'being' that is identified with our consciousness is only about one foot in width and six feet in height—the bodily prison. Within that limit consciousness moves, identified with that amount of being only. So we have only as much energy as the body has, and no more than that.

We have managed to limit our consciousness to the being of the body. Anything external to the body is not us, and so anything outside the body does not belong to us. Therefore, the mind runs after the objects saying, "Because it is not mine, I want it." To want what does not belong to us is not a justifiable attitude. How can we ask for a thing which does not belong to us? And if it really belongs to us, we need not ask for it. The thing outside either belongs to us, or does not belong to us. If it does not belong to us, we have no business to ask for it. How can anyone ask for a thing that does not belong to him? Are we thieves? If it is ours, why do we go on asking, "I want it. I want it. I want it"? What is the meaning of 'wanting'?

What is the significance of desire, or the asking for things? It has no significance. It is a hybrid which does not belong either to this side or that side. Somehow or the other it seems to be hanging in the middle, like an apparition.

Energy becomes diminished due to object-consciousness. The more we become object-conscious, the weaker we become in body, in mind, and in every sense. The reason is that the activity of the mind in terms of the objects outside depletes even the little energy that we have. The energy that is with us is very little; it is not much. Our energy is only as much as the body is in its quantitative measurement, and even that is depleted through the rays of cognitive action by the mind. Cognition is something like the projection of rays of light, just as the rays of the sun proceed from the sun. In an act of perception, as it was pointed out, the mind envelopes the object, and in this act of enveloping the object, it also manages to draw the attention of our consciousness and drags it towards the object. Thus, a part of what we ourselves are—or sometimes the whole of what we are—gets transferred to the object of perception, and it is quite obvious how our strength gets transferred to the object. In any act of external love, energy diminishes because of its getting transferred to the object of love, so that one who thinks of an object intensely, particularly with an emotional attitude, does a great harm to himself or herself. It is not a simple or an innocuous action that is taking place when we emotionally cast a glance on an object, even with hatred or dislike for the object. In any intense consciousness of an object outside, the indivisible structure of our true being gets artificially divided into parts, gets dismembered, and we become an artificial personality.

Knowledge, in the true sense of the term, is regarded as identical with power, identical with virtue, and identical with happiness. Wherever there is knowledge, there is power; wherever there is knowledge, there is righteousness; wherever

there is knowledge, there is happiness. But, in ordinary parlance, we find that a so-called man of knowledge, these days, is not a man of power. He is a simple man, in his own house, with a little family, though he may be a highly qualified academic man with all knowledge that we value in this world. However, he may not be a righteous man merely because of that knowledge, and he need not be a happy man, either. In this context, knowledge is not found to be identical with either power or virtue or happiness, because knowledge is not 'being', and that is why this entire catastrophe has taken place. Knowledge is power and virtue and happiness only when knowledge is 'being', and not otherwise. The condition of 'being' must be fulfilled—this proviso is very important.

So professorial knowledge is neither happiness nor power, and it is not virtue, because it is external to the being of the one who professes that knowledge. It is like an attribute, or even like a load, as we may call it, which does not actually become a part of one's own existence. The value of a person increases to the extent of the increase in the dimension of his being. This is something inscrutable, a thing which people do not bother about very much. It is a secret into which people are not initiated by anyone, at any time. We do not understand what it means when we talk about 'being' and its commensurability with consciousness, etc; it all sounds like Greek and Latin, which make no sense at all. But really it makes all sense, because that is the secret of success, of happiness, of energy, of even the attitude of justice and righteousness.

The practice of yoga is a master key to open the portals of an experience of all these supreme advantages mentioned, for which the dimension of one's being should be expanded. That is all that has to be done, and there is nothing else to be done. If we think of it very deeply, we will find that it is a very, very simple matter. It is not a very complex or complicated

mechanism. Yoga is not as difficult as it is made to appear. It is the simplest of things conceivable because it is nothing but the character of truth. But it is also difficult, merely because of this reason—it is the character of truth; and it becomes more difficult because this character of truth is inseparable from what our own self is. So, truth and self are one. As a consequence of the meaning of the great aphorism of yoga, *yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ* (I.2), we are also told, *tadā draṣṭuh svarūpe avasthānaṃ* (I.3). Perhaps these two *sutras* sum up yoga entirely. Yoga is the control of the modifications of the mind whereby one establishes oneself in oneself. This is the sum total of yoga, and there is nothing else.

We are not established in our own self on account of our transference of our self to objects by means of perception, cognition, attachment, etc. We are not our own self—we are somewhere else. We are not where we are physically seated; we are where our mind is. This is important to remember. We should not say "I am here", merely because the body is here. Tell me where your mind is; there you are, really. The physical location of a person is not the locality of the real being of the person; the locality of the real being is the 'being' of one's consciousness. Where is our consciousness? There our being is. Why do we say "I am here", when our mind is somewhere else? So, this aspect is more important than our physical presence or a mere arithmetical assertion of our being somewhere from the point of view of the body only. Wherever the mind is, there we are. Wherever the consciousness is, there we are, because where the mind is, consciousness also is there. As mentioned, where *vritti-vyapti* takes place, *phala-vyapti* also takes place. So where our mind is, there our consciousness is; and where our consciousness is, there we are—the matter is clear. Though I am sitting here physically, I may be in Swargashram, really speaking, if my mind is thinking of an object there. It may be anywhere, even in a very

distant place. Our consciousness gets transferred to some other location, by which we mean the object we are thinking of. The selfhood, which is ordinarily identified with the physical body, gets lifted up artificially from the body and is psychologically transferred to the physical location of the object outside. So we are restless whenever we are conscious of objects.

The restlessness arises on account of our rising up out of our own self and becoming artificially one with something else, in an act of love or hatred. So a person who loves or hates is restless and cannot have peace of mind. How can there be peace of mind when it has gone out of itself and is moving here and there in a region which does not really belong to it, which is not its jurisdiction? In this act of transference of selfhood into the object outside, many things happen simultaneously. When the self goes, everything goes; there is nothing left in us afterwards. Just as when the king goes, the whole palace goes: the retinue goes, the army goes, the police go, friends go—everything goes. Nothing remains behind when the king goes. Likewise, when the self goes to the object, there is nothing left in us thereafter. We have become paupers, bankrupt utterly. We have lost virtue, we have lost power, we have lost happiness, and we are on the verge of death. Death is gripping us, because death is only a name that we give to the utter subjection of self to objects. That is also called suicide, the destruction of one's own self. *Atmahatya*, or one who kills his own self, is not merely he who cuts his throat physically, but one who does something worse than that.

Physical destruction, or annihilation of the physical personality, is not as harmful as the annihilation of one's real being, which is the being of our mind and consciousness. All values in life are centred in consciousness. Whatever worth we see, or meaning we see, or significance we see in the

world, is in consciousness. Where consciousness is absent, life loses its meaning. Inasmuch as every meaning is in consciousness, we have to study its functions and try to do what is necessary to keep it in proper order. To keep consciousness in proper order would be to see that it does not become alien to its own self, which is what happens when it is intensely conscious of an object. We become foreigners to our own self when we are too much engrossed in a consciousness of objectivity, which is the cause of a peculiar psychological tension in which we perpetually find ourselves. When the mind is withdrawn from the object, consciousness also gets withdrawn because, together with the action of the mind in respect of the object, consciousness has moved towards the object.

In the reverse action that we are attempting—namely the withdrawal of the mind from the object—a simultaneous withdrawal of consciousness from the object is also effected. As consciousness of an object is a loss of energy, the withdrawal of consciousness from the object should effect an increase of energy. When the river flows in various directions by multiplying itself into small streams or channels, its velocity, energy and force gets diminished, but when it is channelised in one direction, its energy increases. When we block it completely by building a bund across it, it rises and swells up, manifesting a capacity, a force and an energy which is larger and greater in extent than what we could see when it was moving ordinarily like shallow water. So the more we withdraw our minds from objects, the more we become strong in ourselves, like the river which wells up on account of the bund that is raised against it. If all the ramified channels of the river are blocked, if it is not allowed to move at all in any direction, if the movement of the waters of the river has been prevented completely, it then becomes a heightened

profundity of a vast mass of water which can be harnessed for any purpose that would be regarded as useful.

In a similar manner, we may say that when the channels through which consciousness gets ramified, on account of various types of objective perception, are withdrawn by an act of bund that is built against it through self-control, energy wells up within us. Instead of the tendency of water to move forward to where it is not, it may be said to return to itself when its passage of action has been blocked externally. In a similar manner, the mind or consciousness which exhibits a tendency to move to a place where it is not is made to return to its own true nature by an act of self-control, by the process of mind-withdrawal, and its energy gets doubled, tripled, etc.

This withdrawal of the mind from the object does not mean unconsciousness of the presence of the object. This is also an important thing to remember. When we are not conscious of the presence of an object, it does not follow that we have withdrawn the mind from that object. Yoga is not any kind of unconscious state. If someone is unconscious that he is a king, he cannot be called a king. He may be a king, but he is unconscious of it. If he is in a coma, what is the use of being a king? Therefore, an unconscious act is no act at all worth the while, and so any act of self-control, or withdrawal of the mind from objects, is not an absence of the awareness of the presence of the object, but a conscious condition by itself.

In every stage of yoga, consciousness is awake; it is not sleeping. We should not allow consciousness to sleep at any time. Sometimes it can sleep when we occasionally force it to withdraw itself from objects, and then it gets into a mood of grief. The mind gets into a condition of unhappiness because we have compelled it to withdraw itself from its object of love. Then it plays a trick like a small schoolboy who will not do what we want him to do. If we ask him to go to school, he will not go to school—he will not do anything that we ask him to.

He will revolt. Similarly, consciousness can play the very same role as a truant boy, and not do what we expect it to do. "You don't want me to contemplate the object, so I will not do anything else also." This is the language of the mind. "All right, I will not think of the object. You are not allowing me to do that, so I will not do anything else either." Like a very naughty servant who recoils upon the master, the consciousness will recoil upon us and we will be none the better—perhaps we will be worse.

So sometimes a deliberate withdrawal of consciousness from the objects by an act of willpower may not be equivalent to what we are expecting through the practice of yoga—the *cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ*—because we should not allow the consciousness to enter into any mood of negativity on account of its withdrawal. Let us suppose that today we have to fast. If we do not get food, we are unhappy. To some extent the mind is not joyful; somehow or other it tolerates the idea of fasting and hopes that it passes as quickly as possible. This is the attitude that the mind will adopt. "Oh, I am caught up in this stupid technique called yoga which is harassing me from all sides and not allowing me to enjoy the values of life. What shall I do?" What the mind generally does when it is forcefully withdrawn from the object is that it enters into a *tamasic* condition, a torpid state where it does not think anything at all. This can be mistaken for a condition of yoga, and sometimes even for a condition of *samadhi*.

A mind which does not think about anything is not in a state of yoga. It might be better to think of an object than to be in that *tamasic* condition, because a person who neither thinks nor speaks, who does not say anything at all for days together, is a dangerous person. One must be afraid of him. He is not in a state of yoga. He can suddenly erupt, just as an atmosphere which is cloudy and dark can suddenly erupt into flashes of lightening, thunder and hailstorms. This moodiness of the

mind is a dangerous condition, and it is very easy for the mind to enter into that state. And generally, this is what happens—a subtle unhappiness suddenly arises in the mind due to its withdrawal from objects.

Why is it unhappy? It is unhappy simply because we have cut off the centre of its joy. The joy of the mind is the object, and we have severed its connection with the object that is the centre of its happiness. Naturally, it is unhappy and very grief-stricken, and it has no chances of fulfilling its desires. We have very carefully cut off its connection with the source of its happiness. It then becomes a maniac—a kind of neurotic with suppressed feelings. It can become a glutton; it can oversleep; it can fly into a passion of rage; it can attack; it can become anti-social; it can even condemn God, creation, and all of human society. The mind can do anything when it is in a mood of desperate defeatism due to a forced withdrawal compelled upon it in the name of self-control or yoga practice.

So we know the advantages of yoga, as well as the dangers that follow when it is not properly understood. The control of the mind is a conscious activity willingly undertaken by the mind, and not any kind of unconscious recoiling of parts of the mind due to unwillingness. We are always concerned with consciousness. This is a very important aspect of the matter. In the practice of yoga we are attempting to increase the depth and the extent of our being by a widening of the purview of consciousness. So we are concerned with consciousness, with which 'being' is attached automatically. No type of unconsciousness is called for here—there is no automatic action taking place as in a mechanical movement, but a conscious, deliberate and well-thought-out condition in which we are very vigilant. We do not withdraw ourselves from objects because somebody asks us to do so, or even because the Bible or the Bhagavadgita says to do so. Such withdrawal cannot succeed;

it will end in failure. There must be a flowering of consciousness from within itself in an acceptance of the logical necessity for self-withdrawal. If we do not feel a necessity for it, it cannot be done. Otherwise, it will be a pressure exerted upon us, resulting in failure of some sort or the other.

Self-control, which is the withdrawal of consciousness from objects, is meant for the good of our own self. It is not a punishment that is meted out to us, though it looks very painful in the beginning. *Yat tad agre viṣam iva pariṇāme' mṛtopamam, tat sukhaṁ sāttvikaṁ proktam* (B.G. XVIII.37), says the Bhagavadgita. In the beginning it is very bitter to the taste, like a poison that is forced into one's mouth. In the end nectar will be showered upon us; but we are in a state of agony because we do not know when the end will come. In a state of helplessness, we do not know what is actually happening to us. The unhappiness or the venomous character of the initial stage of yoga is due to an apparent severing of oneself from centres of happiness. Therefore, we must be prepared for it, just as we subject ourselves to the treatment of a doctor.

When we go to a doctor for the treatment of an illness, we do not ask for immediate happiness. It is a kind of painful treatment that is meted out to us with injections and bitter drugs, as well as by cutting us off from our usual diet. All kinds of unhappy things are told to us by the doctor, but we deliberately subject ourselves to hospitalisation and treatment because—*pariṇāme' mṛtopamam*—afterwards, joy will come to us. We will be in a state of health because of this present subjection in the form of pain. The mind should, therefore, be educated in this fashion. The mind is in an unhealthy condition while thinking of objects, and the idea that objects make it happy is misconstrued.

Many people, even sincere aspirants, think that there is a justification in sense-contact because it brings release of tension. There is an erroneous feeling among many well-meaning people that sense-contact brings happiness as a result of release of tension. It is not true. Sense contact increases tension—it does not reduce tension. That it reduces tension is a wrong notion. As a matter of fact, it is a heightened tension that causes an apparent happiness in the perception of an object. When we are highly tuned-up, we are worked up into a peculiar nervous condition which makes us feel that we are happy, but it is a drunkard-like happiness. A person who has drunk a lot of liquor may find himself in a state of happiness, but we know how far removed he is from real happiness. His drunken happiness is due to a nervous condition which has been artificially introduced into him by a whipping-up of the nerves by striking them with a rod so violently that the nerves have no other choice than to rise up in a state of irritation, which titillates the consciousness and makes him feel that he is happy—though he is not really happy. In every act of sense cognition, such a nervous condition is created temporarily, and the nerves are not in their natural state when there is sense-contact. As the mind moves towards the object, and as the consciousness follows it, the bodily conditions also get turned into a new state altogether. There is a change in the muscular movements, in the nerves, and even in the breathing process, and even digestion may get upset if one is intensely in affection or hatred.

So, this artificial condition of the psychological system of the nerves, the muscles, etc., brought about on account of intense attachment to objects through sense action, should not be mistaken for happiness, because there will be a sudden fall afterwards. We know the condition of a drunkard who suddenly reverts to the condition of non-drinking, only to find

that he is in a worse condition than he would have been otherwise.

Because of a perpetual identification with artificial states, we have forgotten what a natural state is. We have been in artificial conditions right from our birth, and so it is natural that we mistake it for what is our true nature. Hence, when our true nature is introduced into our body and mind, we mistake it for something artificial, and so in the beginning it may all look very difficult and quite awful for the mind to swallow. But it is advisable that a little bit of discipline be followed in the interest of the genuine health of the total personality that will ensue, together with an increase in power and happiness. This is our aim.

Chapter 22

THE LIFE AND GOAL OF OUR EXISTENCE

In our discussions on the subject of the control of the modifications of the mind—which is the central function in yoga—we found it necessary to make abundant reference to the objects of the mind, because the restraint of the modifications of the mind is automatically a severance of mental relationships with objects. We were also trying to find out what an object is, what its nature is, and what are the various aspects of which an object can be constituted.

In this context, I am reminded of a very important verse from the Yoga Vasishtha which says, *yathā rasah padārthesu yathā tailam tilādisu kusumesu yathā 'modas tathā drastari drsyadhih* (Y.V. I.3.43): The object is in the subject in the same way as fragrance is in a flower, oil is in a seed, and taste is in objects. This is a very strange definition of an object. We usually have a notion that an object is a solid, substantial something staring at us from outside—something very hard, real, and tangible; such a thing is an object. But here, according to this definition, which is a little novel, of course, the object is in the subject as fragrance is in a flower. It cannot be said that fragrance is something standing outside the flower, staring at it, or even tangible in the sense of a separate object. The object is not a substance. This is what the Yoga Vasishtha wants to convey in this verse, and it is this confusion in the mind of not being able to understand the real meaning of 'object' that makes it difficult for anyone to control the mind. The object is not a substance; it is not a thing. The people who are seated in front of me cannot be called my objects. That idea arises due to some confusion of thought.

From one angle of vision, anything that is seen by the eyes may be regarded as an object, but the Yoga Vasishtha goes into a deeper aspect of this question and tries to remove the confusion in the mind concerning the true nature of an object which binds the consciousness. You, as persons seated here in front of me, are not my objects, because that which makes you an object is only from my point of view; it is in my head, my brain and mind, and not in you. This is very subtle and has to be carefully understood. Though you are a person seated in front of me, you need not be an object of my mind unless my mind reacts in a particular fashion.

The reaction of my mind towards you in a particular manner is what constitutes the object of the mind, and not you as persons in front of me. You may ask, "What do you mean by the 'reaction of the mind'? Are we not objects because you see us? Am I not an object to you because you see me?" No, I am not the cause of your bondage, and you are not the cause of my bondage, taking you or me independently as self-existent 'somethings' unrelated to externals, to which reference was previously made when a distinction was drawn between *Ishvara srishti*, the creation of God, and *jiva srishti*, the creation of the individual. It was pointed out that bondage does not lie in the creation of God, but lies in the creation of the individual. By that it is meant that the reaction of the mind in respect of something which it regards as outside it is the source of bondage and the source of joy and sorrow, and the thing taken from its own point of view is neither a source of joy nor a source of sorrow.

Now, when it is said that the object is in the subject, something like fragrance is in a flower, it is implied that the object is inseparable from the subject. By 'subject', we mean the mind which cognises anything that is external. The cognition of an external condition is the objectivity involved in the mind; this is the cause of bondage. The substance itself

is not the source of bondage. It cannot give joy; it cannot give sorrow. The attitude of the mind towards that something which it is obliged to regard as an object is the source of joy, and the source of bondage. These conditions of perception, conditions of cognition, are really the objects.

Emmanuel Kant, a very great German thinker, wrote 800 pages on this very subject—the distinction between a thing as it is in itself, and a thing as conceived by the mind. The thing in itself is outside the phenomenal perception of the mind. Kant made out that the thing in itself cannot be known at all, because it is noumenal and not phenomenal. It is the precondition of all phenomenal appearance, and it cannot be known through the apparatus that belongs to the world of phenomena. This is something like the distinction between *Ishvara srishti* and *jiva srishti*—they are almost on the same level. The conditions of cognition are the source of bondage—this is our point. These conditions have to be distinguished from things in themselves and, therefore, it is futile on our part to blame other people or to regard other people as sources of our experiences, either positive or negative.

Persons and things outside are harmless existences created by God, and they should not be regarded as tools or instruments for our experiences, and we should not foist upon them conditions which arise in our own mind on account of a reaction that we set up due to peculiar situations in which we find ourselves. If we carefully go into it, we are in a subjective world to a large extent, though we seem to be in an objective world for practical purposes. We have made a mix-up of things; we have mixed up the real objective world with subjective reactions and have made this world to be what it is today—a source of anxiety for us. We are not happy with things, not because there is something wrong with things, but

because we are unable to tune our cognitive conditions to the existent conditions of things as they themselves are.

I am again reminded of another famous verse from the Isavasya Upanishad which says, *yāthātathyato'rthān vyadadhāc chāśhvatībhyas samābhyaḥ* (Isa 8): The Supreme Being has created the world in the way it ought to be created. So it is futile for us to make complaints against it, and to think, "It ought to have been something else. The whole mountain should be full of honey. Why is it full of thorns? God in His wisdom could have smeared it with milk or honey so that we could go and lick it every day. Why has God created thorns that prick our feet when we walk? Why has He created mosquitoes? Why has He created snakes?" One funny man put this question to Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj: "Why has God created mosquitoes? What is the purpose? How do they serve any benefit?" Swamiji laughed and said, "It is to punish you people. Otherwise, you will become very proud; so, there is somebody to punish you." He gave a jocular answer to a jocular question.

We are unable to appreciate the significance of things on account of our inability to attune our conditions with the conditions of things outside, and we have our own set of preconceived notions which we try to project into the existent nature of things. This projecting process is called objectivity—that is the real object. If we go into more philosophical aspects of this question, space and time are the objects. This is the final answer to all these worrying questions. A man is not an object; a woman is not an object; a thing is not an object; a dog or a cat, a tree or a mountain is not an object. Space and time are objects. It is these that create in our mind the notion that there are objects. If space and time were not there, perhaps we would all fuse together into a single existence. But for the existence and operation of space and time, we would not be individuals seated here.

If there are devils, these are the real devils—space and time—and they are such atrocious factors that they have entered into the structure of our brain and our mind, and our understanding of every blessed thing in this world. The conditions of knowledge called space and time are ruling the whole world. The rulers of the world are not presidents or prime ministers. Space and time are the rulers of the world. Space and time make everyone dance to their tune, and it is to space and time that everyone has become slaves, puppets and subjected themselves wholeheartedly. We not only act and work in accordance to the demands of space and time, but we even think and understand only according to space and time, so that our brain itself is in space and time. Who, then, will save us from these subjections?

Ordinarily speaking, there is no remedy for this illness, because the illness has gone into the brain of the doctor himself. So, who will to cure the disease? But there are mysterious techniques of self-adjustment. They have to be called mysterious, indeed—not to be understood in academies and colleges. Even the great thinker Kant concluded by saying that there is no solution to this problem. His work, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ends in a kind of agnosticism, because when we try to understand things purely through reason, we find that problems are insoluble. Problems are insoluble because reason, which is the tool for solving problems, is involved in that which causes the problems—space and time.

Space, time and cause are the conditions of objectivity. The necessity to think only in terms of magnitude, extent, three-dimension—that is subjection to space. We cannot think for a moment of anything that is not possessed of magnitude. Everything has the three dimensions—length, breadth and height—so it is impossible to conceive of anything that has not got at least one or two of these three factors. This is the three-dimensional way of thinking. Minus these three factors,

there is no thought. Also, we are always in time; we cannot conceive of timelessness. We are in the past, we are in the present, and we are in the future. Can we think in any other manner? This idea will never leave the mind. Why is it so? Well, they are the conditions of knowledge.

Also, everything is connected to something else—something comes from something. There is an effect from a cause—a cause produces an effect. Something depends on something else. This hanging of one thing on another is the causal relation, and the necessity for anything to exist in a particular point of duration is due to subjection to time, and that which makes it impossible to think except in terms of magnitude is the subjection to spatiality. It is this subjection of the mind to these conditions of knowledge that is really the object, so that the object is a kind of disease in consciousness, and is not a substance. This is why the Yoga Vasishtha says that the object is inherent in the subject like fragrance is in a flower, like oil is in a seed, like taste is in an object, and rules out the concept that the object is outside somewhere. The conclusion is that the object is not outside, but is only inside the head. This is why we are worried so much. All of the objects that are harassing us are inside our brain, and not outside. So there is no need of making complaints. We cannot complain against anything in this world, because if we make a complaint, we are complaining against our own way of thinking.

This is a very important issue before us, where we are ready to take up the practice of yoga in its aspect of the restraint of the modifications of the mind or *vrittis—yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ* (I.2). The *cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ,* or the restraint of the modifications of the mind, is really the regulation of the modifications of the mind in respect of what the real object is. A particular modification of the mind is nothing but the shape that the mind takes in respect of an

object that it perceives or cognises. So, a modification or a *vritti* is a shape of the mind, a mould into which it is cast, a particular structural pattern of thinking. This is called a *vritti*. Why is it that we are so worried about *vrittis*? Why should we restrain the mind? Why does the necessity arise to control the modifications of the mind?

The necessity arises because a *vritti*, or a modification of the mind, is a particular shape into which the mind is cast, and to which that mind gets attached as if it is a very real, substantial something. Attachment is the immediate consequence of the mind having been cast into a mould. Why the mind gets cast into this mould is a different question. It is due to previous *samskaras*, impressions of previous experiences, the *prarabdha* that operates now as the result of previous actions taken in the many lives through which we have passed earlier, etc. Umpteen reasons exist as to why the mind takes such a shape at all, although this is not the point. Rather, the point is to know how we can prevent the mind from taking these shapes and getting identified with them. Every time the mind takes a shape, it gets identified with that shape and puts on a mood.

We have various types of moods. At times we are melancholic, and at other times we are drooping; sometimes we are sinking; sometimes we are happy, and so on and so forth. All of these moods are nothing but the identification of our consciousness with a particular mould or shape into which the mind has cast itself for a particular reason, at a given moment of time. The difficulty is that as long as the consciousness goes on getting identified with these moulds at every moment of time, its attachment to individuality gets hardened, gets intensified more and more, and it is made to wrongly believe in the reality of a physical body and everything that is externally connected with it, so that the true nature of consciousness, which is universality, is always

hidden, submerged beneath the waves of mental modifications. The waves are so many in number that we cannot see the ocean at the bottom. The ocean floor cannot be seen, owing to these waves which are themselves the modifications of the mind. They are so small, of course, compared to the depth of the ocean, and yet they can simply cover the surface to such an extent that the ocean may become invisible for all practical purposes.

Thus, the restraint of the modifications of the mind is a very technical affair and, therefore, it is also a very difficult affair. It is not physical isolation in the sense of a physical distance between one thing and another thing that is called withdrawal of the mind from objects. When we are physically away from someone or something, it does not follow that we have withdrawn ourselves from the object. We have concluded that the object is not a substance and, therefore, the physical distance of the substance does not amount to much. What is important is the state of mind in respect of that which it regards as an object. Even if the substance, which it erroneously regards as an object, is millions of miles away, the mind can still cast itself into the mould of that shape, and nothing can prevent it from doing so. We can get attached to something which is thousands of miles away, or we may not bother about a thing which is immediately in front of us, if it is not of any consequence to us. So, physical distance is not of great consequence here; it is not important. What is important is the interest that the mind takes in the particular thing which it calls an object, or regards as an object.

So, it seems that the restraint of the modifications of the mind is an internal adjustment that we have to make, and not merely a physical running away or a physical isolation from the object, which will not mean much because something is happening inside us of which we are mostly unaware. We are totally unaware of what is happening inside us, but we are

always conscious of foisting these conditions on outside substances and imagine that these conditions arise from outside substances. This is called projection in psychoanalysis—a very diseased condition. It is not a happy thing. We project internal conditions on external substances, and then evoke those conditions from those imagined objects and then have attitudes towards the objects as if they are the causes of our joys and sorrows. It is this projection of the conditions of the mind on external points in space and time that is called *samsara* or bondage. This is called earthly existence; this is the source of mortality.

How are we going to start the technique? How are we going to control the mind under these conditions? One of the methods is to educate the mind, disillusion the mind from these misconceived notions it has about objects. We have a thoroughgoing wrong notion about things. This notion has to be set right first, before we try to do anything with the mind, because as long as there is a particular conviction in the mind, it is difficult to get out of it. Conviction is a deep-rooted feeling and experience that it is real, and one cannot run away from the real, as we know very well. So, first of all, what is essential is to know whether our convictions are real, or whether they are unfounded. Mostly, they are unfounded. By a critical analysis of the perceptual and cognitional processes, philosophically, we come to a startling conclusion that conscious relationships, which are projections of the thinking mind like rays emanating from the sun, are responsible for the experiences that we are undergoing every day.

Our experiences are nothing but the processes of the mind which we are undergoing from morning to evening. So all of our experiences are internal because they are conditions of consciousness. They are not coming from outside. Experience is nothing but a state of consciousness, and if it is dissociated from our being, it would cease to be an experience. Whatever

is inseparable from our being becomes our experience. Inasmuch as our being is one with the conditions of thinking, feeling, willing, etc., and these very conditions are the objects of our experience, they constitute experience by itself. All of these subjects are very beautifully dealt with in such scriptures as the Yoga Vasishtha, the Tripura Rahasya and such other mystic texts where we are taken to another realm altogether, different from the imagined realm in which we find ourselves. The *adhyasa*, or the superimposition of attributes, which we wrongly bring about by transference of qualities from the subject to the object, and vice versa, is the cause of a confused sort of experience which becomes difficult for us to analyse critically.

We have come to a certain level of understanding about this subject, and it should be easier for us now to tackle the mind in a more appreciable manner. This is the reason why students of yoga, advanced seekers of Truth, content themselves in being absolutely alone. They want to be left alone to themselves. People go to caves and mountains, to isolated *kutirs*, etc., unconcerned with anything in this world, because they have now understood that the problem is inside only—it is not outside. There is no use moving from place to place and contacting things for the purpose of inner reformation. Such a reformation cannot be brought about by any kind of spatial or temporal travel, because the problem is inside, like a disease, inherent in our structure, and a disease cannot be cured however much we may move physically from place to place or contact things outwardly. Ultimately, yoga is the digging out of the roots of this disease and adjusting our existence with the existence of things in such a way that there is harmony between the inside and the outside.

The stages of yoga are stages of establishing harmony between the within and the without. The more harmony is felt and experienced between the within and the without, the more

universal we become in our comprehension and experience, because when this harmony is established perfectly, there remains nothing to differentiate us from the outside world or creation. When this imagined distinction between the inside and the outside is lifted up totally, the outside fuses into the inside and the inside fuses into the outside. Then, there is neither an object nor world outside, nor is there a 'you' either. The word 'you' is dropped completely. There is no 'I', and there is no 'you', because the 'you' is the object and the 'I' is the subject, and the distinction between them is completely removed by a gradual tuning of the conditions of knowledge to the conditions of the object.

This is a very strenuous process because, on the one hand, it requires a complete shedding of all previous notions about the things to which we have been wedded as if they are ultimately real; and on the other hand, it requires a strenuous practice every day so that the old impressions may not come and invade us, again and again, and stultify all the little good that we have done in a few hours of meditation. If we do some four or five hours of meditation today in a good mood and imagine that we have come to a very stable understanding of the true nature of things, and then do not do this practice for another five days, all these five days of the absence of practice will throw mud on the little success that we have achieved in three hours of meditation today.

To repeat the great admonition of Sage Patanjali, the practice is to be continuous. It should be unremitting. It should be strenuous. It should be endowed with immense ardour and affection. And, it should be the life and goal of our existence, so that it is our father and mother who shall take care of us, and we cannot forget it. Such is the practice of yoga. When it is continued for a protracted period, the flower shall blossom, and the sun of Knowledge shall rise.

Chapter 23

THE INTERNAL RELATIONSHIP OF ALL THINGS

In certain mystical circles, a very interesting comparison is made between the mind and a wild bull. A very wild bull cannot be controlled. It is very ferocious, and we cannot even go near it; it will gore us if we try to approach it. Controlling the mind is something like controlling a wild animal. It can be done, but the method is very tactful. It is not a direct, frontal approach. The example given in mystical circles is that if we find a very ferocious bull and we want to bring it under control, we do not approach it directly. So also it is with the control of the mind—we are not going to directly attack the mind. A direct attack is not a wise attitude, because the mind reacts in a very violent manner if we approach it with an injudicious understanding of its likes and dislikes.

What do we do with a wild bull? The teacher says that fencing should be raised all round the bull, maybe half a furlong radius from the bull, without going near it. Now, what has happened? We have limited the movement of the bull; it cannot go outside the fencing. The first step that we have taken is that even without touching it or going near it, we have restrained its movements. After some time, we should go on frequenting that place so that the bull can see us. It has seen us so many times, and whenever it sees us it starts hissing and rushes towards the fencing as if it wants to attack, but it cannot attack because we are outside the fence and it is inside. But still it is ferocious, and it has an intention to attack if possible. What do we do? We bring something that we know bulls like to eat, such as green grass, or perhaps some *channa*

(chickpeas) or some other eatable, and we throw it in front of the bull. Whatever we throw, it hisses and makes faces, looking at us with red eyes as it eats the grass inside the fence. We go on doing this every day.

Though the bull is very ferocious, it is getting acquainted with our face, and it begins to sense that something desirable is coming near it every day—namely, green grass, etc.—and not only is the same person bringing it, he is bringing it at the same time, which is better still. Then, what happens? It comes near the fence and eats the grass, perhaps even from our hands, though we are still outside the fence and it is inside. It gets used to our coming near it, and it is able to recognise us as the person who has been coming with the good intention of feeding it, not intending any harm. So, slowly it draws nearer, the ferocity having cooled down. Then, inside the fence, it thrusts its snout to sniff us, and takes the grass from our hands. We may even touch it with our hands, though we have not gone inside but remain safely outside the fence. We touch it and pat it, and it does not look at us with the very same ferocious attitude as it used to earlier. Then we may open the gate a bit and touch it little more, though not entirely going inside.

Finally, we may be able to touch the bull's entire body and stroke it as well, and because it has understood us, it does not attack. We might even be able to sit on the bull while it walks about, and even ride on it afterwards, says the teacher. That ferocious animal has now come under our control to such an extent that we are now able to ride on it after a long, long practice. Similarly is the way of controlling the mind. Just as we cannot deal with wild animals directly, we cannot deal with the mind directly. It is a very ferocious thing.

So, in the beginning, we put a fence around the mind, and we do not allow it to go beyond certain limits. We allow it to move, of course, and we give it freedom, but only within a

certain limit. The circumference of that limit is what is called spiritual discipline. It is not a hard and painful discipline, but a systematised regulation of the activities of the mind within a given ambit of function. For example, let us say that we live in a sacred atmosphere, perhaps in Benares, Uttarkashi, or Rishikesh, and have decided, "I am not going out of Rishikesh." This is a limitation that we have put on the mind—that we will not go anywhere in India, or anywhere else in the world. Just as we put a fence around the wild bull, we have put a limitation upon the movement of the mind. "I will not go more than ten miles from this place. I will remain within a ten mile circumference." Then we go on bringing the circumference nearer and nearer to the centre until we are able to give a more restrained discipline to the mind than it was given earlier.

What are the functions of the mind going to be? This is another restriction that we have to place upon the mind. Though we may be staying in Rishikesh or any particular holy place, what are we going to do there? This is more important. This 'doing' is an action of the mind. The limitation put upon the functions of the mind is an internal restraint brought about in addition to the external restraint of confining it to a particular atmosphere, such as the disciplines of *swadhyaya, japa, dhyana*, etc. When we study sacred literature like the Srimad Bhagavata, we give a wide range of freedom for the mind to move among ideas which are many in number. The story of creation and the history of the great heroes and masters described in the Srimad Bhagavata Purana, for example, allow the mind to move freely, but yet within a limited range. That is, the mind will not go outside the range of the thought provided for in the Srimad Bhagavata Purana. Though there is freedom inside this range, it is a limited freedom.

Swadhyaya is a great limitation. But a still greater limitation is the *japa* of a mantra, where we do not give as much freedom to the mind as we give to the study of Srimad Bhagavata, etc. We do not go on hearing stories or reading tales that are likely to allow the mind to think many thoughts. During *japa*, we cannot think many thoughts. Maybe two or three ideas at the most may come to the mind. During *dhyana*, of course, we would allow only one thought—not even two or three thoughts. This is a tremendous restriction that we have brought upon it.

But, as in the case of the wild bull, we should not act upon this discipline immediately. It has to be done with great caution, taking a long time—perhaps even years, if it is a very turbulent case. The mind has desires and certain needs, both of which have to be provided for by a reduction of quantity and quality, gradually, day by day, until it can acquiesce to the most restrained form of diet that is given to it. If we live with a Guru or in a holy monastic atmosphere, the practice becomes easier. But if we live independently in the thick of a city, doing whatever we like, then the practice is more difficult because we have given licence to the mind to do whatever it likes. But within the restrained atmosphere of a regulated discipline, in the company of wise people, the practice becomes easier.

We have to always remember that all this practice and discipline is a great blessing that comes upon people when they have evolved in the process of the rise of individuality, from the lower levels to the higher, until they come to the human species, as they call it—and even as a human being, to a very advanced state where the mind can comprehend abstract principles, instead of clinging to concrete forms. *Manuṣhyāṇāṁ sahasreṣu kaścid yatati siddhaye, yatatām api siddhānāṁ kaścin māṁ vetti tattvataḥ* (B.G. VII.3), says the Bhagavadgita. Among thousands of persons—out of many, many thousands—one person may be able to strive, to

put forth effort in the direction of the liberation of the soul. Even among those who are striving, only one may actually succeed.

All are not called to this glorious achievement. Due to the immensity of restrictions and disciplines that are necessary in order to purify the consciousness, and the insistence of the various constituents of individual nature, this practice becomes difficult. There is a tug of war, a constant battle going on between us and the forces outside; sometimes one side appears to win, and sometimes the other side appears to win. This war goes on until the forces of divinity gain the upper hand by continuous, protracted and arduous practice.

A very pertinent point that we have to bear in mind is that, success or no success, the practice should be regular. We should not complain to ourselves, "I have been practising meditation for years and years, and no appreciable or tangible result has followed," because we cannot determine whether any result has followed or not. The result need not necessarily be visible to the physical eyes because, as it is said, spiritual growth is always from the inside and not from the outside. We cannot see spirituality shining outside. It starts illumining our personality from within, as is the case with any kind of growth. All growth starts from inside, and it manifests itself on the outside much later, after a long time, such as the growth of a tree or the growth of any organic substance. There is an internal, structural transformation taking place right from the root, from the bottommost seed onwards, like the ripening of a fruit, for instance. After a long time we will begin to see its ripeness outside—maybe after many, many years.

In the well-known work of H.G. Wells, *A Short History of the World*, reference is made to the life of Buddha, and there he beautifully expresses the difficulty which Buddha felt and how it became impossible even for a person like Buddha to know that he was advancing at all. He was advancing, but he

could not know it—he was blindfolded in his movement. The analogy given by H.G. Wells is that the growth was from within, and the external eyes could not see it—even Buddha himself could not see it. Even the very day before the illumination, Buddha felt that everything was hopeless and that all his practice had ended in a waste. He had fasted, starved and undergone hard discipline and austerity for nothing. Nothing had come of it, and he had a subconscious feeling that he was going to die. "The day has come; this body is going, it is perishing, and all this effort, after all this time, has led me to this catastrophic ending of my life." Such was the reaction set up by the mind of a person like the Buddha, and that too just one day before the bubble burst. That very night, he had illumination. Yet, a few hours earlier he was feeling that all was hopeless. Just imagine—how is it possible?

We cannot see the rise of the sun until it actually rises; before that, there is only darkness. But there are inklings, such as the dawn and the dusk, where we feel sometimes the coming in of a glorious presence. These inklings are not permanent features, however—sometimes they come like flashes, and sometimes they withdraw themselves. The difficulties of a seeker living with a competent master are much less, because even when it looks as if we are retracing our steps, we may be really advancing, and the Guru can tell us that. Sometimes it looks as if we are in a descent, but we are not going down—we are going forward. Let us suppose that we want to go to Badrinath. Sometimes we have to descend a hill, but we should not feel that we are going down. We are actually moving forward, because this descent down the hill is only a necessary step in the process of our marching forward towards Badrinath, which involves climbing up the hill, and then again descending. Many times we go up and many times

we go down along the road to Badrinath. It is a mountainous route, and the mountains have to be scaled.

Likewise, progression and retrogression, ascent and descent, and sometimes even a condition of oblivion, may all be states of mind which we have to expect; and we should not be afraid of all these conditions. Whatever may happen to us, we should not fear, provided our practice is perfect in its technical features and the practice is regular and daily. *Karmaṇy evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadāchana* (B.G. II.47); *nehābhikramanāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate* (B.G. II.40), says the Bhagavadgita. When we do our duty with expertise and to the best of our conscience, understanding and knowledge, there should be no fear. The forces which are outside us, which have not come under our control at present, will automatically befriend us when we have touched their border by putting forth the best of our efforts from inside. In this practice, nothing is lost; everything is gained.

There is no such thing as a loss in spiritual practice. Everything is a gain, even if it be the littlest of gains. Even a single step, or even a half step that is taken, is a positive step, after all; and what has been given will not be withdrawn. It may be only a jot that we have gained—a microscopic, invisible, atomic achievement—but even then, it is an achievement. This is the glory of spiritual practice. And when the practice is perfect, which means to say that it is done daily, regularly, at the proper time and with the proper intensity, adopting the same technique and done with the same devotion—when practice is conducted in this manner, the result will take care of itself. What is called for in spiritual practice is whole-souled dedication.

When our entire being is devoted to the practice, there is nothing else that is required of us. This entire dedication may be of various intensities, according to the stage of our understanding and the condition of our mind. Whatever be the

level of our understanding, the dedication must be whole-souled. It may be a child's whole-souled dedication, or it may be the whole-souled dedication of a genius—but nevertheless, it is entire. All that we are, the entirety that we are, offers itself in this practice.

In the context of our practice of the *japa* of a mantra or the practice of meditation, there is only one important thing to remember, and that is the question of whether the whole of our being is present during the practice, or just a part of our being is present. In ordinary practice we find that nothing we do can attract the whole of our being. Whether we are taking our meal, doing office work, going for a walk or having a chat with friends, we find that the whole of our being is not there—a part of the mind is always somewhere else. When taking a meal, we may be thinking of some office work, and when working in the office, we may be thinking of lunchtime, etc., so that some part of the mind is 'outside' the particular task that we are doing. This is not whole-souled work. But here, in spiritual practice, the dedication should be whole-souled. Everything that we are should be present. Our will should be there; our feeling should be there; our thought should be there; our understanding should be there; and, our love should be there completely.

Practically speaking, this whole-souled dedication to anything is impossible, because the mind does not know what is good for it or what is in its real interest. Why is it that we are thinking five things at a time, instead of one thing? The reason is that we are not fully sure what is good for us. We think that there is a little goodness—a little of this is good, a little of that is also good, and that a little percentage of good is found in everything. So the mind goes on hopping like a frog from one thing to another, because it thinks, "Everything is good, so I may gain some benefit from that also." But, we have not found anything which is entirely good, which has everything we are

seeking so that we need not go to other places. If we go to the ocean, we need not go to wells and rivers and ponds, etc. for water. Everything that we want is there because it is the largest quantity of water. However, such a thing has not been found by the mind. We have never seen anything in this world that can provide us with everything. We have never gone to a shop where everything can be found. We have to go to twenty shops to get twenty things, because each shopkeeper stocks only certain items; he cannot stock everything. Likewise, this world seems to be a shopkeeper with various avenues and showrooms, where particular things are available, but not everything is available. So this is the reason why the mind is trying this and that, experimenting with the different showrooms in various locations of the world and not sticking to any particular one.

In the discipline of spiritual practice, however, a type of rudimentary illumination is to be roused from within which will enable the mind to see all value in a particular ideal that it has taken for its meditation. The ideal that we choose for our meditation should be such that it includes every value; all value is present in it. This is a hard job, indeed, because in order to find all values in a particular ideal, we must first of all know the values that we are seeking in the ideal. What are the worthwhile values in this world? This requires a little bit of analysis of one's own mind—with the help of a good teacher, of course.

What is it that we want really in this world? We want food; we want water; we want a house; we want money; we want fame; we want security; we want beauty; we want aesthetic grandeur. What are the things that we want? We want deathlessness, finally. We do not want to die—we want immortality. We want all things for all time—this is what we actually seek. 'All things' means, 'that which is as vast as space'; 'for all time' means, 'that which is as long as time

exists'. We want infinite possession for an eternity of duration; this is our longing.

Such a thing is not visible in this world. Nobody has seen any such thing in this world. Have we seen anything in this world which is as vast as everything, and which can endure for all time? Therefore, nothing in this world can satisfy us, because nothing can contain everything, and nothing can last for all time. But an ideal has to be engendered within us by a proper adjustment of our own understanding, so that in this ideal that we have roused within ourselves, in our consciousness, we find all worthwhile values. We find truth, we find goodness, we find beauty—we find everything. Truth, goodness and beauty are the highest values; they contain everything else. This, in the largest measure, must be found in the ideal that we have chosen for our meditation; it is all truth, all goodness and all beauty. Then the mind will not go to anything else. "Oh, everything is here. So anything that I could seek anywhere else is also here. Not only is it here, but it is in a better form—not in the rusted and dusted, diminished and distorted form as would be found elsewhere. Here, it is in a refined and shining form, in its truth and glory."

Thus the mind has to be educated in a spiritual sense. All interest is to be concentrated in this ideal. Here, we will have one difficulty: after all our effort of rousing in our consciousness an ideal of such a perfect character, we will find that we have a subtle feeling that the ideal is abstract and not concrete. This is another trick of the mind. It will tell us, "I will cut you at the throat one day or the other because you are trying to harass me like this." It will also tell us, "After all, my dear friend, all this that you have is abstract. It is not concrete." Again we will fall into a melancholy mood. "Oh, this is awful. I have only ideas, and no concrete objects." This is a peculiar joke which the mind will cut, and it will laugh at us. It will mock our practice after a long, long period of effort,

saying, "After all, what you have gained is nothing but concocted ideas." This doubt will arise in the mind and we will become frightened, and think, "After all, am I a fool? Have I been deceived? Am I catching only ideas in my mind and getting nothing substantial or concrete in return? There are concrete things in the world and I am meditating on abstract ideas. Oh, what a pity!" This will bring us back to the old groove of sense-thought with such force that it will look as if we are dying, and we will not be able to understand what is happening to us. Here, a Guru is necessary.

In the beginning stages of spiritual practice, we will not find the need for a Guru. We think that everything is all right: "I myself am my Guru." But when we go further, we will find that the difficulties are insurmountable; and there, we will require a guide. It is not true that we are catching abstract ideas—it is only a trick of the mind. The mind is trying to dupe us into a sense-groove to which it wants to direct our attention once again. The mind wants to send us back to that place from which we have come thus far with great effort. This is what it does.

Here, vigilance should be exercised. That which we are contemplating is not an abstract idea. One of the fundamental problems of philosophy, to which reference has been made earlier, is the relation of thought to 'being'. The whole of philosophy, to put it plainly, is an attempt to find out a relationship between thought and being. What is the connection between idea and existence—what we call thought, and the concrete forms of the world? Is there a connection, or is there no connection? All these circus feats of philosophers, such as idealism and realism, etc., are only endeavours to solve this crucial question of the relationship between consciousness and its object—that is, thought and being.

We regard an object as 'being', and the consciousness as a thought of that object, because we have a subtle fear that 'being' is only in the object and not in consciousness. The consciousness is running to the object. Why did it run to the object? We think that consciousness has no being, that it is the object that has being. So, this poor consciousness is running to the object which has being, so that it may identify itself with being—because without being, it is nothing. What is the value of anything which has no being? It is almost a nil.

Consciousness wrongly and foolishly imagines that it has no substantiality inside—that substantiality is only in the object outside—so it wants to connect itself with the being of the object so that it may gain substantiality and existence. It wants to import the being of the object into itself (called *adhyasa* in Indian philosophy), which is a mix-up of perceptional experience that takes place by the transference of the illumining character of consciousness to the object, and the 'being' character of the object upon consciousness. We are left hanging in the middle—with a part of objectivity and a part of subjectivity in us. So, the human being is half subject, and half object. The conscious aspect may be regarded as the subject, and the 'being' aspect is the object.

Thus, we are hanging between the object and the subject. We have love for our own self, and we have love for the object also. How much love we have for the object, and how much love we have for our own self, is very difficult to judge. It depends upon the emphasis that we lay under different conditions. Here, the idea that the object alone is substantial, and consciousness within is insubstantial, is a misconstrued notion. It is due to an un-philosophical idea that has arisen in the mind in respect of its own position vis-a-vis objects. We have been brought up in an atmosphere of objects. Right from childhood onwards, we have been living in a world of objects only. The moment we open our eyes, we see only outside

objects. We cannot see ourselves inside. Nobody, not even a child or a genius, looks inside at the mind or consciousness. So we live in a world of objects; and we have been taught to value objects as the only concrete and substantial things, and thoughts as only isolated accretions, as it were, that are intended to give some peculiar value to the objects.

It is now that we have to bring about a right-about turn of this attitude. It is not true that objects alone have being, and that consciousness has no being. It is this wrong notion that makes us sometimes feel that what we think in our mind is insubstantial and abstract. It is not abstract, because a thing becomes abstract when it is dissociated from 'being'; but it becomes concrete when it is identified with 'being'. Now, has consciousness being, or has it no being? Tell me. Can we say that the idea, or the mind, or the consciousness that we have, has no being at all? If it has no being, from where has it arisen? Is it a void, or a nullity? This is a very difficult thing for us to conceive. How can non-substantial consciousness arise from somewhere? It must have being. But, how can it be that the consciousness forgets its own being, and goes to the object to seek 'being' elsewhere? It is because the consciousness has forgotten the being that it is, and it has found it necessary to run into the being of something else. The being of consciousness is not an object of consciousness, and that is why consciousness runs toward something which it looks upon as an object.

Why is it that the being of consciousness is not an object of consciousness? It is because being is not separable from consciousness; and inasmuch as being is what gives significance even to consciousness, it cannot be projected as an object outside it. It is like a person who talks, but does not know that he has a tongue. How can he talk without a tongue? And yet, he has doubts: "Do I have a tongue?" How can we doubt the existence of a substantial something behind

consciousness, when there is such a thing as consciousness? And minus consciousness, what is an object? Just imagine—even the being of the object, which consciousness is running towards, has a value only when consciousness cognises it, and invests it with understanding and appreciation, etc. Minus this, it is nothing. It is something inert.

Now, we have to go further into the deeper problems of the meditative procedures, which are nothing but procedures in the analysis of the relation between consciousness and the object. In the beginning, they look as if they are completely isolated things, where one has absolutely no connection with the other. Later on, they appear to be fraternal in their relationship, one requiring the other for existence and activity. And later still, they will be found to be inseparable in their character, and ultimately inseparable in existence itself.

These three types of knowledge or experience are described in the eighteenth chapter of the Bhagavadgita, where everything regarded as being dissociated is the lowest kind of knowledge, and where everything regarded as being related internally, by an interpenetrating structure, is higher knowledge. The highest knowledge is that conscious experience where even internal relationship is not called for; rather, 'being' includes all the objects and stands unconnected with externality, but is perpetually related to consciousness. The last stage of experience is where consciousness need not run towards objects for being, but recognises the being of all objects within its own bosom. This is the goal of life.

Chapter 24

AFFILIATION WITH LARGER WHOLES

Among the many recipes that Sage Patanjali prescribes in his system of yoga for the control of the mind, a masterstroke is given in a single aphorism as a prescription for every type of mental modification when he says, *tatpratiṣedhārtham ekatattva abhyāsaḥ* (I.32): The practice of one reality checks the movement of the mind. It means that the movement of the mind is due to its weddedness to various realities, and not to one reality. *Ekatattva* is one truth, one being, one substance, one reality—anything that is single and comprehensive. The practice of one reality is the ultimate remedy for all psychological modifications. But, as far as the human mind is concerned, there is no such thing as one reality. The human mind sees many realities and, therefore, it has manifold approaches to the various forms of reality which it sees in the world.

The mind moves only to realities, and never to unrealities. There is no such thing as the mind getting attracted to unreal things. Anything that it considers to be real becomes the object of its consideration and action. The subsequent transcendence of a particular concept of reality does not in any way affect the mind from getting interested in whatever level of reality it considers valuable at a given moment in time. In every stage of life the mind is confronted only by realities, because should it be convinced that its perceptions or cognitions are unreal, it will not bother itself about them. A reality is that which can fulfil a particular need at a given time; whether or not it is ultimately real is a different question altogether. A thing may not be ultimately real, and yet it may

be real enough to satisfy a particular requisition of the mind under a given condition.

Sometimes we have false illnesses which can be set right by false remedies. The remedy and the illness should be of the same category. In dream, we may sometimes feel very hungry. It is possible that even after a heavy dinner, we may dream of hunger when we go to bed. Is this hunger in the dream real, or is it unreal? If it is unreal, we would not feel it. Why would we feel it if it is unreal? So when it is felt, it is real. We may have lunch in a dream. Is this lunch real, or is it unreal? If it is unreal, it cannot appease the hunger of the dreaming individual. We have a dream hunger, appeased by a dream lunch. The hunger in dream cannot be called real if we compare it with the waking state, nor can we regard the lunch that we have in dream as real when compared to the waking lunch. But that is a different matter; we are not asked to compare here. We have to take things as they are. The condition of the mind in dream, which makes it feel an intense hunger, is commensurate with the nature of the food that is given to it in that very same dream condition. The dream food can satisfy the dream hunger because they are in the same space-time level; they are not in different degrees of reality.

We should not compare the dream experience with the waking experience. There is happiness and sorrow in dream, as well; we can be overjoyed, or be in deep grief. Why should we be in joy or the state of grief in dream when the causes thereof are unreal? All the causes of experience in dream can be regarded as unreal, as we would all say, when comparing those experiences with the waking state. But if they are unreal, we will not experience them at all. The very fact that we experience them shows that we have drawn them to our consciousness and made them a part of our being.

So, the real is a peculiar set-up of affairs, a condition or an environment which acts upon a particular state of mind and

produces a particular type of experience. If in great fright we jump over a piece of rope thinking it is a snake, we may start perspiring and have tremors in the body. A false snake can create real perspiration. Although on a later comparative experience the snake might have been found to be unreal, when we perceived something to be a snake, at that particular moment of perception it was real enough to create a reaction in our physiological and psychological system. The mind has so many realities of this type in the world of experience, and because different realities satisfy different needs of the mind, it goes to these realities. We should not ask here whether this particular reality is ultimately real, because we are not concerned with it, and the mind is not going to accept this argument. The mind is not concerned with ultimate realities. It is concerned with realities as it sees them, conceives them and experiences them. So we can understand the reason why the mind is drawn towards objects which it considers as real.

Patanjali's point is that as long as diverse realities are cognised by the mind, it is impossible to withdraw the mind from them, because the mind has already been convinced that they are realities and, therefore, it has to relate itself to these realities in a particular manner. There is no question of control of the mind as long as there are realities which are multifarious in character. The rays of the mind, which go out in the form of cognition, can be drawn back and the energy of the mind is conserved—but this can be done only when there is a flowing of the mind towards a single reality. Our difficulty is that there is no such thing as a single reality in this world. Where is that one reality, of which Patanjali speaks or advises? Every reality is as good as any other reality, under different conditions. The one reality of which Patanjali speaks, and of which yoga speaks in general, is that transcendent comprehensiveness where the lower realities are subsumed so that the mind will not find a need to go to the

lower levels because of the satisfaction it achieves through contact with the higher real.

The question may be asked, "What is the higher real and what is the lower real?" Here again, we have the analogy of the comparative reality between dream and waking. A beggar who has very little to eat in his waking state will not be sorry that he has missed his beautiful dinner in dream. Let us suppose a beggar was dreaming that he was an emperor, and a delicious meal was served to him in his dream palace, and suddenly he awakens to the discovery that he is a beggar on the street. Will he feel sorry and cry, "Oh, what has happened to me? I was an emperor. I was enjoying my life, but now I have become a beggar. It would be better to go back to that condition of emperorship." The beggar will not be grieved over his waking from the dream. He will not think that he has lost something valuable, though it is true that he has lost a great thing—that he has lost his kingdom, wealth and joys and is now sitting on the street like a beggar. From a certain viewpoint, it is a loss, but the beggar would rather be on the street with a crumb of bread in the waking condition than to be rejoicing in emperorship in dream. This is because a higher degree of reality is experienced by his consciousness during waking.

What satisfies us is not dinner, or lunch, or a kingdom, but the degree of consciousness that is experienced. This is a very subtle point which we should not miss in our analysis. If a kingdom, retinue, army, dinner, lunch and whatnot can satisfy a person, then a dream kingdom would be much better than a waking state beggarship—it would be better to go on sleeping and dreaming about emperorship than to live as a beggar in the waking state. But he would rather be a beggar in the waking state than be sleeping and dreaming of emperorship. The penury and hardship of the beggar in the waking condition does not in any way make that condition inferior to the

dreaming state, notwithstanding the fact that in dream he had an imaginary kingdom to experience and enjoy.

The consciousness that is experienced in the waking state is superior in its degree or quality to the one that we are subjected to in dream. We are happy that we are awake, and what we are associated with is a different and secondary matter. The mere fact of getting up from sleep is a joy, because we feel that we are in a state which can be called a reality of a higher degree and inclusiveness than the lower one, which is dream. *Ekatattva,* or one reality, is that in which all of the lower values are included in a higher degree of comprehensiveness, just as the waking consciousness includes within itself all of the values of the dream world. Instead of contemplating upon the diverse values of the dream world, one would be content to restrict one's attention to the greater values of the waking life, because they include the lower values of dream. Although it is true that a comparison can be made between the dream life and the waking life and we feel satisfied that waking values are higher than dream values, there is no reality superior to the realities that are experienced in the waking world and, therefore, any further comparison becomes difficult. We are in a waking world, and we have not seen anything superior to this. This is the final thing that we have seen.

Thus, any further comparison to a still higher degree of reality—superior to the waking one—is unthinkable to us human beings. But we sometimes find ourselves in moods which give us inklings of the fact that there are things higher than what we see with our eyes. If there are not things higher than what we experience through the senses, why is it that we feel restlessness? Why are we not content with things in this world? What is it that makes us feel that there should be something else, something different than what we are experiencing at present? The universal restlessness and

anxiety, and the hope that is experienced by every human mind should be indicative of the presence and the possibility there being something superior to the present sensory experiences.

There cannot be hope or aspiration if something higher does not exist. It is the existence of something higher than all empirical life that draws us towards itself in a process called psychological aspiration or expectation of a better condition. Every day we expect a better state. Even a person sunk in sorrow imagines that tomorrow will be better, and that his condition may perhaps improve. It is rare to find people who are so pessimistic as to think that everything is dead wrong, and tomorrow will perhaps be worse than today. There is always a hope: "After all, tomorrow will be better. Conditions will improve, things will be better and I shall be happier." This hope is but a symbol, a significance of the existence of a condition superior to the present one. That superior condition is naturally inclusive of all the lower values. When we get something higher, we do not think of the lower—not because we have lost the lower, but because in the higher we have found all that was in the lower.

For the purpose of controlling the mind, we have to adjust ourselves to the concept of a higher reality. That is what is meant by *ekatattva abhyasah*, by which there is *pratisedha* or checking of the modifications of the mind. The introduction of the concept of a higher reality into the mind can be done either by logical analysis or by reliance upon scriptural statements. Great texts like the Upanishads, the Vedas and such other mystical texts proclaim the existence of a Universal Reality which can be reached through various grades of ascent into more and more comprehensive levels. The happiness of the human being is not supposed to be complete happiness.

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and the Taittareya Upanishad we have, for instance, an enumeration of the

gradations of happiness, which is a wonderful incentive for the mind to concentrate on higher values. In the Taittareya Upanishad we are told that human happiness is the lowest kind of happiness, and not the highest happiness, as we imagine. We think that perhaps we are superior to animals, plants and stones, etc., and biologists of the modern world are likely to tell us that we are Homo sapiens, far advanced in the process of evolution, perhaps having reached the topmost level of evolution. This is not true. The Upanishad says that we are in a very low condition.

Essentially, the Upanishad tells us that all of the happiness of mankind put together is but a jot—only a drop. Let us imagine the state of happiness of a healthy, young individual who is the king of the whole world. We know that there is no such person as a king of the whole world, yet let us imagine such a person who is the emperor of the whole world. No one is in opposition to this emperor. He is vibrantly healthy and youthful, and has all the powers of enjoyment. Everything in the world is under him. What is his happiness? The happiness of this emperor of the entire world can be regarded as the lowest jot of happiness.

One hundred times the happiness of the emperor of this world is the happiness of the *pitris*, another level which is superior to the physical world. One hundred times the happiness of the *pitris* is the happiness of the *gandharvas*, who are celestial musicians in a world which is still higher than that of the *pitris*. One hundred times the happiness of the *gandharvas* is the happiness of the celestials in heaven—the *devas*, as we call them. One hundred times the happiness of these celestials is the happiness of Indra, the king of the gods. One hundred times the happiness of the king of the gods is the happiness of the preceptor, the Guru of the gods—Brihaspati. One hundred times the happiness of Brihaspati is the happiness of Prajapati, the Creator— Brahma. One hundred

times the happiness of Brahma the Creator is the happiness of Virat, the Supreme. Beyond that is Hiranyagarbha, and beyond that, Ishvara, and beyond Ishvara is the Absolute.

So where are we in this scheme? What is our happiness? It is the happiness of a cup of coffee, cup of tea, or a sweet—which has no meaning compared to these calculations of astounding existences which are transcendent to human comprehension. When I say a hundred times, it is not merely a mathematical increase of the quantity of happiness; it is also a corresponding increase of the quality of happiness. As mentioned earlier, the quality of happiness in waking life is superior to the happiness in dream; it is not merely quantitative increase, but is also a qualitative increase. The joy of waking life is greater and more intense than the quality of joy in dream. So these calculations given in the Upanishad mean an increase of happiness one hundred times, both in quantity and in quality, so that when we go to the top, we are in an uncontrollable ecstasy of unbounded bliss.

The mind can be brought to concentrate itself upon higher degrees of reality through the reading of scriptural testimony, which can be corroborated by the inductive logic and deductive reasoning, etc. of our own analytical power. *Sruti* and *yukti*, as the great masters tell us, should both come to our aid in bringing the mind to a point of concentration on a higher reality than what it is experiencing now through the senses.

The urge that we feel from within to acquire more and more things, and to enjoy greater and greater degrees of happiness, is an insignia of the existence of such states where we can have that type of experience. An intellectual urge, moral urge, spiritual urge and aesthetic urge are all indications of the presence of certain values which cannot be comprehended at present by the powers of sense and reasoning. There is an irresistible desire to ask for more and more, and we cannot ask for more and more unless this 'more'

exists. We will not ask for an empty thing. The idea of the more cannot arise in a mind which has not sensed the presence of that 'more' in some subtle manner. The mind has various levels of perception. Although through the conscious level it cannot directly perceive the existence of these higher levels of reality, it can sense the presence of these higher realities through other forms of apparatus that it has within, and it is due to the action of these inward sensations that it feels agonised and restless in any given condition of lower experience.

If we are not possessed of even the least tendency to recognise a higher value of life, we will be happy—we will be perfectly contented. It is the impact of a higher state of life upon the present condition of existence that is the cause for our unhappiness and restlessness. If that impact were not to be there at all, there would be no contact between the present state of existence and the future possible state. When this contact is not there, there will be no asking for it, no aspiration for it, no feeling about it, and therefore no unhappiness about the present state of affairs. So, we should be perfectly contented, but we are not. We are unhappy. We do not want the present condition to continue because we feel that there is inadequacy, shortcoming and all sorts of ugliness which we want to overcome and rectify, but which we cannot execute and achieve unless a higher condition does exist, and becomes practicable.

This is the conclusion arrived at by certain faculties of prehension which are operating in the subtle layers of the mind, invisible even to the mind itself in its conscious level. In our own six-foot bodily individuality, we have possibilities of the whole cosmic experience in a minute, microscopic form. The seeds of universal powers and achievements are hiddenly present in the cells of our own individual body. The vast tree of cosmic experience, the blossoming of universal realisation,

is latent as a seed in the very fibre of our present individual existence. It is this that occasionally makes us brood over the possibilities of higher achievements in life and never allows us to rest contented with what we are at present. So, by these methods of self-analysis and study of scriptures, etc., we should be able to bring the mind back from its concentration on diverse realities of the sense-world and fix it upon a higher reality so that its distractions get lessened as much as possible.

A distraction is the attention of the mind on diversity. Concentration is the withdrawal of the mind from diversity, and its attention bestowed upon a more unifying system of values. As we go higher and higher, the diversities become less and less. They all get included in a more comprehensive system, which includes all of the diversities which the mind originally perceived as independent existences. This is how the mind can be brought from its usual meanderings in the world of sense and made to concentrate itself on higher realities. By educative methods it has to be told, again and again, that a higher plane does exist and is implicit in one's own experience. It is not outside; it is hidden, latent potential, and it can be manifest by proper methods.

Infinity is hidden in every grain of sand. It can be directly contacted by the mind, by the application of suitable methods or techniques. These techniques are nothing but the affirmation of reality in every particular form of reality, which in ordinary life is mistaken for an absolutely independent existence. These so-called absolutely independent existences called realities, which attract the mind in different directions, are aspects of a more comprehensive system which includes these realities.

Therefore, it would be profitable for the mind to pay attention to this higher system, rather than to pay attention to a single, isolated individuality which it has misconstrued as a whole reality by itself. No particular individual, nothing that is

isolated, can be regarded as an entire reality. It is only an aspect or a face of reality and, therefore, it is not advantageous to the mind to engage itself entirely in any kind of action in respect of that particular form of reality. It is disadvantageous, because a part cannot give the whole.

It is, therefore, essential for the mind to affiliate itself with the characters of larger wholes, so that in these larger experiences it not only gains greater control over the environment and its own self, but also experiences a greater intensity of happiness, which follows automatically with the experience of larger dimensions of being.

Chapter 25

SADHANA – INTENSIFYING A LIGHTED FLAME

In the practice of one reality, *ekatattva abhyasah*, mentioned by Sage Patanjali in one of his *sutras* for the purpose of restraining the modifications of the mind, there are, again, grades of approach. The one reality is not necessarily the Absolute Reality, though that is the aim, ultimately. As was mentioned previously, a reality, for the purpose of practice, is that condition which can fulfil a particular need of a specific state of mind under a given condition. So until the Absolute Reality is reached, all other realities are relative realities. Every reality, as far as we are concerned empirically, is relative—subject to transcendence. Nevertheless, it is a reality to us, which only goes to prove that we are also only relative realities. We, as individuals, are not absolute realities and, therefore, we are satisfied with what is relative. We are not in daily contact with the Absolute; what we are in contact with is a relative reality. And inasmuch as the subject experiencing and the object experienced are on the same level or degree of reality, it goes without saying that the empirical subjects that we all are come under relative reality, and not the Absolute Reality.

In the concentration of the mind on one reality, *ekatattva*, what is intended is that the attention should be focused on a system or order of values which is immediately superior to, or transcendent to, the current state of affairs, the present state of experience, and the conditions through which we are passing through at this moment. Anything which can include particulars in a more organised whole can be regarded as a

higher reality for this purpose. There are tentative realities created for the purpose of practical convenience by organisations, associations or systems which we have created for the purpose of subjugating the individual ego and compelling it to affiliate itself to a larger body to which also it ought to belong and is made to belong.

I can give you examples of quantitative systems which we create in our practical daily life for the purpose of overcoming the urges of the ego and connecting it with wider or larger wholes. A physical individual, or a bodily person, is the lowest unit of reality as far as our experience goes. An utterly selfish individual is one who looks upon the body as the ultimate reality, and the only reality—there is nothing else. Now, this is the grossest form of egoism, where the bodily individuality is regarded as the only reality and everything else is completely ignored. This is the animal's way of thinking, to some extent. The tiger has no concern for anything except its own personal existence, and it can pounce on anyone for the sake of its own security and existence.

The animalistic way of thinking persists in the human level also, and often—many times, in fact—the urge to assert one's bodily individuality vehemently gains the upper hand, though rationally it would not be possible for anyone to justify the exclusive reality of a bodily personality. Such was the primitive condition of people in prehistoric times, or Paleolithic times, as they say, when human beings were not yet evolved to the present condition of social understanding. In the biological history of mankind—right from creation, as far as the mind can go—it is said that the evolution of the human individual, right from the lowest levels, included certain conditions of human existence which were inseparable from animal life. The caveman, the Neanderthal man and such other primitive types of existence point to an animal mind operating through a human body, where cannibalism was not unfamiliar.

One could eat another, because the animal mind was not completely absent even in the human body, and there was insecurity on account of it being possible for one man to eat another man. As history tells us, it took ages for the primitive mind to realise the necessity for individuals to come into agreement among themselves for the purpose of security. If I start jumping upon you and you start jumping upon me, both of us will be unhappy and insecure, and you cannot not know whether you will be safe and I cannot know whether I will be safe. This sort of thing would be most undesirable.

It is said by anthropologists, historian's of mankind's evolution, and political historians that a state was reached when it was felt necessary to organise people into groups, and this was the beginning of the governmental system. A government is nothing but an agreement among people in order that there may not be attacks and warfare among individuals. Otherwise there would be chaos and confusion, and anyone could attack at any moment, for any reason whatsoever. Therefore, an agreement was made, an organisation was set up, a rule was framed and a system was brought forth under which it was obligatory on the part of individuals to obey certain principles laid down by groups, of which some people were made leaders. It does not mean that these leaders were kings or autocrats; they were the governors of law, the dispensers of justice, and the instruments for the maintenance of order in the group of people who found it necessary to bring about this system.

Here we have a higher reality than the individual, quantitatively speaking, though qualitatively we cannot say that there was an improvement. While there is a quantitative improvement in an organisation or a set-up such as a government, in the sense that an individual is made a part of a larger body so that the egoism of the individual cannot operate as forcefully as it could have operated when it was left alone

and given a long rope, a consideration for the welfare of other individuals in the system becomes obligatory on the part of every individual on account of the presence of this order and system. So far, so good. From the point of view of the quantity of the reality that has been introduced into life—the mathematical measure of the order that has been set up—we can say that a society is a larger reality than the individual. A nation is a larger reality than a community, and the entire set-up of mankind, the international system, may be regarded as a still larger reality than a single nation. This is a quantitative evaluation of the reality toward which the human mind seems to be aiming, for the purpose of bringing peace on earth, happiness, etc.

But, this is not the type of reality that Patanjali had in mind, though this type of reality cannot be completely ignored. While it is true that a social system is a quantitatively higher reality than an individual body, because for obvious reasons life without it would be impracticable, it is not wholly true that an ordered society is qualitatively superior to the individual, which is the reason that insecurity within society still persists. Even with the best government there can be insecurity and unhappiness because, after all, individuals are behind this quantitative system called this ordered whole. A hundred million thinking people cannot always be qualitatively superior to one thinking man. After all, it is man who is thinking, and not God. We must know that. A hundred million people thinking, means only people are thinking—only man is thinking. So qualitatively, it is only human thinking, though quantitatively it has a larger force on account of the inclusion of many individuals.

This is a very interesting subject in political science, where political thinkers differ in their opinions as to whether there is a total absence of improvement in quality when there is social order, and there is only a quantitative increase, or

whether there is also an element of an increase of quality in thinking. This has led to divergent opinions among statesmen and political philosophers—right from Plato and Aristotle onwards, through to Chanakya and other thinkers in India—where the opinion swung like a pendulum. One side held that there is absolutely no improvement in quality, though there is a large improvement in quantity, and the other side thought that there is an element of qualitative superiority. We are not going to discuss this subject at present, as it is outside the jurisdiction of our current topic.

However, the point on hand is that a larger reality should also be qualitatively superior to the discrete particulars from which the mind is supposed to be withdrawn for the purpose of the practice of yoga. Though it is somewhat easy to bring about a quantitative increase in the concept of reality by methods such as the ones I just mentioned, it is a little more difficult to introduce a qualitative increase into the concept of reality. This is the main difficulty for everyone. However much we may concentrate on God, we will not be able to improve upon the human concept, even when there is a concept of God. So we feel unhappy even when we are meditating on God, because we have not improved the quality but have only increased the quantity, so that we may think of God as a large human individual—a massive individual, as expansive as the universe itself, for example. That is quite wonderful, but still this human thought does not leave us.

Even when we think of the Creator as a transcendent father, the anthropomorphic idea still persists and stultifies the aim at introducing a higher quality of thought into the concept of God. That is why we are unhappy even in meditation, even in our highest spiritual exalted moods. Even when we are exalted, we are quantitatively exalted; qualitatively, we are very poor. We are unhappy in some way or the other, and no one can make us happy. A tremendous effort is necessary to

introduce a superior quality in the concept of reality. The difficulty lies in the mind being the only instrument that we have for doing anything whatsoever, and who is it who will introduce a higher order of value or a greater quality into this concept, other than the mind itself? But how can we expect the mind to conceive of a higher quality of reality other than the one in which it has found itself at the present moment? How can we jump over our own skin? Is it possible? How can we expect the mind to think of a reality superior in quality to the one in which it is living at present, and with which it is identified wholly? An immediate answer to this question cannot be given. However, there is an answer.

Sadhana is a very mysterious process. It is not like the ordinary efforts that we put forth into our workaday life. Every effort, even the first effort in the practice of *sadhana*, brings about an improvement. The impetus that is created by the first step that we take will carry us forward with a greater impetus towards the next step by the generation of a force which is superior to the powers of the mind in its ordinary operations. Also, there is a peculiar something in human nature that is called 'aspiration'. It is difficult to understand what it actually means. It is not merely a hoping for something in the ordinary sense. It is a surge of the soul's force from within, and we must underline these words, 'soul's force', for it is not merely the mental faculties. The soul's force rises up, wells up within us in a totality of action, drawing forth the whole value that we are at present, and pointing to something which is wholly other than the present whole from which the soul is being drawn.

The meritorious deeds that we performed in previous lives, the good *karmas* of our past produce a force called '*apurva*' in Mimamsa parlance. The good *karmas* of the past are present in the mind even now as a kind of *prarabdha*, and when the *prarabdha* is of a *sattvic* nature, it permits the rise of

a novel type of asking by the soul, which is called spiritual aspiration. It is this peculiar context—which is inscrutable, of course, to anyone's mind—that brings a person in contact with a Guru. How we come in contact with a Guru cannot be understood. It is worked up by mysterious forces from within that are associated with the good deeds of our past lives, etc., and which permit good actions in this present birth. Such forces make it possible for us to think divine thoughts and to take the initial step in the practice of yoga. It is this initial step, as mentioned, which is capable of generating a peculiar potency, enough to carry us forward to the next step. Like the chain reaction of an atomic bomb explosion, every step is automatically an urge towards another step.

The more we practise *sadhana*, the stronger we become and the greater is our capacity to understand, to enlarge our perspective of thinking and to contact reality in deeper profundity. Many factors operate in spiritual practice. Our previous good deeds is one factor. The other factors are the associations that we have established in society with wise people in this present birth, the practical experience that we gain by living in this world, the initiation that we receive from the Guru, and the wisdom that we acquire from the Guru. Finally, the most mysterious, of course, is the grace of God Himself, which is perennially operating, perpetually working, and infinitely and most abundantly contributing to the onward march of the soul towards its goal.

The practice of yoga is nothing but a conscious participation in the universal working of nature itself and, therefore, it is the most natural thing that we can do, and the most natural thing that we can conceive. There can be nothing more natural than to participate consciously in the evolutionary work of the universe, which is the attempt of the cosmos to become Self-conscious in the Absolute. Evolution is nothing but a movement of the whole universe towards

Self-awareness—this is called God-realisation. Our every activity—from the cup of tea that we take, to the breath that we breathe, from even the sneeze that we jet forth, to the least action that we perform, from even a single thought which occurs in the mind—everything is a part of this cosmic operation which is the evolution of the universe towards Self-realisation. Therefore, the practice of yoga is the most natural thing that we can think of and the most necessary duty of a human being. Nothing can be more obligatory on our part than this duty. It is from this point of view, perhaps, that Lord Krishna proclaims, towards the end of the Bhagavadgita, *sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* (B.G. XVIII.66): Renounce every other duty and come to Me for rescue—which means to say, take resort in the law of the Absolute. This is the practice of yoga, and every other *dharma* is subsumed under it and included within it, just as every drop and every river is in the ocean. In this supreme duty, every other duty is included. There is no need to think of every individual, discrete and isolated duty, because all duties are included in this one duty, which is the mother of all duties.

This peculiar feature of spiritual practice, *sadhana*, being so difficult to understand intellectually, cannot be regarded as merely an individual's affair. *Sadhana* is God's affair, ultimately. Spiritual *sadhana* is God's grace working. Though it appears that it is individual effort, it only seems to be so, but really it is something else. Not even the greatest of philosophical thinkers, such as Shankara, could logically answer the question, "How does knowledge arise in the *jiva*?" How can it be said that individual effort produces knowledge of God? Knowledge of God cannot rise by individual effort, because individual effort is so puny, so inadequate to the purpose, to the task, that we cannot expect such an infinite result to follow from the finite cause. The concept of God is an inscrutable event that takes place in the human mind. Can we

imagine an ass thinking about God? However much it may put forth effort and go on trying its best throughout its life, the concept of God will never arise in an ass's mind or in a buffalo's mind. How it arises in man's mind is a mystery. Suddenly, it comes.

It has been said that all great things are mysteries. They are not calculated effects produced logically by imagined causes, but are mysteries, which is another way of saying that all of this is unthinkable by the human mind. Knowledge somehow arises. One fine morning we get up and find that we are fired with a love for God. What has happened to us? Why is it that we suddenly say, "Oh, today I am something different." Why we are something different today? From where has this inspiration come? Nobody knows what has happened. If we read the lives of great masters, sages and saints, we will find that they were all suddenly fired with a longing which they could not explain, and no one can explain ordinarily. That knowledge, that aspiration, that love of God has not come from books. It has not come from any imaginable source. It has simply come—that is all. How? Nobody knows.

Inasmuch as this aspiration is a super-logical mystery, there would be no necessity on our part to investigate the causes thereof and the methods thereof logically or scientifically beyond a certain limit, though logical and scientific thinking is a help to corroborate the presence of this aspiration. The aspiration is already present within us. It is not created by logical thinking and, therefore, such logical thinking is only a bulwark that we create to reinforce the aspiration that is already there. We already have a faith in God. We already believe that God-realisation is the goal of life. This belief has taken possession of us already, and now all that we do is only an ancillary process which is contributory to strengthening this aspiration and enabling it to become more

and more potent and influential in our daily life. Thus we cannot create a concept of God by any amount of effort.

Sadhana is nothing but the intensifying of this flame that has already been lit up in us by God Himself, ultimately. You have been led to this study due to God's grace. It is not because you have money to purchase a book. It is not money that has brought you these discourses. It is not your effort that has brought you to these discourses. It is nothing of the kind. It is a divine mystery that has operated in a very inscrutable and marvellous manner for a purpose which is cosmic in significance, and not merely individual, as you may imagine. You have been led to this study for a cosmic purpose, and a divine purpose, which is a coincidence and a collocation of factors which can be understood only by the Cosmic Thinker, God Himself. I have always been holding that, ultimately, it appears to be God who is doing *sadhana* for God-realisation, and nobody else can do it; and meditation is nothing but God thinking God.

Chapter 26

THE GUNAS OF PRAKRITI

Every fulfilment is the result of a necessary relinquishment. There is always a necessity to abandon something when we want to attain something. The attainment of an object always calls for a readjustment of conditions such that it is tantamount to an abandonment of those precedent conditions that are inconsistent with those necessary for the purpose of the longed-for attainment. The practice of *abhyasa*, particularly *ekatattva abhyasah* mentioned by Patanjali in his great *sutra*, is coupled with what is known as *vairagya* or the spirit of renunciation—a most difficult thing to understand, and a still more difficult thing to practise. What is it that we are going to relinquish so that *abhyasa* or practice may become steady and effective? Practise becomes ineffective and does not appear to produce the expected results on account of the absence of this essential requisite called *vairagya,* or renunciation.

Abhyāsa vairāgyābhyāṁ tannirodhaḥ (I.12): The control of the modifications of the mind is made possible by the practice of concentration on one reality, and by *vairagya,* or the relinquishment of falsehood. Within every one of our experiences in this world there is an element of falsehood, though there is also an element of positivity, on account of which they seem to be drawing our attention towards them. Nevertheless, they are covered over with dust, dirt, mud and whatnot, and these aspects have to be carefully eliminated from their essentiality. The difficulty in the practice of *vairagya* or renunciation lies in the difficulty of discriminating between false values and true values in life.

True values and false values get mixed up in such a way that we always mistake one for the other due to erroneous judgement and wrong perception through the senses. Our experiences are illusory and do not always reveal the fact behind them. We have various kinds of experiences every day, and none of them can be called wholly true, though there is something in them which is elusive in character. Due to the mysterious character of this elusive something, neither are we are able to get rid of these experiences, nor are we satisfied with them. We are in a set of circumstances such that we can neither completely get away from them to avoid the painful aspects that are present in them, nor can we completely wed ourselves to them on the supposition that there is something worthwhile in them. They seem to have a twofold character, one getting emphasised at one time and the other at another time, so that we swing from one state to another state without being able to get satisfied with any one in particular.

All of our experiences are ultimately of such a nature that they have to be abandoned one day or the other, says Patanjali. "The world is made of such stuff as dreams are made of," as Shakespeare put it. *Pariṇāma tāpa saṁskāra duḥkaiḥ guṇavṛtti virodhāt ca duḥkham eva sarvaṁ vivekinaḥ* (II.15). This is a pertinent aphorism of Patanjali, relevant to the practice of *vairagya* or renunciation. All is pain in this world, if we properly investigate into the truth of things. There is no real joy anywhere. Even the so-called joy is not really a joy—it is only a form of pain appearing as joy. If we know this truth, we will not run after the joys of this world. The joys and satisfactions of this world are pains coming in camouflage, deceiving us and putting on a counterfeit face so that we are kept under perpetual deception throughout our lives, and we are never allowed to open our eyes to see the way things are. The consequence of enjoyment in this world is painful, says Patanjali.

What is known as *parinama* is described in this particular *sutra*: *pariṇāma tāpa saṁskāra duḥkaiḥ guṇavṛtti virodhāt ca duḥkham eva sarvaṁ vivekinaḥ.* For a person of understanding, everything is wretched and painful in this world. If there is no understanding, everything looks all right and beautiful and happy; but let there be understanding, and we will see the truth of things: "Oh, it is horrifying! It is not as happy as it appears on the surface." The consequence of joy is sorrow. It is very strange, indeed, that the consequence of joy should be sorrow. Rather, we expect that the result of joy would be joy only. "No, not so," says Patanjali. Whenever there is an occasion for joy in this world, a sorrow follows it afterwards. If today we laugh, tomorrow we shall cry; this is how the world is made. Whoever laughs today shall weep tomorrow because of the peculiar features of which the world is made, and of which we have no knowledge, and cannot have knowledge.

The consequence or the result of happiness or pleasure in this world is grief or sorrow, the reason being that joys are not really satisfying. No pleasure in this world can satisfy us, because it is not a pleasure at all. It is a counterfeit coin that comes in the middle and tries to introduce itself in the midst of true values, just as a false currency note or a false coin can get mixed with the real ones and then pass as currency. The false values that deceive us are responsible for the grief that follows the pleasures of life. The pleasures of life are not really pleasures, because they are brought about by false causes. False causes cannot produce right results. Why are we happy? What is the reason behind our pleasure?

Every pleasure in life is an effect produced by a cause. If the cause is real, the pleasure would be real. But is the cause real? Go deep into it and find out. The cause is an inscrutable, un-understandable set of circumstances; and if we go deep into the nature of the cause of any happiness in this world, we

will find that we cannot locate it. We cannot know why we are happy and where the pleasure lies. We are simply tossed from one centre to another centre—tossed with such vehemence and force that we have no time to think and our brains become giddy. If a person is to be deceived and not allowed to think properly, it is essential to brainwash the person. False ideas are hammered into that person, again and again, as some politicians are accustomed to doing, and this repeated hammering of false ideas produces such a habit of thinking in the mind that it loses control over its essential way of thinking. It is impossible to find the cause of happiness, by any stretch of the imagination. We are simply happy without knowing why we are happy. If we know why we are happy, then we will never have the occasion to be happy again, because we will know that there is something seriously wrong at the back of things.

We are pushed and pulled by forces of which we have no knowledge, and over which we have no control. Certain biological conditions inside are mostly responsible for our pleasures, or so-called joys. These biological conditions are connected with sociological and psychological states. We cannot understand all these things. Even the best sociologist or psychologist cannot understand them because they are very, very deep-rooted. Our existence is a multi-faceted complex and not an indivisible unit, which cannot even be called this body. We are not merely a physical body. Connected with this physical existence is also a social aspect, and we are well aware of the degree to which we are connected to human society and how much its conditions can influence our joy or sorrow. We have a physical constitution, a biological set-up, and a psychological pattern of thinking, which is also influenced by a social order. And more than all this, there is the natural set-up of things—the conditions, or the rules or laws of nature itself.

These things press upon us from every side for a particular reason of their own, and to yield to a pressure is a joy. This is a very interesting thing for us to understand. Whenever we yield to a very pressing, emphatic, annoying and irritating compulsion, to which we have been accustomed for a long time and which we have made a part of our nature due to a habitual frequenting with it, we immediately feel a sense of relief from tension.

Suppose you are carrying a heavy load on your head—perhaps two mounds of wheat. Upon throwing down the weight, you feel happy. A great joy has come because you have thrown down the load. You were unhappy due to the nervous tension caused by carrying such a weight, and when it is thrown, there is happiness. Can you call this happiness merely because you threw off a load from your head? Very strange, indeed. When you had no load on your head, you were neither happy nor unhappy; you were not even thinking about it. Suppose I put one mound on your head, and then remove it—you would feel happy. The very moment I removed it, a feeling of happiness would come over you for no reason other than the act of removing the load and throwing it down. If the absence of a load on the head is to cause you happiness, you must be very happy just now. All of you must be terribly happy, because you have no load on your heads. How terribly happy you must be, and all because you have no load on your heads. But you are not happy. So why don't I just put a load on your heads, and then remove it? Immediately, you will be happy. Now, look at this strange, peculiar, causative factor behind your happiness. It is not merely the absence of a load that causes you happiness, in which case you would all be happy just now. I must put a load on your head and then throw it down—this is what you want.

This is what happens to us every day. A load is kept on the entire nervous system by social conditions, biological

conditions and natural conditions, and we have no knowledge of any of these conditions. We are ignorant of social laws, ignorant of physical laws and ignorant of biological laws, because we are utter slaves of these conditions. An utter slave, a bonded slave, cannot know anything. He is simply an automaton, a machine driven by the master. The masters are these forces—the biological forces, the natural forces and the social forces. We have been born into these forces like bonded slaves. If my father was a slave, I am also a slave because I am his son—hereditary slavishness is continuing. So we are all slaves and slaves and slaves, to the core of our being. We are slaves to forces which are external to us, which compel us, impress upon us, press upon us, and we are forced to yield to this pressure. A yielding to a pressure from outside cannot be called an act of freedom.

So, a joy in life is not an act of freedom; it is slavishness that makes us happy. What a pity! Can this be called a pleasure when it is caused by a slavish mentality? When we yield to a compulsive external pressure, do we call it freedom? Where there is no freedom, can there be happiness? And yet, how is it that we are happy merely because of the absence of freedom? This is the reason why every so-called joy in life is followed by a real sorrow. Sorrow is at the back, and the joy is only an outer whitewashing that has been given to the real substance that is behind it, namely, subjection to forces, which is the essence of pain and sorrow of every kind.

The consequences of the pleasures of life are only sorrows. No person who is happy today can be happy always. Today's joy is followed by tomorrow's sorrow, because these pleasures have not been caused by real or true factors; they are unreal factors. Also, says Patanjali, there is an ensuing anxiety. When we are enjoying a pleasure, we have an anxiety in our minds: "Oh, something is not all right." Who is telling us that something is not all right? If something is not all

right, how can it cause pleasure? How very strange, again. Everything is strange if we go into it.

A person who is possessed of an empirical happiness has an anxiety at the back of his mind, because there is a feeling that this pleasure may pass away. How long will it continue? How long we can be happy? We know that it will pass away in a very short time, and so there is a feeling of anxiety, "Oh, it is going! It is bound to go, and after that, what happens? I will be left at sea. I will lose it, and I will be unhappy once again." The pleasure comes like a lightning flash and vanishes, and because of the apprehension of such a possibility, the mind is unhappy even at the time of enjoying. A rich man is unhappy because of the fear that he may lose his wealth one day or the other. He knows very well: "I will lose it; something will happen." So even when we are possessed of a large amount of wealth, there is a subtle insecurity felt within which is gnawing away inside at the subconscious level. Therefore, the consequence of happiness is sorrow, and there is anxiety even at the time of enjoyment of the pleasure, so we are not secure; we are insecure, even at that time.

Another contributing factor is *samskara*, an impression produced in the mind at the time of an enjoyment. The mind is something like a gramophone plate on which there are grooves. If we sing a song into a microphone and arrange the mechanism in such a way that a copper plate is manufactured simultaneously for the production of a gramophone plate, the grooves are formed on the plate. Then we can go on replaying this plate and our song can be heard a million times. We have sung only once, and it can be repeated any number of times merely because of the grooves that have been formed on the plate. These grooves are the *samskara*s, the impressions formed by a particular experience. So, if there is an urge for the satisfaction of a particular desire, and it is fulfilled temporarily by false means as mentioned earlier, an

impression is formed in the mind of that condition which produced that temporary happiness. Then what happens? There is a desire to repeat that happiness again and again on account of the presence of that groove in the mind, formed like a gramophone plate. A particular experience produces a particular groove in the mind. A *samskara* or impression is formed, a *vasana* is generated, and this groove becomes the cause for a further desire to repeat the experience indefinitely. No matter how many times we go on repeating it, we will never be satisfied. The second experience produces another groove that calls for further experience of a similar type which, when fulfilled, produces a third groove, a fourth groove, etc., until there are grooves and grooves and grooves in the mind, so that the mind becomes a dustbin. It is not at all a clarified, clean slate. It is a muddled something, a hotchpotch, a confused heap of unclear notions and hazy impressions of past experiences which have made us what we are today—hopeless individuals who can know neither the beginning nor the end of our life. So, the *samskara* that is formed as a consequence of a pleasurable experience is also a cause of sorrow, because that will be repeated again, not merely in this life but even in future lives. *Pariṇāma tāpa saṁskāra duḥkaiḥ* (II.15): For this reason, everything is painful in this world, says Patanjali. There is a last reason that he gives as to why experiences are unhappy, when he says: *guṇavṛtti virodhāt ca duḥkham eva sarvaṁ vivekinaḥ* (II.15). These experiences are caused by the operations of the *gunas* called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. We do not know why we are happy, for instance. The happiness that we experience is due to a sudden and temporary surge of *sattva guna* in our minds, maybe for a flash of a second, and the pressing down of *rajas* and *tamas* due to certain reasons.

The motion of *prakriti*, or nature, is something like the movement of a wheel. We know that wheels have spokes, and

the spokes move together with the movement of the wheel, as in a cart. When the vehicle moves, the wheel also moves, and when the wheel moves, the spokes also rotate. The spoke that is up or at the top comes down, and that which is down goes up. So there is a repeated going up and coming down of the spokes of the wheel when the wheel moves, on account of the motion of the vehicle. Likewise, nature is in perpetual motion—it is not static. Nothing can be permanent in this world. Everything moves. And in this motion, what actually moves is nothing but a set of conditions or forces called the *gunas* of *prakriti*, or nature, we may say—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

What are these *gunas*? These *gunas* are the constituents of nature, the substance of *prakriti*. The tendency to stability of a particular condition, inertia as we call it, is what is known as *tamas*. The tendency to movement or action, and an urge towards external things is called *rajas*. *Sattva* is a peculiar thing which cannot be properly analysed, because it is a state which supervenes when both the conditions of *tamas* and *rajas* subside. *Sattva* is an equilibrated condition of the mind that is neither static nor inert—of an unconscious nature—nor is it an urge towards an external something. In the state of *sattva*, we are neither urged towards an external object, nor are we unconscious. We can imagine what that state is. What is that condition of mind where it is not thinking of an object and yet is not unconscious? That is *sattva*. But that state is very rare, and we cannot be in that condition for all times; either we are thinking of something outside, or we are asleep. But, is it possible to be in a condition where we are not sleeping, and yet not thinking of an object? How many times could such a state be experienced in life? *Sattva* is a via-media between *rajas* and *tamas*, a balance between inert unconsciousness and a diversifying, externalising urge towards objects of sense.

These *gunas* of *prakriti* are perpetually in motion, like the spokes of a wheel. The evolution of nature is similar to the movement of a vehicle, and these *gunas* are the spokes of the wheel of nature. When there is evolutionary movement, a movement of everything in the world, these conditions called the *gunas* are also set in motion. These *gunas* constitute not merely the external physical objects, but also the mind inside. The mind is also a part of nature; it is not a subject, par excellence. The mind is an object, ultimately speaking. Though the physical object is external to the mind, the mind itself is external to consciousness. So, from the point of view of pure consciousness, the mind is also an object. It is not a subject, though it appears as a subject in respect to physical objects outside. Inasmuch as the mind also stands in the position of an object, it comes within the law of nature and is conditioned by the *gunas*; it is constituted of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. In this movement of the three *gunas*, the mind is also set in motion. That is why the mind is restless.

The mind never rests for a moment, because it is urged by the law of evolution. When the universe evolves, moves forward, the mind and body and every blessed conceivable thing is drawn, dragged together by the force of the evolutionary urge. In this motion, the *gunas* of *prakriti* are not in a state of balance. They are perpetually moving. There is progression and retrogression, coming down and going up, etc., so that there is an unintelligible activity going on both outside and inside oneself. When the *rajas* spoke comes up, we are distressed and distracted, agonised and disturbed, and are placed in a state of insecurity and unhappiness. Sometimes we are disturbed and unhappy, and the moment we get up in the morning there is the feeling, "Oh, something is wrong. I am not all right." We do not know what has happened to us. We put on a Sunday face or a castor oil face and don't want to speak to anybody. If someone asks what has happened, we

reply, "I do not know. I am not well." This is *rajas* coming up. Sometimes in the morning we say, "I do not want to get up. I will sleep. Don't talk to me." This is *tamas*. Either we do not want to do anything at all and would like to be in a torpid condition on account of the supervening of *tamas* in the mind, or we are dejected and in a melancholy mood due to the operation of *rajas*.

Occasionally, due to a coincidence of various rare factors, especially when the mind comes in contact with certain conditions that it regards as desirable, there is a cessation of the activity of *rajas* and *tamas*. There is no such thing as an object, ultimately speaking—it is only a set of conditions, and the mind also is a set of conditions. When there is a temporary compromise between the internal set of conditions of the mind and the external set of conditions known as the object, there is a sudden flash of similarity, a sympathy established between the mind and the object. Then there is a flash of a so-called imagined unity between the subject and the object and, in that instant, happiness is experienced like a flash of lightning. The flash of happiness is occasioned by a temporary subjugation of *rajas* and *tamas*, brought about by this momentary sympathy established between the mind and its object outside, due to the equilibrium or the equality of the frequency in the operation of the mind and the character of the object.

Buddhist psychology is very fond of emphasising that all things in this world are insubstantial, by which is meant that nothing in this world is solid—the solidity of an object is only an illusion created by the sympathy that has been established between the experiencing of a mental condition at a given moment of time and the prevailing condition outside at a particular point in space, with which these internal conditions get connected. This connection, temporarily established, creates the illusion of a permanent and solid object in front of the mind, and it feels happy by coming into contact with it.

The happiness which the subject experiences in its connection with the object is due to a temporary pressing down of the *rajasic* and the *tamasic* activity of nature, and the sympathetic character experienced between the mind and the object outside. This condition will suddenly go down when the other spoke comes up, namely *rajas* or *tamas*, so that immediately after the joy there is sorrow due to the coming up of *rajas* or *tamas*. So, *gunavritti virodhat*—on account of the opposition of the *gunas*, which are never in a state of equilibrium, there cannot be permanent happiness in this world.

For all these reasons, God bless us, there is only pain in this world. Therefore, withdraw yourself from attachment to things and resort to true practice of yoga, says Patanjali.

Chapter 27

PROBLEMS ARE A STATE OF MIND

A very significant term is used by Patanjali in his definition of renunciation, namely, '*vasikara-samjna*' (I.15): Consciousness of mastery is called renunciation. It is very pertinent to note that he uses the term 'consciousness' where it is a question of detachment, self-abnegation or renunciation. So, renunciation means a state of consciousness—this is what is very important to note. It is not a physical distance obtaining between the subject and its object, but a consciousness which arises within the subject in respect of the object. That particular degree of consciousness of freedom from objectivity, which is a requisite for the practice of yoga, in the language of Patanjali is called *vasikara-samjna*. This particular stage of *vairagya* or renunciation that Patanjali speaks about—*vasikara-samjna*—is the highest kind of *vairagya.* Patanjali does not speak of the lower types of *vairagya* in his aphorisms, perhaps because he thinks that they are insufficient for the purposes of yoga.

However, we may make note of these earlier stages. It is not that we suddenly rise to this level of *vasikara-samjna*, which means to say, a consciousness of having gained complete mastery over the object of one's cognition and perception. This consciousness of freedom and mastery does not arise suddenly; it arises very gradually, by systematic effort. The necessity for renunciation in life arises on account of the difficulties that we experience in life. Whenever there are pressing problems, harassing and annoying situations in life, we try to get rid of them by certain methods. This is *vairagya*—a sense that arises within us which tells us we

should be free from those conditions which cause these annoyances, difficulties, problems, etc.

The effort of the mind to find the cause of the problem is the first stage of *vairagya*. This is called *yatamana-samjna*—the consciousness of effort on the part of oneself to detect the causes of one's difficulties. Everyone has some difficulty, but what is the reason behind this difficulty? The problems of life are like effects produced by certain causes, and the remedying of these results or effects automatically implies the recognition of the nature of the cause or causes thereof, so that, as we know very well, when the cause is properly dealt with, the effect automatically gets controlled. What are the problems of life, and how do they come about? Though it is true that the details of the problems of life vary from individual to individual—they are not identical in every respect—yet, the major factors contributing to the problems of life are similar in every case. The minor details may differ, but the major aspects do not differ. So the mind tries to determine what these factors are. Instead of merely suffering the agonies of life, one finds it would be profitable to study the causes of these difficulties, and do one's best to remove them.

This stage of conscious exertion in the direction of attaining freedom from the causes of trouble is the first stage of *vairagya* known as *yatamana-samjna*. When effort is put forth in this direction for a protracted period, we start sifting the various pros and cons of the conditions that we undergo in life, and get at the root of things. Though a revolution may be set up by thousands of people, the leaders may be only a few in number. So when we try to find out the background of a revolutionary activity taking place somewhere, we are first confronted with the thousands of people causing the trouble, but we then find that the ringleaders are very few; and they must be tackled first. Likewise, though the problems are many

and multifarious, no doubt, the leading causes of these problems are not as many as they appear on the surface.

So the next stage in *vairagya* is the consciousness attained wherein one properly distinguishes between the essentials and the non-essentials among the supposed causes of the troubles. This stage, which is the second stage, is called *vyatireka-samjna*. The causes of the problems may be many, but there may be many non-essentials which we may, for the time being, ignore or set aside, inasmuch as they will be dealt with spontaneously when the essentials are dealt with. As in the case of medical treatment, for instance, the essential causes have to be brought to the surface. *Vyatireka* means distinguishing, differentiating, discriminating, isolating and sifting. The consciousness which distinguishes between the essential causes of trouble and the many other non-essential contributory factors, and knows where the problem really lies, is *vyatireka-samjna*. The word '*samjna*' is always used, and we must remember this word carefully. Every stage of renunciation, even the first stage, is a state of mind. Renunciation is not an activity; it is not something that we have done. It is a state of consciousness—an awareness—because, after all, our freedom as well as our bondage is in our consciousness, and not in things or objects.

After properly investigating into the causes of problems in life, one would perhaps come to the conclusion that all troubles arise on account of a peculiar reaction set up by the individual in respect of its environment. My problems are created by me, insofar as they can be said to be generated by my reactions in regard to the atmosphere outside. I set up a set of vibrations around myself which recoil upon me in accordance with their relationship with the atmosphere around. The results that follow, the consequences which are automatically implied in this reaction of the individual in respect of the atmosphere outside, have a subjective character

as well as an objective character. They are subjective in the sense that they proceed from the individual concerned, but they are objective in the sense that they have some connection with other people, so that our attitudes can create joy or sorrow for other people. And the joys or sorrows that we create for others by our attitudes can react upon us, and bring us joy or sorrow. So now we understand where things stand. The joys or sorrows, which are the generators of reaction in the individual, project themselves upon the external atmosphere of other people, causing joys and sorrows to them, and, in return, come back to the individual like a boomerang, causing further joys and sorrows, having passed through the prism of the social set-up outside.

This is a very complex subject which is really the cause of all our troubles. When I am either happy or not happy, I set up a reaction from within myself. I have a particular attitude towards persons and things when I am happy, or when I am not happy. And, my attitude in either state of mind is expressed through my speech, action and general conduct, all of which have some effect upon other people. My behaviour in respect of other people, my way of speaking, and my action in respect of outer society have something to do with other people, and will be felt by others in a particular manner. The peculiar feelings generated in others by my reactions produce certain effects in their minds in the form of joy or sorrow, and these joys and sorrows felt by other people as the result of my attitude towards them do not exist isolated in the minds of these people, but themselves are vibrations which have some connection with me, who is the cause of these original attitudes. So they come back upon me, and in a diluted form, or sometimes in a more reinforced form, act upon me secondarily, causing in my mind further joys and sorrows of a different, complex character, having passed through the minds of other people. When I receive these reactions of other

people's minds, either in the form of joy or sorrow, what happens? I do not keep quiet. I have a further reaction in respect of those people whom I regard as causes of my secondary joys and sorrows, forgetting all the while that I have been originally the cause of this reaction that has been set up by them. So once again I set up a secondary reaction in respect of other people, and this process goes on until a thick layer of confusion is created, not only in the minds of individuals, but in the social atmosphere, generally.

It amounts to saying that our difficulties are psychological in their nature, which have an effect upon physical conditions, etc. We cannot say which individual is the cause of the problems of life, because there is a relativity of action and reaction among individuals psychologically so that, in a sense, everyone is responsible for everything, we may say, and the causes of the problems of life are not to be found in this person or that person. It is a mutual reaction set up among individuals, and these reactions are caused by actions of sense and mind. We now discover in this *vyatireka-samjna*, or the second stage of *vairagya*, that our problems are caused by the senses and the mind. It may be my senses and the mind, or your senses and the mind, or anyone's senses and the mind—it makes no difference. The senses and the mind are finally responsible for our experiences, whether in the form of joy or in the form of sorrow.

We then concentrate our attention upon the discipline of the senses and the mind. But we discover a little later that this is not the whole truth. As mentioned earlier, the leaders of a particular movement may not be as many in number as the total individuals involved in the movement. So we go on pinpointing, further and further, until we get to the chief leader of the group. The leaders may be a dozen or half a dozen, but the chief among them is only one. Now we find out who is the chief cause of trouble. We said that it is the senses and the

mind, which means to say there are many. But later on it will be found that the chief ringleader is the mind only, and not even the senses. *Ekendriya-samjna*—ultimately there is only one sense troubling us, and it is not the eyes and the ears and the nose, etc., which are, of course, secondary causes of problems. The chief source of the problem is the mind only.

So we come to the third stage of consciousness in the development of *vairagya*, known as *ekendriya-samjna*. This is a consciousness that ultimately there is only one sense, and not many senses. We speak of many senses, but they are only various avenues of action of the single sense, which is called the mind. So the mind has to be tackled, and if that is properly dealt with, everything else is dealt with in parallel.

Now comes the last stage of *vairagya*, which is mentioned by Patanjali in this *sutra*. *Vasikara-samjna* is that stage where we are not merely aware of the presence of the chief source of the trouble, but we have gained control over this source of trouble. This is called *vasikara* or mastery—an attainment of complete control over the primary cause of our difficulties. Having now come to the interesting conclusion that the chief source of our troubles is the mind, we are naturally led to taking steps in the direction of controlling the mind. But we must know the ways in which the mind causes trouble.

Unless the methods employed by the mind in creating problems are properly analysed and discovered, any kind of control over the mind will be difficult. The mind causes troubles, no doubt, but how does it cause the trouble? What is the way it adopts? The chief forte of the mind in all these matters is that it creates a misplacement of values. It suddenly changes the very way of thinking and understanding. Our judgement of things is the final deciding factor in all of our attitudes to things in general. Whatever we do in life is based on a judgement of values. According to my opinion of things, I act.

The chief function of the mind, then, is to create a particular opinion about things; this is what the mind does. If it succeeds in creating a set opinion about things, then, without much effort, everything of course will follow as a consequence. We are made to feel that something is desirable, or that something is not desirable, and we have wonderful reasons for passing this judgement. When the judgement is passed, we know what follows—we take action. The judgement of the mind is called the 'desireful' attitude of the mind in respect of the object concerned. Here, the word 'desire' is used in a very technical sense. It is, broadly speaking, a general attitude of the mind. Any attitude of the mind towards an object is, technically speaking, a 'desireful' attitude of the mind. This attitude of the mind arises on account of ignorance present in the mind. There is, at the outset, a lack of the knowledge of the true nature of things. Then, a prejudiced attitude is developed by the mind in respect of a set of objects in front of it, as a consequence of which there is erroneous action in which it engages itself towards the fulfilment of that 'desireful' attitude in respect of the object.

This threefold knot is called *avidya-kama-karma*, in philosophical parlance. *Avidya, kama* and *karma* go together. *Avidya* is ignorance, nescience, lack of knowledge—a total absence of insight into the true nature of things, on account of which there is a misconceived attitude developed by the mind in respect of things, as a consequence of which there is, again, wrong action. So there is, first of all, wrong understanding, then wrong attitude, then wrong action. These three together create the problems of life. *Avidya*, *kama* and *karma* is a single knot—*granthi*—and this knot is the knot of life. This is what they call the Gordian knot—very difficult to untie. All these three aspects function simultaneously. We cannot say that there is a succession of one aspect following another. The absence of correct understanding, the presence of a wrong

attitude, and the projection of an erroneous action all take place almost at the same moment. This is the central pivot of all difficulties in life.

The mind cannot be controlled. We cannot master the mind or exert any kind of control over it unless its pros and cons are properly known. Why has such a state of affairs arisen at all? To affect a permanent control over the various functions of the mind, Patanjali suggests that a frontal attack in this matter would be undesirable. We cannot attack an enemy head-on, because the enemy is also intelligent. There should be an intelligent manoeuvre consistent with the conditions prevailing, and inasmuch as the mind has already been convinced about its attitude towards things, notwithstanding the fact that this conviction has arisen on account of erroneous understanding, it is difficult to wrench the mind from this conviction directly, by an immediate frontal hit. It has to be done gradually by a movement from the lowest effect to its precedent causes. The lowest effect is, of course, attachment. The mind clings to an object or to a group of objects, and that should be our stand. We should not take any other stand. We should not go to the causes in the beginning itself. The mind will not be able to listen to these arguments due to its having clung to an object and, therefore, that is the end of the matter.

So the first step in the effort to control the mind would be to take one's stand on the condition in which the mind finds itself at any given moment—namely, an obsession in regard to an object, be it positive or negative. A distaste for this object towards which the mind has developed a particular attitude is the intention of the development of the spirit of renunciation or *vairagya—vasikara-samjna*. *Dṛṣṭa ānuśravika viṣaya vitṛṣṇasya vaśīkārasaṁjñā vairāgyam* (I.15) says the *sutra*. The consciousness of mastery over the objects of sense means the generation of an inner distaste for all things that are seen,

as well as heard. Just as the word 'consciousness' is very important, the word 'distaste' is also very important. The taste for things should be absent.

Vairagya, then, is not an abandonment of an object, but freedom from the consciousness of subjection to the object, and the absence of taste for the object. This is what is implied in this famous aphorism, *dṛṣṭa ānuśravika viṣaya vitṛṣṇasya vaśīkārasaṁjñā vairāgyam.* As noted in many earlier discussions, this effort is not an easy affair, as if it is a hobby. It is a matter of life and death for us, because this is what is going to decide our future. We are going to decide our fate, ultimately, by conducting ourselves either this way, or that way.

The system of yoga, which requires of us a control of the modifications of the mind, is actually dealing with cosmic affairs, though it starts with a discussion on the structure of the mind in the individual. Naturally we have to take a stand on something, as it would be difficult to conceive of the cosmos at one stroke. We stand in one place and then have a vision of the atmosphere around. When we stand at a particular spot and try to know where the difficulty arises, we are likely to make a mistake in thinking the problem lies in another person. "Now I have understood the whole thing. He is the cause of the trouble."

There is a humorous story. It seems there were two mountaineers who were climbing mountain after mountain, and somehow they got lost along the way. Perhaps it was somewhere in the Himalayan region where there are peaks after peaks, mountains after mountains, on and on as though layered, one behind the other. They stood on the peak of one mountain and wondered aloud where they were. "Which mountain are we standing on now?" Then one climber suggested, "Bring the map. Let us read the map and find out where we are standing." One of them looked at the map. Then

looking up, he pointed to another mountain nearby and said, "Oh, now I know where we are standing. Look at that mountain. Do you see it? We are standing right there." He looked at the map and said, "That is the mountain on which we are standing." How can he possibly be standing on *that* mountain? Well, this is a joke, but it is a very serious joke.

We go on with psychological analysis, delving deeply into the problem, and find out the cause—"that man" is the cause. "The whole problem is created by that man," we say as we point to somebody outside. We commit exactly the same mistake as the mountaineers did and say that it was "that man" who is the cause of the whole problem, as we point to someone outside. The problem is not "that man", my dear friends. This is another mistake, which is called projection in psychological language. We have projected our condition upon somebody else, which is another defect of the mind, another trick of the mind, another mischievous activity of the mind by which it prevents our understanding of its techniques. In the control of the modifications of the mind—*yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ* (I.2)—we have to isolate the mind from the conditions causing the problem, stage by stage, like peeling an onion, removing one peel after another peel. Finally we will find that there is nothing inside—peel after peel with no substance inside. Like the onion which has no inner substance and is only peel, so, too, when everything is removed from the layers after layers of complexities, we will find there is nothing. Just as with layers of clouds, we go on removing one layer after another layer of cloud, and finally there is nothing. It is all an unsubstantial thing which looked like a tremendously substantial solidity.

The problems of life look like tremendous, solid hindrances in our movements in any direction, but they are solid psychological complexes and not solidities like stone or rock, though they may appear to be as solid. If we touch a high

voltage live wire and are shocked, our hand jerks and we may feel as if a tremendous weight is pressing on it. But where is the weight? There is nothing. There is no weight, but at the moment of the shock a sensation of weight is created by a kick that is given by the surge of electric energy to the nerves.

Likewise, the so-called hard and insoluble problems of life are like the weight felt by the hand when it receives an electric shock. Really, the weight is not there. It is a reaction of the nerves in respect of a particular pressure exerted upon them. Similarly, problems are nothing but a state of mind, a state of consciousness, we may say, which has arisen on account of certain pressures that have been generated by various conditions, all of which have to be investigated carefully.

Chapter 28

BRINGING ABOUT WHOLE-SOULED DEDICATION

We were discussing the relationship between *abhyasa* and *vairagya* in the system of yoga. The practice of yoga becomes effective when it is charged with the power of *vairagya* or the spirit of renunciation because, while practice is the endeavour to fix oneself in a particular attitude of consciousness, *vairagya* is a sympathetic attitude which simultaneously frees consciousness from attention to contrary objectives, or objectives which are irrelevant to the one that is taken up for the purpose of concentration and meditation. We cannot have a double attitude in yoga. That is, our attention cannot be diverted into two channels. Else, there would be split devotion, as they call it—*vyabhicharini bhakti*—not whole-souled devotion.

What is called for in this practice is wholeheartedness, and perhaps every other qualification is included in this. When we are wholehearted in anything, we shall succeed, whatever be the direction. But our difficulty seems to be that we can never be wholehearted in anything. It is merely a peculiar trait of the mind that it cannot give itself up entirely to any kind of effort, thought, feeling, or volition. There is an inherent inadequacy in the structural character of the mind, which makes it sometimes look like a double-edged sword, cutting both ways—sometimes like a naughty child asking for what is impossible, and at other times trying to upset, every moment, what it is trying to achieve by its effort.

I am reminded of a small child who was very eager to plant a mango tree. He brought a small mango plant and planted it in the ground, and every day he wanted to know how much it had grown. So he would pull it up to see how much it had grown, and then he would replant it. The following day he would again remove it to see how far down the roots had gone, and then replant it. We know that if every day we pull the plant up to see how far down the roots have gone, it will wither away and there will be no mango. This is a child's very foolish attitude due to not knowing what is to be done. While the intention is to have a mango from the tree, and it is a very good intention indeed, what is the use of the intention when the technique is not known? The child pulls out the plant every day to see how far down the roots have gone.

Similarly, the minds of 99.9% of the people in the world are made in such a way that while it looks as if there is a good and pious intention on one side, there is also a stultifying effect immediately following from it, due to a lack of understanding. While we are doing some good things, we are also doing correspondingly counteracting actions every day, so that the good things do not bring any result. We then complain, "I am doing so much good, but nothing comes of it." How can anything come? We are pulling up the plant every day to see the depth of the root.

It is impossible to do anything wholly good on account of it being impossible for us to wholly understand the total pattern involved in the movement of any successful action. No human being can wholly succeed in life, because a wholly correct action cannot be performed. The reason is that all the contributory factors tending towards the success of an action cannot become the object of knowledge of any individual, because that would call for omniscience, almost, and no one can be omniscient; therefore, no one can be wholly successful. Entire success is possible only when there is omniscience, and

not before. So, we have to swallow the bitter pill and then try to be satisfied with whatever we get. Nevertheless, it is up to us to see that we put forth the best of our abilities, commensurate with the extent of knowledge with which we are endowed in our life.

Practice, or *abhyasa*, is always strengthened, and has to be strengthened, by a corresponding practice that goes on simultaneously with *abhyasa*, and that parallel practice is the automatic withdrawal of the mind from all distracting factors. If we are pulled in two directions with equal force, we will not be able to move even a little bit. We have had occasion to contemplate to some extent on the details of what renunciation is, and what are the various stages of *vairagya* which Patanjali regards as indispensable to the practice of yoga. He tells us that the practice consists of an insistent attempt on our part to fix ourselves in a single or given attitude. *Tatra sthitau yatnaḥ abhyāsaḥ* (I.13): *Abhyasa* or practice is the effort to fix one's own self in a given attitude. What is this given attitude? We have to choose a particular attitude in which to fix ourselves for a protracted period; this is called practice. The attitude in which we have to fix ourselves should be such that we would tend to greater and greater stages of freedom of the soul, and a lessening or decreasing of the intensity of bondage.

As we had occasion to observe, the practice commences with being seated in a particular posture; and sitting in a particular posture is itself a practice. Often we may be under the wrong notion that 'sitting' is not a very important part of yoga, because yoga is mental concentration. Yes, it is true, but the concentration of the mind will not be possible when we are seated in an awkward posture. We must remember that there is a vital connection obtaining between every part of our psychophysical organism. Right from the skin, which is the outermost part of our body, to the deepest level of our

psychological being, there is an internal relationship. Any kind of disturbance that is felt in any part of this organic structure will be sympathetically felt to a particular degree in other parts or levels of this organic structure. The posture or *asana*, the steady seatedness in a particular mood—not only of the mind, but also of the body, the nerves and the *pranas*—is essential for the concentration of the mind on the objective.

This practice becomes fixed and successful when it is continued under certain conditions. It has to be continued every day; this is one thing to remember. Every day the practice should be taken up in right earnest, and it has to be done at a given time, if possible—at a fixed time, at the same time, and not changing the hours of the day—because this practice is not a hobby. We are not merely engaging ourselves in a sort of diversion for the sake of freedom from boredom in life. The practice of yoga is a serious undertaking and, therefore, it has to be taken up with the earnestness of a scientist who is bent upon achieving his objective by the adoption of all technical devices available.

Inasmuch as the goal that is before us is the very purpose of life, it would be futile on our part to think that we can devote only half an hour of the day for this practice, and during all the rest of the twenty-three and one-half hours of the day we can do other things which will throw dust on this little practice which has been done for half an hour. The major part of the day is spent in activities which are not only not contributory to success in the practice, but are contradictory, as well, and which completely disturb and upset the little result that we seem to be achieving through this little practice. So what is essential is that, in the beginning, taking for granted that we can be engaged in other activities for the major part of the day for obvious reasons, we should see that though the activities are of a different type, they need not be

contradictory, because distinction is not necessarily opposition. We can have a distinct type of engagement because we cannot practise meditation throughout the day; but this distinct type of attitude, profession or function that we engage in should be such that it will at least not directly disturb the mood that we have generated in the practice called meditation, to which we have devoted ourselves for half an hour, one hour or two hours.

The other point is that this practice will not bring results in only a few days. *Sa tu dīrghakāla nairantarya satkāra āsevitaḥ dṛḍhabhūmiḥ* (I.14), says Patanjali. In many cases the result will not follow at all, due to obstructing *prarabdhas*. There were great seekers, *sadhaka*s, who used to perform *japa purascharana*, the chanting of a *mantra*, for years and years together, with the hope of having the vision of the deity. But they had no vision of the deity. We hear of the story of the *purascharanas* performed by Sage Vidyaranya of yore, Yogi Sri Madhusudana Saraswati and others, but they had no vision. The reason mentioned is that they had obstructing *prarabdhas*.

We have three kinds of *prarabdha*—the *tamasica*, the *rajasica* and the *sattvica*. The *tamasica* and *rajasica prarabdhas* will not allow even the rise of aspiration for God. The *tamasica prarabdha* will always bring the most intense form of obstacles, including a mood of lethargy, indolence, sleepiness, and even doubt of the possibility of gaining any such realisation at all, as yoga promises. Atheism, materialism and lack of faith are due to the working of *tamasica prarabdhas.* As long as these types of *prarabdha* function, as long as the *tamasica prarabdhas* are active, there is no question of the practice of yoga—we can do nothing.

Even the *rajasic prarabdha*, which is a little better than that which is *tamasica*, does not allow us to do any practice because it fills us with desires and distracting characteristics

and does not allow us to sit in one place. We cannot sit continuously in one posture, even for a few minutes, if the *rajasic prarabdha* is working very actively.

It is only the *sattvic prarabdha* that permits spiritual practice. Sometimes there is a mix-up of these *prarabdhas* —we have a little of *tamas*, a little of *rajas* and a little of *sattva*. So due to the action of the *sattvic prarabdha* in us, we seem to have aspiration for God, love for the practice of yoga, etc. But we also have the *rajasica* and the *tamasica prarabdha* within us and, therefore, this aspiration does not get fulfilled or materialised with the intensity expected, so we are always kept in a state of tension and anxiety, inasmuch as there is a tug of war going on among these kinds of *prarabdha*. But the subtler is always more powerful than the grosser; the *sattva* overcomes the grosser *prarabdhas* in the long run, and the aspiration for higher types of living becomes more and more tangible in one's practical life.

The practice should be continued for a very, very long time, and we should not expect results. We should not expect results because we do not know the conditions to be fulfilled for the materialisation of a result. The result expected is cosmic and infinite, and a little finite effort cannot be expected to bring such a result. All of our practices are finite in their nature. Whatever effort we put forth is limited in its character, and all of our aspiration is completely circumscribed by certain notions that are characteristic of human individuality. How can we expect infinite results to follow from such finite attitudes, which are ingrained in our very structural existence? But our finite effort will give an impetus for us to move onward, so that the push that it gives will enable the next door to be opened before us and we can see a vista that is just ahead of us, though we will not be able to see many miles ahead.

Only one step ahead can be seen at a time, and not one hundred steps. This, of course, is an advantage as well as a

disadvantage. It is a disadvantage because we do not know what is before us. We are not quite sure as to where we are standing, how much progress we have made, and the things that we may have to encounter in our future; so this is a type of disadvantage. But it also has an advantage that is similar to the advantage of not having any memory of our previous lives. What would happen to us if we knew everything that has happened in all of our previous lives? We would not be able to live in this world. We would perish in a few minutes by the shock of the memories of previous lives. But the abolition of all this memory keeps us constrained to a limited vision of things, and makes us feel that this world is the entire world, and that the people around us are the only realities, and that there is nothing in the past and nothing in the future. This ignorance keeps us happy, somehow or the other. But if the whole universe is opened up before us like Pandora's box, then the entire world would perish in a few days—it could not exist.

Likewise, to know everything that will happen in the future also cannot be regarded as a happy state of affairs for minds that are incapable of understanding all aspects of things. Inasmuch as the *prarabdhas* in us have a restraining force upon us, all the gates will not open at one stroke. There is a gradual opening of the personality, like the blossoming of a flower from the state of a bud. Just as we grow from childhood to youth, etc., and do not suddenly jump into the skies, there is a gradual opening up of consciousness into higher and higher levels by the intensity of the daily practice. Each day we will find that there is a little progress, though it may not be all that we expect. All that we expect cannot come in one day, for reasons that we know very well. But there is bound to be progress, even if the practice is very little, provided that it is done with ardour and with great affection, intensity and wholeheartedness.

The condition mentioned in the *sutra* of Patanjali is: *sa tu dīrghakāla nairantarya satkāra āsevitaḥ dṛḍhabhūmiḥ* (I.14). A very, very affectionate attitude towards this practice is one condition. We cannot have a greater love for anything in this world than we have for this practice. In fact, this practice is like a parent to us—it will take care of us, protect us and provide us with everything that we need. This practice of yoga should be continued until the point of realisation, without asking for immediate results. *Karmany evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana* (B.G. II.47), says Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the Bhagavadgita. Our duty is to act according to the discipline prescribed, and not to expect results. The results will follow in the long run, in due course of time.

The practice should not only be continued for a protracted period, but it also should be unremitting. There should be no break in the practice—this is another condition. Some people say, "For twenty-five years I have been meditating." But we have not been meditating continuously, without break, throughout all the twenty-five years. We have been missing link after link every now and then, so there has been a disconnection in the practice. It is something like having our lunch today, and missing it for two days, and then having it again on the third or fourth day, and then not having it for five or six days. Then, naturally, the intake of the diet will not have any kind of salutary effect upon the body. So the practice should be not only continuing for years and years until realisation ensues, but also it should be unremitting—ceaseless. Every day it should be taken up, and at the same time each day.

Our love for the practice should be such that the moment we sit, our hair should stand on end that we are, after all, blessed with this glorious opportunity to dedicate ourselves to the supreme cause of our very existence. As if we are floating in an ocean of honey—such should be the joy when we sit for

meditation. We should not be worried, "Oh, how long have I to sit?" Some people go on looking at the timepiece, "How far it is over? Half an hour over? Not over? It is a great boredom, indeed. The bell is not ringing." Sometimes we do *japa* and look at the *mala*, "How far is it? Has it not finished?" This sort of practice is a mockery, and we should not play jokes with that which we have undertaken of our own accord. We cannot count the beads while looking at the watch; it is stupid to do so. It is a practice for the regeneration of our entire soul, of everything that we are. It is a process of rebirth in every sense of the term, and so it is a tremendously hard job—very bitter, very awful, full of difficulties, and we have to encounter much opposition. All sorts of difficulties will be expected, and must be expected. But we will see the result almost every day if the practice is wholehearted, which means to say, our whole being is present in the practice.

As mentioned earlier, it is difficult for us to place our whole being in anything. We are always distracted by certain other things which continue to be present in the conscious level of our mind. We are conscious of many things. The work that we have not done or the things that we have yet to do in the immediate future, heat and cold, hunger and thirst, sleepiness, exhaustion and fatigue, annoyance, the unfriendly attitude of people around us—umpteen such things will come and make themselves heard, so that the wholehearted attention that is expected in the practice will not come. But once it comes, once we are able to dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly even for a few minutes—not for hours, even for a few minutes—we will see the result following. It is something like touching a live wire. It does not take hours to see the result of having touched a live wire. We have only to touch an open wire that is not covered or insulated, and the moment we touch it, the result is instantaneous.

But here, we are not touching it at all. It is completely insulated by other factors which are preventing its being visible and, therefore, whatever the practice is, the result does not seem to follow. When we have never been wholehearted for even a moment, how can the result come? Half of the mind is somewhere else, so how can there be a result? We always complain, "Nothing comes, nothing comes, nothing comes." How can anything come when the mind is only fifty percent present in the practice, and sometimes not even fifty percent? So, the mistake is in us. It is not in the yoga; it is not in God; it is not in anybody else.

It is necessary to reiterate that the only obstacle in the achievement of success in the practice of yoga is the absence of wholeheartedness. We are never whole-souled in our dedication, because of we subtly feel the presence of other desirable things in the world which we consider as equally good, or at least to some extent. We never feel that things are useless, and that this is the only useful thing. Unless the feeling that everything else has no meaning whatsoever for our personal life, that everything except this wonderful undertaking called yoga has no meaning in our life—unless this attitude of complete distaste towards everything extraneous arises in the mind, there cannot be whole-souled attention of the mind on the objective. That is why Patanjali has been crying that *vairagya* should be coupled with practice or *abhyasa*. We have practice or *abhyasa* without *vairagya* and, therefore, no result comes. Practice without *vairagya* is the attempt at fixing a portion of the mind, a fraction of the mind, on this objective called meditation, and sometimes allowing a major part of the mind to engage itself in other things which also look equally good to this unfortunate attitude of the mind.

Whole-souled dedication to the practice is possible only when there is perfect understanding. Why is it that our mind is

not entirely dedicated to this practice, and part of it is thinking of something else? The reason is that our understanding of the efficacy and the value and the worthwhileness of the practice is inadequate. Our faith in God, our trust in God, and our feeling that God is everything is half-baked; it is not perfect. We do not have, even today, full faith that God is everything. "There is something else which is also good." Such thinking is lurking in the mind. "Though God is all—all right, the scriptures say that—but my subtle conscience says that there is something else also, something else that is also sweet. God is sweet, but there is something else also, equally sweet. Why should I not go there?"

So the subconscious mind goes there, and that outlet which the mind allows for at the bottom lets all the energy leak out in the wrong direction. The so-called concentration of mind in the practice of yoga that is undertaken every day becomes a kind of futile effort on account of not knowing that some underground activity is going on in the mind which is completely upsetting all of our conscious activities called daily meditation. We have certain underground activities which we are not aware of always, and these activities completely disturb and turn upside-down all of the so-called practice of yoga that is done only at the conscious level.

I have always been saying that our personality is not merely at the conscious level. The larger part of our personality is in levels which are deeper than the conscious one. Until all of the levels come up and merge into a focused attention in the practice of yoga, we cannot expect the desired result. But once this whole-souled dedication is achieved, once it becomes part of our conscious life, it immediately speaks in the language of ultimate success.

Chapter 29

THE PLAY OF THE GUNAS

Now we have to consider a rather new aspect of what we have been studying in the previous several chapters—namely, the positive association of consciousness with the nature of reality known as *ekatattva abhyasah*, in conjunction with a dissociation of consciousness from factors which are not relevant to the task taken up by the seeker of yoga. The new aspect is that neither the positive practice, nor the negative dissociation, is an easy matter. Both of these are terribly difficult things. It was said that by daily practice one can gain steadfastness in *abhyasa* and *vairagya*. This is true to some extent, but it is not the whole truth. While daily practice is the main road to success, there is something else which may upset the entire practice in spite of a daily sitting and a continuous effort generated even from a sincere heart, and that is, an internal readjustment of the attitude of consciousness. If that is not done, outward efforts may not succeed to any appreciable extent. This point has been hinted at by Patanjali in one of his *sutras*—mentioned, of course, in his own language.

There are what are known as the *gunas* of *prakriti* —*sattva, rajas* and *tamas*—to which we have already made reference. It is the position and velocity of these *gunas* that is responsible for either our attachments or detachments. Just as modern scientists tell us that the position and velocity of the electrons revolving round a nucleus in a particular atom are responsible for the structure of any particular physical object, and that the structure can change if the velocity and the position of the electrons change, in a similar manner, with

equal emphasis we can say that the position and velocity of the three *gunas* tell upon the entire pattern of things—internal as well as external.

Na tadasti pṛithivyāṁ vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ (B.G. XVIII.40). In the Bhagavadgita, in the eighteenth chapter, Bhagavan Sri Krishna says that there is nothing, either on earth or in heaven, which is not controlled by the *gunas*. Right from the bottommost hell to the topmost heaven, we will find that everything is constituted of, controlled and regulated by the *gunas*. Even the mind is under subjection to the operation of the *gunas*. The mind is nothing but the *gunas* in a subtle form. A rarefied form of the *gunas* is the substance of the psychological organs—*manas*, *buddhi*, *ahamkara*, *citta*—the mind, the intellect, the ego and the subconscious. A gross form of the same *gunas* appears as the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. Therefore there is a fraternity of feeling between the mind inside and the object outside, since both of these are constituted of the same *gunas*, as it has already been referenced in a statement of the Bhagavadgita: *guṇā guṇeṣu vartante* (B.G. III.28).

Inasmuch as the *gunas* are almost everything, and there is nothing outside them, our efforts in the direction of the practice of yoga should take into consideration the constitution of the *gunas* in respect of our own individual personality. Here, we have to study our own self, we have to make our own self, and we are concerned with our own self, ultimately speaking. As I am the seeker of yoga, I am the student of yoga, and I am the practitioner, I should know where I stand in respect of these *gunas*. My entire personality is made up of them, and the attitude of my personality depends upon the pattern of the arrangement of the three *gunas*. My likes and dislikes are dependent on the *gunas*. To what percentage have I risen in the preponderance of any particular *guna* in myself—*sattwa*, *rajas* or *tamas*? Which *guna*

preponderates in me? Of the three *gunas*, which one is the strongest in my personality? Is it *sattva*, or *rajas*, or *tamas*?

From our general attitude to things, our daily feelings and reactions, and our longings from the bottom of our hearts, we can have an idea as to where we stand in respect of the *gunas*. The nature of our deepest feelings throughout the day and our general reactions to things outside will be an outward symbol of our inward constitution. Though one cannot know one's own self deeply, profoundly and wholly, by observing certain insignia or symbols outside, one can know what is happening inside. The way in which we speak and the opinions that we hold about things and persons, as well as the deep-seated longings in our hearts, expressed or otherwise—these will tell us what we are. Others cannot know it; we have to know it for ourself. We are the students, we are the aspirants, we are the seekers, and we are struggling to achieve this Supreme Goal; therefore, we have to be very cautious in knowing our own self.

As a matter of fact, there is nothing to be known in this world except our own self. There is no need to bother about things, because all of the difficulties arise from us only, and not from others, so there is no use opening our eyes and looking at other people and things to study them. It will not profit us in any manner whatsoever. Rather, we should close our eyes and look within, and see where we stand in the scheme of things. As long as this internal structure of our deeper personality is not properly investigated into and understood, the outward efforts will not bring much result. We mostly concentrate on external effort and forget the internal tendencies in our mind, and our general attitude of consciousness.

I would like to point out that the tendencies in our internal set-up are more important objects for investigation and study than anything else outside. An object outside us may be the

target of our particular inward tendencies, and it is possible that we give too much importance to our external attitude towards objects and persons and do not pay sufficient attention to the causes of our relationships to objects, the causes being the tendencies within. Our likes and dislikes are not to be taken merely as an external expression of our personality, as they are only outward symbols of what is happening inside us. Different types of urges within us become responsible for certain types of relationships to objects outside. When we like something, there must be a reason why we like it. How can we like something or dislike something for no reason? That reason is the inward tendency or the particular preponderance of a *guna*. It is not that a single *guna* is preponderant at any given moment of time. We cannot say that today, or at this moment, *sattva* is preponderant, or *rajas* or *tamas* is preponderant.

Many a time, or we may say almost always, there is a mix-up of a certain percentage of these *gunas*, so that we are not wholly *sattvic*, or *rajasic*, or *tamasic* at any time. We have some element of something, and some element of some other thing, mixed up in a certain proportion so that we have all the tendencies grouped in ourself, and we may look like a mixed-up personality, which makes it all the more difficult for us to understand our own self.

These tendencies inside are the objects of study in a deeper investigation. The necessity for it is pointed out in the *sutra*: *tat paraṁ puruṣakhyāteḥ guṇavaitṛṣṇyaṁ* (I.16). In respect of the practice of *vairagya*, about which we have been studying up to this time, Patanjali says that real *vairagya* cannot arise unless we gain freedom over the *gunas*. The spirit of renunciation does not get confirmed and does not become steadfast merely by a readjustment of an outward attitude towards things. What is essential is an adjustment of inward tendencies, and if the tendencies persist, our outward

adjustments will not be of much consequence, because what liberates us and what binds us is the tendency inside, and these are the *gunas*. These *gunas* are terrific forces, and they cannot be controlled by ordinary effort. They are terrific because they are our masters. We are entirely made up of them, and we are subjected to them in every sense of the term. Every fibre of our being is nothing but the *gunas*. This is actually the difficulty of self-mastery. The mastery over the *gunas* is mastery over one's own self.

We have been observing that there are degrees of the observation and experience of self. The selfhood goes on expanding and deepening as we advance further and further. This means that the *gunas*, in their readjustment of pattern, go on becoming thinner and thinner, rarer and rarer, more and more ethereal in their structure, so that the light of the Truth gets reflected in a greater and greater intensity. It is the opaqueness of the pattern of the *gunas* that prevents the reflection of Truth in our own self, just as the light of the sun cannot penetrate through a brick wall because it is opaque and throws back the light outwardly rather than absorbing it, whereas the light of the sun can pass through translucent or transparent objects like glass, mirror, etc. In a thickened personality, with a preponderance of *tamas* and *rajas*, the reflection of Truth is not so apparent, whereas it becomes more and more capable of being experienced when the *gunas* become more and more *sattvic* in their tendency—which means to say, more and more transparent in their structure. It is then that we feel that the self is progressing in its onward journey and becoming wider in its comprehension and deeper in its profundity.

How are we to tackle these tendencies—the *gunas*? Most of our practices are outward; this is what we call the religions of the world. We have religions, but no spirituality in the world, and that is why religions do not help us much. We are

very much concerned with rituals and forms, routines, traditions, scriptures, customs, manners, etc., as they have come down to us from ancestry, but these are not going to change us. We may have hundreds of religions with all of their rituals and tradition, but man will be man—he will not change. This is because outward adjustments and disciplines become objects of utility, and have a meaning and significance only if their intention is an inward regeneration. The intention of religions should be a revival of spiritual values inside the individual; and if this is the intention, religion will have meaning.

There is a great point in religion, of course, but the point will be missed if the aim is missed. The movement of the religious attitude should be not outward, but inward. Unfortunately, we have become more and more formal and externalised in our religious attitude, so that we appear to be religious only for the sake of other people. If we are alone, unobserved in the world, perhaps religions would not be of much meaning to us. Suppose we are absolutely alone, and nobody sees us; what does it matter to us whether we are a Hindu, or a Christian, or a Buddhist? Nobody is there to call us a Buddhist or a Hindu. We have no name at that time, and we can put on any dress we like—nobody bothers. But if we are in society, we dress in a particular way, we speak in a particular way, and we designate ourselves in a particular fashion as belonging to a particular faith, and so on and so forth. So it looks as if we are religious only because society exists—otherwise there is no religion. This is very strange. But religion is not social. It is something quite different from what we mean by social relation, because social relation is an outward movement of the human mind for certain purposes, while religion has a different aim altogether. If we are conversant with the philosophy of religion, we know that the very word means, ‘that which binds us back to God’. Not that

which makes us externalised and a social being, but that which ties the soul back to God is religion.

So religion is an inward journey of the soul towards contact with larger realities and greater forms of comprehensiveness, which cannot be achieved by any amount of external movement. Reality is not outside, in the sense that reality is not a relationship; it is not any kind of contact or coming into union with anything in this world. We cannot bring reality into contact with anything. Being independent and self-existent, it is non-contactable, and any conscious tendency towards it should also be imbued with the characteristic of reality. If religion is the tendency towards the real, it should exhibit in its structure and function the character of the real, which is inwardness and a greater tendency to 'being' rather than a tendency to activity and relation. Religion is not an action; it is a tendency towards being, and though it begins with action, it does not end with action. It ends with an absorption of all outward contact and relation, including every type of activity, into a more comprehensive state of being, which point is mostly missed by religious people. We have no religious people in this world, really speaking, if we go deep into it. We have only outward practitioners of the formalistic traditions of religion, but there are no religious people who have gone to the root of the matter, as religion is ultimately inseparable from spiritual consciousness.

The spiritual sense in the individual is the determining factor of the validity of any kind of religious attitude. If the spiritual sense is missing, religions will cease to exist. They cannot survive in this world; and, unfortunately, this seems to be what is happening today. The spiritual sense is sinking back into the clouds of unknowing and we are becoming, more and more, formality-ridden automatons, driven by impulses of social sense. There is a feeling today that a day may come

when religions will die altogether. There would be no religion in this world and, God forbid, we might live like animals. But this may not happen if at least a few people in this world, even a handful of people, rise up to the occasion and strike on the qualitative aspect of religion and live up to the requisitions of true spirituality, which will shed a force, and power and an aura around it that can counteract all these outward diversifying elements that we see prevailing today, both in smaller circles like the family and in larger circles like the international systems.

The practice of yoga, therefore, goes into this vital issue of human existence and points out that any amount of makeshift arrangement or contrivance is not going to succeed. *Kaś cid dhīraḥ pratyag-ātmānam aikṣad āvṛtta-cakṣur* (Katha II.1.1), says the Katha Upanishad. Our eyes are now turned outward, and we judge everything from the point of view of outward relationship and society, on account of the externalised movement of the organs of perception. *Āvṛtta-cakṣur* is one who has an introverted vision. The introverted vision alone can tell us what we really are; an extroverted vision can tell us how we appear to others.

From the point of view of our ultimate achievements in life, how we appear to others is not important. What we are really in ourselves cannot be seen by any outwardly turned observation, either of the senses or of the mind. But this inward movement, which is what is meant by *avrita cakshutva* or introverted vision, is again capable of being misconstrued. What do we mean by internal vision, or introverted observation, or *avrita cakshutva*? Does it mean that we close our eyes and go on looking inside the body? Nothing of the kind—that is not the meaning of introverted vision. We will find that the more deeply we go into this subject, the more difficult it becomes to entertain ordinary, tradition-ridden thoughts.

The introverted vision, which is required in order to understand the tendencies within for the purpose of controlling the *gunas*, does not mean closing our eyes or looking inside our physical body. This is, again, a peculiar twist of consciousness that is actually taking place. Vision does not mean physical vision or looking through the eyes. It is not opening the eyes or closing the eyes—nothing of the kind. It is neither of these. The introversion that is spoken of here has no reference either to the opened eyes or to the closed eyes. Introversion is an attitude of consciousness. We may open the eyes, or we may close the eyes—it makes no difference. I may open my eyes and appear to be looking at things, and yet see nothing if my consciousness is introverted. On the other hand, if my consciousness is extroverted, I may be seeing things even if I my eyes are completely closed. We may close our eyes and yet be in contact with things. We may open our eyes and yet not be in contact with anything. So there is no point in overemphasising this opening or closing of the eyes. The point is what it is that we are feeling, and what it is that we are thinking, and where we stand in the scheme of things. The introverted vision is a vision of consciousness; it is not a vision of the eyes or a function of the senses.

On the other hand, a proper definition of the extroverted vision is: that awareness which is dissociated from its content. Extroverted vision is that condition of consciousness or awareness where its content is isolated from itself. That is, the consciousness is aware of something, and yet it is dissociated from that of which it is aware. Therefore it is running towards that content. The content of consciousness stands dissociated from consciousness as an external something, and then there is no other goal for consciousness than to struggle to become one with that content from which it has been isolated for some reason or the other. This is called external perception, external activity, desire—everything. The moment the content is

dissociated from consciousness, there is a struggle of consciousness to become one with that content, which is called desire. It puts forth every kind of effort to achieve this end, and that is called activity. This is what we are doing in life. The content, or the objective in front of consciousness, is isolated from it. This is what is called desire; and therefore, there is a lot of work to be done. We are very busy every day, for this reason. This is the outcome of extroverted vision. The introversion is the readjustment of the movement of consciousness in such a way that it begins to go into the nature of that peculiar situation which has brought about the dissociation of itself from its content. This is the beginning of the introverted vision.

How do we become introverted, rather than extroverted? The first step is to go into the necessity of understanding the circumstances which have brought about this dissociation of consciousness from the object. Why is it that this has happened? What is the next step to be done? And so on and so forth, we go on investigating the nature of this difficulty that has arisen. Rather than emphasising the necessity for consciousness to come in contact with this content outwardly, we go the other way round and begin to feel the necessity to know the nature of the difficulty that has arisen, which has prompted the consciousness to urge itself towards its content in an extroverted manner.

Until this is achieved, until the necessity for this kind of investigation is felt, we are not on a spiritual path; we are still persons of the world. We are still like anybody else—like a straw being drifted by the wind. We should free ourselves from the peculiar crotchet in our heads that we live a spiritual life for the sake of other people. This is not true. Our fate is not in the hands of other people. It is under the control of certain other forces, and if we ignore these forces and emphasise the external factors, we will be doomed. It is no use judging

ourselves in terms of the colours that we put on due to the relationships that we establish between ourselves and external things. We are mostly engaged in confirming the attitude of consciousness, which is that it is dissociated from its content. This is a pitiable state of affairs. Our activities are not a remedying process of this illness. Rather, they are a confirming process and, therefore, we are getting more and more bound every day, in spite of our making it appear that we are trying for freedom or liberation. So a very acute, incisive analysis is necessary of what is happening inside us, rather than of what we are doing outside us. We need not go on analysing our outward conduct and activities as much as focusing on what is happening inside our consciousness.

This is a proper attitude to take in the direction of a real control over the forces that are responsible for what we are today, in our individual and social set-up. These are the *gunas—sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas. Gunas* are not substances. We have to remember that *gunas* are not things like stones that we can catch. We cannot catch them. They are elusive things which can escape the grasp of any sense organ, and they can even escape the grasp of the mind, because the mind is constituted of these *gunas* themselves. The mind, being constituted of the *gunas*, cannot control the *gunas*. The mind is habituated to that sort of control which is exercised upon other people and other things outside, and it is not used to a control which is called self-control. Whenever we talk of control, we think in terms of master and servant—the master controlling the servant, or somebody ordering somebody else—because we are used to this kind of control. This sort of exercise will not work in our efforts towards control of the forces called the *gunas*, because the *gunas* are not the servants of the mind that they can be restricted as a boss restrains his subordinates. The mind is not a boss, and the *gunas* are not

subordinates. The *gunas* are involved in the structure of the mind itself.

Therefore the gaining of a control over the inward tendencies of our personality is a new system of educational refinement of ourselves, which has very little to do with what we regard as important in life, and which is completely different from all the values that we regard as meaningful in life. We get reborn into a new world altogether when we step into the path of yoga.

Chapter 30

THE CAUSE OF BONDAGE

The verse from the eighteenth chapter of the Bhagavadgita, which has been cited earlier, mentions that everything, everywhere, whether on earth or in heaven—everything in all the worlds—is constituted of the three *gunas*. *Na tad asti pṛithivyāṁ vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ, sattvaṁ prakṛitijair muktaṁ yad ebhiḥ syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ* (B.G. XVIII.40): There is none free from these three *gunas* anywhere in creation; and the freedom from *gunas* is liberation. The absolution that one attains from the clutches of these three *gunas* is called salvation, and no one is free entirely from these *gunas*. The freedom from the gunas is real freedom, because all freedom is associated with consciousness. It is a feeling of getting liberated from the subjection of consciousness to outward compulsive factors.

Our bondage is psychological and not physical. As the old saying goes, 'Stone walls do not a prison make'. A prison does not mean a building with walls, because even a house is a building with walls, but we do not call it a prison. However, we can call it a prison if our mind changes. From tomorrow onwards we can call it a prison, or we can call it a temple, a police station, or anything that we like, but it is the same building with the same walls, the same ceiling, etc. So bondage is not merely a physical association, but is also a psychological feeling, and ultimately it is a state of consciousness. Subjection to *gunas* means the subjection of consciousness to the operation of the *gunas*.

Our joys and sorrows are conditions of consciousness; they are not physical. It is not the body that is happy or sorry,

but it is the mind, charged with consciousness, that undergoes these experiences. Liberation is a condition of consciousness and not a condition of physicality, materiality or any type of external association. Therefore, the ultimate freedom, which is *moksha*, being a state of consciousness, should be attained through a gradual ascension from greater states of subjection of consciousness to lesser states of subjection of consciousness. Obviously, this is achieved through a training of consciousness in its relationship with the *gunas*.

In the Samkhya, as well as in the Vedanta, we are told a lot about these *gunas* in their relation to consciousness. To bring about the ultimate purity and freedom of consciousness in spite of its so-called association with the *gunas*, the Samkhya gives us the example of a crystal that can falsely appear to be coloured on account of its proximity to a coloured object. If a red flower is brought near a pure crystal, the crystal may look red because of the reflection of the colour of the flower in the crystal. The crystal has not become red; the colour has only been reflected. If there is no proximity of the object to the crystal, there would be no reflection, and the crystal would appear in its pristine purity. Likewise, it is said that consciousness appears to be bound on account of what they call *adhyasa*, or transference of characters, which happens to take place between consciousness and the *gunas* of *prakriti* in a mysterious manner.

This transference of characters, which is called *adhyasa*, is the real bondage. We are seated together, and yet we need not be either happy or sorry unless our minds are tuned in a particular manner in respect of the proximity of the people in this audience. The person sitting near me need not cause me either joy or sorrow, unless my mind is tuned in respect of the presence of the person in a particular manner, for certain reasons.

Suppose the person sitting near us is a police officer. We do not know why he is sitting there, but there is a suspicion in the mind: "Why is this gentleman sitting near me? He might have brought a warrant from the court, or he may have come for some other troublesome reason." So we have a suspicious, anxious feeling in our mind because the person sitting near us is a policeman. Or that which is near us may be a snake, a cobra—we know how the mind is tuned in respect of its presence. Or that which is just near us may be a very delicious dish, and then we think, "After *satsanga* is over I will eat it. I will wait for all the people to go, and then I will polish it off." It may be our friend, it may be our enemy, or it may be something that we like or dislike on account of a peculiar psychological relationship that we have with the thing near us. The thing near us may be, physically speaking, not at all the cause of either our joy or our sorrow. Physically we may be in a particular atmosphere, but that is not what is going to be of consequence in our life. Psychologically, what is the atmosphere in which we are living?

Here is a story. There was a person who was attending *satsanga*, perhaps the great *satsanga* of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu himself. Wonderful *kirtan*, *bhajan*, etc. were going on, and after the *satsanga* was over all the people left. But one man did not get up; he remained seated. So the Master thought he was a great devotee, remaining as he did after all had gone. He must be having extraordinary devotion. The Master said, "I am very happy to observe your devotion. You are still seated here even after everyone has gone." The man replied, "No, no, no. I am sitting here to take this carpet, because it is my carpet." He was not sitting because of devotion. His carpet was spread out there and he wanted to take it, and that is the reason he remained seated. Even after everyone had left, he stayed on. Look at that man in *satsanga*! He was sitting there thinking of his carpet throughout the

program of beautiful kirtan, bhajan, etc., so his physical presence at *satsanga* had no effect on him. His psychological atmosphere, the world in which he was living, was quite different from the physical world of *satsanga* in which he appeared to be present.

Our world is a psychological world. There is a world under every hat, as they say. Everyone carries a world inside his cap or hat, and that is what causes the bondage. This bondage that is within us is due to a conscious relationship between ourself and the physical condition, social condition, and other conditions, etc., with which we seem to be connected. As we have been observing through our analysis, these relationships are difficult to understand. We cannot know what relationships are consciously developed within us, inasmuch as we cannot know our own self wholly. When we try to understand the nature of our bondage, the condition in which our consciousness is in at the present moment, we will find that it is not easy to get the complete information about this situation, because our relationship does not mean merely an external spatial relationship. It is not an outward visible relationship; it is mostly invisible. The invisible relationship is at the background of the outward visible form which it takes, little by little, just as the wholesale merchant may take a little out of his stock for retail purposes and put it outside for daily transaction.

There is a wholesale stock of commodity inside us, and a little of it is coming out for retail transactions in daily life. We are conscious only of this retail commodity that is visible outside. We do not know what is inside, in the storeroom. The larger part of what we are is inside, and that cannot be seen by us. We cannot see what it is because we have no apparatus to see it with. The only instrument with which we can see things is a pair of eyes, and the eyes cannot see what is inside us, because even the way in which we see things through the eyes

is conditioned by what we are inside. So any kind of extroverted vision will not be of any avail in this matter of an understanding of the condition of our own consciousness, and that which we really are. It requires a discipline of a very graduated nature to enable consciousness to get freed from the clutches of forces, which are inwardly operating, invisible to the physical organs of perception.

Many a time, our own feelings cannot be known to us when we are in a distracted atmosphere, or even in an ordinary social atmosphere which engages our attention wholly. If we live alone, absolutely alone, for a long time, in an isolated place without any kind of contact with people outside, maybe even for months and years, some of our feelings will come out. We can know ourself a little better when we are absolutely alone than when we are in the midst of people, for simple reasons, of course. One of the reasons is that in the midst of other people, we put on a false personality. We are not what we really are, because the rules of society require of us a particular type of behaviour, and we know it very well. So, we always try to put on that behaviour which is required by society, whether or not it is our real behaviour. Thus we live a false life in human society, and not a real life; and inasmuch as we always live in human society, we always live a false life. That part of our nature which is associated with human society becomes encrusted with falsity, layer after layer, so that the truth of our nature is completely buried under the clouds of these false accretions grown around us. We cannot know what we are, ourselves, when we are in such an atmosphere.

We are always something in terms of what other people are, or what the society in which we are living is. The personality that we project outwardly is not our personality, and it is not what is of importance here. What we are when we are psychologically totally unrelated to things would be an indication of what we really are. But if we have lived in human

society for years and years together, putting on a false personality, and suddenly retire to a secluded place for *japa*, meditation, *swadhyaya*, etc., the impressions of the false personality will not leave us so easily. A collector will think he is still a collector, though he is in Badrinath. The collector is a retired man, but even inside the temple he still thinks of himself as an official. "I am a retired collector," he will say, though he is inside the temple worshipping. He will always imagine that he is a retired collector, and this impression will not leave. He is a retired man—he is nothing. Yet he has a false personality which he has created in himself due to his association with other people while he was in service, and those impressions do not leave him even now. Even if he goes to stay in the village of Mana, he is not going to be free from these impressions. This peculiar personality that has grown around us as an accretion, which is not our real personality, will pursue us like a hound even if we are retired people, even if we go to a holy place, or even if we are in a monastery. For some years, it will be difficult to find out what we really are, because we have thoughts of various types even after retirement. We have thoughts of collecting pension, of old relationships, and many other associated factors which will be pursuing us wherever we go, in spite of our attempt to lead a holy life of spiritual practice.

To do self-analysis, to go deep into the causes of our real bondage, would be to enter into our true personality and not a personality that we have put on; and this requires a lot of time. Personalities are variegated. The outermost personality is the social personality, which itself is a difficult thing to give up. The position, the relationship, and the coverage of this outward atmosphere do not leave us even when we are alone. But there are more difficult things inside us than even this social personality which has become a part of our nature. There is what is called the biological personality, and this is

more difficult to leave than the social one. With great effort we may forget our social relationships. We may forget that we are ministers, or collectors, or rich persons, or whatever it is. Though even that is difficult and it may take a long time for us to do, yet it is something that can be achieved with some conscious effort.

But there are other things which we cannot give up even with any amount of effort, namely, the bondage caused by our biological condition itself. For example, one cannot forget that one is a man or a woman, however much one may struggle in one's mind to give up this idea. Biologically, we are human beings. We cannot think that we are snakes, or trees, or tigers; we are human beings. How can we forget the idea that we are human beings, male or female? Any amount of *sadhana* will not enable us to give up this idea, because here the bondage of consciousness to the condition in which it is involved is more deep-rooted than is the social involvement.

The biological subjection is connected with natural factors, namely the structure of the physical body itself. The five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—which are the substances out of which this physical body is made, condition the body according to the laws of nature. We cannot easily give up the bondage of hunger, thirst, heat, cold, etc. Everyone becomes hungry and everyone becomes thirsty; everyone feels heat and everyone feels cold, because bodily conditions are subject to the order of nature, as it is nature that has ordered the present pattern of the physical body. The elements that constitute physical nature constitute the physical body also, and our very individuality, physically speaking, is nothing but an abstraction from universal nature of certain limited particles of matter which have gone to make up our physical personality, to which we are attached very vehemently and very forcefully.

So, the bondage of consciousness is more deep-rooted than it can be made to appear on the surface. The liberation of consciousness, which is *moksha*, said to be freedom from the *gunas* of *prakriti*, cannot be achieved until the root of bondage is dug out—which means to say, the ultimate connection with the *gunas* is snapped. This cannot be done as long as its effects continue in the form of this relationship of consciousness to lower conditions, such as the physical personality, social atmosphere, etc.

Also, our physical individuality is not merely constituted of the visible body alone. There are many other vestures inside the physical body which make up our individuality. There is inside us what is known as the *linga deha*, or the *linga sarira*. In Sanskrit, *linga* means an indicator, an insignia, or a symbol. Our individuality is not the physical body; that is only a vehicle which is used for the purposes of our real individuality which is known as the astral body, the subtle body—*sukshma sarira* or the *linga sarira*. The astral body, which is within us, is said to be practically the same shape as the physical body. It is cast in the same mould as the shape of the physical body. As a matter of fact, the physical body is only an external formation, in space and time, of our internal nature which is the subtle body, or the *sukshma sarira*. Our real individuality is in the subtle body. This subtle body is constituted of certain peculiar powers or forces in which the psychological organ is situated. The mind, the intellect, etc., including the principle of ego, are all in the subtle body. Also inside the subtle body are the *pranas*, the powers of sense.

Sometime back we had occasion to go into the details of the structure of this personality, wherein we observed that the main difficulty arose from self-affirmation or self-assertion, namely, the position of egoism—*asmita*. The affirmation of the ego is a conscious function, originally. As it is mentioned in our scriptures, a part of the Virat segregates itself from the

whole and asserts itself as an independent entity. This independence assumed by it becomes the basic condition of its individuality, and later on it develops external relationships as a consequence of this self-affirmation. The moment this self-affirmation is made, the ego asserts itself. Automatically a desire arises in the ego to come in contact with other egos, on account of a loss of contact with the Universal. The desire is fulfilled through the aperture of the senses by the action of the mind. The whole of the subtle body, or the *sukshma sarira*, is nothing but an instrument manufactured by the ego to come in contact with other individuals of a similar nature, and to fulfil its purpose of gaining freedom from the sense of limitation to which it has, unfortunately, subjected itself.

Our individuality is of a complicated nature. Originally—taking the standpoint of the scriptures—this individuality arose on account of a simple assertion of consciousness of independence from the Universal. This is what they call "the fall", "the original fall", "Satan's fall from paradise" which arose on account of his affirmation of independence over God Himself. This has arisen by a simple act of self-affirmation, but then it complicated itself by a multiplication of factors, namely, the desires that arose as a consequence of this self-affirmation.

The *gunas* of *prakriti* are nothing but the forces that are responsible for belief in the reality of external conditions, and the possibility of fulfilling the desires of the individual by coming into external contact through the avenues of the senses and the mind. Ultimately, these *gunas* are not substances standing in their own right, but are peculiar circumstances brought about by this isolation of consciousness from the whole to which it originally belonged. The *gunas*, ultimately, do not exist. They cannot be called Ultimate Reality. They are a peculiar set of conditions. As these conditions are inseparable from the consciousness

which experiences them, somehow or other they are made to appear as self-existent individualities, and it is then that we begin to feel that there is a physical world outside us. Ultimately, upon a subtle analysis, we will realise that the world that we experience is nothing but a set of conditions.

This subtle body that is within us, which is the operative principle of the self-affirming ego, is a form taken by an ethereal transformation of the three *gunas*. The self-affirming consciousness urges itself forward outwardly through the mind and the senses, and then this urge, which is called desire, creates impressions, especially when it is fulfilled. Each impression becomes a part of its individuality, and the association of these impressions, or sets of impressions with itself, only confirms its bondage, hardens its ego, and makes the individual more and more bound to external conditions, which again creates further desires for contact with externals, which in turn creates impressions—and so on and so forth, on and on like a vicious circle, until we find ourselves in a state of utter bondage, and we are aware of only bondage and nothing else.

The layers of bondage have been formed through ages of experience which we have passed through on account of the births that we have taken through various incarnations. To untie these knots, these *granthis* that have been formed within us, requires, no doubt, a Herculean effort. Given that the association of consciousness with the *gunas* is not only an internal bondage but also an external expression of it in the form of practical life, we will find that in the practice of yoga we have to take steps towards freedom, not only by means of internal discipline by adjustment of the mind in required fashion, but also by a corresponding adjustment of the mind in respect of external relations, because the *gunas* operate both outwardly and inwardly. The *gunas* are the desires inside, as well as the objects of the desires—both of these are only

gunas. So when we tackle the *gunas*, we have to tackle the objects of desire as well as the conditions of desire.

Hence, the practice of yoga is not merely a one-sided effort—it is a total effort. It is total in two ways. Firstly, it is a total effort in the sense that the whole of our personality is worked up into action in the practice of yoga. Secondly, the whole of the atmosphere, inwardly as well as outwardly, is taken into consideration for the purpose of the practice. Thus, it is a very vigilant effort of consciousness. Ultimately, it is an effort of consciousness only. We are concerned only with that. Therefore, freedom means the freedom of consciousness from its feelings in respect of its conditions, which are called the *gunas*.

Chapter 31

INTENSE ASPIRATION

Tīvra saṁvegānām āsannaḥ (I.21): It comes near to you when your wanting it becomes intense. This is a very small *sutra* of Patanjali. When we want it intensely, it will come to us—whatever it is. It may be a small pin, or it may be an elephant, or it may be anything; if we want it intensely, it will come to us—*tīvra saṁvegānām āsannaḥ.*

Wanting a thing intensely seems to be the condition for getting anything. "Ask, and it shall be given," said the Christ. Perhaps all great men think alike and say the same thing in different languages and in different actions. The only qualification is 'wanting intensely'. No other qualification is as important as this. Everything, we may say, is a subsidiary, contributory factor to this central discipline: wanting it intensely. The word used is 'intensely'—*tivra*. We have been musing over the different aspects of it being necessary for one to be whole-souled in one's endeavours, in one's actions, in one's efforts, in order that there may be quick success.

This whole-souled attitude is what is meant by *tivra samvegatva.* If our asking is charged with an intensity of fervour, we shall get what we want. This is the secret of success, not only in spiritual life but also in material life, because the whole-souled surging of oneself towards the objective sets in vibration the atmosphere in which the objective is situated, and there is a sympathy or an empathy, an *en rapport* established between the seeker and the sought. The object that we are seeking—I am not speaking of a spiritual object, as it could even be a material object—the

object that we are seeking is not located somewhere in a distant place. This is the secret of achievement of any kind. We have a wrong notion that things are situated far off in some place and therefore it requires a tremendous effort of travel, etc., in the direction of the object in order that it may be acquired. This is not the fact. Any object in this world, whatever it may be, is not cast off into distant space in the manner in which we think it is, or it appears to be.

There is nothing in this world that is spatially cut off by a long distance, ultimately speaking. The distance between the seeker and the sought is an apparent one—it is not a real one. If the distance is real, it would be difficult for us to achieve anything. If there is a real gap between me and somebody else, that somebody else will be outside me forever and ever. The object that we seek is not really cut off by a gap of distance—spatial or even temporal. Even the time factor is not a bar to the achievement of the objective, because while space and time seem to be the principle obstructions to our achievement of anything, they are ultimately nothing if we come to the truth about them. These so-called terrific factors called 'space' and 'time', which on one side make the object appear far off in space and on the other side make it appear distant in time, are ultimately illusory vestments over the consciousness of what the truth is. The achievement of anything is a simple affair if the correct technique is known, because nothing can be simpler to understand and experience than truth. The easiest thing is truth, because it is truth after all, and what else can be as easy as truth? It will be difficult to catch untruth. But it should not be difficult to catch truth. We have said it is truth. It is real. It is a fact. It is what it is. How can we say that it is so hard to get it? To utter a truth is very easy; to tell a lie is very difficult, as we know very well, because we have to think deeply before we utter a lie. But what is the difficulty in telling the truth? It is a plain fact.

The whole-souled movement of consciousness towards the objective is not merely, or not necessarily, a spatial movement. The great teacher Acharya Sankara was never tired of removing this misconception in the minds of people—the travelling to truth does not mean travelling in a vehicle towards some distant place, as if it is a village or a town. In every commentary on every Upanishad and Brahma Sutra he mentions this point—that here, 'travelling' does not mean travelling in a vehicle, nor does it mean movement in space. It is nothing of the kind. It is a different thing altogether that takes place, because the object of our quest is ultimately connected with us—I would say, even now. But even if we do not want to accept that, at least ultimately it is connected with us. Therefore, finally, it is a movement towards our own self.

The achievement of an object, temporal or spiritual, is ultimately an effort towards achievement of unity with one's own self. Though in the beginning it looks like a movement of the seeker towards the sought due to the individuality of the seeker and the consequent isolation of the seeker from the object that is sought, the more we advance towards the object, the nearer we seem to come to our own self. This is very strange. One's intention is to move towards an object, but what is happening is that one is coming nearer to oneself. The reason is that the object that we seek has some connection with us. So the nearer we go to the object, the nearer also we come to our own self, because the self of the object is somehow or other, at least remotely, connected with our own self. And finally, the intention is to unite oneself in the possession of the object. The ultimate success is union of oneself with the objective that has been sought. We are in complete possession of it—not an ordinary possession of an imaginary character, but an absolute commingling of oneself with that objective so that it is inseparable from our being; we have enjoyed it perfectly, to the utter core.

So, this intensity of asking, the profundity of the soul's aspiration for the object that is being sought, mentioned in this *sutra* of Patanjali, *tīvra saṁvegānām āsannaḥ,* is the crux of the whole matter. We are also told that *mumukshutva* is the most important qualification of a spiritual seeker. All other things, even *viveka*, *vairagya*, *shatsampat*, come afterwards. *Mumukshutva*—intense longing—swallows up every other thing. What qualification did the *gopis* have? They were not qualified MA's, graduates from Oxford. They had no *viveka* or *vairagya* in the sense that we describe academically, in philosophical parlance. We should not even apply these technical aspects to them. It was simply a surge of their souls. They wanted it and wanted nothing else, and there ended the matter. "You don't tell me anything else. I want it; I want it, and I don't want anything else." This kind of aspiration was in their hearts, and we should not bring any other argument here—either philosophical, or academic, or logical, or scientific. We do not want to hear anything else. When these arguments were brought in an academic manner by Uddhava, they said, "You bundle up your knowledge and go from here. We want Him, that is all, and we do not want to hear anything else." This wanting is something which is inscrutable, though it is very easily said.

Well, we may say, "If it is such a simple matter, then this is what we want and we don't want anything else." But, my dear friends, this wanting is almost everything; there is nothing which it does not include because this *tivra samvegatva*—this wanting, this intensity of asking—is of a very strange character. We have never been accustomed to this kind of wanting in this world. We cannot want even our father and mother with the intensity that is expected here. What is the dearest object in this world? Perhaps it is our parents; we cannot think of a dearer thing than father and mother, for instance. We cannot like even them so much, unless certain

conditions are fulfilled. Even our love for parents is conditional; unconditional love is impossible. Certain conditions must be fulfilled—only then we love. Otherwise we say, "Good bye, I don't want to look at you." But here it is not like that; this is unconditioned asking. It is not limited by space, time, causality, or any kind of qualification from outside. Whatever may happen, and whatever be the difficulties on the way—whatever be the obstacles and whatever be the temptations—we shall not yield to any of these but move straight towards the objective that is before us.

Another peculiar attribute which Patanjali uses is *samvega*. It is very difficult to translate it into English—*tivra samvega*. *Tivra* is intense, very forceful, vehement. *Samvega* is impetuosity, if we would like to put it into English. We know what impetuous movement is—it is turbulent, uncontrollable, vehement, powerful, revolting—such is the kind of asking that is implied in this *sutra*. That is *samvega*—like a violent tempest, a forceful wind that is blowing, uprooting all trees and blowing buildings. We know how forcefully the wind can blow off even the top of buildings. That kind of aspiration is called *samvegatva*, where we do not care for anything else. Let heaven go to hell or hell go to heaven, it makes no difference. The soul is simply revolting against any kind of limitation which has been imposed upon it by any factor whatsoever, even if it is a so-called virtuous factor of the traditional world. Everything is broken to pieces, cast to the winds, crushed under the feet, and the soul simply asks and asks and asks. This is the *tivra samvegatva* that Patanjali is referring to in the seeking of the great Reality, which is the object of our quest.

Such an asking, such a kind of aspiration, this kind of longing is unknown to us. Neither can you understand it, nor can I understand it. It is impossible for any human mind to have such an aspiration for anything in this world. We have

tentative longings; we have conditional desires and limited loves, but unlimited love is unknown to us. Nevertheless, this is what is needed if we want success. Unfortunately, as the mind has been tethered to conditions of various types right from its birth in this physical world, this kind of aspiration has been a strange phenomenon even to the farthest stretch of imagination. But now we have come to the field of a new type of training where such an old prejudice of thought is to be abandoned and a new understanding is to be awakened in ourselves, which has nothing to do with the factors which may condition this asking in any manner whatsoever. Bondage is of two kinds—that which looks bad, and that which looks good. There are two types of bondage in this world. There are certain things which everybody appraises as valuable, considers wonderful and praiseworthy; that is one kind of bondage, and it is as powerful a bondage as the second kind—that which we call 'bad' in this world. This is because the idea of bad and good is, again, conditional in respect of circumstances, conditions and stages of evolution. What is bad at one time may be good at another time, and vice versa. So in this unconditional asking of the soul for its supreme object, it gets rid of the shackles of conditional factors either in the form of virtue or in the form of vice.

Spiritual aspiration is a non-ethical movement of consciousness where it becomes superior to all conditions either of morality, or ethics, or law, because it has a law of its own. The law of divine love is different from the law of the world. It cannot be appreciated by ordinary minds, nor can it be understood, because every desire, every wish, every effort, every longing, every love in this world has an ulterior purpose. Whenever we love something in this world, it is with an ulterior motive. We want to achieve something out of it, so the love is not an end in itself. It is the means to the achievement of something else and, therefore, we cannot

understand the nature of that love, which is a law unto itself. We are acquainted only with that love which is conditioned by other laws. What are those laws? They are the laws of achievement of an ulterior object, for which purpose love is used as a means or an instrument. So, we are not really unselfish lovers in this world.

Unselfish love is unknown, because love is used as an instrument for the achievement of something else. How then can we call it unselfish? But here, love is a law unto itself in the sense that it has no object outside it; it is itself the object. We may ask how it is possible. Here the divine aspiration, or the love of the Supreme Reality, is not an emotion. It is not merely a psychological function. It is not the mind thinking of something, or feeling in respect of an external object. It is a rising up of the soul towards a higher condition of itself. This is a great differentiating factor between ordinary objects which are sought in the world, and the spiritual object which is the goal of yoga or spiritual life.

While in the acquiring of objects of a temporal nature in this world the movement may look horizontal—a movement of one individual towards another individual or a group of other individuals, in a spatial direction—here, in this case, it is a kind of rise from the bottom to the top. It is like waking up from dream, where we are not moved from one place to another place. When we wake up from dream, there is no movement; and yet, there is a movement. As there is a transformation, we can call it a movement. But it is not an ordinary kind of movement, like moving from Rishikesh to Delhi. It is not that kind of movement. It is a reshuffling of the constitution of one's own mental conditioning and the whole set-up of consciousness—a reorganisation of one's own individuality. It is a complete reordering of one's true being for the purpose of a reawakening into a wider order of reality, about which I have been mentioning again and again. And

here, in this awakening into a higher order of reality, the object that was originally thought to be outside in space is now visualised as something nearer to oneself than it appeared to be earlier.

The whole thing is made still more difficult by another condition which Patanjali puts in a subsequent *sutra*: *mṛdu madhya adhimātravāt tataḥ api viśeṣaḥ* (I.22). Even in this tremendous aspiration, this impetuous asking, there are degrees of intensity. There can be mild asking, there can be middling asking, and there is the most intense type of asking. Firstly, it was said that our wanting, or asking, or our aspiration should be turbulently vehement—unconditionally forceful. Now, here he says there can even be degrees—all of which make it appear that perhaps we are unfit for the practice of yoga or the attainment of God. It looks terrible—better to bid goodbye and go and have lunch. Sometimes it looks as if it is not meant for us. But the difficulty of the whole matter is also the worth and value of it. It is difficult to get gold and diamonds, and yet we know the value of them. Once we get them, they will support us for our entire life.

The attainment of that higher reality is difficult merely because of its inseparability from us. Everything that is connected with us is most difficult to understand. We can understand everything connected with others. We can be masters in the psychology of others' minds, but about our own minds we are the biggest fools—we cannot understand anything. Likewise, we may be very clear about all things in this world, but completely idiotic about things connected with our own self, and so the difficulty has arisen. The object of the quest is somehow or other subtly connected with our self—that is the difficulty of the whole matter. If it had been really far off, unconnected with us, that would be a different thing altogether. But it is connected with us, and so there is a necessity to reorganise our way of thinking.

I can give a certain practical suggestion as to how this can be achieved in our daily routines of *sadhana*. What makes it difficult for us to generate such a genuine aspiration within us is our habitual association with hackneyed factors outside. We are used to living in a certain type of atmosphere, and we are continuing to live in that atmosphere. We have not changed that atmosphere. Merely because we have left Rameswaram and come to Kasi, it does not mean that the atmosphere has changed; it is the same atmosphere. We see the same people; we breath the same air; we drink the same water; we have the same hunger and thirst; we sleep in the same manner; we have anger; we have irritation, perplexity, and prejudice of the same type, and we think in the same way as we thought in Rameswaram—there is absolutely no difference. So, what is the difference? What change has been brought about? What is necessary is that this change of location that we have effected becomes helpful in bringing about a change inwardly also. Otherwise, why should we move from place to place, as if we have no other work? We can stay in one place, wherever it is.

Why do we travel from place to place, as if we have nothing else to do? The reason is that we want to bring about a corresponding change in our own self, and the external movement has been used as a kind of assistance. But if that change has not become an assistance, the whole effort is futile. Another thing: why does it not become helpful? How is it that this imagined external change of condition does not become helpful in bringing about an internal reorientation of living? The reason is that we have not been very honest and sincere. There has been a kind of bungling in the whole attitude of our mind towards what we are seeking, and a kind of confusion—a self-deception, we may say. This, again, is due to a lack of proper training from a competent master. Again, I come to this point that a Guru is necessary. We cannot tread this path with our own legs. Our legs are very weak, because

there are millions of obstacles that can simply shake us from our roots and throw us into the pits, even with all our understanding, which is of no use in the face of these obstacles. The obstacles are violent winds, and our legs are like sand which will be thrown in any direction by these violent movements of winds of desire, and whatnot.

In the external change that we bring about, which is the first step in *vairagya*, as people generally understand it, we leave the homestead and go to Badrinath or Uttarkashi, or somewhere. This initial step that we regard as *vairagya* or renunciation is to be converted into an internal discipline and change of attitude, for which proper guidance is necessary. Everything is a system of thinking, a change in the attitude of consciousness, and even the first step that we take is only towards that end. Unless there is a corresponding transformation inside, external movements have no meaning. If proper care is taken, an external discipline has some effect upon the internal character. But proper care has to be taken. We have to be very vigilant, and we cannot be vigilant if we give a long rope to our old ways of thinking. We can change anything, but our ways of thinking cannot change, because that is a part of us—part of our nature.

What we should do is, together with our effort at change of physical atmosphere, also try to bring about a gradual change in our internal atmosphere by resorting to certain spiritual disciplines, such as the utilisation of the time on hand for certain definite chosen purposes. When we live in a particular place—we have left our homes and have come to Uttarkashi, for instance—how do we use our time? Do we go about from place to place, chatting? Then we should go back to our home and stay there. Why do we come to Uttarkashi? We have to utilise the time for a purpose which is more intimate to the object on hand than the way in which we lived earlier. Generally, people take to mantra *purascharana*—a

disciplined type of chanting of the mantra that has been given to them by their Guru—and sacred study of scriptures, such as the Srimad Bhagavata or the Ramayana, or any other holy text which is conducive to pinpointing the mind on the liberation of the soul, which is the ultimate objective.

Another greatly helpful factor is observing *mouna* or not talking, or at least talking only when it is necessary. Talking only when it is necessary means we will talk only when it is absolutely impossible to avoid talking; otherwise, we will not talk. Why do we go on talking with everyone? There is no necessity. We should regard ourselves as real seekers and not merely as jokers with truth, and try to open our mouths only when it is necessary, and otherwise not open our mouths. It is necessary to open the mouth only when it has some connection with the purpose for which we have come here. When it has no connection, why do we talk? We should keep our mouths closed. This is not only a spiritual discipline but also a very helpful method of conserving energy, because much of the energy is lost in talking. If we do not speak for three days continuously, we will see what difference it makes. We will feel that there is so much of strength in us that we can walk even long distances without any feeling of fatigue. All our energy goes in speaking unnecessarily to anyone and anything that is in front of us, on any subject whatsoever.

This is, perhaps, a major obstacle in the practice of yoga. Do not speak for some days. Take this vow: "For any reason whatsoever, I will not speak." When speaking is necessary, condition it by a principle that: "I should regard it as most unavoidable; otherwise, I will not speak." This is the discipline of speech, which is a very, very important discipline. There is also mental discipline in the form of *japa* and *svadhyaya*, with a little bit of meditation to the extent possible under the condition in which we are seated initially. And, there is physical discipline. These three disciplines

should go together, by which what is intended is a total restriction of the movement of the mind towards extraneous factors which may distract the attention and diminish the intensity of the aspiration. The more we restrain the mind from its movement towards extraneous factors, the greater is the energy that is generated within, and automatically the aspiration becomes strengthened. When the energy is not allowed to leak out through other avenues or channels, then that energy naturally gets conserved, and the conserved energy increases the force of the aspiration. Energy is not destroyed. The principle of conservation of energy states that energy is indestructible. It cannot be destroyed, but it can be increased or decreased by channelising it in different ways. It may appear that we have no energy at all because we have channelised the energy in some other way—it has gone somewhere else. Not that it is absent—it is there, but we have let it out, and so it looks as if it is not there.

Therefore, we should block the avenues of the distraction of energy—the channelising of it in various ways, in an unwanted manner—and then conserve it so that this centralised force within us, which is the conserved energy, will give such a push to the aspiration within that the soul will rush to the Absolute like a bullet that has been fired by a gun. That kind of aspiration is referred to in this *sutra* of Patanjali—*tīvra saṁvegānām āsannaḥ.*

Chapter 32

OUR CONCEPT OF GOD

A very potent method prescribed by the yoga system for the purpose of channelising the mind towards its salvation is the worship of God. This is, perhaps, the ultimate stroke that one can deal upon the mind when everything else fails. The worship of God is an expression of one's love for God, just as when we adore a person in this world, in any manner whatsoever, we express our love for that person by means of various external forms of behaviour and conduct, which is, in technical religious terms, called a ritual. If I love you, how can I show that love to you? The way in which I show my love for you is ritual. Even if I join my hands and offer my salutations, it is a ritual that I am performing because it is an outward symbol of inward feeling. Though the inward feeling is more important than the outward expression or conduct, there seems to be a reciprocal relationship between these two aspects of one's approach to anything. So in the practice of yoga, which is aimed at ultimate God-realisation, the adoration of God may be taken as a principal technique which may commence, in the beginning, with external forms of the religious attitude. As a matter of fact, what we call 'religion' is nothing but ritual expressed in various degrees of subtlety and manifesting the spirit of which it is the expression.

As the realisation of God is the goal of life, and it is towards this purpose that we are putting forth all our efforts in every way, the absorption of the mind in the concept of God may be regarded as the highest of duties. The greatest duty is the occupation of the mind with that object for which purpose it exists and functions, and all other duties may be

contributory to the fulfilment of this central duty. It is difficult to conceive God and, therefore, it is difficult to express our love for Him in an unconditional manner. As we have been observing, our religious traditions and performances have mostly been conditional. They have been some sort of an activity, like any other activity in a factory or a shop, though it is not true that religion is such a kind of temporal engagement. The religious spirit is what is important, and it is this that should animate the religious formalism and ritual.

Īśvara praṇidhānāt vā (I.23) is a *sutra* of Sage Patanjali. One of the methods of controlling the mind is surrender to God. According to many, it is perhaps the principal method of controlling the mind. This is a most positive approach, of the many that can be thought of. When our mind is absorbed in love for something—'absorbed' is the word, completely occupied with the thought of a particular thing—there is no chance for the mind to think of anything else. The modifications of the mind, the *vrittis* in respect of objects, should cease spontaneously when they are all focused in the direction of love of God. There is no need for any struggle in the form of breathing exercises or any type of hardship in the control of the mind or its *vrittis*, if it is absorbed in a love which is all-consuming.

The extent of our love of God, the intensity of our feeling for God, will depend upon our idea of God, our concept of God. There are various concepts of the Creator, of God, the Absolute, etc., according to the various philosophical theories, doctrines, and religious traditions. One of the primitive forms of conceiving God is that He is the Creator of the world. We have a childish idea of a creator. A creator is one who makes things, and God is someone Who has made this world. "God made this world" is an old saying which we often repeat. God made the world and, therefore, God is the Creator of the world. God is the Father of the world and, therefore, all

His children should love Him as the Supreme Parent. The idea of creatorship that is in our minds is the conditioning factor of our love towards this Creator. We have seen in this world that if someone makes something, he is the efficient or sometimes the instrumental cause of that particular thing that he has made, and the thing that he has made is an effect that is produced by him, standing outside him. God can thus be regarded as extra-cosmic, which is the usual way in which we conceive God.

We cannot imagine God usually, normally speaking, in any other way than as someone standing outside the world. If a carpenter makes a table or a chair, we can call him the creator of the table or the chair; and the table stands outside him, so that there is no proper relationship between what he has made and his own existence. Hence, we have to cry to God in a loud tone so that our voices may reach Him in the transcendent paradise where He is seated. We have a concept of paradise in every religion. In the Hindu religion we call it Vaikuntha, or Brahmaloka, Kailasa, etc., but whatever term we use, it is a concept of heaven—the highest heaven where God is seated—which we have to reach. We love God as we love any other object in this world, because God Himself has become an object of the love of the individual.

Here I have to take a few moments to give some sort of an idea as to what love is, so that we may have an idea as to its relationship to the object of love. Most people have no idea of what it is and, therefore, it has been given many definitions. The most common definition of love is that it is a psychological emotion, a welling up of certain feelings in respect of an object. Love is the manner in which the mind arranges itself in respect of an object which it needs. Just as when one is on a battleground and there is a necessity to gird up one's loins for an immediate attack, one prepares oneself thoroughly, from head to foot, for the purpose of the task on

hand—or, a wrestler in the field prepares himself for the purpose for which he is there, and in this preparation he is worked up into a feeling of total concentration of his personality for the achievement of that purpose—in a similar manner, the mind works itself up into a concentrated feeling in respect of the object which it needs for a particular purpose, at a particular time. This working up of the mind in sympathy with the object which it needs at a particular time is the love that the mind has for the object. Therefore, love may be regarded as a condition of the mind. It is a state of mind—not a perpetual state, but a temporary state of the mind—in respect of that particular object which is necessary at that particular moment.

Ordinarily speaking, there is nothing in this world which we require always. Therefore, it is not possible for the mind to be in a condition of love for all times. If a particular thing can be needed for all time, then the love also can be there for all time; but such a thing is not present in this world. According to the conditions of body, atmosphere, age, etc., needs go on changing, and the mind arranges itself accordingly, under different conditions, in respect of the outer atmosphere in which it wants to place itself. So the condition of the mind called 'love' is subject to the necessities of the time, and there is no such thing as an eternal love for anything in this world. It is a movement of the mind towards the object. Sometime back we were discussing the nature of the movement of the mind in regard to the object, where it pervades the object—that pervasion being called *vrittivyapti*, etc. So the mind, when it loves an object, is in the form of a *vritti*. Love is a *vritti*, and Patanjali says all *vrittis* must be controlled, which means that even love must be controlled.

Love of God is something different from ordinary love, because God is not something which we need today and do not need tomorrow. God is not an object of a temporal necessity.

He is not a requisite of a particular period of time, or of a given condition. God is a necessity of every condition, of all times, and for every person, at every place. The reason is that God is the presupposition of every condition of being, and hence the love of God cannot be conditional; it is always unconditional. While every other love can be conditioned by circumstances and needs of the time, no such condition can apply to the love of God. But our concept of God is here a very important factor, which rules the destiny of our love for God. If God is extra-cosmic, which means to say that He is outside the world, as a carpenter is outside the table or the chair, then there should be some means of communication between the table and the carpenter, or the world and God. The means of communication is, of course, the very same means that we adopt in coming in contact with anything else in this world. How do we come in contact with any person or thing in this world? We adopt the same means also in respect of God. We cry and shout loudly so that the person will hear us, if the person is far away, and yearn from within for vision and contact of that something which we love.

Now, the yearning or the love, when it is directed to an object outside, becomes a psychological condition, and if love of God is also to become a psychological condition, then it may change according to the conditions of the mind. No condition of the mind can be perpetual, because it is related to the structure of the body also. In different incarnations, different types of births that we take, the states of mind may change, and so the attitudes which the mind has towards things also may vary in different incarnations. So the love of God may become conditioned if He is to be treated as an extra-cosmic something which has to be reached by a temporal affection in the form of a mental emotion, as we have in respect of ordinary objects in this world.

Secondly, the extra-cosmic concept of God makes Him an individual like other individuals, though He may be a vaster individual than others. Anything that is 'somewhere' is finite in its nature. If God is outside the world and the world is outside God, naturally the world would be finite, and God also would be finite in the same manner, because one would limit the other. The existence of the world would limit God, and the existence of God would limit the world, so both would become finite. Anything that is finite is subject to destruction, because every finite thing is seen to have a tendency to move towards something else in order that it may overcome its finitude. So God would be an imperfect being wishing to become more perfect, as any other individual would do, if He is regarded as extra-cosmic, conditioned, limited and finite. Also, there would be no means of approach to God, because an extraordinary perception, which would be necessary to come in contact with God, would be denied its need if the placement of God is extra-cosmic.

Anything that is outside us places itself in such a way that it cannot be possessed by us, in the true sense of the term. That which is outside us cannot be possessed by us, and we cannot do anything with that thing which is really outside us. We can have a tentative contact with things outside, but these contacts are conditional and subject to destruction and separation. Anything that comes in union with another thing is also subject to separation. Every union is subject to separation, because union has a beginning and an end. Because of this peculiar feature of contact with things, there is no such thing as permanent contact with anything in this world. If this were to be the nature of God, there would be no such thing as permanent contact with God. We would be separated from God in the same way as we are separated from other things in the world. Our aim, which is permanent union with God, will be an impossibility if He is an extra-cosmic individual.

So, there is a defect in the concept of God as a Creator or a Maker in the sense of a carpenter or a potter. To obviate this difficulty, people have conceived God as an Immanent Ruler—some such thing as the soul in the body. The soul in the body is not outside the body. It is not a creator of the body in the sense of a carpenter making a chair, and yet we cannot say that the soul is the body; it is not identical. So, a via media was struck by certain thinkers in the religious field, who made out that it is not fair or tenable to hold that God is totally extra-cosmic, for then there would be no means of communication with Him. He has to be intimately present in His creation, and He has to be organically related to the world so that there may be a real contact of the effect with the cause. The soul and the body are organically united. We cannot separate the body and the soul; they are together.

Though this is a very satisfactory solution and we can conceive God as an organic unifying principle of the cosmos which He has created, it becomes difficult to understand the factors that were responsible for the creation of the world, whether bondage is real or not, and what sort of relationship really exists between the soul and the body. Is the body a quality, an attribute of the soul, or is it something quite different from the soul? How does the soul pervade the body? Examples have been given. When we soak cloth in water, we find that every fibre of the cloth is permeated by water. The whole cloth is wet with water. Every part of the cloth has absorbed water, so that there is no part of the cloth where water is not. In that sense we can say that God is everywhere in the world. Yet, water is not the cloth; they are two different things. We can wring out the water from the cloth, and then dry it. Water and milk can be mixed together so that we cannot know where the water is and where the milk is. Yet we know that milk is milk and water is water; they are not one and the same thing. Though we cannot distinguish between water and

milk when they are mixed together, they are yet independent and cannot be identified one with the other.

So if God is to permeate this world, in what sense does He permeate it? How does He become immanent in this world? Does He enter into this world as water enters cloth or electricity charges a copper wire? When electricity passes through a wire, we find that every particle of the wire is charged with electricity, so that if we touch any part of the wire, we feel the shock of the current. The force of electricity is present in every particle of the wire, and yet the wire is not electricity; they are two different things. The electrical force can be withdrawn and the wire will be just wire, dead and powerless. So, whatever be the manner in which we may conceive the presence of God in this world, a difficulty will arise in understanding the relationship between God and the world.

The organic connection that has been introduced into the field of religion is a practical solution of a difficulty that has been posed by the concept of the extra-cosmic presence of God. Yet the problem persists in a very subtle manner, so that we may be inwardly unfriendly with a person though we may be sitting on the lap of that person. As we know very well, physical proximity of even the most intense type need not be an emblem of friendship. Though I may be sitting on your head, I may not be friendly with you.

There is an internal dichotomy subtly pressing itself forward, even in the organic concept of God; and how can there be an unconditioned love of God, a perpetual feeling for God, when the relationship of oneself with God is not clear? "I don't understand you and, therefore, I cannot love you. So my love for you depends upon my understanding of you, and the more I understand you, the more I love you." Here, the understanding is nothing but an appreciation of the real connection that exists between oneself and the other. "I must

know, first of all, what my relationship with you is; then I can tell you how much love I have for you. Are you my father? Are you my brother? Are you my boss? Are you my servant? Are you my friend? Are you my enemy? What are you? If you tell me what you are, I can tell you how much love I have for you, because your context in relation to my presence is what determines my feeling for you." Likewise, I may ask this question: "How am I related to God?" This question was completely brushed aside by certain schools of devotion. They never wanted to answer this question at all, and kept it aside in cold storage. "We shall love God as we love anything else in this world."

But wholly dedicating ourselves for the sake of God—these feelings for God, in a whole-souled fashion, though in a rarefied form of the ordinary loves in the world, are called the *bhavas* in *bhakti* yoga. A *bhava* is a feeling. Our feeling for God is called a *bhava*. Here, the basic difference that seems to be there between man and God is taken for granted, and it is not solved, because it cannot be solved so easily. If we go on trying to solve this question, our whole life will be spent in only answering this question. Therefore, the teachers of the path of devotion emphasised the necessity to love God, somehow or other, even if it be a magnified form of human love; and the answer to the difficulty as to whether human love is really divine love was that when human love gets magnified into infinity, it becomes divine love. There is a great point in this answer, because when the finite is lifted up into an unconditioned expanse to the extent possible for the mind, it loses the sting of finitude. The doctrine here is that when this human affection is expanded into the vastness of creation—though it may be true that in quality it has not changed, because of the fact that it has transformed itself into an utterly inconceivable magnitude of quantity—it will be

free from the stigma of finitude of affection, and will be able to achieve certain miraculous results which finite love cannot.

These *bhavas* or feelings of love for God are, therefore, human affections diverted to God in an all-absorbing manner, so that the conditioning factors of human affection are removed as far as possible, and God is taken for granted as a permanent Being—not like an ordinary object in the world which can die one day or the other, but as a perpetually existent Being—and the necessity for loving that permanent Being is emphasised. Here, the feeling for God is similar to the feeling we have towards human relationships. These *bhavas* of *bhakti* are the central features of one path of yoga, called *bhakti* yoga, where God can be loved as a father, for instance. This is called *shanta bhava*, where emotions are least present.

We do not have a lot of emotion in respect of our father. We have a reverence for our father, a respect and a feeling of awe, coupled with a sustained emotion of love—not in the form of an ebullition of emotion, but as a controlled form of feeling which is designated as the peaceful attitude, or the *shanta bhava*. Most religions regard God as a father, and very few religions have any other attitude. He is the Supreme Father, and our relation to God is the relation that we have to a father, and we feel for God in the same way as we feel for our father. What is our feeling for our father? Fear is also a part of this love when God is regarded as a parent, because we fear our father—not because we dislike him, but because he has certain regulating principles which may not always be commensurate with our whims and fancies of personality.

The juristic concept of God as a lawgiver, a lawmaker and a dispenser of justice is a pre-eminent feature in the concept of God in most religions. This feeling can be regarded as one of the channelising factors which can draw all the forces of the mind towards God. The teachers of *bhakti* tell us that if God is

regarded as All-in-all, as the Supreme Maker and the All-powerful Being, even if He be the Creator in the sense of an ordinary maker of things, a day will come when this quantitative expanse of devotion will automatically bring about, in a subtle manner, a qualitative transformation also, so that human love can become divine love.

Chapter 33

WHAT DIVINE LOVE IS

In at least two *sutras*, Sage Patanjali refers to the efficacy of devotion to God in the practice of yoga. Previously I made reference to this subject—how the love of God can act as a masterstroke in the control of the mind. The distractions of the mind, in the form of what are known as the *vrittis* or the psychoses in respect of objects of sense, get completely reorganised, modified and sublimated by this all-absorbing menstruum that is known as the love of God.

Devotion to God is constitutionally different from ordinary loves known to us in the world, though it is the doctrine of the philosophy of *bhakti* that human affection may be turned to God and then be allowed to get sublimated in this manner. The structure of divine love is different from the structure of human affection because of the nature of the object itself. The object of divine love is God, whereas the object of human affection is a finite something, located somewhere, and persisting only for some period of time. As I mentioned, because of this peculiar character of finite objects, loves in this world automatically become conditional, and there is no such thing as unconditioned love in this world. It is not possible to love a thing for all time and under every condition, because human affection is the reaction of the mind in respect of an object or a condition outside which is felt as a necessity by the mind under a given condition. When the necessity is not felt, the love vanishes automatically. So love is a peculiar instrument in the fulfilment of a necessity felt by the mind in its individual capacity. Just imagine—love can be selfish, and perhaps it is, because of its being backed by a

necessity felt inside, and if the necessity is not there, the love also cannot be there.

But divine love is of a different nature; here, the question of conditional necessity does not arise. We do not love God for some other purpose, though, in ordinary popular religious attitudes, it appears that the love of God is used as a kind of tool for the satisfaction of certain ulterior motives of untutored minds. But, ultimately, that is not real devotion. When we pray to God for long life or promotion in the office, that cannot be called an expression of divine love. We do not pray to God because we love Him when we say, "God, give me long life." Well, it may look as if we love Him because we are praying to Him; but this is not love, because our love is for a long life and not for God, and He is used only as a tool. Most unfortunate is this peculiar situation in which God is placed. But that is not the intention of divine love. The intention is to comprehend all that God is, because of the value that is inherent in God's very existence itself. God Himself has a value by Himself, and His value does not consist in what He does for us—as it is, or as it may be, in the case of human beings. The value of an officer in the government, for instance, may be said to consist in what he can do or what he is supposed to do, so that his value is his action or his capacity to act. But God's value is not merely in His action or in His capacity to act; it is merely because of His very Being Itself.

The 'being' of a human being, the individual, is not complete, and therefore it has to be completed by certain extra additions in the form of qualifying activities. We work hard so that our finite being can get modified into a larger, more expanded, comprehensive constitution. Why is it that we act? We act because we are finite. We are incomplete. There is something wanting and lacking inside, and our activities are supposed to pinpoint themselves to certain ends in view which, when acquired, or possessed, or enjoyed, are supposed

to increase the dimension of our being, lessening our finitude. That is why we work hard from morning to evening.

But God has no such necessity. He need not work to increase the dimension of His Being, because His Being is infinite, and there is no need to increase the dimension of infinitude. Hence, the worth or value of God is the very existence of God, whereas the worth or value of anything else in this world does not lie merely in its being, but in what it means in its relationship to someone else who is the experiencer or the observer thereof. God's existence does not depend on the relationship that He has with others, or what He would mean to others under different conditions.

In this world, which is a relational world, or the relative world, as we may prefer to call it, the worth of a thing depends upon its connectedness with other things. This table has a value, and we know why it is valuable. It has value because it serves a purpose for somebody. So, the worth or value of a table is not intrinsic, but extrinsic. It serves a purpose, but to whom does it serve a purpose? The table does not serve a purpose to itself; it serves a purpose to someone other than itself. So the value of the table is not in itself, but in a peculiar relationship that seems to be obtaining between itself and someone else, for whose purpose it is valuable or worth the while. Everything in this world is like that—organic or inorganic, living or otherwise. There is no such thing as a self-existent value in this world, and therefore everything is conditional.

So, once again, I come to the point that we cannot unconditionally like or love anything in this world. When we have nothing to do with a table, we cannot have any affection for it. If we have no work to do on the table and have nothing to do with it, then naturally our mind will not go towards it. So is the case with every blessed thing in this world, even the dearest and the nearest, which is so only on

account of a conditional necessity felt by our psychophysical individuality. When this necessity is obviated on account of a transformation that we automatically undergo in the process of evolution, our needs change and our loves also change, and therefore what we loved in our previous birth may not be the objects of love in this birth. As a matter of fact, whatever we experience in this life are the reactions of what we desired in those previous lives.

To give an instance as to how things happen, suppose you ask for cold, fresh water from the fridge during the hot summer. You tell me, "I want cold water because it is summer, and very hot." Then I give you cold water in the middle of January because you asked for that water once upon a time. "You want cold fridge water? Here it is." But now you do not want it, because it is the middle of January—it is shivering cold and you would like to have hot coffee or tea rather than cold water. For some peculiar reason, our desires do not fructify themselves at once. And so, when the water is wanted and asked for in summer, it can come in winter, and then we say, "What a wretched thing this is. Why this *prarabdha* has come on my head?" And so, all these painful *prarabdhas* that we are undergoing in this world are cold water coming in winter, or hot tea coming in midsummer when we would like to have a cold bath.

We are getting what we wanted—nothing else. But unfortunately, these things are coming at the wrong time, when we do not want them, which is a different matter altogether. The law of nature has a system of its own, and for extraordinary reasons which cannot easily be comprehended by the human mind, the asking is not granted at once; but it is granted. Sometimes it may be granted after several births, and not even after a few months as I mentioned in the above analogy. And when it comes to us after many births, we do not know what this devil is that is coming. Why are we

suddenly confronted with a horror? But it is not a horror—it was a very desirable thing that we wanted, though many births previously. Because of the weakness of the desire, it has taken so much time to materialise itself. But if it was a very vehement desire, well, it may manifest itself immediately. If our virtue or vice is very strong, it can materialise itself as the fruit here in this birth itself. But if it is mild and we are indifferent as to when it is fulfilled, then it will come after some time and not immediately. However, if we say, "No, I want it immediately. I must get it just now. Please bring it right away. I must get it!"—then it will come. But usually such a strong asking is not there, so it takes a lot of time.

So, the conditional relationships of our individuality with circumstances outside prevent us from having any kind of genuineness in our approach to things or in our affections. God is infinite. *Kleśa karma vipāka āśayaiḥ aparāmṛṣṭaḥ puruṣaviśeṣaḥ Īśvaraḥ* (I.24). Who is Ishvara whom Patanjali mentions in this *sutra*? He is not affected by anything that usually affects the individual, and therefore the defects of the individual are not present in Ishvara. There are no *kleshas*—the afflictions which we are subjected to are absent in God. He is pristine purity and abundance of everything that is positively needed for anyone, at any time. *Kleshas* are undesirable, painful, limiting factors which harass the individual, and cannot be said to be present in an Infinite Being like God.

The *kleshas* or the painful afflictions, at least in the system of Patanjali, are: ignorance of the true nature of things, known as *avidya*; as a consequence thereof, egoism or the principle of self-affirmation, *asmita*; a further consequence following from it—*raga* and *dvesha*, like and dislike; and a far greater concretisation of this attitude manifests itself as intense love of physical life and fear of

death. These are known as the painful *kleshas*. God is not unaware of the true nature of things, so there is no *avidya* in Ishvara. He knows the correct position of everything. He knows the past and the future and the present, and so there is not the least trace of nescience in God. Everything is known to Him in its proper place and in its proper condition, so there is no *avidya*, no ignorance of any kind, no cloud of unknowing in the case of God, and therefore there is no egoism in God. He does not assert Himself in contradistinction to an object outside Him. There is no egoism in God because there is no object in front of God, so there is nothing to oppose Him, confront Him, or limit Him. He doesn't need anything. He need not show His power to anybody else.

The question of egoism, or the principle of individual self-affirmation, does not arise in the case of Ishvara or God, and therefore He has no likes and dislikes. He does not need anything, and therefore He cannot have likes. For the same reason, He cannot have dislikes, because when there are no likes, naturally there are no dislikes. Dislikes are only those peculiar mental attitudes in respect of factors contrary to those necessary for the fulfilment of our likes. This question does not arise in the case of God, for obvious reasons. God has no fear of death, because the Infinite cannot die, and therefore He has no love of physical life. God is not a physical individual. So, these *kleshas* are absent in God. *Avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesha*, and *abhinivesha* cannot be in God. Also, the other *kleshas*—those which are of a non-painful nature, namely perception of objects, etc., which involve a mental modification in respect of what is observed or cognised under circumstances of the remoteness of objects of perception—are also not present in God. God does not perceive objects with eyes as we see objects, for instance, because the objects are not outside Him.

There is no need for *vritti-vyapti*, etc., in the case of God. The *vritti-vyapti*, which is the movement of the mind in respect of an object outside as well as the pervasion of the object by the mind, etc., is not in God. The mind of God does not move towards an object, because all objects are comprehended within the Being of God. So there is no mental modification or *vritti*, no limiting perception or cognition in the case of God. All *kleshas*, all afflictions, all limitations, and all conditions of every description are absent in the case of God. So He is *aparamristah*—untouched by afflictions of this type. *Karma vipaka* is also not present in God. He need not suffer the consequences of His actions. His actions, if we can call them actions, do not produce reaction. Every action that we do has a reaction, but the actions of God cannot have a reaction. Also, for the same reason, the actions performed by those who are in God-consciousness do not produce a reaction.

An action produces a reaction because of the mind impinging upon an object outside, which is the motive behind the action. Every individual action can be said to be a kind of interference with the law of nature. We are not wise enough to understand the circumstances under which nature works. We do not know what is good from the point of view of nature as a whole. Therefore, what we regard as good from our own individual point of view may, and of course it often does, come in conflict with what nature regards as ultimately good. When our individual attitude of the so-called good conflicts with the real good, which is the point of view of nature, there is a reaction set up by nature in respect of this so-called attitude of goodness or value arising from the individual.

It is something like an electromagnetic field giving a kick when we go near it. The forces that constitute our body cannot bear the power of the energy that is vibrating around that electromagnetic field. If we go near a substation of

high-voltage electricity we may get a kick, or we may be pulled towards it and be destroyed. The reason for such reaction is that our actions may not always conform to the requisite laws of nature as a whole. Nature naturally tries to maintain an equilibrium; it cannot brook any kind of interference in its law. As every individual approach is an interference with the equilibrium of nature, there is an automatic reaction set up by nature for the purpose of maintaining the equilibrium which has been disturbed by the wrong notion of the individual.

So, individual actions produce reaction, and we suffer the consequence of these actions. This is called *karmaphala*. Why do we suffer? We suffer because we have done something wrong. Why is it wrong? It is wrong because it does not conform to the existent laws of nature as a whole. Why does it not conform to nature as a whole? We have no understanding of the laws of nature; we are not omniscient. But in the case of God, and in the case of those who have knowledge of God or experience of God—who are one with God—this question does not arise, because when there is God-consciousness there is also an infinitude of awareness in respect of everything. Our actions will then not be interferences, but rather participations in the existing laws. Participation in law does not produce any reaction from that law, but interference with law may produce a reaction. The law of nature and the law of God mean one and the same thing; they are not two different things. Therefore, there is no question of any reaction being set up by the actions of God. It is difficult to understand what an action of God is. It is not the movement of limbs, of hands and feet, etc. It is an inscrutable mystery, as the existence of God itself is.

For this wonderful reason that is behind the glorious existence of God, *karma vipaka* or fruits of action cannot be attributed to anything that God may do or does. He is also

unaffected—*aparamristah*—by *karma vipaka*. *Kleśa karma vipāka āśayaiḥ*—the impressions of actions also are absent in His case. So there is no rebirth for God. He is not compelled to take repeated reincarnations. The incarnations of God are not compelled by *karma*, while our incarnations are forced by *karma*. We are born, not of our own accord, but by forces which exert a pressure upon us and make it obligatory on our part to be born under certain conditions. But in the case of the incarnations of God or manifestations of God, they are spontaneous revelations of the Universal Law. All these limiting factors are absent in the case of God.

Kleśa karma vipāka āśayaiḥ aparāmṛṣṭaḥ puruṣaviśeṣaḥ Īśvaraḥ (I.24). A peculiar, definitive attribute is given here in this *sutra* by Patanjali in respect of God. *Puruṣaviśeṣaḥ*—He is a *purusha*, but He is not an ordinary *purusha*. Generally, by *purusha* we mean a male; but God is not a male. We cannot attribute any such thing to God, or use 'he', 'she' or 'it'. These words are useless in respect of God; they are only helpful in describing the things of the world. God is *purusha* in the sense that He is totality of Being, all-comprehensiveness, and therefore adjectives and pronouns that are valid in this world are inapplicable in the case of descriptions of God. Neither a male, nor a female, nor a neuter—nothing of the kind is God. It is something transcendent. Anyhow, for the purpose of explanatory convenience, the word '*purusha*' is used, by which what is intended is that it is the Supreme Unifying Principle. It is an extraordinary principle, and not an ordinary principle known in this world as *vishesa*, so sometimes we use the word '*purushottama*' rather than '*purusha*' in respect of God. Supreme *purusha*, as we say—*paramatman*—to distinguish Him from the ordinary concept of the *atman*. Just as Ishvara or God is supreme *purusha*, *purushottama*, He is also supreme *atman* or *paramatman*. This word, *paramatman*, or

purushottama, is used as an epithet of God to distinguish His characteristics from the limiting characteristics of individuals. Such a God is the object of divine devotion.

Previously I mentioned that various *bhavas* or feelings are generated in one's devotion to God, and one of the principles of the doctrine of *bhakti* is that we can channelise human love to God. We can love Him as our father, as our mother, as our friend, as our master, etc. Different religious attitudes emphasise one or another aspect of devotion. Also, the worship of God is supposed to be a restraining principle over the activities of the mind, which is the purpose of yoga, of course. The worship of God, the adoration of God, is any attitude or function which can create in one's own mind the dependence of oneself on God, or the surrender of oneself to God, and also the conviction that God is everything and nothing else is required when God is attained.

The various aspects of this type of devotional ritual are mentioned in a very famous verse which occurs in the seventh *skanda* of the Srimad Bhagavata, which is put into the mouth of the great devotee Prahlada: *Sravanam, kirtanam, vishnuh smaranam, padasevanam, archanam, bandhanam, dasyam, sakhyan, atma nivedanam*. Nine types of devotion or devotional attitude are mentioned in this famous verse. The first one mentioned here is *sravanam*, or the listening to the glories of God. We go to *satsangas* or prayer meetings and listen to the glories and the magnificences of God, sung in praises and in songs in *slokas* and verses etc., in the scriptures. The glories of God, when they are heard, become purifying processes, just as fine music can bring about an internal transformation by the vibrations set up by the *raga* of music. Likewise the idea or the ideas generated in the mind when hearing or listening to the glories of God can act as cathartics for all impurities in the mind, and drive the mind towards the attainment of God. The

glories and the beauties of God's Being, sung in scriptures etc., make the mind feel that God is everything that is needed by it; and so, merely the hearing of the glories of God by means of scriptural recitation or *satsanga*, etc., is also regarded as a complete devotion by itself. It is a principal mode of *bhakti*.

In singing the name of God, we daily chant His name, and this includes *japa*, which is a part of *bhakti*. The recitation of a mantra repeatedly, or even the singing of *bhajans* or *kirtan* set to tune, generates a devotional fervour in the mind of the devotee, putting an end to all other *vrittis* or psychoses in respect of objects of sense, merely by the repetition of this practice, again and again. Singing the name of God, the glories of God, or recitation of His name in the form of a formula or mantra is a method of *bhakti* or devotion.

Constant remembrance of God is a more difficult thing. It is another form of devotion. It is called "the practice of the presence of God" in mystical parlance. There was a Christian mystic called Brother Lawrence who used to practise this devotion. We should feel the presence of God in everything that we see with our eyes, and remember Him in every little bit of thing. Whatever we touch and whatever we feel, whatever we see or hear, is identified with the presence of God. Because it is difficult to feel the presence of some invisible thing, an invisible object, this method of devotion is more difficult than the other ones. The mind is constantly brooding over the presence of God in all things, and this brooding or remembering can be accentuated by audible *japa* or singing of His name as well, so that *smarana* and *kirtana* can go together.

Padasevana is something very unclear. What it actually means cannot be understood, though various interpretations are given. *Padasevana* really means 'serving the feet of

God'. Extreme traditional conservatives in the devotional path regard this as an impossible attitude of devotion, because nobody can serve the feet of God. Nobody has seen Him, and we cannot touch His feet, and so the question of serving His feet does not arise except by those who are in the proximity of God. But there are others who regard this as a practicable attitude, provided we regard God as manifest in all His creation. Service of anything and any form in this creation, unselfishly and without any feeling of recompense, may be regarded as *padasevana*, because God's feet are everywhere. *Sarvataḥ pānipādaṁ* (B.G. XIII.13), says the Bhagavadgita. Everywhere we find the feet of God. There is no place, no spot in space, where the feet of God are absent. This, again, is a very heightened attitude of devotion, because we cannot feel the presence of God's feet in things which are usually considered by us as objects of sense. But the feet of God are not objects of sense, because God is infinite. *Sarvatah*, it is said—everywhere His feet are. So how can we regard them as objects of sense?

Whatever it is, a feeling of utter abjectness and surrender of oneself in the presence of this mighty, all-comprehensive Reality, and an attitude of humility in respect of everything and everyone may be regarded as *padasevana*. We have no importance in this world—all importance is given only to others. We are the last person to ask for anything. In an audience we may occupy the last seat, perhaps near the shoes. It is not because we are egoistic, and it is not that we put on an added air of humility. Rather, we really feel a smallness of our individuality and an utter insignificance of our being in the presence of the mighty laws that operate in this cosmos, so that there is no occasion for the manifestation of our egoism even a little bit if we only understand the powers of God and the powers of nature. With this genuine, spontaneous and dispassionate attitude of humility, we may surrender

ourselves to the conditions that are spontaneously brought before us without our asking, and be happy under every condition, under every circumstance, in the presence of anything that comes, whatever it be. Such is *padasevana*, to give only a bare outline of what it can be.

Archana is worship—ritualistic, mental or even psychological. Formal worship which is performed in churches, temples, and mosques may also be regarded as *archana*. It is a very visible form of concrete ritual. We consider God as a king or an emperor, or an honoured guest, and treat Him in the same way as we would treat such a person. If an emperor comes to our house, how would we treat him? If an honoured guest comes, how would we treat him? If a very dear person comes to us, how would we treat that person? That attitude of offering all the facilities necessary to make that person immensely happy and grateful, and to provide everything in order to make that person immensely comfortable, charged with an utter love which asks for nothing else except the return of love, if at all—that sort of feeling is behind the various gestures that we perform in the nature of rituals, which can be seen performed every day in the churches and temples of different religions. *Archana* is worship of God through external symbols, which, though they are symbols from outside, can draw corresponding feelings from inside, so that the ritual form of worship may also be regarded as a genuine form of devotion to God.

Chapter 34

SURRENDER TO GOD

The worship of God has been regarded as a potent method of mind control, and the methods of devotion are the different ways by which a positive approach is made to the restraining of the modifications of the mind. It is also very beautifully pointed out in another aphorism in the Yoga Sutras that God is the Guru of all Gurus—*sa eṣaḥ pūrveṣām api guruḥ kālenā anavacchedāt* (I.26). This is a very important aspect of spiritual approach which Sage Patanjali makes mention of in his *sutra*. Ultimately, everything is done by God. This is not merely an ultimate realisation, or a statement of ultimate fact, but it is every kind of fact, and perhaps there cannot be any other truth than this great miracle—that there is only one Power working everywhere, at all times, and in every possible manner.

The workings of God are from outside, as well as from inside. As the wondrous function of creation, God acts from outside, and as the principle of inner illumination, He works from inside. Every assistance that we receive in our life comes from God; it does not come from man. It does not come from anybody other than the Creator of the cosmos. There is no atom in this universe in which the divine power is not working. Also, we cannot say that any power other than the power of God is at work. He is the Guru of all Gurus on account of the fact that He is unlimited by the time factor, says Patanjali. *Sa eṣaḥ pūrveṣām api guruḥ*: He is the Guru of even the ancient Gurus because of the fact that He is there even prior to the birth of these Gurus—*kālenā anavacchedāt.* A Guru is a directing principle, and inasmuch as there cannot

be a directing principle other than God, we have to accept that the act of self-surrender to God becomes a necessity even in the most empirical of our actions and modes of living.

It is commonly believed, of course wrongly, that the connection of God with human life is remote, and the immediate connections are personal and social. It is not so. God's connection with us is not remote. As a matter of fact, there cannot be anything nearer than God. Even the nearest conceivable relation in this world is further away than the presence of God in respect of us. Every event that takes place, inwardly or outwardly, and every experience that we are passing through, is motivated by an urge which is a tendency towards God-realisation. There are progressive and retrogressive movements, and there are even apparent erroneous movements from the point of view of personal observation, but all of these winding courses of individual life are ultimately a movement of the river of existence towards the ocean of God. Therefore, the surrender of self to God is inclusive of all the duties of life. This is perhaps the message of the verse in the Bhagavadgita, where the Lord concludes by saying, *sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* (B.G. XVIII.66): Renounce all other duties and come to Me alone for refuge. This means to say that the duty of surrender of oneself to God is comprehensive enough to include every other duty within itself.

We have to remind ourselves, once again, that our duty towards God is not exclusive, but inclusive. It is not a function that we perform in respect of some individual, excluding certain other individuals. It is this inability on the part of the human mind to think of God correctly that has become responsible, unfortunately, for a subtle doubt in the minds of seekers that social duty is different from spiritual duty. And so, often there is even a complaint on the part of the seeking soul that, "We can take care of God a little afterwards; let us

take care of the world just now," so that God may come afterwards—He should not come immediately. This is a peculiar twist in the way of thinking of the human mind which has given a place of lesser importance to the presence of God in life, and a greater importance to the empirical needs of social existence. We may regard this as one of the principal obstacles in spiritual practice. It is a defect in the way of thinking itself, and this defect is so deep-rooted and inherent that it can cut at the root of all aspiration, just as cancer can eat the flesh of the body, and all other efforts at maintaining health may fail if cancer enters into our vitals. Likewise, this cancer of doubt is the destructive principle that is working in life, which can set at naught every other effort, though it may apparently be a religious or a spiritual one.

The principle of God is supreme and incomparable. It is not possible for an ordinary mind to understand this truth, because the mind has never been trained in such a way so as to look at life in relation to the presence of God—it has always been looked at as isolated from God. This is a consequence of the natural structure of our perceptual process itself. Our senses and the mind are made in such a way that it is not possible for us to include the presence of God in the pattern of life. The senses will not allow it, and the mind will not agree to it, because the mind is the servant of the senses and it simply accepts whatever the senses say. Inasmuch as, according to the report of the senses, the world is outside us, and inasmuch as the mind confirms this fact on the basis of the report of the senses, we have perforce to accede that God is outside the world.

This peculiar habit of the mind to regard God as an extra-cosmic principle, in spite of academic confirmation to the contrary, becomes the cause of our subtle problems felt inwardly, notwithstanding the fact that our intellectual analysis tells us a fact which is more revealing. The point

made in the following *sutra* of Patanjali—*sa eṣaḥ pūrveṣām api guruḥ kālenā anavacchedāt* (I.26)—is that once we place ourselves at the disposal of God, we do not require assistance from anybody. Not all the armies of the world put together can shake a hair of our body if God is our protector, because the power of God excels any other power anywhere in the universe. While people may take time to act, God does not take time to act. I may take a few minutes to fulfil a request of yours, but God does not take even a few seconds, because He is timeless—*kālenā anavacchedāt.*

There is a very informative and illustrative anecdote which is significant of the way in which God works. It is said that there was a sage who, due to some *karma,* was born as a deer, but because of the intense *tapas* or austerity that he performed, he had the memory of his past life. "I was a seeker in the previous birth, and due to some error in my life I have become a deer, an animal." So he very miserably passed his life in the body of a deer, and he was biding his time in the forest. One day it so happened that a hunter attacked the deer. As a deer is able to run with great speed, the hunter was determined to ensure that the deer would not escape. On one side he set his hounds out, on another side he tied a net, on the third side he raised a huge fire, and on the fourth side he himself stood poised with a bow and poisoned arrow. The deer, having memory of the past, mentally surrendered itself to God. It is an extraordinary event that even an animal could maintain the memory that it had no other support than God. The deer was about to be killed, and an utter feeling of desperate and abject surrender to God was the only alternative. A miracle took place, and the miracle took place within a minute. A mighty, swirling wind blew, and the raging inferno set the net on fire. Dark clouds filled the sky and rains poured and poured, extinguishing the fire. The hunter, standing with his bow and poisoned arrow aimed at the deer,

felt something crawling at his feet. It was a snake. While kicking his feet in panic he let fly the arrow, which killed his dog, and then he fled in fear of the snake that was underfoot. The deer escaped and was free. This is not a mere story; it is a highly instructive episode, taken from the events of spiritual life. If only we could be careful enough to observe the events in our life; but we are never careful enough to observe them—we are very foolish. But if we are cautious enough to go deep into the structure of every little event we pass through in life, we will realise that every event is a miracle by itself.

Every event in life is a miracle, and it cannot be caused by any human factor or individual. The very fact that we exist today, that we are living and breathing, should be regarded as a miracle. This world is made up of such peculiar, uncontrollable factors and forces that it is really the height of non-wisdom to imagine that we can control them and live in this world. How are we responsible for the continuance of our peaceful life in this world of terrific forces, over which we have no control at all? How is it possible that we are alive here, even for a few days, amid such vehement energies that are working around us, and which can simply floor us in a second if they make up their minds to do so? What prevents the earth from cracking, splitting into two parts, and an earthquake suddenly swallowing up our every effort? All the centuries of civilisation can turn to dust in a second if there is an earthquake and the earth breaks, and can we do anything to prevent it? Can we say that we are working hard to prevent an earthquake? What can we do to prevent an earthquake?

An earthquake can happen anywhere. At any time there can be a tempest or a tornado. At any time there can be drought or a flood. At any time there can be heart failure. At any time a grain of rice can enter the wrong passage in our gullet. Anything can happen at any time. Such uncertainty is the ruling principle of life, and we say that we are masters of

life, that we rule the destiny of mankind. Is it true? Not so. There are more subtle things than the human mind can comprehend. "There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how you will." However much we may assert our ego in respect of our importance and achievements in life, remember that there is a divinity that rules our ends. This is a surprising truth which should make us completely part and parcel of this ruling principle, this sovereign principle. This consciousness of our being an inseparable part of this ruling, sovereign principle is also the principle of self-surrender.

Every help comes from God. It is not merely subtle, invisible help, but even visible help. If I can get a cup of water when I am thirsty, it has come from God—it has not come from man. As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as man. This is a misconception in our mind, and all these events, persons and forces which we regard as empirical are also the manifestations of the Eternal. Finally, we will find that there is no such thing as the empirical, and no such thing as the temporal. They are only some philosophical distinctions that we make for the purpose of logical conviction and explanation. Ultimately, there is no world, no empirical life, no temporality, no individuality, no human being—it is a flood of Universal Truth. This was what was revealed to Arjuna by Bhagavan Sri Krishna, ultimately. We behave as if we are responsible for the fate of life and the future of the world, though everything is done by God, as it has been done up to this time and shall be done in the future.

All of the values that we regard as worthwhile in life, and all of our rules and regulations, are all stomached by this terrifying universal law which simply sets at naught everything that we regard as meaningful. Even our efforts are His efforts—this will be realised a little later. Even what we call 'self-effort' and 'free will' is entirely the work of God, and this will be realised as we advance further in spiritual life. Our

every action is God's action. Everything that happens is caused by Him, every event is motivated by Him, and every tendency in life is a tendency towards His realisation. He is the Master of all Masters. *Sa eṣaḥ pūrveṣām api guruḥ*—He is the Guru of all Gurus. Even the human Guru—the individual Guru, the visible Guru—is a manifestation of His Universal Presence.

It is His Universal Presence that projects itself in an individualised manner, sometimes for the purpose of working the aims of evolution. This is a truth which shall open up the heart of every soul and then make it completely surrender itself to God. Once this surrender is effected, the mind withdraws itself automatically from all its attachments. The supremacy and the almighty existence of God is enough to cut at the root of all desire. This is a final stroke that we deal at all individual attractions and repulsions, and all the problems and difficulties of life. They are merely winds that blow without any substance to them, and they shall be taken care of by this one ruling principle that we are stating and proclaiming here through this *sutra*—that God is All. *Tatra niratiśayaṁ sarvajñabījam* (I.25): God is omniscient, and He knows everything.

So we need not pray to God that something may be done. Why are we reminding Him, as if He has forgotten something? *Sarvajnabijam*—He is the root and seed of omniscience itself. He knows what is going to take place, and how it is to take place. *Niratisayam*—incomparable, unsurpassed seed of omniscience is God. Because He is omniscient, He is also omnipotent. The three great attributes of God are generally spoken of—namely, omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence—are inseparable attributes. Where one is, the others also are. The very fact of omnipresence implies omniscience, which again implies omnipotence. Because something is everywhere, it knows

everything. Because it knows everything, in an identity of being, it is also all-powerful. This 'identity of being' is a very important qualifying clause. Power is absent where knowledge is cut off from its object, and power automatically manifests itself where the object is identical with this knowledge of the object.

The object of knowledge is always outside knowledge in ordinary life and, therefore, everybody is impotent—no power is present in any person. We always cringe before things, but it is not the case with God because the object of His knowledge is the same as His knowledge. His Being is His knowledge, His Being is His action, His Being is His power, His Being is His experience of bliss and freedom, and this omnipresence, which is at once omniscience and omnipotence, is naturally all-inclusive, because omnipresence is exclusive of nothing. This Truth, when it is revealed before the seeking mind, will draw its soul towards God, and there need not be much effort on the part of the seeker to control the mind once this Truth is revealed before it.

Perhaps there is a great point in the promulgators of devotion and *bhakti*, telling us that devotion to God is the easiest way to the achievement of the goal of life. I cannot say that it is the easiest, but it is the final step that one can take if it could be achieved. It is not as easy as it appears, as ordinarily it is not given to the human mind to accept the omnipresence of God in such an intense manner as to rule out the very possibility of individual existence because even when we tentatively, religiously, accept the all-inclusive existence of God, we subtly maintain our individuality as an isolated principle. Whatever be the extent of our surrender of self to God, the self subtly tries to maintain itself, and it says, "God, you are everything. I am a fool." Some people pray to God in *arati*: *Main murakha khala kami*—I am stupid, wicked and lustful. They do not really believe what they are saying. It is a

hypocritical prayer, because nobody believes that he is a fool. Before God he utters the prayer, but before the world he says, "I am not like that." The subtle reserve of individuality maintained creates a peculiar artificiality in our attitude towards God, and no one can know this better than God Himself. He knows that we have an artificial devotion towards Him, and so whatever be the *tapas* that we do and the number of years that we spend on the bank of the Ganges, we cannot achieve the expected result because of the subtle reserve of individuality that we have.

Here is another humorous story. There were two villagers who fought with each other to have water flow through their fields. There was a common channel of water, and each farmer wanted the water to flow only through his field. There was a quarrel, and they went to the magistrate to fight the case. They were villagers—untutored, boorish types—and the magistrate knew very well their level of understanding. So very humorously, and in a parental manner, he said to them, "My dear friends, you have filed a case before me for judgement as to how the water should flow through the field—whether it should flow through this man's field or that man's field. Now you have come to me for a decision, and I am the magistrate. So you must abide by whatever I say. Do you agree?" One of the farmers stood up and answered, "Lord, whatever you say is acceptable to me, but water should flow only through my field. Please pass judgement in my favour." The magistrate said, "Then what is the use of your coming to me? You have already passed judgement on your case." Likewise, this is our attitude towards God. "God, Thou art everything, but I am also something. Don't forget that. I am also something. I am not nothing."

We may feel that this is a great humour and joke. But is it true? Are we always playing tricks with God? Are we hypocritical with God, and are we maintaining a subtle

egoism even in the presence of God? This is a great doubt that may arise in our minds, but it is true. We maintain egoism even in the presence of God, and nobody can deny this. Even the best devotee cannot be free from egoism. It is this egoism that spoils all the efforts of life, because no obstacle can be equal to egoism. All others are minor obstacles compared to egoism. It is the king of all demons. It is the Sumbha that we speak of in the Devi Mahatmya, the final devilish force that had to be encountered by the Divine Power, Mahashakti.

So this principle of self-affirmation or individuality—the 'I-ness' and 'my-ness'—is the barrier between us and God. There is no barrier between us and God except ego—that is the only barrier. That is the thick wall, the dark screen, the iron curtain between us and God. We cannot remove it by any amount of ordinary effort, because we ourselves are the ego, and we are not going to meddle with some other instrument which is called the ego outside us. Therefore, a perpetual effort at affirmation of God's universality is necessary by way of a deep feeling for the liberation of the soul, the ultimate supremacy of God, and a hammering into the mind of the truth, again and again, that in the light of the almighty omnipresence of God, the presence of the individual is a misnomer. Though this is known to us, we cannot feel it because we are not driving this into our feelings by deep meditation every day.

It is a simple, logical deduction that in the light of the omnipresence of something, something else cannot be present. Everyone can know and understand this simple truth that if God is, we cannot be, because if we are there as well, God cannot be omnipresent. The soul must rush towards God in an act of utter self-surrender merely on the acceptance of this simple, intelligible truth. But with all this understanding, the ego keeps a knife tucked under its arm and will not let it

out easily because of a peculiar trait which is most inscrutable, and this trait is called *maya*.

Sage Patanjali tells us that it is up to the sincere seeking soul, whose aspiration should be *tivra samveganam*, as he has mentioned in *sutra* I.21—the soul whose aspiration, whose search for God, should be intense like a flaming fire. By a repeated affirmation of this ultimate fact of life, which is called *abhyasa*, it shall become practicable for us to gradually gain experience of this truth, day by day. As we say, practice makes perfect.

Even impossible things may become possible by repeated practice. A day shall come when this hard ego, which obstructs our real surrender of self to God, gets thinned out so that it becomes a transparent medium to reflect the glory of God in our personal life, and we live a life of divinity, even in this world.

Chapter 35

THE RECITATION OF MANTRA

The adoration of God, the contemplation of God, the attunement of oneself with God, says Patanjali, can be easily achieved through the repetition of the Name of God. It is difficult to contact God, for reasons that are obvious. But we need not despair or feel that it is impossible to contact Him, because while there are most difficult techniques of the soul's merger into God, there are also very simple methods of drawing His attention to oneself. The most traditional, accepted and common *sadhana*, not only in India but in religious circles in almost all parts of the world, is what is known as *japa* or recitation of the Divine Name. The object that we are having in our mind becomes associated with our idea of it by the invocation of its name, as it is known in common parlance. There are two aspects to the way in which there can be an invocation of anything in our mind. One is, if I want to draw the attention of a person towards myself, I call the name of that person, and the person listens. The expected effect is then produced.

There can be a reciprocal action on the part of the object of our idea when we summon the name of that object, if it is an object which is conscious, like a human being. But if the object is not conscious like a human being, or it is so withdrawn into itself that it has no consciousness of itself at all, then we can generate an idea of that object by calling its name and visualising it in our mind so that we are able to remember it. *Japa* has something to do with the drawing up of a memory in respect of anything that we wish to maintain in our consciousness. There are objects of various kinds in this

world, of which some are conscious and some are unconscious. If I summon a conscious object, there is an immediate reaction; but more effort is necessary for summoning an unconscious object. I can call a dog by making a sound with my mouth and it will come running to me. But if I call an umbrella, "You come,"—it will not come, because it is not conscious of my intention in regard to it. Though, ultimately, even unconscious objects can be made to move by the power of thought, it cannot be done easily; it requires extraordinary effort.

The Name of God is a peculiar mode of invocation by which we generate in ourselves forces of a peculiar character which have significance, both in our inner life as well as in our outer life. The particular symbol by which we can invoke the form of God into our mind, and which Patanjali has in mind, is *pranava* or *omkara*. *Tasya vācakaḥ praṇavaḥ* (I.27): The Name of God is Om, says Patanjali. Now, when he says "Om", he does not mean any kind of Hindu concept or any type of sectarian tradition. What he intends to tell us is that the symbol of God should be comprehensive enough to contain within itself almost all of the characteristics of God. A limited object, a finite thing in this world, can be designated by a finite name. But, an infinite object like God cannot be designated by any kind of finite designation or epithet. When a finite name is uttered, an idea in the mind is generated which corresponds to that finite name. The name 'tree', for instance, immediately generates in the mind the idea of a tree, which is the corresponding finite object that is related to this finite name. A particular name can summon up only a particular idea of a given object.

God is not any particular thing. He is the most general of all beings—*satta samanya*, as He is called—the universal substratum or the greatest common factor present in every conceivable thing, anywhere. Therefore, the designation of

God should be possessed of similar characteristics—namely, it should be very comprehensive. That is, when the name of God is chanted, it is not that any particular finite idea is generated in the mind, but a vaster and more comprehensive notion is generated, which works in such a way that it removes the finitude of consciousness in our mind. *Tajjapaḥ tadarthabhāvanam* (I.28)—'*japa*' is the word used here in this *sutra*. *Japa* is a holy recitation, a constant hammering into the mind of a particular formula, an idea, or a name, in order that the same idea may be allowed to originate in the mind, and nothing else is allowed. The mind is made in such a way that it cannot think one and the same thing continuously and, therefore, it is necessary to repeat the designation or formula of a particular given object again and again, without any remission or gap, so that the mind reconstitutes itself into the form of that object and there is a new type of *vyapti* or pervasion taking place in the mind, which is our intention in the recitation of the mantra.

The mystic formulas, known as mantras, have some peculiar features. A mantra, in its spiritual connotation, is not an ordinary name like John, Jack, or Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Gopala, etc., as we have in respect of ordinary human beings. It is a specialised combination of vibrations which are packed into a very concentrated form so that when they are repeated, what happens is not merely the generation of an idea in the mind in the sense of any abstract notion, but a positive vibration, though it may be invisible. When we take a powerful homeopathic dose, for instance, we cannot see the vibration, but it has its own effect. Words are really symbols of vibration. They are charged with the force of which they are supposed to be the external shape or the form. The mind, which itself is charged with consciousness, is associated with the meaning of the word with which it connects itself, and so sympathetically there is an effect produced in consciousness

itself on merely hearing the word uttered. The word-symbol is a concentrated energy presented to us, which can be thrust into our system and made part of our nature.

In Indian tradition, we have the mantras which are also associated with certain factors other than merely a combination of words, one aspect of which is what is known as *chandas*. This is a peculiar feature of the formation of a mantra. A *chandas* is a particular method of combining words according to a rule called *ghana shastra*, which is known in mystical circles in India. A particular word, when it is combined with another particular word, produces a particular effect. Rhetoricians are well acquainted with this subject. Great novelists and poets in India, especially those endowed with special genius and charged with divine power, such as Kalidasa, followed this technique of *ghana shastra*, and knowing the power of words, composed their poems or their works in such a way that they follow the rules of accepted rhetoric. Ordinary literature is not acquainted with this secret of Sanskrit literature. The greatness of a poet can be judged from the way he starts the work. How does he start the work? What is the word that he uses in the beginning? It is the belief among great writers in India that the initial phrases at the commencement of the work tell upon the nature of the entire work that is to follow.

This system of the combination of particular words with other words of the requisite character is followed in the composition of a mantra, which literally means, "that which protects a person who thinks of it". *Mananat trayate iti mantrah*—a mantra is that which protects us when we chant it. It protects us like armour, like a shield that we wear in a war, by generating in us a resisting power against any kind of influence which is extraneous in nature, and which is unwanted for the purpose on hand. *Chandas* is the peculiar chemical combination of the letters, we may say. Particular

chemical substances produce special results or effects when they are combined with certain types of other chemical components. But when they are mixed together, they may create a third force altogether.

A mixture that is chemically produced, like hydrogen and oxygen for instance, is not merely an arithmetical combination of two elements, because when the two are combined, some peculiar effect is produced which is not apparently present in either of the components. For instance, water is produced by a combination of hydrogen and oxygen, but we will not find the character of water either in hydrogen or in oxygen. The water that is the effect of the combination of hydrogen and oxygen in a certain proportion is a new effect altogether, and we cannot, by analysis, discover the essence of water in its original causes. Likewise, the words of a mantra, the components of a mantra, have special forces present or inherent in them, and when the words are combined in the requisite proportion and in the manner mentioned in the *chandas shastra*, they produce a third kind of effect which is the purpose or intention of the mantra, and that effect is called the *devata*. We may say that water is the *devata* of hydrogen and oxygen—it is the deity. That is the intention. That is the purpose. That is what we require. That is what we are aiming at and want.

The mantra, when it is chanted, generates a force which is the object of the realisation of the *sadhaka*. A mantra has a *chandas*, or the combining feature, which is the determining factor of the particular shape that the effect takes, and so the mantra determines the deity, and vice versa. So we have a deity, or the aim or the goal of the mantra, and the *chandas* of the mantra, as well as another thing altogether, namely, the discoverer of the mantra has some say in this matter. The discoverer of the mantra is called the *rishi* of the mantra. A *rishi* is a seer of the mantra—not merely a composer like a

writer, or an author, or a poet—but a seer into the truth of a mantra, to whom the mantra, in its truth, has been revealed in his meditations; and so the will of the seer also is present there. So, according to our tradition, when we chant a mantra we remember the *rishi* of the mantra, the *chandas* of the mantra, and the deity of the mantra. *Rishis, chandas, devata*—these three are always remembered before the mantra is chanted, so that we have the grace of these divine precedents of the sacred mantra that we are going to chant, because these are the causes behind the action that the mantra takes.

The mantra that Patanjali particularly refers to in his *sutra* is *pranava* or *omkara*. This is something very difficult to understand and cannot easily be explained however much we may try, because these are very great secrets which are invisible to the eyes and, therefore, ordinarily incapable of explanation. It is believed that the chanting of *pranava* or Om, in the prescribed manner, sets up a novel type of vibration in the system, which is free from every kind of distraction or particularisation in respect of any external object. Every name in this world particularises itself in respect of an external object, such as tree, mountain, sun, moon, star, etc.—they are external objects. But here, the object of *pranava* or Om is not any given object in particular. It is a general being, and anything that is general is also harmonious. Hence the chanting of *pranava* or Om in the prescribed manner, with the required intonation, produces a generalised harmonious vibration in the entire physical and psychological system, and this is what is conducive to the concentration of the mind in meditation, because meditation is nothing but the harmonious condition of the mind.

'*Samadhi*' is the word used for the highest state of harmony achieved thereby. *Adhi* is a mental condition, and an equilibrated mental condition is *samadhi*—equilibrated in the utmost manner, so that every component of thought is

systematically harmonised with every other component, and not one setting itself against the other or distracting the other. So harmoniously are they knitted together that there is a uniform fabric of the mind, as it were, in respect of the object. A harmonious vibration creates a thrill in the system, which is the trick that the chanting of the mantra or *pranava* produces, and one can feel it when one chants *pranava* at least for a few minutes continuously. We will feel a subtle, creeping sensation in our system, as if ants are crawling through our nerves. We will feel a peculiar touching sensation, a titillating feeling in the beginning, which is an indication that our chanting is correct and the mind is getting concentrated.

Simultaneously with this feeling of a subtle thrill in the system when the chanting of *pranava* is done properly, there is a feeling that a loss of body-consciousness is gradually taking place. We will not feel that we exist at all. We will be aware of a non-objective something, and it is this non-objective awareness, which is the effect of the chanting of *pranava*, which also creates the feeling of levitation. We are not actually getting lifted up physically, but we will feel as if we are lifted up from the earth and moving in the air, as it were. Though we are on the ground and not moving in the air physically, the mind will feel as if it is lifted up, and this is the astral body getting stirred because of the harmonious vibration that is being produced. Though the physical body is not moving in the air, the subtle body is trying to get up, and that is why we feel as if we are moving in the air. The feeling of levitation is generated by the effect produced upon the subtle body, by the chanting of the mantra. The subtle body is ordinarily so intimately connected with the physical body that we cannot isolate one from the other. When we are intensely conscious of the physical body, the subtle body gets impregnated with the notion of the physical body, and we cannot forget that we are anything but the body.

This difficulty one has in getting tethered to the notion of the physical body alone arises on account of a distracted, inharmonious movement of the mind and the *pranas*. If we want to draw the mind or the subtle body away from its contact with or attachment to the physical body, the first thing we should do is to create a system of harmonious feeling in the mind, as well as to very, very carefully isolate every component of the subtle body from its contact with the physical body by a new type of vibration altogether. Sometimes sticking plasters cannot be removed from the finger immediately. If we pull them off, the skin is removed and we feel much pain. So doctors and nurses try to remove a sticking plaster from a wound very, very slowly by pouring some solution over the sticking plaster, and this detaches the plaster automatically by the smoothness and softness produced by the application of the solution.

Likewise, we cannot wrench the subtle body from the physical body by effort; it will mean death if that is attempted. It has to be healthily detracted from its attachment to the physical body, and pinpointed towards the universal object which is God, which the chanting of *pranava* is supposed to do, as the yoga *shastras* tell us. We are not in a state of vibration that is appreciably harmonious, usually speaking, because we have attachments to particular objects. Any kind of special concern that the mind has with the particularised objects of sense prevents the subtle body from being in a state of harmony with itself. There is non-alignment of itself with the universal objective. The alignment can be effected only by producing in the subtle body a condition which is akin to the condition of universality. As we know, the universal is the most general of all beings, and nothing can be more harmonious than the universal.

Thus, the purpose of the recitation of *pranava* or mantra is to produce a condition in the subtle body—the vehicle of the

mind—which is sympathetic in nature with the universal objective of harmony. What is harmony? It is equal attention paid to every structure, and every component of the structure of one's being. It cannot be done easily and, therefore, we take to the method of the chanting of mantra. The mantra, *pranava*, is supposed to be the king of mantras because the various parts of the voice box in our vocal system that ordinarily operate in the chanting of any mantra, or the utterance of any word of any language, take part in the utterance of Om. The entire voice box vibrates from the bottom to the top, and so it is believed in many mystical circles that Om is inclusive of every language. Every word conceivable is included in it in a very potential latent form, and because it is thus the most general of all symbols conceivable, it is the best designation of God, Who is the greatest of universals.

This has to be chanted again and again, says Patanjali —*tajjapaḥ tadarthabhāvanaṁ* (I.28). Here, Patanjali does not say that the chanting of the mantra alone is sufficient. He also says that we have to concentrate on the meaning of the mantra to produce quick results. *Tadarthabhāvanaṁ*—the meaning should be felt in the mind. We must be feeling the content of the mantra. "What does it signify? What am I chanting? What does it mean, ultimately?" When the intention behind the mantra is coupled with the chanting, there is a quickening of the process in the realisation of the objective. There are many various other prescriptions mentioned here for the purpose of accelerating the process of realisation through the chanting of the mantra, such a proper seat, a proper direction, a proper time, a proper place and given circumstances, etc.—all of which are known to us.

Also, there is a special tradition of chanting mantra, known as *purascharana* in India, and it is supposed to be the recitation of the mantra as many *lakhs* of times (a *lakh* is one hundred thousand) as there are letters in a mantra, so that the

completion of the *purascharana* is supposed to be the completion of a round of *sadhana*, the completion of a given cycle. As many *lakhs* of *japa* as there are letters in a mantra are to be chanted, and then it produces a novel effect in oneself. There are devotees, even today, and there were many previously, who did numerous *purascharanas* of this kind for the purpose of the realisation of the deity of the mantra. I personally feel that for the minds of today, *japa* is perhaps the best *sadhana*, because it is a technique by which the mind can be automatically drawn towards the point of concentration by habitual recitation—repetition of the mantra. It does not require much logic, study, or analysis, or anything of that sort. It requires merely a will to do it; that is all. There were many saints and sages who had spiritual realisation merely through this *japa sadhana*, because *japa* or recitation of the Divine Name or the mantra is virtually the same as meditation. As Patanjali mentions, *japa* is charged with the notion, idea or concentration of the mind on the meaning of the mantra.

Chapter 36

THE RISE OF OBSTACLES IN YOGA PRACTICE

Tataḥ pratyakcetana adhigamaḥ api antarāyā abhāvaḥ ca (I.29): By the persistent practice of the method mentioned, there is a revelation of the inner consciousness and an absence of all obstacles, says this *sutra* of Patanjali. This is something very, very important and interesting—even the obstacles cease after some time, and will not be hounding us for all times. We know that even an enemy cannot be an enemy for all times; a day comes when enmity stops. Even illness cannot be a perpetual illness; it has to end one day or the other. Every limiting condition is a temporary period of transition, and it has its day.

The impediments to success, the obstacles to yoga, are certain cleansing processes, really speaking. Ultimately, by a very comprehensive analysis, we will realise that obstacles are not enemies but cleansing processes, like the effect of a cathartic given by a doctor leading to purging, if that is necessary for the treatment of a disease. If we have to purge many times due to the medicine given by the doctor, we cannot call it an obstacle to our health. It is a process of clearing up the system, which comes like a painful reaction to a treatment that is administered by the physician.

Likewise, the spiritual undertaking is a treatment administered to the soul for the purpose of its regaining perfect health and pristine purity. The practice of yoga is nothing but this cathartic, this pill that is administered, and immediately there is a peculiar action set up in the system by

this purifying drug that has been given. Then anything and everything takes place, much to our surprise—all of which look like tremendous enemies attacking from all sides—and we may be under the impression that we are falling down, dropping into the pits, or going to hell. But that is not what is happening. As the sun rises, sometimes the frost starts biting more intensely than it would before the sunrise. In midwinter sometimes we have that experience, when the entire mountain is seen to be covered with mist. We cannot see the Ganga; we cannot see the buildings on the other side; there is nothing that can be seen. It is all a white, hazy, impervious substance, and we do not know anything—it is all homogeneity. When the sun rises, there is a dispersion of this white substance and it starts moving towards our rooms, and we find it entering and stinging us. When the sun rises, the cold increases as a preparation for the complete vanishing of the substance altogether, and then there is the warmth of the blazing sun. Such is the inward transforming process which we undergo when spiritual discipline takes action in the entire system of the seeker.

Ordinarily, no one can understand what effects follow from spiritual practice. We cannot understand this by a study of books, because the actions, or the reactions we may say, that follow the practice of a system of spiritual discipline for a protracted period depend upon what is already inside us. What is inside us will come out; and different persons, finding themselves in different stages of evolution, have different patterns of this deposit in themselves. So the experiences that seekers pass through vary merely because of the difference in the content of their own personalities.

For a long time it may look as if nothing is happening in spiritual practice. This has been the experience of all yogis, saints and sages. For years and years together we will have no experience whatsoever. It will look like everything is dead,

that there is no life in anything, that we are striking a brick wall or a hard stone with no effect whatsoever, that our *japas* produce no effect, our meditations mean nothing, our worships are perhaps not heard by God, and there is only suffering. This condition may persist for several years, and the number of years or the extent of their duration depends upon the nature of the case, just as the purifying medical effect of a medicine depends upon the nature of the disease, the intensity of the disease, and the particular case on hand, to give an instance. But, suddenly, there will be a miracle. This is always the case in spiritual experience—it always comes like a miracle. It doesn't come very, very slowly with halting steps, giving previous notice. It will give no notice. When there is illumination, we will not know that it is coming; and when we are going to be opposed, we will not know that it is going to happen. Both things will happen without our having previous knowledge of what is to come.

But there is a great and solacing admonition given by Sage Patanjali here in this *sutra*, a very beautiful phrase that says continued practice shall result in the revelation of the inner consciousness—*pratyakcetana adhigamah.* '*Adhigamah*' is a term that has many meanings. It means knowledge, or it may mean acquisition, attaining, contacting, facing, realising, entering—all of these meanings are hidden in this peculiar phrase, *adhigamah. Tataḥ pratyakcetana adhigamaḥ*—then comes the revelation of the inner consciousness. The word '*pratyak'* may be translated as inner, or the introverted one. Though this is a literal translation of the term '*pratyak*', its connotation is more profound. We come in contact with, attain to, and enter into a new type of consciousness altogether, different from the one with which we have been acquainted and which we have been befriending as the sole endowment of perception and knowledge in empirical life. A new type of knowledge will be the result of this practice.

What is this new type of knowledge? A third eye will open. The physical eyes would not be essential at that time, because whatever knowledge is gained through the perception of the senses would be inadequate to the purpose. The knowledge that we have to acquire through yoga is not a sensory knowledge—it not a psychological cognition. It is an insight into the Truth of things. This insight is *pratyakcetana adhigamah*, where we begin to recognise what is in front of us. Up to that time we have not been able to recognise anything. We are not able to know what is in front of us when we are looking at things with our eyes, because the eyes, the senses, do not give us the truth of things—only a camouflage is presented before us. All that we see with our eyes is a camouflage, because the essence of things is covered over by a relational form in which alone the object is presented, and through which alone the cognition of the object is made possible. But, this form is lifted when there is *pratyakcetana adhigamah*, or inner attainment. The veil that covers the object is removed, and we see what is really there inside.

What is this veil? It is nothing but the space-time complex, which is the reason for the appearance of the individuality of things and the diversity of objects. This space-time-cause complex is the veil that covers the truth of things; and this veil covers even the perceiver himself. The individual cogniser, the perceiver, the experiencer, is a part of this involvement in the space-time-cause complex. So there is an entire relativity of perception and knowledge throughout the world, and there is no such thing as real insight into the nature of things. And so the whole universe is *samsara*—world riddled over with error and sorrow. The veil of *samsara* gets lifted; it is penetrated into, and what is behind the veil is seen when there is *pratyakcetana adhigamah*. There is no relational knowledge at that time; it is a direct

perception, *aparoksha anubhava*. We do not require the instrumentality of mind and senses at that time.

There is a sudden rising into the wakefulness of reality from the dream of world perception. All instruments of knowing are hushed forever. We begin to be aware of the presence of objects by a sympathy of 'being' rather than by a relatedness of sensory cognition. At present we are repelled by objects due to the egoism of personalities, and as one ego cannot tolerate another ego, there is an automatic repulsion of objects, one throwing the other out into a remote distance. But when this interior consciousness arises, the repulsion that is consequent to the presence of egoism ceases and the reverse action takes place, namely, a friendliness of attitude, not in the sense of an emotional affection that we are used to in this world, but the urge of kindred characters towards a fraternal embrace for a permanent union of their essential being.

This experience is uncommon, and humanly it is not possible, and we cannot call it human understanding, human awareness, or human relationship—it is super-human, super-physical, super-psychical, super-intellectual, super-logical and super-relational. Such knowledge will rise as an emanation of being rather than as a faculty of understanding. This knowledge is a light that is shed by our essential being, and it is not merely a function of the psychological organ. This subject is explained in more detail in another *sutra* of Patanjali, which we shall study when we come to it later on. When this knowledge arises, there is a cessation of obstacles. Enmity ceases when the causes of enmity cease. The obstacles on the path to the realisation of Truth appear only as long as there is a hidden tendency of the individual to maintain itself in contradistinction with other individuals.

The tendency of individuality can be conscious, deliberately felt and affirmed, or it can be an unconscious presence which is potential though not manifest. As long as

there is even a potentiality of this tendency to individuality, the obstacles will persist. Though consciously we may be doing nothing wrong, and everything may look all right, many of us may start feeling, "What wrong have I committed from my birth onwards? I have been living a very good life, but why these obstacles?" These obstacles do not necessarily follow as a result of our present life or our conscious experience. They are the consequences of the hidden potentialities in the deeper layers of our personality—all of which have to come to the surface before there is a complete riddance of individuality altogether. The experiences that we pass through are not necessarily the results of what we have done yesterday. Mostly, they are the results of what we have done many, many years back—sometimes some births back.

By a persistent, insistent practice of deep concentration on a given reality, *ekatattva abhyasah*, there is an automatic exhaustion of the potentialities of individuality inside because we do not go on adding to the *karmas* by further binding action. There is only a burning up of what is already there, and once the store of *karmas*, even in a hidden form, is exhausted by experience, there is no further bondage because we have not added any further *karma* to the already existing store. How these obstacles cease and *karmas* are exhausted is a miracle by itself.

Adepts in yoga tell us that there is a gradual exhaustion of *karma* and a slow diminution of the intensity of obstacles; but others are of the opinion that there can be a sudden end to all this. It is something like the theories of creation—whether God created the world item by item, step by step, gradually, stage by stage, or by a fiat, at one stroke. Is it *krama srishti*, or *yugapat srishti*? '*Yugapat*' means God willed, "Let there be light," and there was light; "Let there be trees," and there were trees; "Let there be man," and there was man. Is it like that? Or, was there an evolutionary process, gradually manifesting

form after form? These are two theories of creation, and they are not contradictory—both are correct. Likewise, both these views held by yogic adepts are correct. It is possible that obstacles may cease gradually, step by step, by the diminution of their intensity, or there can be a sudden burning up of everything and an instantaneous illumination. Individual logic or human understanding cannot probe into these mysteries. We have only to accept what comes, and to do our duty in the form of the practice prescribed. But, one thing is certain—that whatever be the way in which the obstacles cease, they must cease, one day or the other.

Enemies in the form of external forces become friendly at a particular stage. At one time it may appear to us that the whole world is our enemy—that nobody wants us, and everything is against us. Everything that we do is thrown out of order by the forces outside us, and there is no success. And then it is that we get fed up with the world, become disgusted with everything, and it appears that nobody is cooperating with us anywhere and that everybody is trying to upset what we have done. This is one stage wherein we will have this type of experience and such feelings; but it will not be a permanent condition, because the world is not an enemy, ultimately.

The world appears to be opposed to what we are doing and intending on account of the peculiar, disharmonious elements present in us, into which we cannot have proper insight at present, and when these elements in us get transformed into a state of harmony with the forces of the world outside, then the truth will reveal itself—that the enemy is our friend. *Ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ* (B.G. VI.5). The Bhagavadgita tells us that our higher being may appear as our own enemy. God Himself may look like an enemy one day, because our intentions, based as they are on our psychophysical individuality, may not concur with the will of the Supreme, and then it is likely we will feel

the will of the Universe, the will of God, and the intentions of nature are contrary to what we are intending to do.

But when these impending impediments get reversed in their order of action and procedure, we face the world directly and do not turn our backs to it. Now we are turning our backs to nature. It is moving in one direction, and we are moving in the opposite direction, and therefore there is a repulsion of two forces and an apparent feeling of irreconcilability between our intentions and the intentions of the world or nature. The reason is that we have turned our backs to nature. While the order of nature requires cognition of things from the point of view of their own subjecthood or selfhood, we turn our backs to this truth and regard everything as an object. This is the reason why there is conflict between us and nature.

There is no such thing as an object from the point of view of nature as a whole. Everything is a subject from the point of view of each and every individual element. So when we look upon anything as an object, we are fighting with nature and opposing its order; and as nature is ultimately the face of God, we are opposing God Himself. In this struggle, it is we who will be defeated, because Truth will triumph. But when this inner consciousness rises, *pratyakcetana adhigamah* is present, we collaborate with the order of nature by developing that faculty of cognition within us which is a function of our being rather than an activity of our mind and senses. Then the universe comes to us like a dear mother and embraces us in all affection, and the abundance, the richness and the wealth of the whole of nature becomes ours, and we return like a prodigal son to the father from whom we have run away, having deserted him. The obstacles cease.

These obstacles are of varying categories—physical, psychological and social, and we have to be prepared to meet any obstacle that comes on the way. As it is difficult to know what sort of obstacle will come before us, it is better that we be

prepared for everything—even the worst thing conceivable. We should conceive of the worst possible thing, and be ready for it. At present it is not possible to have a clear idea of what is ahead of us. The obstacles, as I mentioned, are external reactions produced by certain internal potentialities. The hidden latencies in us, on the subconscious and unconscious levels, stimulate certain centres outside, and there is an apparent reaction set up by these centres in relation to the wire-pullers that are within us, within ourselves.

The centres of potentiality within our own selves, subconsciously and unconsciously present, are instruments in evoking the action or reaction of corresponding centres outside in the world of perception. So, there is a relativity of action and reaction even in the confronting of obstacles. We cannot wholly blame others for the sufferings of mankind or for the pains that we are undergoing in life. There is a corresponding action from outside in relation to the presence of potentialities inside.

As I mentioned, these obstacles sometimes appear with little indication of their coming, and sometimes without any indication whatsoever. One fine morning we may get up with a sudden, unprecedented and unexpected experience of a positive or a negative character, due to the sudden rise of a particular latency within, worked up into action by the practice of yoga. All the dirt and rubbish inside us is kept intact, ordinarily speaking; we do not touch it. But this intense, concentrated practice known as yoga calls to action every sleeping dog that is inside; immediately every dog starts barking, and we do not know which is barking from which side. It is necessary to rouse every potential feeling in us on to the conscious level so that it may get exhausted, and we become completely cleansed. There is no use keeping these latencies inside, because though they may appear to be absent on account of their being on the lower level, they will take

action one day or the other, just like a seed which is lying in dry soil germinates when rain falls and climatic conditions become favourable.

So, a calm and quiet person is not necessarily a good person, because this calmness and quietness may be like the dry seed which has no opportunity to germinate. The conditions favourable should be present, and then immediately we will see what is coming up. It is the purpose of the practice of yoga not to allow these tendencies to germinate as and when they like, but to bring them to the light of day by deliberate evoking of their presence on to the conscious level so that they may all be destroyed at one stroke.

The psychology of the destruction of these obstacles is most interesting. Only a sincere seeker, one who practises yoga, will know the interesting features of these processes. These are not theoretical discussions or academic subjects, but they are, as a matter of fact, the hard realities of practical life. The obstacles are nothing but the peculiar relationships that we have with things outside; these are the obstacles. By 'relationship', we do not mean the visible relationships of friendliness and enmity, etc.—love, hatred, and the like—with which we are familiar in waking life. The relationships are the connection of our whole personality with everything outside, and not merely in the function of thought on its conscious level.

That is the reason why we have different types of feeling in respect of persons and things at different times, and we frequently go on changing our attitude towards persons and things. The reason is that our relationships with externals are not necessarily the conscious relationships, but the invisible potentialities and the urges that are present on the subconscious and the unconscious levels. They are more powerful than those on the conscious levels, and they are the real personality. Psychoanalysts tell us that the conscious level

is like the tip of an iceberg in the ocean, the larger portion of which is submerged and invisible. We do not see the iceberg at all, but it is so hard that it can severely damage a ship if the ship hits it. Likewise, our larger personality is hidden inside, and a very insignificant part comes out as what we appear to be in conscious life.

So, the obstacles are not necessarily the outcome of conscious action, perception and cognition. The obstacles are the reactions set up by our deeper personality. It is not merely the intelligible relationships of waking consciousness that are the causes of our experiences, but the unintelligible inner hidden latencies which become these powers. So we ourselves cannot know what mood will come to us tomorrow, what we will do tomorrow, what we will utter tomorrow, and in what direction we will move tomorrow. "Oh, something occurred to me, and so I went somewhere," is how we will put it. Why should something just occur to us and make us go somewhere? The reason is that the causes of our moods and actions are not always on the conscious level, and as long as they are there, even unconsciously, they shall be the determining factors of our future; and these are the obstacles which have to be faced with a deliberate, conscious practice of yoga.

Chapter 37

PREVENTING THE FALL IN YOGA

When there is attainment of *pratyakcetana* (I.29), or the inner consciousness, there is a cessation of all impediments, says Patanjali. But these impediments, when they come, are variegated in their number. Though they do cease eventually, after a long time, when they come, they come in large numbers. "Misfortunes do not come in one," is an old saying. When we get into trouble, it will come from every direction and not only from one side, so that it will look as if we have no help at all. This is how higher obstacles attack us. They will come and pounce upon us like a pack of hounds, attacking from all sides.

The reason for this unfortunate condition is manifold. Why are we attacked like this when we are pursuing a right course of action? This is not really an attack in the sense of an inimical reaction of any person or set of forces. It is a natural consequence of certain cleansing processes going on inside, as has been pointed out. There are no enemies, really speaking. Even when there is a counter-posing action taking place somewhere in a most unpleasant manner, it cannot ultimately be regarded as an inimical reaction, because finally, truly speaking, there are no enemies in nature—there are only friendly forces. But sometimes they look like enemies for peculiar reasons, one of the main reasons being the inability on the part of the individual to understand the circumstances under which these reactions have been set up.

The impediments in the practice of yoga are more serious, unpleasant, painful and harassing than the obstacles that

ordinary people may face in the world. The little difficulties that the common man has in his day-to-day life are not as painful, annoying or agonising as what the yogi has to confront on his path. For this also, there is a reason why it is that a student of yoga should suffer much more than ordinary people in the world. The common man does not allow the whole of his personality to function at any time; only a partial personality functions. Not even the busiest person in the world can be said to be engaged in the totality of his being. Only some percentage of his being is active and, therefore, the reactions set up by the activity of a percentage of one's being are less potent than the reactions set up by the activities of the whole of one's being.

The reason is simple. In the practice of yoga the whole being is active and, therefore, it starts waking up every blessed thing in this world—whatever may be sleeping anywhere. Even invisible forces, even distant elements may feel that some strange activity is going on in some part of the universe. We must have heard in the Epics and Puranas that even the gods are distressed by the *tapas* of yogis. It means that the meditative activity of a sincere seeker can tell upon even very far and distant regions like the heavens, and not merely the corners of the earth. But our ordinary little work that is going on in a shop, a factory or an office may not be felt at all in such regions. The reason is that these ordinary activities are shallow; they are not deep enough. They do not touch the bottom of things, and therefore the reactions set up are also mild.

But in yoga, what actually moves is the very root of our being. Our soul itself is yearning in the aspiration for the Ultimate Reality. It is not a function of a part of the psychological organs like mentation, intellection, egoism, etc. It is every blessed thing that is in us that becomes active, and we may say there is a sort of conscription of every part of our

personality in this warfare called the practice of yoga. Every individual is harnessed into the army. Everyone is a soldier when this war takes place. There is no civilian at all in the practice of yoga; everyone is active like an army man—everyone, and no one is excluded. Every part of the personality becomes roused, and we can imagine what reactions this can set up. You may ask me why they should set up reactions. Can this noble activity called yoga not be carried on without any adverse reactions?

It is not the intention of the practice of yoga to set up reactions, but they automatically happen on account of there being certain obstructing elements within us which get stirred up automatically due to the cleansing process that is going on in the practice of yoga. They are not really enemies working, but are the impurities that are leaving. When the impurities are driven out of the personality within, they look like violent opposing elements putting on various types of faces—sometimes pleasant, sometimes unpleasant, sometimes unintelligible, sometimes very inscrutable—because we have within us, potentially, infinite latencies of past *karma*, impressions of previous deeds, frustrated desires, and so on and so forth, all of which have to come out one day or the other if the field is to be clean. This cleaning is done by yoga.

Then, we have what are known as the obstacles or the impediments. Though there can be endless types of obstacles in the practice of yoga, Patanjali mentions a few leading obstacles which have to be taken care of by a student, with the guidance of a competent master, because when these obstacles come, they do not come in the form of obstacles. A shrewd enemy always comes like a friend, for if we openly come as an enemy we will not succeed because the other party will know what we are. Ravana always comes as a *sannyasin* in order that he may succeed. If he comes as Ravana himself, nothing will happen; everybody will understand what is coming. So

these peculiar reactions, called impediments, do not come openly as impediments, and we will not know that they are the consequences of our practice. We will attribute these experiences to some other persons or conditions outside us, and will not be able to understand that they are caused by certain internal practices of our own.

In the list Patanjali mentions, the first obstacle is physical disease. His *sutra* runs thus: *vyādhi styāna saṁśaya pramāda ālasya avirati bhrāntidarśana alabdhabhūmikatva anavasthitatvāni cittavikṣepaḥ te antarāyāḥ* (I.30). The *antarayah* or impediments which cause distraction of the mind are ninefold, of which physical illness is the first. When we have a splitting headache, we will not know why it has come; we may attribute it to heat of the sun, or wrong diet, or sleeplessness, and so on and so forth, which ordinarily are the usual causes. But when the practice becomes intense, the physical body may not be able to tolerate the intensity of the practice and there can be a revolutionary condition set up in the physical system, in the whole anatomy and the physiological functions, and painful illnesses may become the result thereof. I myself have seen some of these sincere students of yoga suffering from peculiar types of physical illness which cannot be cured by ordinary medicines. No medicine will work at that time, because the illness is not caused merely by physical causes; the causes are very deep-rooted. They are thrown out by the *pranamaya kosha*, or even something deeper than that, we may say; and the remedy is yoga practice itself.

We have to cure these reactions of yoga only through yoga. Drugs will not cure these illnesses. If a headache is caused by intense meditation, it cannot be cured by an aspirin tablet, because it is a result of an intense pressure that we have exerted upon the mind, the nerves and the *pranas*, and that pressure can be lifted up only by another type of meditation, of

which we have to gain the knowledge only through the Guru who has initiated us. It is not an easy thing to understand. Sometimes there can be such disturbance of the digestive system that we will have diarrhoea for days or months, and we cannot stop it with medicine. Headache, giddiness and diarrhoea are generally supposed to be the immediate reactions of intense concentration of the mind. We will feel as if the mountains are revolving when we stand up. This is giddiness, and we cannot easily know why this is happening. Sometimes we may be under the impression that we are practising a wrong type of meditation, due to which these reactions are set up. It is not necessarily so. Our meditation may be correct, and yet the reactions can be there.

When there is a physical condition of the type of painful illness, the practice should not be diminished. Generally, when we have a little fever, we will not be able to sit for meditation; and of course when there is a headache, it is out of the question. But knowing that these are the necessary and expected consequences of practice, one should not become diffident, and the practice of meditation should not be brought down to a lower level, either in quantity or quality, merely because of these obstacles. They will be there for some days, and sometimes even for months, but they will pass away. Just as when we clean a room with a broom there is a rise of dust, and it may look as if we are worsening the condition in the room rather than cleaning it, that is not the truth, because afterwards all of the dust will vanish and the whole room will be clean. Likewise, in the beginning it may look as if there is something worse happening to us than what has occurred earlier, but it is not true. We are getting cleaned up, and a day will come when the storm will cease and we shall be happy.

When there is intense pain—an intolerable physical condition which prevents sitting for meditation—one can split up the sessions for meditation into one, two, three, four or five

sittings, but the total quantity should not be diminished. If we are in the habit of sitting for three hours of meditation, and it is not possible to do so when we have got a headache, we may split it into six parts. But it should not be completely given up on the plea that we are ill and therefore cannot do the practice, because if we miss the practice its intensity will come down, and then the reaction produced by non-practice will really be disadvantageous—more disadvantageous than the pains we feel due to the rise of reactions by correct practice.

Sometimes it so happens that these impediments persist for a long time. They do not cease after a few days. We should not worry if they continue even for a few years, in the case of certain people. Then it happens that we get fed up. There is a feeling of dullness, and a sense of having had enough with the practice. This is what Patanjali refers to as *styana*, which follows *vyadhi*; *vyadhi* is illness and *styana* is dullness. The enthusiasm comes down and all our vigour goes. The ardour that we felt for the practice vanishes because we have been suffering and suffering for months and years, and who would like that pain or agony? Then, naturally, the alternative for the mind would be to slow down the intensity of the practice, and slow down even the feeling and the longing that it had earlier. But the trouble will not end merely with this arising of dullness.

There is a series of difficulties that follows this condition of lethargic inactivity and the slowing down of the intensity of meditation. The mind will expect only one chance to enter in, and if we give the least chance for this peculiar trait of the mind to counteract any good thing that we do, it will set up a tempest, a cyclone of counteracting work, which will prevent us from taking further steps in the practice of yoga. It will create doubts in the mind. “Oh, maybe something is seriously wrong—either with the initiation that I have received, or I may not be fit for the practice. Otherwise, why have I been

suffering like this for years? I have achieved nothing. I have not had the vision of God after ten years or fifteen years of meditation, and the only thing that I have is purging. I have no desire to eat anything, and I cannot sleep."

Then doubts will start rising up in the mind and tell us all sorts of stories about our Guru and our *sadhana*, our scripture and religion, and everything. We will start doubting everything; and only a single doubt has to arise in order for ten doubts to rise up as the result of that one doubt. Then we will change the Guru. Many people change their Gurus, change the method of meditation, change the mantra and move from place to place, because they have found that there is something wrong. "Otherwise, why is it that I am not achieving anything after so many years of effort?" So, after *vyadhi* and *styana* comes *samsaya* or doubt. This is an obstacle, says Patanjali.

We may doubt the existence of God Himself—this is something that is not unexpected. "After all, is there such a thing called God? Buddha did not believe in God. Perhaps Buddha may be right. He never uttered a word about God. So why am I crying for Brahma, Vishnu, Siva and all that? They may not be there at all." These doubts also will arise. "If they are not there, why am I praying to them? And if they are there, why didn't Buddha mention them? Buddha was not a fool. And there are other religious teachers who do not mention these things. They have other methods, such as *upasana* meditation, *vipasana* meditation, and all sorts of things."

So we change the technique; and this change of technique, this change of initiation and Guru can be compared to digging a well a foot deep, in one thousand places, for water. We have dug only one foot, and we do not find water anywhere, and so we go on digging for a lifetime. In the same way, one thousand Gurus will bring us nothing. This is what will happen. This has happened to many people, and nobody

can be exempted from this possibility, because doubts do not come like extraneous factors. They are internal illnesses that are conditions of the mind itself.

Vyādhi styāna saṁśaya pramāda... (I.30): *Pramada* is the other obstacle in the *sutra* that is mentioned by Patanjali. Blunder, floundering and gross error are called *pramada*. What can be a greater blunder than to forget the existence of God and our purpose in life? Most of the students do not go beyond this stage; they end with this. Their life closes with this difficulty. They make a serious blunder in choosing a different line of activity altogether. For example, suddenly there can be an emotion fired up within to save the world from falling into hell. They will think, "We have come to a stage now where we have to lift the world from perdition." There will be arguments after arguments, logically deduced, justifying this attitude, because logic also comes from the mind—it does not come from outside. The aspiration of the spirit for God-realisation will be dubbed as selfishness of the worst type. Even today we have thousands of people before us who have such suspicions in their minds. These suspicions do not arise merely in idiotic minds, but they also arise in the minds of those who are very intelligent, very learned, very honest and sincere in their approach. Such people will have doubts of this type and come to think that working for the liberation of others is better than working for the liberation of one's own self, because one's own self is a selfish centre. The thinking is: "This is very clear—everybody knows that, and it does not require very much argument to prove that a single person's salvation is selfish compared to the salvation of many others."

So we give up the aspiration for the salvation of the soul, and work for the salvation of others. The result is that both will be in equal bondage, and neither will get salvation. This will not be understood by the mind. It is a trick that is played,

because there is no such thing as a salvation of the type that people are arguing for in this manner. It is a gross error of thinking; it is a blunder of the first water. But this *pramada* or mistake will be committed by most people, and even advanced seekers will not be free from this mistake.

Even masters, great Mahatmas and Mandaleshwars are not exempt from this error of thought because it is a very subtle form of difficulty which is easy to justify by specious logic, and it may look very wonderful and beautiful to the public eye though it may be a gross mistake. This *pramada* is death itself. Nothing can be worse than this idiocy in the practice of yoga. A student of yoga is free from this blunder. This *pramada* is the worst thing that we can expect on the path. So, one should not be heedless or careless in the evaluation of one's spiritual way of living. Let there be persistent practice with caution, intelligence and understanding that we are moving in the same direction that we have chosen earlier, and we have not taken a different line of approach.

After that, something else can come, says Patanjali. This working for the world and merging oneself in social liberating activity cannot go on for a long time, because the world will give us a kick. All great saviours of mankind were thrown to the pits because they could not save mankind. A day comes when society will dislike and even hate us, though we have been trying to help it with utmost sincerity. We have only to read history—that is sufficient. All masters in the political field and most sincere workers in the social field were finally doomed by society. They were either killed by the very same people for whom they were working, or they were condemned to a condition worse than death. This is what happened to great leaders of mankind right from Pedicles, Plato and Aristotle, and nobody has been exempted from this, right up to modern times—which is the tragedy of human effort. Then we

will realise what is in front of us. People generally leave this world with a sob and a cry, not with joy on their faces, because they realised this fact too late. There was very little time for them to live in this world, and all the time had been spent in wrong activity under the impression that it is right activity.

When it is too late to realise this, there is a deep sorrow supervening in oneself, and then people wind up all their activities, spiritual as well as temporal, and nothing happens. There is the condition of torpidity—*alasya*, as Patanjali mentions. If there had not been lethargy in people, who would not be successful in life? We are not successful because of lethargy. We are not active, really speaking. A little finger is active, but the whole body is not active. A little part of the mind is functioning, while the other part is sleeping. *Alasya*, or the lethargic condition of the whole personality, will swallow up all effort. The mind and the understanding cease to function. There is a complete hibernation that takes place, and oblivion—both inward as well as outward—occurs. This oblivion is most dangerous. This total inactivity which a person may resort to, and an extreme type of negativity that may become the consequence of the difficulties on hand, may stir up another storm altogether, because these forces of nature will not allow us to keep quiet for long. They will neither allow us to do the right thing, nor will they allow us to keep quiet. They always want us to be punished, harassed and put to the greatest of hardship. This lethargic condition may continue for a long time.

The lethargic condition can be of two types—one of them being a disgust for everything in life on account of a failure from all sides, and the other type is a peculiar sleepy condition of the mind, which it has resorted to merely with one intention, which is to stop further activity on the path of yoga. This sleepy condition of the powers of the mind is only a pre-condition to an outburst of negative activity of the senses

as well as the ego, which may follow after some time. Intense desires may arise in the mind, which may not arise in the minds of even ordinary householders. The egoism of a spiritual seeker may be worse than the egoism of an ordinary man in the world, and the desires of a spiritual seeker in this condition may be more inscrutable than even the strongest cravings of a worldly man, because here unnatural desires can arise in the mind, while it may be said that the desires of the ordinary man are mostly natural and are taken for granted. But here, attachments of a very peculiar nature may arise—attachments to silly things in the world, not necessarily valuables—and any interference with the expression of these desires or wishes may stir up anger of the most violent type.

Avirati is a sudden flare-up of buried desires in a very vehement manner, pouncing on anything and everything that is in front. It may be even an inanimate object—it may be a fountain pen, a wristwatch, a transistor, or it may be a donkey. It does not matter what it is, because the desire that has been kept suppressed for years together wants only an immediate satisfaction, even through the silliest object possible. This condition of *avirati* (*avirati* means the absence of *virati*, which is the same as *rati*)—attachment, affection, craving, and longing for the smallest satisfaction available—will completely divert the attention of the mind from the original ideal. Even a little stream can draw the entire mass of water of a large river with a force that can burst all boundaries and devastate everything that is around. This is what we call "the fall" in yoga. When a person reaches this state, he has fallen. We talk of a fall and hear of these things happening in the Epics and Puranas, where the mind has come back to the original condition from where it wanted to rise; only it is in a worse state.

All of these virulent flare-ups are to be guarded against before they actually happen. It is better to prevent the rise of a

disease by prophylactics, etc., rather than to try to treat the disease when it has already come up in a violent form. This is only to present before the mind of the seeker the possibilities of impediments and the nature of the difficulties that may arise. The teacher also prescribes methods of remedying them in a proper manner.

Chapter 38

IMPEDIMENTS IN CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION

Major impediments to yoga have been stated to be nine, according to the aphorism of Patanjali. We have been trying to observe the nature of these obstacles, and every one of them seems to have some connection with the other, perhaps one following the other in some mysterious manner. Finally, certain conditions may arise in the mind which may topple down all our effort—namely, perception of illusions which can be easily mistaken for realities. Pressures exerted on the mind—which cannot be avoided in the earlier stages at least—set up certain psychological reactions, and these reactions appear as forms, shapes, colours, sounds and sensations of touch, etc., which cannot be easily discovered in their essentiality. The mind gets mixed up with these conditions, and there can be a subtle erroneous feeling that perhaps one is touching the borderland of Reality. But the visions and these experiences need not necessarily be of that nature. They can be merely kicks given back by mental conditions themselves, and these states are referred to by Patanjali in this *sutra* as *bhrantidarshana*—perception of illusions.

Everything that we see, and anything that we feel, need not necessarily be true. But everything passes for reality when it gets identified with consciousness. This is the difficulty of the whole matter. Yet, intelligently, one should be able to compare these experiences with the characteristics of Reality, and thereby know whether they are real or not. There should be a very clear philosophical background of perception in

order that the intelligence of the seeker may not be duped by these experiences, because when there is even a flash of the vision of Reality, there will be such a transformation brought about in oneself that one can see in one's own personal life a reflection of those features which can be discovered only in Reality.

Otherwise, if these experiences are followed by distractions of any kind, moods which are depressing in nature, or if they are capable of exciting the activities of the senses in any manner whatsoever, or if there is any kind of doubt, suspicion, or sorrow in the mind in spite of these experiences, one can safely say that these are not experiences of Reality and are only illusions. But if it is really an experience of Reality, there will be a feeling of strength from within, a power which can make one indefatigable, physically as well as psychologically, and there will be a great sensation of inclusiveness in one's comprehensive vision of things, so that one cannot be irritated, roused to anger or put out of balance of mind easily by any circumstance in life. These are the characteristics of the perception of Reality. If all of these are absent, if we find the same human nature in its crude distractions persisting, notwithstanding all these visions, tactile sensations, etc., then they can be brushed aside as not spiritual.

Then Patanjali goes on to tell us that there can be another obstacle—*alabdhabhumikatva*, which means to say the incapacity to fix the point of attention. However much we may try, we will not know where to concentrate the mind. There will be either experimentation with various ideas and ideals for the purpose of concentration, not knowing which is good and which is better, or there will be a total inability to fix the mind at all. Due to continued exertion of the mind for a protracted period in the practice of meditation, it may become so tired that it may refuse to act further, just as we sometimes

see horses becoming exhausted by pulling carts. Perhaps from not having been fed for some days and from working in the hot sun, they refuse to move further in spite of their being whipped any number of times. They may even topple the cart, or they may move backwards, so that the driver does not know what they will do. It is possible that the mind can also resort to these devices when it is exhausted due to the fatigue of practice.

This is also an important aspect of the practice of meditation. It should not entail any kind of exhaustion of spirit or fatigue of the body or the mind. Whenever we work we are likely to get exhausted, but it is essential to remember that meditation is not a work—it is not an activity which can exhaust us or tire us. Also, there is a possibility of one's getting tired of anything which is extraneous to one's own essential nature. It is not easy to get tired of one's own self, although we can get tired of others. We can get tired of anything that is not essentially a part of our own nature. But meditation is nothing but an attempt to manifest our own nature in greater and greater degrees, rather than engage ourselves in an activity for the purpose of the achievement of an ulterior motive. Meditation is not an action in the ordinary sense of the term and, therefore, it is not supposed to bring about fatigue, either of the body or of the mind. If we feel exhaustion or fatigue after meditation, it can be safely concluded that there has been some kind of mistake in the choice of the ideal of meditation or in the method that has been adopted in meditation.

Somehow or other we have considered spiritual meditation as a kind of work—like factory work, or work in a shop, or some such activity—which it is not, really. We have to remember that in yoga, we are moving closer to Reality which is our own essential nature, and we are not going away from Reality. The externality that is involved in activity

gradually gets diminished in spiritual meditation, and the less is the element of externality present in an activity, the less also is the sense of fatigue and exhaustion. The nearer we are to our self, the happier we feel. Inasmuch as meditation, if it is really spiritual, is a tendency to one's own essential nature and not a movement externally in the world of objects, it should, instead of bringing fatigue and exhaustion, create happiness and a sense of energy in one's own self.

The incapacity of the mind to fix its attention on the ideal of meditation may be due to undue pressure exerted upon it by an unclarified understanding of the technique. It can also be due to certain desires present in the mind which have not been fulfilled, and which have not been allowed to come to the surface due to the force of discipline. While discipline is good, it cannot always succeed, because it is a power externally exerted upon something which succeeds for sometime, but cannot succeed for all times. The reason is that anything extraneous is repelled—it cannot be absorbed. The mind, being the subtlest instrument available to us, can feel the pressure more than anything else. Therefore, any kind of frustration of feeling, even very minutely present, can cause a sensation of exhaustion in oneself. It is not easy to understand why we are exhausted, why it is that we are not able to sit for a continued period in meditation. There can be hundreds of excuses for our inability to sit for meditation, but they are only excuses—devices employed by the mind to get out of this difficulty we have put upon it.

The mind's non-cooperation with this enterprise called yoga can specifically be said to be due to a lack of understanding as to what it is, because when there is proper understanding and deep conviction born of this understanding, it is difficult to believe that one will not cooperate. Lack of cooperation is lack of understanding. We do not appreciate the meaning of it, or the value of it, or the

worth of it; the mind is of that nature. It does not know why we are practising yoga, or what the purpose of yoga is. Though intellectually, superficially, logically and academically it acquiesces in the pursuit, this has not been driven into its feelings and has not become a part of its real nature. For all these reasons, it may be difficult to gain the point of concentration, which is called the difficulty—*alabdha-bhumikatva*.

Finally, Patanjali says there can be another problem—*anavasthitatva*. Even if we gain the point of concentration, we cannot continue to fix our attention upon it for a long time. We have understood where to concentrate. We know where to fix the attention, but we cannot go on with this practice for a long time, perhaps for not more than a few seconds or minutes, because then the mind jumps. This is only a brother of the earlier obstacle of a similar character. All of these obstacles are ultimately due to certain hidden impressions of likes and dislikes which have not been properly detected, and which have been allowed to lie in ambush for a long time. They can set up various types of subtle reactions from inside—all of which can come either in the form of an internal disturbance or an external irreconcilability with nature. These obstacles have been recounted as being the major impediments to the practice of yoga. *Vyādhi styāna saṁśaya pramāda ālasya avirati bhrāntidarśana alabdhabhūmikatva anavasthitatvāni cittavikṣepaḥ te antarāyāḥ* (I.30)—these are the distractions of the mind; these are the impediments; these are the obstacles of which one has to be very cautious.

These obstacles can be reinforced, confirmed and made difficult to avoid by certain accessories which are known as the associate troubles—*duḥkha daurmanasya aṅgamejayatva śvāsapraśvāsāḥ vikṣepa sahabhuvaḥ* (I.31). These distractions have their own younger brothers which can

join them in their actions and make it difficult for one to face them. These youngsters who create problems in association with these major obstacles are five in number, as mentioned by Patanjali in this particular *sutra* that I cited.

Dhukha is one obstacle—sorrow in the mind. We have a subtle displeasure which we cannot express before others and, therefore, we have always an unhappy face. Sometimes we know its cause, and sometimes we do not. Somehow or other, for days and even months together, we are unhappy. We neither want to eat, nor can we sleep. We do not want to speak to anybody. We feel as if we are fed up with everything. What is the matter? Nobody knows. We cannot understand what has happened. This is a subtle cold war that is going on inside. It is a war, but it is a cold war—a preparation for a hot war, if necessary. A moodiness sets in, which cause can be known if we are intelligent enough, and one cannot say that a sincere seeker can be unaware of the causes of all these moods. But even if the causes are known, they cannot be easily overcome, because what happens at this stage is that the centres of one's likes and dislikes somehow or other seem to get isolated and cut off from one's nature. This is a very great problem indeed.

At a particular stage in the practice we get severed from the centres of our pleasure; and nothing can be worse than this. This severing of oneself from the centres of pleasure can happen either due to a deliberate withdrawal of oneself effected by physical sequestration, deep concentration, etc., or it may be due to a reaction of the practice of meditation. Whatever be the cause, this effect may follow—that which we liked or loved and regarded as worthwhile in life may leave us; and if the cause of this event is not known, the difficulty or the pain felt is much more. If I attack you, and if you know why I am attacking you, the sorrow that you feel is a little less than when you do not know why I have attacked you. If suddenly I come and attack you and you do not know why,

you become more agonised than when you know the reason behind it. Even though you are not pleased with my attitude, at least this feeling of agony is mitigated by the knowledge of the cause thereof. But if the cause is not known, it is still worse. You do not know what is happening or why this sudden attack has taken place. Oftentimes we may be in a state of depression without knowing the cause thereof, and here the danger is obvious because at this point we are kept in a state of suspense, and a state of suspense is not a good condition because it can take any side. A person who is neutral is capable of taking either the right side or the left side, if the chance comes or the time for it comes.

So this peculiar, inert and neutral condition of the mind, where it is deeply sunk in a kind of sorrow for some reason or the other, is a dangerous state where there is a possibility of a strong wind blowing from any direction. When there are dark clouds soaring in the sky, and the sun is completely dimmed and nothing can be seen, we know that it is a preparation for a violent storm, and we do not know from which side the wind will blow, or towards what direction. So this despondency —*daurmanasya*—a mood of melancholy which follows this sorrow, which is associated with sorrow and is a part of sorrow, can produce any consequence of a devastating nature, and it is here that the subtle potentialities within can take very strong shapes and violent forms.

Duhkha and *daurmanasya*—sorrow and depression in the mind—can be due to a memory in the mind of having lost everything pleasurable in life. This memory can come after years and years of practice. The memory need not come immediately. After fifteen, twenty years of meditation we may remember, "After all, I have lost all the goods of life. I am a miserable person." This condition can supervene due to the memory of having lost the centres of satisfaction in life. Or there can be a writhing of spirit from within due to the

pressure of Reality itself, though our meditation has been correct and in the right direction, and this requires that the external centres of pleasure be isolated from the spiritual ideal that is before it, because the centres of pleasure, whatever they be, are ultimately irreconcilable with the ideal of meditation.

The irreconcilability arises on account of the fact that all objects of pleasure are centres which pull consciousness in a direction which is different from the direction which the spirit is trying to take in the practice of meditation. To use a common term, 'objects of sense', the centres of pleasure in life exert a centrifugal force, while in meditation the force is centripetal. It is a movement towards the centre rather than towards the circumference. But in the pursuit of pleasure—in the cognition of objects of sense and the activity that is directed towards the achievement of these objects—there is a movement of the mind away from the centre externally, like the radii of a circle moving away from the centre towards the circumference. In meditation these rays, which are the radii of the mind, are withdrawn to the centre and conserved with a tremendous effort of understanding. Whatever the circumstance, one has to pass through these stages, and perhaps no one can escape these conditions. One day or the other we will find ourselves in this mood of sorrow and despondency; and most of these difficulties come only in an advanced state and not in the initial stages. A beginner does not know what all this is, because he has not felt any one of these. It is only after a certain stage, perhaps after years of intense practice, that these experiences will come like violent winds blowing over one's head.

Patanjali also mentions that there can be another difficulty, namely, tremor of the body—*angamejayatva*—which means a sudden reshuffling of the cells of the body and an urgent necessity felt by the *pranas* within to rearrange themselves on account of pressure exerted by meditation. The

pranas move in a particular direction and in a particular manner, usually speaking. Though this is the usual way that they function, it is not the way in which we want them to work, according to the ideal that is before us. This meditation on the ideal may require the *pranas* to function in a different manner altogether, and if they are thus required, insistently and persistently, every day for a long time, and a rearrangement of the pattern of action is demanded of them, they may feel the pressure thereof to such an extent that they may cause a jerk in the body, a sudden shaking up of the muscular system and a shock is felt in the nerves—all of which is only due to the movement of *prana*.

The *prana* is connected with the nerves and the muscles very intimately, and inasmuch as the *prana* is nothing but the external expression of the mind, any rearrangement of the method of thought will tell upon the arrangement of the movement of the *pranas*, and all of this will also tell upon the muscles, the nerves, etc., so that there can be a complete overhauling of the system. If this is done suddenly and not very slowly or gradually, due to very intense pressure exerted upon the system there can be *angamejayatva* or tremor of the whole system. We will feel shocks and jerks and tremors, as if we are jumping like a frog. We may not actually physically jump, but there will be a sensation of jumping, as if we have been pushed by somebody from outside, or we have been pulled from the front. All of this is due to the intensification of the activity of the *prana* in a more harmonious manner than it is accustomed to in its ordinary ways. The movement of the *prana* is conditioned by desires. As a matter of fact, the *pranic* activity is usually nothing but the preparation of the system to fulfil its desires. The dynamo, which produces within us the necessary energy for the purpose of fulfilling a desire, is the system known as the vital energy or the *prana*, and it is always

directed towards objects of sense. It pulls the mind in that direction.

So, there is distraction in the movement of the *pranas*. Any tendency towards objects of sense is a tendency of distraction, and not a tendency to unification. This is the reason why there is *svasaprasvasa* or inhalation and exhalation through the nostrils. This compulsion to breathe in the manner we do every day, by means of forced inhalation and forced exhalation, is caused by the working of desires in a particular manner. The more is the desire, the greater is the vehemence of the movement of the *prana* and the quickness of breathing. The lesser is the desire, the slower is the movement of the *prana*. The desires temporarily get hushed up in deep sleep, and so we find that in sleep we breathe more slowly than in waking life. When we are worked up into a mood of passion, either of desire or of anger, the breathing process gets accelerated because we are required to take up an action which is urgent from the point of view of the need of the system, and so the engine works faster to drive the vehicle with a greater speed. That is why we breathe faster when we are worked up with such an emotion.

The point is that ordinarily the movement of the *prana* is motivated by desire, and in meditation the desire is sublimated—at least there is an attempt at sublimation, though it is not fully sublimated—and this is immediately felt by the *pranas*. When the practice of meditation is continued and is repeated every day, naturally the effect upon the *prana* becomes permanent, and it changes its movement in the direction of unity and harmony rather than diversity and distraction. But in the beginning this effect exerted upon the *prana* comes to it like a surprise because it has not become used to it, and when it is taken by surprise, it pushes the whole system with a new type of force.

The push exerted by the *prana* is the cause of tremor of the body and, therefore, it is not a permanent condition, and it will not continue for a long time. It is not that we will feel the jerk or shock always. It may continue for some months or even years, as the case may be. Patanjali regards it as an obstacle because of the fact that it is a passing phase, as it is only a temporary reaction set up by the *pranas* and it has to cease when the condition of meditation becomes sustained and a part of one's real nature—*duḥkha daurmanasya aṅgamejayatva śvāsapraśvāsāḥ vikṣepa sahabhuvaḥ* (I.31).

Even breathing is an obstacle, says Patanjali. Though we regard breathing as natural, normal and very necessary, he regards it as an obstacle because this inhalation and exhalation process is an indication that the *prana* is moving towards objects. Though we may be trying our best to control the mind and withdraw it from the objects outside, the very breathing condition itself indicates that the tendency towards objects still persists.

When this tendency comes down, then this heaving of the breath through inhalation and exhalation also becomes slower, so that in deep meditation we will find that we will not even feel the process of breathing at all; it will be so calm, quietened and slowed down that it will become imperceptible, for all practical purposes.

Chapter 39

CONCENTRATING THE MIND ON ONE REALITY

After mentioning the possible obstructions to yoga, there is a consideration, again, as to how one can face these obstacles, because there is no use merely suffering them and not knowing what to do when they come. The nine obstacles and the five accessories to these obstacles have been enumerated and explained. There is a very simple and direct instruction by Patanjali which may go over the heads of people if it is stated plainly, because his prescription is in terms of the ultimate nature of things, which he regards as the solution for all problems. Before I tell you what seems to be in the mind of Patanjali in regard to the solution of these problems or the removal of these obstacles, it is better to recapitulate the causes behind these obstacles. We have studied them fairly well in our earlier sessions, but it is better to recollect them for the purpose of deeper understanding and concentration.

The obstacles do not come either from inside or outside, exclusively speaking. They come from a peculiar combination of both factors. As a matter of fact, whatever be the difficulty, including physical illness, no difficulty is exclusive in the sense of being external or internal. It is caused by internal factors as well as external ones. So is the case with every problem, every difficulty, every question, and every issue. Our life is neither purely subjective nor purely objective; we are hanging in the middle, and this condition is the cause of all the problems. If we had been wholly inside, that would have perhaps been better, but that is impracticable.

The world that is outside us will not allow us to be wholly inside. Nor is it true that we can be wholly outside, because there are forces within us which compel us to pay attention to them. So we cannot be a hundred percent extrovert, nor can we be a hundred percent introvert. We have a percentage of both elements in us, and so there is a relativity of action and reaction between internal conditions and external conditions. This relative condition is the condition of the world as a whole, including the condition of every person and every thing in this world. This is why it is often said that this is a relative world. There is nothing absolute here—everything is conditional. Everything is determined by something else, so that nothing can stand on its own status, on its own legs.

The difficulties arise on account of an improper adjustment of the internal with the external, or the external with the internal. If there is a proper adjustment, perhaps we would be able to manoeuvre a course, strike a via media between these two devils—or we may call them the devil and the deep sea—the external and the internal. But it is not always easy to determine the correct golden mean between the internal forces and the external conditions of the world.

We cannot wholly understand the structure of things outside, nor can we fully understand our own selves. So there is always a miscalculation, in almost every moment of time, in the manner of adjustment of oneself with the world outside. Neither can the world adjust itself with us, nor can we adjust ourselves with the world. When the world cannot understand us fully, nor can we understand the world fully, where comes the question of harmony? It is impossible and, therefore, some sort of a friction is inevitable; and it is a perpetual friction, not felt only occasionally or rarely. To go back to what was discussed much earlier, the original cause of this irreconcilability felt between the internal and the external is the gulf that has been created between them—the individual's

isolation from the Cosmic, about which we have adequately studied previously.

The segmentation of the individual from the Universal compels the individual to go back to its source, as that is the natural state of affairs and the natural condition of things. This obligation on the part of every individual in respect of the Universal is the cause of cognitions, perceptions, attachments, loves, hatreds, etc. All of these also bring about a sort of friction due to a lack of sufficient understanding of the prevailing condition of the external atmosphere, in relation to the relevant or the corresponding internal condition of the individual concerned.

Neither is the world in a permanent condition always, nor is an individual in a permanent condition at all times. People outside and things in the world go on changing in the process of time, and so it becomes necessary for us to adjust ourselves to things in the world—to every condition of the world, and every state of people or things outside. Also, we ourselves go on changing in the process of evolution; we are not today what we were yesterday. So, there is a continuous necessity to reshuffle and remodel our relationships with the world outside—all of which is, indeed, a great hardship, a struggle and a torture, we may say, on the part of the individual experiencer. And so, life is a struggle; it is a perpetual hardship, an exertion, and we cannot be at peace for a moment in this world.

This compulsion felt by the individual to relate itself to the universal outside, including the world and society, simultaneously brings about a need to understand the conditions under which this relationship is possible. But this understanding is outside the purview of individual knowledge. No object in this world is wholly individual—it has a cosmic element in it. That is why we cannot understand anyone wholly. To understand even a grain of sand fully,

thoroughly, to the core, we may have to understand the whole world and the whole universe, because the essentials of the whole universe will be found to be present in a grain of sand. So even to thoroughly understand such a minute particle as an atom, we may have to be omniscient, which is impossible. So the question of thoroughly understanding anything in this world does not arise—it is impracticable. Therefore suffering cannot be avoided as long as we live in this world, until we become omniscient.

These obstacles arise on account of a fundamental difficulty in which we find ourselves—namely, the inability to understand the world, the incapacity to relate ourselves properly to things and persons outside—in short, an absence of the knowledge of the essential structure of all things. The remedy, then, is to go to the cause, as it is in every case, in every question. Patanjali's prescription is, "Fix your attention on the Ultimate Reality, which will set right everything." *Ekatattva abhyasah* is the only recipe— *tatpratiṣedhārtham ekatattva abhyāsaḥ* (I.32). Meditation, in a word, is the answer.

We cannot succeed in life without an element of meditation in our minds. Whenever we put our minds into an action, we are supposed to be meditating, though in a very, very little percentage. We cannot do anything without the mind being in it. Can we think of any action bereft of the mind element? That would be a thoughtless action, and it cannot lead to success. Ordinarily, what happens is that although we put our minds into a work or an action, we are not fully interested in that action. It is very difficult to imagine any kind of work in this world in which we are wholly interested, one hundred percent. We cannot be wholly interested even in our own children; that is not possible. We have only a percentage of interest, because our interest is conditioned by other factors.

How can we have unconditioned interest in anything? This is really the meaning of meditation. When we have an unconditioned interest in something, our whole mind is present there. This is the secret of spiritual practice, ultimately—the essence of yoga and the meaning of meditation. In ordinary enterprises the whole mind is not present, obviously, for reasons well known to us, but to the extent that the mind is present in the action, perhaps to that extent alone we may succeed in the action. Minus meditation there is no success in any field of life, because putting the mind into a work or an action is another way of putting oneself, one's soul, into it. The mind is only a symbol or an insignia of the soul in us, because where the mind is, there the consciousness also is. As we have studied, *phala-vyapti* follows *vritti-vyapti*, and *phala-vyapti* is nothing but the attending of the consciousness simultaneously with the action of the mind in respect of any action or object; and consciousness is one's own soul.

So, virtually, to put the mind into a work is to put oneself into the work, one's soul into the work, one's being into the work, to find oneself in the work—we become the work. This is really the essence of *karma* yoga also. We ourselves become the work, and then we have to be successful; and we will not be tired of the work, because we cannot be tired of ourselves. But if the element of self is absent, if the soul is not sufficiently present in the work, the work can become tiring, fatiguing, exhausting. That percentage of action, or work, or function which is bereft of the soul-element can become tiring and annoying. But that percentage of action or function in which the soul-element is present cannot be tiring, though we may go on doing it for a hundred years.

Take breathing, for example. We are not tired of breathing. We do not say, "For how many days do I have to breathe? I am fed up with this; I will stop it today." Nobody

says that. It has become a part of our nature; it is we ourselves functioning and, therefore, we cannot be tired. That which is an essential part of us cannot be an object of exhaustion. When the mind, which is the acting principle of the soul, connects itself with an object or engages itself in an action, it thereby determines the extent or the percentage of success possible. If we have to obviate all of the problems and difficulties of life, we have to go to the topmost type of meditation, which will put its finger on the vital spots of every problem and not merely gaze at them, stare at them or look at them from outside. But this is a simple remedy, which is almost impracticable for ordinary people.

This *ekatattva abhyasah,* or the resort of the mind to one reality, is practically impossible, because the mind is not used to, or accustomed to, permanently engaging itself in any one given thing. It is variety that feeds the mind; anything single is monotonous. If variety is presented, we may not feel even the passing of time, but if a single item is presented before us, even a few minutes may look like ages, whatever be that thing in this world. The variety of the world keeps the mind engaged in a pleasant mood, and it is this variety that causes the distraction of the mind. Variety also means, at the same time, the cutting off of the individual from the object of its engagement, and we have already noted that this severance of the subject from its object is the source of all troubles. So to ask for variety is to ask for trouble, while our intention is to obviate or get rid of the troubles.

The idea of one reality will not enter the mind ordinarily, because we have never seen such a thing in this world, and what has never been seen cannot be understood or appreciated. But a judicious analysis, philosophically conducted with a disciplined attitude, can take us to the realms of very abstract principles, which ultimately rule the destinies of mankind and the world as a whole. The higher principles of

mathematics, for example, cannot enter the minds of people, but we cannot say that they are unrealities. They are more real than gross arithmetical calculations. A child will not be able to understand the principles of abstract mathematics, because these abstractions apparently have no connection with the things of the world. The very complicated algebraic calculations of an advanced physicist or a mathematician will look like a crazy presentation in Greek and Latin for a person who is untutored in the subject. But we know how real these calculations are, and how they have contributed to the transformation of the whole world today by means of the industrial revolution and technological advance. All of this has become possible only by the calculations of these abstract thinkers who are not very much concerned with the concrete objects of the world, whereas the ordinary person thinks that the reality of the world is nothing but these objects that are concretely presented to the senses. The abstractions of physicists and mathematicians ultimately determine the fate of even concrete objects. But to understand these principles we have to undergo a very severe discipline of thought, which a student of these subjects knows very well.

Mostly, it is impossible to conceive of universals in the mind, because universals do not exist in this world; everything is a particular. But a person who has read a little of logic will know what a universal is. The general principle present unanimously and uniformly in a group of particulars—this principle is called the universal. As logicians will tell us, horses are the particulars; horse-ness is the universal. Horse-ness is different from horse. But to the mind that has never been accustomed to thinking in this fashion, this sort of statement looks crazy and meaningless. What do we mean by 'horse-ness' or 'table-ness'? It is stupidity to talk like this. But it is not stupidity to a logician. These are the universal elements behind particular concrete objects that he is trying to

describe. Likewise, apart from these logical universals which are only notional, we may say, there are other types of universals, which may look notional from a purely academic point of view but are realities more significant than concrete objects, as is the case with mathematical equations, as mentioned, which are far removed from the world of particulars and concrete things and yet which determine the course of higher advancement in the world—whether in technology, or science, or social living.

The concept of the universal is not easily appreciated by the mind, because from birth to death the mind is accustomed only to the thought of objects, which are particulars. We have never been taught what a universal is and what its importance is in one's life. Because the universal cannot be seen with the eyes, one does not bother about it. But it is behind the particulars, and the particulars are included in it; therefore to concentrate on it, to bestow some thought on it, would not be a waste of time. On the other hand, it would be a great advantage because instead of wasting time in thinking of different particulars successively, one after the other, we would group them together in a single aggregate which we may call the universal, and the thought of the universal, or the concentration of the mind on the universal, the engagement of the mind in the universal, would be equivalent to thinking of all the particulars, including the universal itself.

But there will be a difficulty felt even by a trained mind in entertaining the notion of the universal, because of a doubt that perhaps the universal is only an idea disconnected from the objects which are concrete and, therefore, it is difficult to believe, ordinarily, that an abstract universal can be a total of concrete objects. How can concrete objects put together cause, or bring about, or be equivalent to, an abstract universal? The abstract, according to us, is something which is unreal. I can think of something in my mind, though it may

not be there. This is what is called an abstract thought which has no relevance to concrete objects. So there can be a suspicion in the mind that, after all, this logical universal that we are speaking of, or any sort of universal for the matter of that, may perhaps be a sort of building castles in the air—a kind of idea that is arising in the mind without any corresponding reality in the outside world.

This is the reason behind the rise of various schools of philosophy, both in the East and the West, which have different thoughts on the subject. As I mentioned sometime back, this has led to opposite schools of thought—such as realism and idealism, materialism and subjectivism, and so on and so forth—because of an exclusive emphasis that they laid on one side of the matter, without taking into consideration the other side. The materialists ignore the subject, and the idealists ignore the object; but it is necessary to take both elements into consideration in understanding the determining factor behind the presentation of the subject as well as the object.

The notion of the universal, though it is difficult to entertain in the mind ordinarily, can be made a part of our thought by a little deep thinking of a subtle nature, which is, of course, the beginning of philosophy in a real sense of the term. The knowledge which the subject has of an object implies the presence of something which is transcendent both to the subject and to the object. This something which is transcendent may be said to be the universal, for the purpose of the subject which we are discussing. It is not true that there can be a consciousness of an object, or knowledge of an object, merely by an interaction of the subject and the object in an external manner through space and time, unless there is a third element which is inclusive of the principles of the subject as well as the object. On a deeper analysis it will be found that the subject is not merely the body of the subject.

This is a thing which is known to most of us, so I will not go into the details of it. We are not the body, and we are not even the mind; there is something in us which is different from both.

As students of the Mandukya Upanishad and the Vedanta philosophy know very well, in the state of deep sleep we exist in a state or condition which is free from the shackles of body and mind. What is that state in which we exist in deep sleep, where we are oblivious of body, mind, social relations, etc.? That state is one of pure awareness—of pure consciousness. We cannot associate any attribute to this consciousness in the state of deep sleep, because nothing is present there; no attribute, no adjective—nothing is connected with it. The whole world is absent in sleep; but consciousness is present, on account of whose presence, they say, we are able to remember the fact of having slept earlier.

So we have to conclude that our essential being is consciousness, and not a body, or a mind, or even a social relation. This consciousness is the real subject which knows the objects outside. The analysis of the process of perception, with which we are well acquainted, proves that the very possibility of consciousness coming in contact with objects requires the presence of the very same consciousness even as a link between the subject and the object, without which the awareness of the object itself would be impossible. There is a necessity for the presence of a conscious link between the subject and the object, without which it is impossible to explain the phenomenon of knowledge of anything whatsoever. It is not space, time, and sunlight, etc., that are the causes of perception of objects, as they are all inert elements without knowledge or understanding.

There has to be an implied presence of consciousness between the subject and the object so that knowledge of the object may be possible—the subject is consciousness, as we

have just noted, and the process of knowledge is also consciousness. Finally, we have to find out what the object is made of. Is it a body, material in nature, bereft of consciousness? That also cannot be, because if the object is wholly material in the sense of complete removal from the principle of consciousness, if it is not conscious, it would be difficult to explain how consciousness comes in contact with that object and becomes aware of the presence of that object. Characters which are wholly dissimilar cannot meet each other. If matter and consciousness are to come in contact with each other, and consciousness is to be aware of the presence of matter, such a thing would be impossible, inconceivable, unless matter—the object itself—is potentially conscious or has the element of consciousness in it. Therefore, the principle of consciousness in the subject, in the object, and also in the process of knowing the object has to be accepted, so that everything is consciousness only and there is nothing else but that. This principle of consciousness is the universal, which transcends the concept of ordinary subjectivity and objectivity and the process of ordinary perception. This principle cannot be known by opening the eyes and looking at things; it can be known only by a critical analysis of the situation of knowledge itself.

The universal is something very difficult to understand, and Patanjali says we have no alternative. The Ultimate Reality has to be concentrated upon in order that there can be a freedom from the tension created by the irreconcilability between the subject and the object. The concentration on the principle of the universal, which is consciousness, in the phenomenon of knowledge of an object, will obviate the difficulty of reconciling the subject with the object. The question will not arise at all, because there is no subject and no object when we understand that what we call the subject and the object are only temporal, phenomenal manifestations of

another transcendental being in which these two contradictory elements are not present at all.

Then it is that we are able to understand the meaning of the famous verse from the Bhagavadgita: *brahmārpaṇaṁ brahma havir brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam, brahmaiva tena gantavyaṁ brahmakarmasamādhinā* (B.G. IV.24). The actor, the action, and the end towards which the action is directed—the seer, the seen, and the process of seeing—all become, ultimately, various processes in a wider sea of reality, on which concentration is prescribed when Patanjali says: *tatpratiṣedhārtham ekatattva abhyāsaḥ* (I.32).

But this concept of the universal cannot be brought to the mind at once; it has to be done gradually. It is for this purpose that we prescribe *tratak*, the concentration or gazing at a given object—candlelight, or an *ishta devata*, or a concept of a personal god, or anything that is attractive or pleasant, for the matter of that. The intention behind all these is the concentration of the mind on one thing to the exclusion of other things, because any endeavour to focus the attention of the mind wholly on a given principle or object breaks the structure of the mind. The complex structure of the mind gets dismembered and, ultimately, what is the purpose of yoga but the dismemberment of this composite structure called the mind, which is obstructing the revelation of the *atman* within like a thick cloud covering the sun?

So *ekatattva abhyasah*, the concentration of the mind on one reality, is the prescription given by Patanjali for getting rid of these obstacles that may present themselves in the practice of yoga; and the methods of concentration on the One Reality, in its various degrees, have to be considered.

Chapter 40

RE-EDUCATING THE MIND

The removal of the impediments to the practice of yoga is said to be possible by meditation on reality, to give an ultimate solution to the problem. This is finally the only solution to all difficulties. There can be tentative solutions, but a final solution is not possible unless one resorts to the ultimate cause of all things, from which everything proceeds and of which everything is an effect. But, as we observed, the generals that are behind particulars—the universals that are at the back of all visible objects—are incapable of human comprehension. And, inasmuch as it is these universals that are the realities, a proper attention to the nature of these mysterious principles would be not an easy matter for the mind, which is used to perception of external things.

The one reality which Patanjali speaks of in his *sutra*—*ekatattva abhyasah* (I.32)—can be interpreted to be any kind of object, for the matter of that, provided that there is no other object attracting our attention. Though, in a way, the universal is that which is inclusive of all particulars and, therefore, it may appear that to concentrate on the universal would be equivalent to concentrating on the background of every particular conceivable, nevertheless, the characteristic of the universal can be visualised even in a particular object. This is the significance of idol worship or the ritualistic adorations that we perform in temples and in religious fields, generally speaking.

The universal is anything which is free from externality; and it is the presence of the consciousness of an external that

becomes the cause of distraction in the mind. We have always a sense of fear and insecurity if there is something else, something external to us, whatever it be. It may be a person, or it may even be an inanimate object. The existence of something outside us is the cause of anxiety of some kind or the other; and that is distraction. The very consciousness of anything external or outside oneself is identical with distraction, which is the opposite of concentration of mind. The preventing of this distraction implies the absence of a consciousness of anything outside it.

In the beginning stages, for the purpose of novitiates absolutely unfamiliar with this subject, what is prescribed is a conceptual form of the ideal that one would regard as the highest possible, and this is the philosophy behind the worship of the gods of religions. It is not the worship of many gods, but the worship of any aspect of the one God, which can be taken as the means to the realisation of that all-inclusive background of these various manifestations called 'gods'. Sometimes, especially in the field of pure psychic science and occultism, any object is taken for the purpose of concentration, provided the will is strong enough. The object of meditation or concentration need not necessarily be a deity in the sense of a divine being. It can be anything. It can be even a candlestick, or even a fountain pen or a pencil; the only condition is that we should not think of anything else except that pencil in front of us.

But the nature of the mind is such, the mind is made in such a way, that it cannot go on thinking continuously of any absurd object. A leaf from a tree cannot become the object of attraction for the mind because the mind cannot see any value or significance in a leaf, or a pen or a pencil, though a very scientific attitude would find significance in anything. Even a pencil is as important as a deity if we understand the background of it and the way in which it is constituted. But the

ordinary mind cannot understand it. It requires the foisting of certain characteristics which are regarded as beautiful, magnificent and capable of fulfilling the wishes of the person concentrating. No one concentrates without a purpose.

It is very well known why we practise yoga, or for the matter of that, why we engage ourselves in any activity at all. The purpose is to fulfil a wish, whether it is a particularised one or a larger one. This wish is supposed to be fulfilled by the practice of concentration of mind. Here, it would be advantageous to note how a wish can be fulfilled by mere concentration of mind. If that had not been the case, why should be there any attempt at all at concentration? Is it possible to fulfil a desire, or come to the attainment of any wish, for the matter of that, by concentration of mind? The answer is yes, as given by the science of yoga. Any wish can be fulfilled, whatever it be, on earth or in heaven, provided we can adjust our thoughts properly, in a prescribed manner. The absence of success in the pursuit of any objective is due to absence of sufficient concentration on the objective. We are not fully interested in anything, as I mentioned sometime back. That is the reason why we cannot achieve anything fully. There is nothing in this world which can draw our attention wholly, and that is why nothing comes to us as we expect it. A half-hearted friendship with anything in this world cannot lead to a permanent success in the matter of union with that object, or utilisation of that object for one's purpose.

We have a wrong notion that our secret feelings are not known to others, and that we can dupe people by showing an external form of friendship, though inwardly there may not be that friendship. It is not true that we love all people, but yet we show that we are fraternal in our attitude. This is called political relationship, or social etiquette, etc., which will not succeed always, because things of the world have a peculiar sense, and this sense is ingrained even in inanimate objects.

There is nothing absolutely senseless in this world. Everything has a sense, and that sense is peculiar to its own structure. The vibrations produced by things are the senses which these things possess, and any kind of disharmonious vibration that emanates from ourselves, in respect of those things or persons outside, would be an expression of an unfriendly attitude. This has nothing to do with what we speak with our mouths or the gestures that we make with our hands. We may shake hands or we may have tea on a common table, and yet all people sitting there may be enemies. It has nothing to do with common tea, etc., because the sense of internal structure and relationship with others is something deep-rooted—more deep-rooted than is visible outside. Sometimes we get repelled by certain things even when nothing is happening, and sometimes we are pulled or attracted even if there is no obvious cause behind it. That is because of something else happening inside. Some people use the term 'prehension' for this peculiar sensibility present in things, to distinguish it from 'apprehension', or conscious understanding of the nature of things by means of sensation and mental cognition. Everything reacts to everything else in a subtle manner, notwithstanding the fact that it cannot be detected by ordinary observation through the waking mind or the active senses of the waking life.

It is this subtle disharmony we have in ourselves, and an irreconcilability of our nature with the nature of other persons and things, that is the cause of failure in our life. We do not succeed, because we do not want to be friendly with anyone. We are always opposed to something or the other, and this sense of opposition within us can be felt by everybody, though we do not express it openly with our mouths. In this world, an open expression through words is not necessary. The vibrations of our very being will be felt by the vibrations of other things and other persons in life through a peculiar

sensation that they have got, and which will act or react according to the circumstance on hand. Therefore truthfulness of attitude, or openness in one's dealing with others, does not constitute merely a question of speaking with people or gesticulating in society, but an inward harmonious feeling which is deeper than the conscious relationships that we deliberately put on, sometimes contrary to what we are inside, deeply, at the core.

It is not true that our inward life is the same as our outward life. They are two different things altogether, and this is perhaps so in the case of 99.9% of people. For various reasons, psychological as well as social, it becomes difficult for the individual to express his real nature outwardly. Whatever the reason behind it, the fact is there—the outward relationships and inward characters do not coincide with each other; therefore there is irreconcilability, obviously. So, there is no friendship. Friendship is not a matter of writing a letter or speaking a word, but a matter of feeling. This feeling is impossible unless there is the capacity to appreciate the condition or circumstance of the person or the object with whom we are related, or with which we are related, and finally, to enter into the very feeling of that person and the being of that object—which is alone, ultimately speaking, real fraternity of feeling or friendship.

We have a subtle distractedness in our mind on account of an absence of friendliness with things. This will cut at the root of all the yogic practice, because yoga is the attempt to contact Ultimate Reality. It is not a mere social contact that we are trying here, but a contact of utter being—the basic reality that is in everything. So there is a requisition for a complete transformation of our personality, inwardly as well as outwardly, even on the unconscious level—not merely outwardly—so that we get attuned to the structure of anything and everything in the world, under every condition.

There is nothing personal in us, if we become genuine seekers of Truth. We become like crystal, as the Samkhya philosophers would say, which has no colour of its own and appears to have a colour of everything that comes near it. Everything is okay. There is nothing wrong, erroneous, ugly or unwanted in this world from the point of view of the strange harmony that exists among things at the core. Ultimately, everything is harmonious. That is the meaning of the universe or cosmos. The moment we touch this secret of things by the practice of concentration of mind, we invoke the harmony that is at the back of all things. And harmony is nothing but the attunement of things with one another and the basic relatedness of things, rather than the so-called irreconcilability that is visible outside. The moment the mind concentrates on this fact, bereft of all inward distractions and tensions, there is an automatic summoning of the essential nature of things outside, and they come to us instead of getting repelled.

It is possible to concentrate the mind on an object merely on the surface level, though at the bottom there may be a feeling of irreconcilability. That will not lead to success. We may be praying to God through an image in a temple, and yet have a suspicion in the mind that we are praying only to an idol made of stone. This suspicion will spoil all our devotion. "After all, I am praying to a small wooden image. How will this bring fulfilment of my wish or the satisfaction of my desires? I want to be a king, an emperor, and for that purpose I am praying to an idol which is unconscious, which cannot listen to anything that I say." This suspicion will shake the very foundation of devotion, and religion will become merely a pharisaical ritual.

This is what is happening, mostly—our religion, our practice, our devotion becomes a kind of dead routine which has no life in it, and all the efforts of life seem then to bring

nothing fruitful. We are neither scientific in our attitude, nor logical, nor really religious. There is, basically, a kind of hypocritical attitude which is covered under a camouflage of a necessity of practical life, which takes all our time, and we may spend our entire life in this attitude to things, ending in nothing, finally. But the inward tendency to repel things, on account of an intense egoism of nature, subsides by a proper understanding of the nature of things and by a forced imposition of universality upon the particular object upon which we are concentrating. In the beginning, it may be merely by power of will; later on, understanding will come and make it more alive. It is better to always couple understanding with the power of will, so that it may be a pleasant process rather than a hard discipline of an unpleasant character. Whatever it be, we cannot say which is more important and which comes first. Understanding and will should go together, and do go together.

Any particular object can be taken for the purpose of concentration, because any particular has the elements of the universal present in it. For instance, we can approach the government through any officer. He may be an officer from Madras, or from Punjab; it makes no difference. He is an officer of the government of India. So to touch the government we need not run about from place to place in search of it, because a government is like the universal—it is pervading everything, and it is everywhere. We can contact this universal called the government through an individual or a particular that is the officer. He may be any officer; through him we can find our way to that universal principle called the government. When that officer expresses a view, is it the officer's view or is it the government's view? It is not his individual view, but it is the expression of the universal that is behind him. It is the force of the government that works through the individual, and at that time he is not an

individual—he is a representation of the universal. Likewise, even an idol, or an image, or a picture, or a concept can become a representation of the universal characters behind it, provided we are able to visualise these characters with sincerity of purpose.

As I mentioned, the main point to be remembered here is that while concentrating on any object, no external thought should be allowed because the thought of an external object is the distraction which prevents concentration. The mind cannot be wholly present in the given object if there is another thing side by side or along with it. This is then *vyabhicharini bhakti* or divided devotion, as they call it. When we think of two things at the same time because of the presence of another thing outside that given object, the devotion is split. The force of the mind gets diminished on account of a channelisation of the mental energy in two directions. In the beginning, the mind will refuse to concentrate like this because it is fed by diverse food. So what is essential in the beginning is to diminish the directions in which the mind moves to the minimum possible. Though it is not possible to bring the mind to a single point, we can bring it to the minimum possible or conceivable number of items of concentration.

This is the purpose of *satsanga*, listening to discourses of a spiritual and philosophical nature, study of sacred scriptures, *svadhyaya*, etc. Direct meditation is impossible, for reasons well known; therefore, we go to *satsangas* and listen to discourses touching upon various subjects, though within a limited circle. The subjects are variegated and yet limited to certain features. Similar is the case with study. If we study the Srimad Bhagavata, or the Ramayana, or the Bhagavadgita, the mind is given a large scope to think of many ideas and to bring into it notions of various features of reality. Though there is a variety presented in the study of a

scripture of this kind, this variety is ultimately limited to a particular pattern of thinking.

The whole of the Srimad Bhagavata, to give only one concrete example, is filled with thousands of ideas expressed in various ways. Though these ideas are many, they are kindred, essentially. Therefore, the chaotic movement of the mind is brought to an end, and the first step is taken in bringing the mind under control by allowing it to think of sympathetic thoughts, though they may be variegated in their structure. There are several members in a family. Each person is different from the other—one is tall, one is short, one is very active, another is idle, one is working outside, one is working inside, one is a man, and another is a woman. There are all sorts of persons in a family, but yet they are kindred spirits—there is a sympathy of character among them. This is the reason why we call them a family, though they are individuals of different natures altogether. Likewise is any type of organisation—it may be an institution; it may be a parliament; it may be a government or it may even be an army—it may be anything. In the army we have thousands of people of different natures, yet they are brought together by a single ideal.

Likewise, by introducing a common background of a type of organisation in the midst of variegated ideas, the mind can be brought within the circumference of a given purpose. This practice should be continued for long time, until it becomes possible to reduce the size of the circumference. The ideas become less and less in number, so that we will be able to get on with only a few thoughts throughout our day. There is no need to think a hundred thoughts, because it is not the number of thoughts that is important, but their quality. We may be thinking of a million things in a shallow manner, which may not lead to success; but we may be thinking of only a few things in a very deep and profound way, and that type of

thinking will be more beneficial in the long run, as we know very well.

So we can take any object for our concentration, but we should be sure that the thoughts are not distracting, and that they are not so many in number as to diminish the power of thought. If we think of many things at the same time, the force of thought gets diminished due to the diversification of the channel of the movement of mental force. In *dharana* or concentration there is a twofold activity taking place—the idea that certain notions should be entertained in the mind, and also a simultaneous idea that certain notions should not be allowed into the mind. There is a double activity going on in our minds at this time. We have a feeling inside that, "I should not allow certain thoughts inside the mind." And yet, the very idea that we should not allow certain thoughts inside the mind is itself an idea of those objects. "I should not think of my enemy," but the moment we have that idea, we have already thought of the enemy. So even the idea to repel an extraneous thought is an idea of that thought, the particular object.

It is a peculiar repulsive feature that makes itself felt in the mind at the time of concentration of mind, which is what I mean by saying the double activity that is going on in the mind. We have resentment towards certain features which we regard as irrelevant for the purpose, and so there is a tension in the beginning. It is not an easy thing; we struggle hard, we sweat and then feel fatigue, exhaustion. The reason for feeling exhaustion in meditation is that there is a kind of struggle going on inside, and there is not a spontaneous movement of the mind towards the given object. That is not possible, because the very attempt to concentrate the mind on a given concept is a simultaneous attempt to get rid of certain other thoughts which are unsympathetic with this ideal; and this is the tension. There is always a simultaneous activity going on in the mind—one pulling the other in this direction and that

direction. This subtle tension is the cause of exhaustion, and we tire of meditation.

We may not be openly conscious of this activity going on in the mind, but subtly it will be going on. We know very well that the very idea of sitting for meditation implies that we should not think certain things. Otherwise, we can be thinking anything in our minds and call that meditation; but it is not so. We have an idea that what we are doing through the mind at present is not meditation. The idea of meditation present in the minds of people is such that it calls for a rejection of certain thoughts. Otherwise, why should we sit in a particular place? We can be anywhere and do anything we like. The idea of rejection of certain thoughts becomes difficult to implement for many people, because the mind feels pain whenever it is asked to give up something with which it has been friendly up to this time, and which it has been regarding as valuable. The mind will say, "Why should I reject these things?" We will have a simple answer, "Because they are unspiritual, unreligious and anti-divine, unsuited to meditation, etc." But these glib answers will not be accepted by the mind easily, because the mind is shrewd and requires a very satisfactory answer.

Most people cannot succeed in meditation because a satisfactory answer cannot be given to this question. Why should we reject something when the mind feels that there is a great point in thinking about it? Unless there is some meaning in it, why should we think of it? It sees something—some meaning, some significance, some purpose, some practicable wish-fulfilment, and we are doing contrary work by saying, "It should not be thought. It is not good. It is untraditional, unreligious." Merely making a statement of this kind is not going to be acceptable to the mind, because the mind cannot be terrified by orders of this nature. It is a very terrible thing

by itself, and so it requires a gradual training from inside, rather than an order issued from outside.

The mind is intelligent; it is not a corpse which can be dragged as we like, in the direction we please. As it is difficult to control anything that is intelligent, merely because it is intelligent, we have to apply intelligence itself to control intelligence. An intelligent person can be subdued only by intelligence, and not by force, because intelligence will not yield to any kind of external pressure. So mere pressure will not succeed here in this context of meditation, because the mind is intelligent; it is capable of understanding, and it knows where to find its wish fulfilment. Therefore, any kind of whipping which is meted out to it in an illogical manner will bring about resentment in the mind in such a way that it may completely upset the whole practice after some time.

An intelligent technique has to be adopted in the very beginning itself. The mind should be made to understand the necessity of avoiding certain ways of thinking for the purpose of a larger objective that it has placed before itself, because the reason behind the necessity to give up certain other methods of thinking is that these methods of thinking which are supposed to be given up are irreconcilable with the nature of truth. And as truth alone succeeds, thoughts which are not consonant with the nature of truth should be given up.

For this, the mind has to know what the characteristics of truth are. When it knows that truth is this, and the nature of truth is like this, and "my way of thinking is not in consonance with the nature of truth, and therefore I will not succeed by the pursuit of this method", it may gradually withdraw itself from its erroneous tracks and pursue the right path of spiritual meditation.

Chapter 41

BECOMING HARMONIOUS WITH ALL

The reason behind the distractions of the mind in the midst of the practice of concentration is the inability of the mind to understand that the thought of objects is irrelevant to the nature of Reality. This is, perhaps, the central problem. If this were not the case, there should be no reason why the mind should not concentrate on the ideal chosen. On account of certain pressing difficulties in life, the mind feels a sense of "enough with things", and takes to the path spiritual, the way of yoga, and resorts to meditation.

It is not that people take to yoga by compulsion. It is a voluntary, dedicated aspiration that arises on account of a higher sense rising from within, simultaneously with the perception of defects in things of the world. Nevertheless, there is a dubious personality in the mind itself, which on the one hand aspires for a state of things which cannot be reconciled with the activity in which it is engaging itself, in the midst of this enterprise. The Maha Upanishad says that poison is not poison—the object is called poison, because ordinary poison destroys one life, whereas the poison of the object can destroy many lives. The poison of a snake may destroy one physical existence, while the poison of an object which enters the mind can create such impress upon the mind that it can become the cause of repeated incarnations.

The peculiar, inscrutable attitude of the mind in aspiring for the goal of yoga on the one side, and running after the objects of sense on the other side, can be ascribed to a peculiar pleasure it recognises or sees in its contact with the objects of

sense. While there is also a subtle feeling inside that the goal of yoga is bound to bring a greater joy than all of the pleasures of the world put together, yet there is a state or a condition on the way where the ideal remains as a kind of future objective, unconnected with the present condition, and what is present is nothing but a consciousness of objects. Our difficulty is that the goal that we seek is not connected with the present moment. It is sometimes of the nature of a possibility in the future; and we are not satisfied with mere possibilities—we want actual experiences or realities.

Oftentimes, this possibility may even look doubtful, which makes matters worse because the pressure of the visible realities of sense-objects can overwhelm, for the time being, the effort at recognising value in a future ideal, which is the goal of yoga. It is not possible to visualise the joys of yoga when there is the immediate perception of the realities of sense-life and the pleasures thereof. What the mind seeks is pleasure, and nothing but that. It wants neither yoga, nor anything else. Even if it is yoga, it is only for the sake of the supreme joy which will overcome all limitations of space, time and mortality. But the joys of yoga, the delight of divine experience, is only a concept in the beginning stages, and ordinarily, from the point of view of the psychology with which we are acquainted, the concept is bifurcated from its object. A thought of the object is not the same as the object. So the thought or the concept of the goal of yoga cannot be equated with its realisation, or its experience, or coming in contact with it, while we have daily contact with the objects of sense and there is an immediate demonstration of the pleasures that one can gain by such sense contact.

This is the struggle that one has to pass through every day in one's meditation, in one's practice of yoga. Sometimes the senses gain the upper hand, because they are old friends and it is very difficult to give them up completely. And in the

beginning the new friend, namely yoga, looks like a stranger with whom we are not well-acquainted, and we are not quite sure what this new friend will give us. The mind generally follows the doctrine that says, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." After all, yoga is only a bird in the bush and we do not know whether it will come to us or not, whereas the sense pleasures are a bird in the hand. This is quite understandable, and it is the great problem.

Superhuman understanding is necessary to overcome the tense situation created by the tussle between the senses and the great ideal—consciousness—which aspires for divinity and immortality. It is not humanly possible to do so single-handedly, because the powers of diversity and externality are not ordinary powers that can be trampled down by the power of intellect. They are the Kauravas, larger in number, and they cannot be faced even by an expert like Arjuna, unless there is divine sanction behind it as well as a continuous cooperation from the higher forces of divinity—all of which come after a long time. Even the Pandavas did not get help in the beginning; they were tortured, almost to death. The assistance they received from persons like Krishna came much later, after they were already half-cooked. They had suffered enough, and it was only then that God's grace started making itself felt. Well, this is a mystery. How God works, only He knows. This is the case with everyone, A to Z, and not one is excluded.

It is therefore necessary to repeat, again and again, this important aspect of practice, which is that it is impossible to practise yoga in Piccadilly or Connaught Place where there is plenty of distraction, and it is futile on the part of a novitiate to imagine that he can take to complete abstraction of consciousness in the midst of the din and bustle of physical and social sense activity. It is true that inner strength should always become superior to all external temptations. This is the

ideal, no doubt; but it is an ideal, and cannot be taken literally, at least at the commencement of the practice. The power of yoga is far superior to any other power in this world, without question; it is true, and yet it becomes true only when the power manifests itself. When it is not manifest, we should not imagine that we can go scot-free, and that the powers of the world will leave us unscathed.

The homely analogy given by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is that although it is true that fire can burn ghee, and any amount of ghee can be poured on a fire and be burnt up because fire has such a power, yet if we take this very literally and pour one quintal of ghee over a spark of fire, what will happen to the fire? The fire will not be able to burn the ghee, and will become extinguished. So we should not be under the impression that, "I have the power of yoga, and I am a spiritual seeker; therefore, I can be in the midst of umpteen temptations." This is not advisable, because we are misjudging our situation and misconstruing the circumstance in which we are realistically placed. Therefore, one has to live in a sequestered place as much as possible, and not deliberately run towards difficulties or purchase trouble under the wrong assessment of one's own powers or strength achieved in spiritual practice. Not even saints can be so confident as to be able to face the powers of nature because, ultimately, the stages through which one passes in the spiritual field are mysterious processes which cannot be calculated mathematically, even by the best of brains.

We cannot say what will be ahead of us in the next moment, and what will be our condition at that particular time of confrontation. Therefore, it is necessary to take as much care as possible, and there is no harm in erring on the right side. We may be over-careful, because the powers of the senses, especially when the vehemence of the will is attempting to subjugate them, are likely to be lying there in an

unsublimated condition—a fact which may not be known even to the most acute of understandings—and there is every chance of these potential sense-powers germinating into active participation in diverse activities, which will be the ruin of spiritual effort.

Therefore, the practice should be a double process in the beginning—outwardly guarding oneself against all powers of temptation and opposition, simultaneously with an inward discipline of regular sitting for *japa*, *svadhyaya*, meditation, etc. So much of our energy is wasted in thoughts of objects, and this is partly the reason why we are unable to concentrate on the ideal. It is something that is difficult to understand, because the ways in which our energies get depleted through consciousness of objects are not visible to the eyes; they are subtle processes. We are secretly being drained of our energies by sense-contact—a fact which cannot be known easily, and we also cannot know why we suffer thereby.

Therefore, the principle of *ekatattva abhyasah,* as mentioned by Patanjali, though it is the last remedy that can be thought of in the practice, can be conceived of as an attempt at fixing the mind on any given point to the exclusion of the thought of anything else. When the mind is engaged in concentration, there is, on the one hand, an effort at allowing in only those thoughts which are in consonance with the character of the object being meditated upon; and on the other hand, there is an attempt to obviate all extraneous thoughts. This is a difficulty, no doubt; but practice makes perfect, and one day or the other we have to succeed.

When the attempt at obviating extraneous thoughts becomes unnecessary, and the positive aspiration of the mind for the spiritual goal becomes overwhelming and superior to every other thought, the difficulty of having to get rid of other thoughts does not arise. The mind gets wholly absorbed in the object of meditation. Love becomes superior to hatred, so that

there is no time for hatred at all. Our love for a thing is so much, we are saturated with it to such an extent that we have no time to hate anything, to feel the necessity to get rid of anything, or to bestow thought on anything external to the object on hand. This is an advanced stage of concentration, where the object takes possession of the thought completely, and we begin to feel a satisfaction, a joy of a positive nature, which pulls the mind towards itself with a greater force than can any other object in the world. Then it is that we begin to love the object much more than anything else, as the more is the pleasure in an object, the more is the love for it.

But in the beginning this pleasure will not be seen, because we have been accustomed to diversity of experience and pleasures that are born of contact, rather than of union. The aim of yoga is union with the object and not merely contact with the object, while in ordinary empirical experience, there is only contact and not union. We cannot have union with anything in this world, but we can have sensory contact, and we are used to this kind of experience only. The negative satisfaction which one enjoys by contact with sense-objects has been regarded by us as a natural thing, as if nothing is superior to it or transcending it. So, there is a feeling of doubt and pain in the beginning when a different method altogether is adopted in the practice of a technique towards union with the object.

Union with an object is possible, but not by the action of the senses, because the senses are powers which draw consciousness outwardly in space and time, and as we have observed, as long as there is the intervention of space and time, there cannot be union of one thing with another thing. It is space-time that is the obstruction between the subject and the object. As a matter of fact, it is this element of space-time that is responsible for the division that we observe between subject and object. And so, there cannot be a union of these

two; and yet there is a struggle for union with the object, and so there is a war perpetually going on, without any success. But peculiar psychological conditions which attend upon this attempt of the mind to come in contact with objects of sense bring about a negative satisfaction, which we regard as the joys of life.

The goal of yoga is a different thing. It is possible of achievement only by an introversion of the senses, rather than by their extroversion, because the union that is called yoga is an entry of the subject into the structure, the pattern and the being of the object, which is ordinarily impossible by any amount of sense activity. And so, we are taking to a path quite contrary to the ways of the senses. Hence it is that there is a vehement resentment of the senses to any kind of spiritual practice. There is pain in feeling that the joys of life have been lost, and that the joys of yoga have not come, and are not likely to come. So we are in a state of suspense, having lost everything and having found nothing.

This condition may persist for any length of time, and for any number of reasons—such as the circumstances of the case, the intensity of one's *prarabdha karma*, the intensity of the practice of meditation itself, the extent of one's understanding of the technique of meditation, and so on and so forth. It is not necessary that one should go on suffering like this, provided the methods are known. If one is an incompetent engineer or drives a vehicle ineptly, one knows one's difficulties, but if one is an expert, knowing well all the mechanisms of the process, the difficulty will be mitigated to a large extent. Again, the emphasis is placed on the necessity for a correct understanding of all the techniques of practice, so that it becomes easy to tackle these problems when they come.

Though the joys of union are superior to the pleasures of contact, the intervening period between the time of withdrawal of oneself from contact with things, and the future

attainment of union with things, becomes one of endless difficulties. It is at this juncture that Patanjali mentions all of these obstacles: *vyādhi styāna saṁśaya pramāda ālasya avirati bhrāntidarśana alabdhabhūmikatva anavasthitatvāni cittavikṣepaḥ te antarāyāḥ* (I.30). We do not have these difficulties when we have actually merged with the objects of sense, nor do we have these difficulties when we are in union with things through the power of yoga. But in the middle there is a lot of trouble because there we are, like a voter about to cast his ballot, but the party does not know for which side we will actually vote. We are very valuable, no doubt, but they do not know to which side we will swing.

The senses want to pull us to one side; and our aspirations are there, of course, pointing us in another direction altogether. In a like manner, the canvassing agents of vote pull us from this side to that side, so that we do not know where to go, and they start promising us all sorts of things. Everyone gives us a promise. The senses also give us a promise: "If you come with us, you will get so many things. Come with us. Why this yoga? It is a stupid thing." But the inward consciousness, which has already understood the problems of life to some extent, tells us another thing altogether—that we are on a dangerous road if we take that step.

The main recipe given to novitiates by adepts in yoga is the practice of *tapas*—physically and verbally, as well as mentally—to the extent that is practicable under the circumstances in which one is placed in human society. The circumstances should gradually get refined, as the externalised forms of relation are thinned out as much as possible by continued practice. We should not allow things to take place of their own accord and imagine that something will happen suddenly. For a long time, at least for years together, it will be necessary to intensely and deliberately attempt to safeguard oneself from the onslaughts of sense, and

to tend to this little plant of spiritual aspiration that has just begun to show its head into the daylight of understanding. Patanjali gives various techniques—philosophical, metaphysical, spiritual and ethical—for gaining mastery over the mind. All that we have said up to this time is of a metaphysical character. But it is the opinion of Patanjali that there are other methods which should also be coupled with this practice, such as one's day-to-day behaviour in social life.

We have peculiar traits in our minds which create unhappiness in our day-to-day existence. These traits cannot easily be overcome. For example, we cannot tolerate another person progressing or enjoying any kind of facility; we are jealous. Patanjali says that this is an unnecessary trait in the mind, and it brings us sorrow. How is it that we cannot tolerate another person's progress? We do not want another person to be richer than us. We do not want another person to sleep better than us. We do not want another person to have any kind of facility that we do not have. This is a very peculiar feature of the mind. How is it that we think in this fashion? Do we not want another person to progress at all? We then try to throw mud on the face of that person, who has some God-sent gift and facility provided by virtuous conditions. The result of this reaction of jealousy is going to be sorrow for the person from whom it is generated. It is not going to affect the person on whom it is thrown. It is going to rebound on the person from whom it originated, because all evil will bear fruit ultimately, in the very same place from where it began.

Every action is like a boomerang—it will come back upon the person who has caused it. There is a feeling of intolerance when we observe someone being held in high esteem in society, and we then try to cast aspersions on that person. "Oh, who is this?" said Sisupala before the great Krishna. "Who is this cowherd, this idiot of a fellow who is being worshiped in the midst of all these emperors like us? Shame on Yudhisthira.

Shame on Kshatriyahood." All such manner of things did Sisupala blurt out there, in the royal assembly. As the poet says, there is no easier way of becoming great than to cast aspersions on great ones. So, this is a very cheap method that we are adopting in becoming important in society—criticising everyone and anything. We do not like anything. Everything is bad. Everything is wretched. Everything is wrong—which means to say, by implication, that we are better off. This is how we are trying to become important in society. Is it good? Is it not the way of purchasing sorrow for ourselves?

To obviate these difficulties and get out of these muddles created by psychological torpidity, Patanjali prescribes methods in a very interesting *sutra*: *maitrī karuṇā muditā upekṣāṇāṁ sukha duḥkha puṇya apuṇya viṣayāṇāṁ bhāvanātaḥ cittaprasādanam* (I.33). If we want peace of mind, if we want *cittaprasada*, calmness, happiness, peace, and an undisturbed state of mind, we must adopt certain reasonable attitudes, and not be unreasonable in our attitude. We must be friendly, rather than unfriendly—this is one prescription. *Maitri* is friendship. Is it disadvantageous to be friendly with people, and is it advantageous to always poke one's nose in others' affairs? Is it advantageous to cow down others, to look down upon others and look upon everything with contempt, as if there is nothing good in this world, and the good is only in one's own mind, and in one's own self, and in one's own life? Is it true that we are the only important and worthwhile person? Is it true that we are the only person who is right, and everyone else is wrong? How is this attitude justifiable?

Knowing that everyone is subject to foibles, and everyone lives in a glass house if it is properly investigated into, knowing the subtleties of the human mind and the inscrutability of natural forces, understanding that nothing finite in this world can be perfect, and that everything has

some good element in it—with this knowledge, let friendliness be developed towards all beings. It is impossible to take the stand that anything in this world can be wholly bad or wholly evil. It is not true. Even if there may be a large percentage of erroneous movement in any kind of finite centre in this world, there is also an element of rectitude simultaneously. "Every cloud has a silver lining," as the saying goes, because an absolute viciousness is unthinkable, and absolute evil does not exist. If we want to develop friendliness with any thing or any person, it should be possible for us to discover the virtuous and beneficial elements in that person or thing which, when evoked or invoked, is perhaps capable of manifesting its powers more and more with our help, and by which act we would be helping that person much more than by detecting the evil present and trying to create a difficulty, both for ourselves and for others.

So, one of the methods is friendliness—*sarvabhuta ite ratah*—and such an attitude should extend not only to animate, but even to inanimate objects, so that we become in our nature harmonious with the existence, pattern and structure of things.

Chapter 42

HOW FEELINGS AND SENSATIONS WORK

A reason for many of our difficulties in life, which is not well thought out, is the unnecessary contact with persons. This could be avoided if some discretion were to be exercised. For the most part, we are not in a position to judge people correctly, and we often err in our judgements of persons and circumstances. Patanjali's advice is to be cautious about our associations with people, because any kind of injudicious relationship with people may lead to complications of an unforeseen character, and later on it may become very painful for us when we try to extricate ourselves from the clutches of these conditions.

'Good things' and 'bad things' are relative terms, and our judgements in these respects, when they are mistaken to be absolute, are likely to lead us in erroneous directions. It is not easy to determine who is our friend and who is our enemy, and our judgements in this regard, being shallow for obvious reasons, will certainly lead to consequences which are unexpected. Therefore, contacts should be at a minimum in the sense that they should be entertained or allowed only when they are directly, or at least indirectly, connected with the purpose at hand. Absolutely irrelevant relationships with people must be avoided.

A very well-known verse from the Vishnu Purana says that every relationship that one establishes with anything in this world is an additional arrow that one has struck to one's heart that will cause unending pain one day or the other. There is no contact or relationship that is going to end in joy, because every contact will end in separation. This is the law of nature.

There is no such thing as permanent contact; and when that contact ceases, there is bereavement, which is a great sorrow for the heart which has become accustomed to this contact all along.

Certain instructions on discretionary attitudes in life are given in this *sutra* of Patanjali: *maitrī karuṇā muditā upekṣāṇāṁ sukha duḥkha puṇya apuṇya viṣayāṇāṁ bhāvanātaḥ cittaprasādanam* (I.33). *Cittaprasada* is serenity of mind, and this serenity or peace of mind can be attained by a harmonious social attitude which we may adopt in respect of people outside, without causing any sensation of repulsion. In advanced conditions, it is also pointed out that we should live in the world in such a way that neither should we hate anyone, nor should others hate us. There should be no repulsion from either side. We should not be an object of disgust or repulsion to others—nor should we regard anyone with repulsion or disgust. *Yasmān nodvijate loko lokān nodvijate ca yaḥ* (B.G. XII.15), says the Bhagavadgita. There should be no kind of shunning, either from this side or from that side.

This is a very highly advanced condition of the spirit. But before we attain this condition, we can have a lesser mode of harmonious attitude such as friendliness, as we have mentioned. When we see someone in a state of happiness, we should not be jealous of that person's happiness. When we observe *sukha*, or the happiness of someone, our attitude should be one of friendliness or *maitri*. "If I see that you are happy, very good—I am also happy. I am glad that God has blessed you with prosperity." We should not say, "Why has God blessed this person?"

Many of us have peculiar inhuman traits which should be very carefully avoided. I will tell you a very interesting story of two great men who did *tapasya* for *darshan* of Lord Siva. They were brothers, or intimately related in some way. They were sitting together and meditating for the vision of Lord

Siva, and Lord Siva appeared. “What do you want? Now, you both are meditating upon me, and both perhaps want to ask something from me.” Then Siva said, “You see, whoever asks for a boon first will get only half of what the other man will get; that is, if you ask for anything, the other man will get double. So be cautious in asking” Then one of the men thought, “What should I ask? Very strange. Whatever I ask, he will get double.” So, nobody wanted to ask. Both of them kept quiet. “If I say anything, the other man will get double.” Then one person thought of a very shrewd way to overcome the difficulty. “Let one of my eyes become blind,” he said, “then both the other man’s eyes will became blind.” He did not want the other person to get double, and that was why he thought, “If it is double, let it be blindness. I have got at least one eye; the other man has lost both eyes.” Lord Siva said, “May it be so,” and vanished. Thus the poor man sitting there lost both his eyes, and the man who asked for the boon had at least one eye. One can imagine human nature, how interesting it is.

We want the other man to perish, somehow or the other. The reason why we wish the destruction of others, and our own prosperity, goes deeper than a psychological truth. Humanly it is not possible to understand why we have such attitudes. If one person dies, there is a great sorrow: “My relative has died in a car accident. My brother, my sister…” It may be anyone—there is great sorrow. But suppose fifteen have gone together—then there is some satisfaction. “It is not only my brother that has gone. Somebody else’s brother has also gone. It doesn’t matter so much now.” Don’t you think there is some truth to this feeling? He has some satisfaction that fifteen have died along with his brother. If only one person had died, he wouldn’t have been able to tolerate the sorrow. “It’s only my brother who went, and the others are happy.” Suppose everybody had been saved except his brother, he would not like God. He would think, “God is very unkind.” But if everybody has gone, as the saying in the

Kannada language goes, "Everybody's death is as happy as a marriage." Let everybody go, then it is all right. But if one man goes, it is a great sorrow.

Many, many years back, when I had more physical strength, I used to take bath in the Ganges, even in the worst winter. I never took a hot water bath, for years together. The wind was blowing, biting, stinging—piercing like needles. So I used to take another person with me to bathe, in order that he might share my pain as well. Both of us dipped, so that there was some satisfaction. "He is also dipping. Why should only one man dip and suffer this cold?" We were great friends. He would not go alone, because who would dip if he went alone? So he would call me and we'd go together. Both of us dipped, and both of us shivered. The satisfaction is there—the other man is shivering; it is okay. This is a strange thing.

In respect of my own readings and studies, it is only the German philosopher Hegel who has gone to extensive lengths, in his great work called *Phenomenology of Mind*, to very logically explain the peculiar nature of the human mind, which consoles itself with the misfortune of others. The reason, he says, is the pressure of the Absolute that is urging forward to assert itself as the sole reality. This is a very strange explanation—that we want the death of other people because of the working of the Absolute within us. We cannot understand this. How can the Absolute expect the death of other people? His explanation is that consciousness cannot tolerate anything in front of it, because it has no object, and it will persist in maintaining this nature even in the lowest condition. In the uttermost form of ego, this Absolute character of consciousness will assert itself; and love and hatred are both expressions of this presence of the Absolute in the individual, though in a very distorted manner. We love things in order that we may exist independently of everything else. Love is the manner by which we absorb the independence of another object into our own self so that it

becomes subservient to us—the intention being that it should become a part of us, or become us. Though this cannot be achieved for various reasons, the intention is that the object should get absorbed into the subject so that the subject alone will survive, because the Ultimate Reality is the subject. And also in hatred and destruction, the reason is the same. Hegel says that in the abolition of all objects there is the satisfaction of one's being alone, independent of any kind of external competition. This may be the crudest form of attitude which consciousness may take; and yet its intention is something quite different, though it has taken this atrocious form. The nature of the Absolute will not keep quiet. It shall persist and insist in manifesting itself in some way or the other, and that is why egoism is so hard to overcome. Egoism is nothing but the affirmation of consciousness to be independent and supreme over everything else, and it cannot tolerate the existence of any other ego, because consciousness has no opposite. Well, this is a highly metaphysical explanation given by Hegel.

Patanjali's point is more ethical and social. He mentions that considering the various aspects of the working of *karma* in people, and also taking into consideration the necessity to have peace of mind, knowing also that we cannot change the order of nature or the conditions of things by our single effort, we should be friendly with those who are likely to evoke jealousy in our minds for some reason or the other. Where there is happiness, let there be friendliness. Where there is *sukha*, let there be *maitri*. Where we see sorrow, let there be pity. Where there is *dukha*, we must show *karuna*. We should not say, "This wretched fellow deserves this. Let him go to hell." This is not going to be our attitude towards people. "Oh, poor man, he is placed in this awful condition. If I had been in this state, what would have happened to me? I am much better off. There are people rolling in the streets in rags—without food, in the cold and heat. Am I not like a king compared to them? What a pitiable state of affairs. If possible, let me work

to ameliorate his condition, to improve his condition." This is so that we do not feel a sense of contempt in respect of others, and we do not regard ourselves as superior. We feel pity—*karuna*. We have a sense of compassion in regard to others who are inferior to us socially, economically, or even physically.

Also, when we see virtuous people, righteous-minded people, and people who are highly honoured in society, we should be delighted in our hearts, "After all, virtue still exists." We should not feel, "Why are these people held in esteem? Now I must cow them down, pull them to the dust." This attitude should not be there. There should be satisfaction that virtue still persists, that there are still good people in this world and *dharma* is not, after all, totally dead. But, if we are around utterly intractable, wicked natures, whose transformation is beyond our hands, Patanjali's prescription is to be indifferent towards them—*upeksa*. We should not look for trouble by poking our nose into things that do not concern us. We should mind our own business. There are things which we cannot change and, therefore, it would be wisdom on our part not to interfere with those conditions, whether they are persons or things. So by adopting these tactics, we should be happy in our minds.

Now, this is not a solution to problems, as it can be seen very well. But to some extent it is effective in freeing us from unnecessary entanglements in the social atmosphere, because freedom from entanglements, in some measure, is necessary in order that we may direct our attention in the way prescribed or necessary. If we gain enough strength in the higher reaches of life, we may be able to do something positive in the direction of mitigating these evils and difficulties. However, that is a far-off matter; it cannot be achieved immediately. So, considering our present impotent condition where we cannot transform people or change the order of nature, it would be

advisable to withdraw ourselves from those circumstances which are likely to disturb us in some way or the other, and confine ourselves to our duty, the function that we have taken up at hand. We should mind our own business. This is the essence of the whole *sutra*. We should not go about here and there, seeing things, contacting persons, all of which may not be necessary for our purposes; and we should not be too officious in our attitude.

Sometimes the emotions within become very active and turbulent, and passions of some sort or the other take possession of us in such a way that psychological treatments would not be immediately effective. For that, Patanjali's advice is that we take to a kind of breathing exercise, and hold the breath in a particular way for as long a period as possible. When the breath is held, the movement of the mind is checked to some extent, just as when we catch hold of the pendulum of a clock, the mechanism inside stops functioning for the time being. So, we check the movement of this pendulum, which is the movement of the *prana*, and then the mechanism inside, which is the mind, will not function. Then we will have a little peace of mind, though it may be for a few minutes; and if we persist in this practice, perhaps the turbulence may completely subside. If we go on holding the pendulum for days together, the mechanism may fail.

The method of breathing that Patanjali prescribes to bring peace to the mind when it is agitated, or angry, or emotionally upset for any reason, is to breathe out, exhale very deeply and hold the breath in the manner of an external *kumbakha*. *Kumbhaka* is retention of breath. When we hold our breath and do not breathe, it is called *kumbakha*. This retention of breath can be done either after inhalation, or after exhalation. When it is done after inhalation, it is called internal *kumbakha*; when it is done after exhalation it is called external *kumbakha*. Here, the *sutra* in this connection is:

pracchardana vidhāraṇābhyāṁ vā prāṇasya (I.34). *Pracchardana* is expulsion—we expel the breath forcefully, as we do in *bhastrika pranayama*. After expelling with force, we do not breathe in; we hold the breath—breathe out, and hold the breath out. The heat that is generated inside will be thrown out by the forceful expulsion of the *prana.*

When we are agitated in some way or the other, there is a heat generated in the system which is the cause of the disturbance. This heat is cast out, exorcised by the expulsion of the breath. So, expel the breath with as much pressure as possible, without causing too much of discomfort, of course; then hold the breath out for as long as possible—it may be for a few seconds, or half a minute. When a sense of suffocation is felt, gradually draw in the breath; then again expel, and hold the breath. There is no need for retention after the inhalation, but there is a necessity to retain the breath after expulsion. So let this practice be done for some time—even for fifteen minutes, twenty minutes, or half an hour. The anger will subside, or any kind of agitated emotion will become calmer.

When some people are very angry, they go for a long walk because they do not know what to do. They cannot express their anger, for some reason, and they cannot sit in their room either—they are boiling. So they leave and go to an isolated place and do not see anyone's face for three days. Then after three days they are all right; they have reconciled themselves somehow or the other. This is one way which Patanjali does not mention—to go to an isolated place if one is very angry. But the breathing-out method which Patanjali prescribes is very effective. Try it today. Anger can be created for the purpose of an experiment. Let someone insult you very vehemently, and then you will get angry and do this breathing technique and see how it works.

Pracchardana vidhāraṇābhyāṁ vā prāṇasya—the mind has to be subdued by various methods. We cannot adopt only a

single technique in controlling it, just as when we try to bring a naughty child under control, we adopt various means. Sometimes we threaten, sometimes we slap, sometimes we cajole, sometimes we pamper; we do all sorts of things. So Patanjali, as a good psychologist, suggests all these methods. We sometimes pamper the mind and we give it a sweet if it wants—okay, all right, be happy. But we should not go on doing this for a long time; we should also be able to exercise control. Together with these social and ethical attitudes which he has suggested for the purpose of subduing unnecessary emotions in the mind, and together with this prescription of expelling the breath and retention thereafter, Patanjali also suggests bestowing attention upon certain experiences which may be capable of bringing the mind to a point of concentration. Wherever there is pleasure, there the mind concentrates. It cannot concentrate on anything which cannot bring pleasure.

Certain psychophysical centres in our body, when they are stimulated, are supposed to cause certain experiences. There are certain nerves in the body which, when they are operated upon, can bring about certain physiological changes or even cause certain psychological feelings. The nerve centres are connected with the *pranic* movements, which in turn are connected with thoughts, feelings, etc. The sensations of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell, which we experience normally, are caused by certain nervous functions in the body, and Patanjali says that if we can concentrate our mind on certain nerve endings in the body, we will have a particular type of sensation which will draw our attention to such an extent that we will forget everything else. A very gross example of this would be 'itching'. If we go on scratching the itch, the mind will not think of anything else, especially when it is an intense itch. For a few seconds we cannot think of

anything else except that particular phenomenon called itching.

We may be wondering how Patanjali prescribes such humorous methods of concentrating the mind. His intention is to prescribe every method, and finally he is going to tell us to take to any method we like, provided the mind can be concentrated. When we concentrate on the tip of the nose, which is a particular centre of nerve endings, we will have the sensation of peculiar odours if this practice is continued for a long time. The tip of the nose is the location of the ending of certain peculiar olfactory nerves, and if the concentration is fixed on these nerve endings, there will be a stimulation felt; but we cannot feel it for a few seconds or minutes, or for a long time. We will begin to smell something, though there are no objects in front of us. In higher practices we are supposed to smell even celestial aromas. We will begin to smell jasmine, for instance, where there is no jasmine in front of us—or perhaps sandalwood, and so on. The concentration of the mind on the tip of the tongue will produce tastes of various types. Because the tastebuds are at the tip of the tongue, if they are stimulated by concentration of mind, we will have an automatic sensation of taste, according to our wish. We may taste very delicious *halvah* even without eating it. This happens because this taste is nothing but a reaction of nerves in respect of certain stimulants or agents from the outside world.

The suggestion here is that we can create these sensations even without an external stimulant. We can have the same satisfaction of coming in contact with odoriferous objects or fragrant things even without actual physical contact, merely by the stimulation of the centres; and the mind will feel such a joy, such satisfaction, that it will not think of anything else. If we concentrate the mind on the middle of our tongue, there will be a new type of sensation altogether. There is even the

possibility of visualising colours. And celestial music is supposed to be heard while there is nothing in front of us to make such a sound, and so on and so forth. According to this *sutra* of Patanjali, all the sensations can be had by operating upon certain parts of the mouth and the nerve centres in the tip of the nose. Right from the tip of the tongue up to the root of the palate, we have an area of all types of sensations, though it may appear strange that every sensation should be located only in the little area. This is a peculiar physiological truth which he reveals in this *sutra*: that it is possible to stir sensations of all five types—*shabda, sparsa, rupa, rasa, gandha*—merely by concentration on certain parts of the tongue, and the tip of the nose.

There is a science these days, a modern discovery, which has found out that every centre in the body finds its switchboard in the soles of the feet. If we operate upon certain parts of the soles of the feet, we operate upon every part of the body, including the brain itself—the brain and the heart. A beautiful book has been published on this subject under the title *The Story That Feet Can Tell*. Our heart, our brain, our lungs, our abdomen—every part of the body—has its switchboard at the soles, and if we press any particular part of the sole, the corresponding centre is stimulated. This has been regarded as a method for healing parts of the body when they are aching or ill for any reason.

So, likewise, Patanjali prescribes methods of stirring sensations for the purpose of drawing the attention of the mind by concentrating on certain nerve endings, which ultimately aim at bringing about serenity of mind for the purpose of higher concentration and meditation.

Chapter 43

HARMONISING SUBJECT AND OBJECT

The point that was made in the *sutra* that we were last studying was that no object can cause pleasure unless the corresponding centre in the subject is stimulated. If this centre could be stimulated by concentration of mind, a similar pleasure can be experienced. And inasmuch as the mind cannot go to any place where pleasure is not—it sees only pleasure and nothing else—the internal centres of satisfaction, thus stimulated by concentration, can become sources of further attraction for the mind so that it ceases from moving outwardly to external objects. *Viśayavatī vā pravṛttiḥ utpannā manasaḥ sthiti nibandhanī* (I.35), is the *sutra*. *Viśayavatī vā pravṛttiḥ* is a peculiar state of mind which has reference to an object. But really, there is no object. When there is thought of an object, a particular nerve centre in oneself can be stirred up into action, and that activity of the centre can create a feeling, a sensation. This centre of sensation may be made the object of concentration, says Patanjali.

The doctrine of yoga is that the different parts of the palate contain certain locations, which correspond to the five types of sensation, which constitute the entire world of experience—*shabda, sparsa, rupa, rasa* and *gandha*. There is nothing in this world anywhere except the experience of the sensations of sound, or touch, or colour, or taste, or smell, and the world is nothing but these put together in some permutation or combination. But this experience can be had even internally by mere thought process, by the concentration

of the will on different centres which sympathetically correspond to the cosmos outside.

Though nowhere does Patanjali refer to *kundalini* yoga or the *chakras*, etc., we can infer that he is acquainted with the theory that internal centres are connected with external objects of sense, and the whole individual bodily organism is a microscopic representation of whatever there is in the universe. The thought of objects stirs internal centres, and concentration on internal centres can invoke the presence of corresponding objects, and vice versa. This is the principle behind the meditation practised by certain schools on what are known as the *chakras* or whirls of energy in one's own psychic and bodily system. These centres are nothing but movements of the mind in certain degrees of intensity, and they correspond to the various layers of the cosmos outside. By deep concentration on these centres, the external levels of being which correspond to these centres are also set to action, and what is microcosmically experienced can be macrocosmically experienced simultaneously. Ultimately, there is no such thing as the internal and the external for nature as a whole; it is one single continuum and uniformity. We make a distinction between the internal and the external, though there is really no such thing. Everything is anywhere, at all places, in every condition, eternally. And so anything can be invoked at any place, provided the proper conditions are fulfilled.

This is a very difficult technique for beginners, no doubt—nobody will understand what it means. There is also the possibility of some difficulty arising by the practice of these methods, because two consequences may follow if the method is not properly understood. Firstly, there can be an over-activation of the senses, which, of course, is not a desirable thing. The senses may then become unruly and difficult to control because we have deliberately stirred them

into action, though for a good purpose, but without understanding, and therefore they have gone out of control. Secondly, these centres may create certain morbid phenomena inside the body, and illnesses may creep in due to lack of control over these centres. Hence, these methods of meditation should not be practised unless there is a proper personal guide.

Viśokā vā jyotiṣmatī (I.36) is another prescription of Patanjali. We can concentrate the mind on the centre of the heart, on a light that is golden in colour, rising from a lotus, as it were—limpid, pure and most attractive. This effulgent, lustrous condition may be the object of meditation. This is the meaning of the *sutra*: *viśokā vā jyotiṣmatī*. A light is supposed to flash out from the centre of the heart when concentration on it is deepened.

Here, again, we are in the middle of a mystical doctrine which makes out that the heart is primarily the seat of the mind. The mind moves about externally for the purpose of contact with things outside by shifting its centre from the heart upward to the throat, and then to the brain, where it acts forcefully in the waking condition. It is believed that the mind functions actively in the brain in the waking state. Some people think that it is the point between the two eyebrows. In the dream condition it is supposed to descend from the brain so that our will is not active, when it supposedly locates itself in the throat region. In the deep sleep state it goes to the heart. It goes to the heart in death, in *samadhi*, and in deep sleep. The idea is that it goes to the heart only when there is no object-consciousness. Even when there is the slightest inkling of the presence of an object, it will rise up from the heart and then activate itself in an externalised manner.

It is easier to concentrate on the heart than on any other centre in the body because of the fact that the heart is the seat of the mind. One is happier in one's own house than in

somebody else's house. So the mind feels itself at home when it is placed in the heart and concentrated upon, and it is believed that a peculiar resplendence or radiance will manifest itself after a long time in the lotus of the heart .

There is no such thing as a lotus in the heart, really speaking. These are only symbolic expressions of certain conditions which are psychic in nature. All of these *chakras* are nothing but psychic centres; they are not physical. They cannot be touched with the hand, as they are not made of muscles, nerves, bones or marrow. They are energy centres whirling in a particular direction. The purpose of concentration on these centres is to make them whirl in a particularly given direction, and not in the direction they take. While it is all right to concentrate on any centre which may correspond to the sensations mentioned in the earlier *sutra*, we are now told that we can concentrate specifically on the heart so that it will become easier for the mind to withdraw itself from objects of sense, and to confine itself to its own abode.

Here, again, a word of caution has to be exercised, because the concentration of the mind on any centre in the body has its own repercussions when it is not properly done with the basic ethical foundations and the requisite understanding. It is always dangerous to meddle with any part of the body, because the part of the body which we are thinking of continuously is roused up into an unnatural action—unnatural in the sense that it becomes overactive on account of concentration. While an excessive activity of a particular centre may be advantageous if it is utilised for an intelligible purpose, it can also be disadvantageous if it goes out of control, because no part of the body can be said to be in a happy state when it goes out of control. If the legs start moving of their own accord and we have no control over them, then we know what will happen to us—they will take us wherever they want. Likewise, the other senses may also take

up the reins in their own hands and drive us in the direction they want, rather than in the direction that we have chosen for our purpose and the purpose for which we have started this meditation.

Any centre in the body is incapable of mastery unless the mind is desireless. Any kind of frustrated feeling should not be at the background of this practice. It is difficult to find people who do not have any desire, because the presence of desires, even in a subtle form, will create a peculiar situation which will be the weak point in one's mind, and that will be the aperture through which the mind will try to get out. The little hole that we have left in the form of an unfulfilled desire will be the avenue for the escape of the mind in the direction of a sense object, notwithstanding the fact that our intention in the practice of yoga is altogether different. The mind will refuse to move in the direction of the practice of yoga. It will always try to go in the direction of the aperture that is left there unplugged, and that is the unfulfilled desire. So what will happen is that the more we concentrate, the more will be the intensity of the desire. That desire which has been left unfulfilled will get activated more and more, just as a little hole in an earthen pot, through which the water can leak out, may become the cause of even the bursting of the pot if the vehemence of the pouring of water from the top is very great. The water will try to leak out in its entirety through that hole, and if the pressure is enough, it will completely break the walls of the vessel. Otherwise, if there is no hole at all, the water will rise up to the surface and overflow.

Likewise, in every act of concentration of the mind, energy gets conserved. It is accumulated in a greater intensity. It is charged with a greater force, and our capacity to execute any action at that time is much more than is ordinarily. But there is the danger that if we have left any aperture open, if it has not been closed properly, the energy that we are trying to

rouse in our system by the concentration of the mind may start coming out through that hole. And, because of the force of the energy that we have accumulated in our system, there is the danger of some catastrophe taking place. People can even go crazy. They completely lose their direction of thought; and something unprecedented, unthought of, unexpected and unforeseen can take place if such concentration is practised by initiates who have started the practice without proper toughness of mind and adequate understanding of the objective that is before them. Here again we come to the need of a Guru, a subject which we need not reiterate.

Vītarāga viṣayaṁ vā cittam (I.37). A less dangerous and more pleasant method would be the meditation on great masters who have attained to the heights of yoga and are examples before us of divine magnificence and spiritual force. *Vītarāga viṣayaṁ* means that condition of the mind wherein desires are totally absent, and divinity is abundantly present. Such a condition of the mind cannot be seen in ordinary persons; and if it is present, they are the masters. Nara-Narayana, Krishna, Vasishtha, Vyasa, Suka, Jadabharata, Dattatreya, Vamadeva, Yajnavalkya, Uddalaka —these are all the great masters. We can concentrate our mind on these great ones—on Vyasa, for instance, or on our Guru if we have a belief that he is a superman. We should not have doubt in this matter, of course. If we say, "Oh, after all, my Guru is only an ordinary person," then we will not have any benefit. We must have full faith in the immense spiritual competency of the master on whom we are meditating.

The benefit accruing out of this meditation is twofold. Firstly, it is easier for the mind to concentrate on something in which it has real faith, which it believes to be true. We can easily accept the greatness of a master like Yajnavalkya, because we have heard much about him; or Dattatreya, as we know something about him; or Bhagavan Sri Krishna; or

Nara-Narayana; or Jadabharata, because we have heard stories about these people. We know something about their lives and the miracles they performed, and the power they exercised. The mind is likely to have a special faith in the glorious existence of these masters. And so, because of this affection that we feel for them, due to the greatness we have discovered in them, we will find it easy to meditate upon them and to think of them continuously; this is one advantage. On the other side, there will also be a sympathetic reaction from those people, because when we think of an object intensely, whatever it be, that object is made to send a vibration towards us—sometimes unknowingly, and sometimes knowingly.

Great masters like Vasishtha are present even today; they are not dead. These great adepts are not supposed to be destroyed by the passage of time. Many of them are supposed to be Chiranjivis. The great masters are eternally present, and whatever be the realm in which they be, their presence can evoke some spiritual reaction in our own selves. Even when we read or do *svadhyaya* of the scriptures and discourses of these masters—such as the Mahabharata or the Yoga Vasishtha that are ascribed to Vyasa, Vasishtha, etc.—we are supposed to be in tune with the thoughts or the will of these great masters. Also, there will be a sympathetic purificatory process going on in ourselves in the course of these sacred studies. So Patanjali prescribes here, like a good friend, that we can meditate upon these great masters—any one of them, for the matter of that, as we would choose according to our convenience and to our liking. This would enable the mind to concentrate on a given ideal. Because we like them so much, naturally it will be easy for us to concentrate on them. The psychology behind this prescription is that we cannot meditate on anything which we do not like, which we cannot understand, which we have not seen, of which we have heard nothing, and about which we have no idea at all. So, for the

purpose of meditation, it is better to have something before us which is clear to us in some way, and about which we have no doubts whatsoever. This is the meaning of the *sutra*: *vītarāga viṣayaṁ vā cittam* (I.37).

But if we are more philosophically-minded or more analytical in our approach, we can meditate on conditions of the mind which sometimes reveal what the world is made of; and if we know the nature of the world in some measure approximating to reality, our attractions for things will be lessened. The objects of the world are related to us, in some sense at least, as the objects of dream are related to the dream subject. In dream, every object is external; in the waking state also, every object is external. In dream, every object is in space and in time. In the waking state also, every object is in space and in time. In dream, every object appears to be outside us, and in the waking state also, every object is outside us. In the waking state we cannot know that the object has any real connection with us. Similarly, in the dream state, we cannot know that there is any connection of the object with us. We have loves and hates in dream, as we have loves and hates in the waking state; but it is very well known that these objects of sense in the dreaming condition, which evoke likes and dislikes, are not really there, physically speaking, though they look physical. Though it is true that we can hit our head against a wall in dream and there can be even bleeding and intense pain therefrom, it is well known, on a later analysis, that the physical form of the wall against which we have hit our head is not really physical—it is a condition of the psyche.

If, in dream, we ran away in fear of having seen a tiger in a jungle, and climbed up a tree and then, due to fright, fell to the ground in agony and broke our leg—all this activity has taken place within the jurisdiction of the mind alone. The tiger was the mind, our running was the mind, the tree was the mind, our falling from the tree was the mind, and our feeling of pain was

also the mind working in various ways. The mind was everything there. The mind was the space; it was the time; it was the distance; it was the fear; it was the action; it was the subject; it was the object. Such a kaleidoscopic shape the mind could take, though it is absolutely certain that there was nothing external to the mind in dream. There was nothing there—neither a tiger, nor a tree, nor our running—nothing happened. But all this mystery of dream experience cannot be known as long as one is in the condition of dream, as long as one is dreaming. It becomes known only when we wake up from dream.

Likewise, the philosophical mind may analyse the nature of the world. It is not true that there are objects outside. It is not true that there is space and time. It is not true that we have likes and dislikes in respect of external objects. All of our pleasures and pains, which are the outcome of these complexities of experience, are as much real, significant and meaningful as those we have experienced in dream. Just as we cannot know that our dream is unreal as long as we are dreaming, and can know it only after we are awake, in the same way we cannot know this secret about the nature of the world as long as we are in a world of relativity where everything is determined by everything else, so that nothing can be known absolutely. We are caught up in a peculiar difficulty in the understanding of the essential nature of any object in this world on account of the relatedness of this object to everything else in this world, so that we cannot know anything unless we know all things.

Thus it is that we are kept in a state of ignorance, and it is on account of the ignorance of the essential nature of the objects of perception that we are in this world of pleasures and pains. But, as it is the case with waking up from dream, so is the case with waking up from world-consciousness. The internal relationship of things gets revealed only after the

awakening of oneself from the dream condition, so that we are not bothered even the least about what happened in dream. We are neither frightened of the tiger, nor are we happy about the emperorship which was perhaps bestowed upon us in dream. Neither of these has any significance for us, merely because of the fact that we have woken up into a higher degree of consciousness which is called waking.

So will be our condition when we wake up from world-consciousness. All these wonders, attractions and repulsions, these horrors, these forms of ugliness, these mysteries—all will be wiped out in a second when this relativity-consciousness gets sublimated in Absolute-consciousness, which is similar to the mind waking up from dream into this 'world-consciousness', as we say. Let the mind meditate in this manner. *Svapna nidrā jñāna ālambanaṁ vā* (I.38), says Patanjali. Can you meditate like this so that you may not be caught up by the snares of this world? Or, you can meditate on the condition of sleep—*nidra*—and ask yourself what you were in the state of deep sleep. "Was I a man? Was I a woman? Was I a child? Was I a minister? Was I a king? Was I a beggar? Was I a human being? Was I an ant?" Nothing was known when you were fast asleep. So what were you, my dear friend, when you were fast asleep? Were you a man, a woman, a king, a beggar, an elephant? No, you were nothing of the sort.

Now, can we say that the state in which we were in deep sleep was irrelevant to our real nature? Nobody can say that. That was, perhaps, our real nature. That condition of deep sleep made us so happy that the happiness of sleep cannot ordinarily be compared with the pleasures of the world in the waking condition. When we are overwhelmed with sleep, overpowered with sleepiness, we would not be attracted by any pleasure of the world. In the state of deep sleep we were possessed of nothing. We had no material or appurtenances with us; we had nothing to eat; we had no companions to talk

to; we had no kingdom to rule; we had no friends; there was nothing to save us, guard us, protect us, or keep us secure. We were like total paupers, and yet we were the happiest people there. How is it possible?

How is it possible that one who is bereft of every relationship and possessed of nothing can be happier than one who is possessed of all the goods of this world? Meditate on this condition. Let there be an effort of the mind to concentrate on the implications of dream as well as of deep sleep. Then there will be some chance of the mind coming under control, because a mind that is busy contemplating external objects, on account of the perception of value in them, cannot be controlled absolutely. The reason why the mind contemplates objects of sense, and refuses to get concentrated on any other thing, has been studied by us adequately.

Such is this *sutra*: *svapna nidrā jñāna ālambanaṁ vā* (I.38). If other methods do not suit us, we can take to this method if it is convenient—the analysis of the implications of the dream experiences in relation to the waking condition, as mentioned, and our own state in deep sleep. Now Patanjali, as a good father, tells us, "If you are not agreeable to any of these things that I told you, do what you like." *Yathābhimata dhyānāt vā* (I.39)—go and hang yourself; this is what he is telling, finally.

We can meditate on anything whatsoever if we cannot take to any of these practices that have been already detailed. We can choose anything that we like, but—a great but—we should not think of anything else. We can choose any object according to our choice and liking, but the condition is that we should not think of any other thing. This is the great psychological and scientific principle behind the act of concentration of mind. *Ananya chintana* is the cause of any success. Real friendship is expressed only in wholehearted thought of the object with which we are really friendly. We

cannot be really friendly when our mind is only half present; that is not real friendship. If we have friendship with twenty people, we have no friendship with anyone, wholly. But here, the friendship that is required is whole, entire, complete, overflowing—*avyavicharani* is the devotion that is called for.

If we want anything to be under our control, if we want anything to be really friendly with us in the real sense of the term, our relationship with it should be whole, and not partial. This is the secret of concentration. Where our entire being is present, there success is certain. The part that is played by the subject, and the part that is played by the object in an act of cognition or perception or experience, should be set in such harmony that they should stand together as if they are a single being—then there is success. Says Sanjaya in the last verse of the Bhagavadgita, "Where Sri Krishna and Arjuna stand together, there is bound to be success."

In one sense, it is a highly mystical teaching of the necessity of harmony being there between the object and the subject. If the object and the subject are dichotomous—one not connected with the other, one disharmonious with the other—then there is no success. We can succeed in anything, provided the object before us is one with us, and we are one with it. Such is the secret of this prescription of Patanjali.

Chapter 44

ASSIMILATING THE OBJECT

Paramāṇu paramamahattvāntaḥ asya vaśīkāraḥ (I.40): The extent of the powers that accrue to a person by means of these meditations is incalculable. There is practically nothing that is impossible to achieve through meditation. In this *sutra*, Patanjali startles us by his conclusive statement that one who gains mastery over the mind also gains mastery over all things, right from the minutest atom up to the widest cosmos. This is the meaning of the *sutra*: *paramāṇu paramamahattvāntaḥ asya vaśīkāraḥ.* All slavish mentality vanishes, and dependence on things ceases. Needs or requisitions of every kind come to an end, because everything becomes one's own by the mere fact of this inward sympathy being established between the meditator and the object meditated upon through these techniques, which are the ways of entering into the structure of things.

But we have to be cautious thrice over in understanding well the type of meditation which leads to such powers. It is not a thought or a mere brooding over some external object in the casual manner with which we look at things in ordinary life. Meditation is not a casual thought; it is a wholesale dedication of whatever one is to that which is meditated upon. We have already had several occasions to observe that this condition is practically something impossible to fulfil because human nature is such that we do not know what is meant by wholesale dedication. But it is this that is required, and nothing short of it, because what we expect is something complete and not partial.

When we wish that a desire of ours be fulfilled, we do not think that only a part of the desire be fulfilled. We expect the desire to be fulfilled entirely, completely, to its very root. A thorough fulfilment of a desire, wish or aspiration of any kind in respect of any objective or ideal is impossible if there is not a corresponding dedication of wholeness of being from the other side as well—on the part of the meditating consciousness—because a part cannot draw a whole. We cannot draw the attention of the whole if we are only a part—we also have to be whole. It is only the whole that draws the whole towards itself. Any partial attention paid towards an object will draw only a partial aspect of that object towards us, and not the whole of it. So no desire that we have can be entirely fulfilled, inasmuch as we have never given ourselves entirely to that object.

But here in this *sutra* we are given the most technical form that meditation can take, by which alone it is possible to gain mastery over things. Here mastery does not mean the authority that one exercises over someone else, like a master has over a servant, etc. It is something quite different altogether because the authority or the power that one has in this world is artificial, foisted upon oneself by conditions which are external to oneself, and they have a beginning, of course, and they shall also have an end. That which is entirely outside us can always remain beyond our control. There is no such thing as gaining mastery over a thing which is totally outside us, whether it is an animate being or an inanimate object.

Hence, it is futile on the part of any person to attempt to gain mastery over things without properly understanding the circumstances alone under which this aspiration can be fulfilled. Our enthusiasm is of no use; it is understanding that is called for. When, in meditation, the deeper essences of one's personality come in union with the deeper essences of the

corresponding objects outside, the level of that particular object gets mastered by the particular level which is corresponding to the object in the subject itself. So whatever be the level on which we are, that particular level of the object gets mastered in the condition of the level on which we ourselves are; and neither the object nor the subject can be on different levels, as then there can be no contact of one with the other.

As we go deeper and deeper into the essences of things, the mastery over things also becomes greater and greater. In the outermost periphery of life that we are living in the sense world, the mastery over things is very feeble, almost nothing—nil, we can say. In our present condition we have mastery over nothing, and we cannot control anything, not even a mouse—even that has its own say. But when we go inward through the peculiar techniques which Patanjali describes in his *sutras* on meditation by which the inner levels of the subject can come in union with the levels corresponding in the object, the result that follows is tremendous control over everything. (We have not touched upon these *sutras* because they are very difficult to understand—very strange, yet scientific—so I have reserved them to the end.) By a mere wish or thought, things will be materialised, events can be effected, anything can be gained at any time and under any condition. *Sarvam āpnoti sarvaśaḥ* (C.U. VII.26.2), says the Chhandogya Upanishad. Everything is obtained at any place, at any time, and in any condition whatsoever in which it may be expected.

The mastery which we are speaking about in respect of meditation is gained by entry into the object and not by standing outside the object. This is the point to remember. This is essentially brought out in another *sutra*: *kṣīṇavṛtteḥ abhijātasye iva maṇeḥ grahītṛ grahaṇa grāhyeṣu tatstha tadañjanatā samāpattiḥ* (I.41). This is a very important *sutra*

which has immediate relevance to the methods of meditation. We cannot gain mastery over anything by standing outside it. This is the point to remember in every effort that we make in the fulfilment of our wishes or desires. There is no such thing as success when we stand outside success. We have to become one with it.

When the mind becomes transparent, when it gets thinned out and is able to reflect the character of anything that is brought near to it, then it shines like a crystal which can reflect within itself any quality or attribute of any object which is in its proximity. The capacity of the mind to draw into itself the character of any object that is brought near it can be seen in the three levels of knowledge—namely, the object of knowledge, the process of knowledge, and the subject of knowledge. The mastery extends to all these three links in the process of knowing. We can condition the nature of the object in any manner whatsoever for the purpose on hand, and can know it in that particular condition. We can reshuffle the way of our knowing and observe the character of the object from any aspect of it, according to the emphasis that we lay on the method of meditation at that time. We can also know the nature of the subject in that condition, so that there is a complete knowledge of all the processes—subjective, objective, and also the link between the two. This is called *samapatti*, which means acquisition in the real sense of the term. It is not like an acquisition of a piece of land or a little money; it is not of that nature. Here, acquisition does not mean a legal acquisition, or a social possession, or a mere idea of one's having something with oneself—nothing of the sort. Acquisition here means a real union with that which is expected, wanted, desired and aspired for, so that once it is acquired there is no bereavement.

Every contact is supposed to end, finally, in a sort of separation. There is no such thing as permanent union in this

world. We cannot possess anything for all time. No desire can be eternally fulfilled under every condition or stage of life, because of the fact that the situation of an object is not under our control. No object or no person in this world can be under our control fully or really, because they have their own existence and status—all of which are regulated by the powers of the cosmos. And unless and until we are able to comprehend these rules and regulations of the cosmos, and be harmonious with their operations, no mastery can be gained over any object or any person. Therefore it is that we have sorrow of separation in life.

But here, in this *samapatti* or the acquisition intended through yoga, there is no separation, no bereavement, and no cutting off from one's beloved. There is a perpetual union established merely because of the fact that this union does not contravene the law of the universe. It is sanctioned by the law itself, and therefore it is a permanent union. How does it get sanctioned by the law of the world, as distinguished from the ordinary types of contact we are familiar with in the world of sense? It is done by the recognition of the inner nature of things, which alone is what is taken into consideration by the law of the universe, and not the external relationship. From the point of view of the world as a whole, or the universe taken in its completeness, we are something quite different from what we appear to be as individuals. For the pattern of the whole of creation, an individual is something quite distinct in status and function from what that individual appears to other individuals by means of sensory perception, mental cognition and social relation.

So, in this yoga of meditation, one severs oneself from these artificial contacts which have been contrived for the purpose of practical convenience by individuals, and enters into the true relationship of things—a relationship which is not social, which is not sensory, which is not physical, and

which is neither temporal nor spatial. This is the secret of ultimate success achieved through the yoga of meditation in one's coming into union with the objects of desire, whatever they be. The anatomy of this process is what is described in the *sutra*: *kṣīṇavṛtteḥ abhijātasye iva maṇeḥ grahītṛ grahaṇa grāhyeṣu tatstha tadañjanatā samāpattiḥ* (I.41). Once we take to the path of meditation, we are practically dead to the world. We cannot have one leg here and one leg there. It is a complete absorption of whatever we are, entirely, in that objective that we have taken up as our goal of life. Either we live for it or we die for it—that is all, and nothing short of that.

Any kind of half-hearted approach here is dangerous. There is no need to say that there can be no success with such an approach. Here, the demand is complete, to the very core of our fibre, because what is ultimately expected in this meditation is that we totally enter into the very being of that object. That is the only intention in meditation. If our intention is something else, we cannot succeed in this meditation. We must be very clear, in the beginning, as to why we are meditating at all. What is the purpose? If there is any kind of subtle artifice, or any kind of peculiar inward gulf that we have created between ourselves and the objective, which may not be visible outside but is subtly present inside, then the laws of nature, which are subtler than even our thoughts, will understand this and kick us out from the very realm in which we are trying to live, and upon which we are trying to place our feet.

The intention of meditation is not to gain pleasure, satisfaction, or status in life. People often say, "I want to practice yoga for a little peace of mind,"—all of which is tall talk, a kind of speaking without understanding what they are really saying. They do not know what peace of mind is, or why they have taken to yoga. It is all very strange, indeed, and that is why nothing comes of it. It ends, finally, in a waste of time,

like a kind of hobby into which one has entered without being serious about it. But nothing can be more serious than yoga, because it is the science of the internal structure and nature of things, and it is not merely a way of living in outer society for the purpose of either the mere achievement of human ideals, or the satisfaction of the senses.

The intention behind meditation is, therefore, something super-physical and super-individualistic, to put it properly. This is a thing which is a little difficult for the ordinary mind to grasp. The purpose of meditation is not to exploit the object of meditation for any purpose whatsoever, because any kind of exploitation is against the law of nature. We cannot utilise anyone or anything in this world for our own purpose because this is the essence of selfishness, and nature abhors any type of selfishness. Nothing can be utilised for our own purpose or with an ulterior motive, in any manner whatsoever, beyond that object which we are trying to contact. Mostly, our contacts with people and things are selfish, either covertly or overtly, and ultimately that is why there is failure. There is no one who goes along in life with a laugh or a smile on their face. At the end there is only a sob, because a kind of deception has been followed as the technique of living throughout one's life, which, of course, cannot get out of the sight of the subtle visions of nature. Therefore, let it be noted again—a point to be underlined with red ink—we cannot take to the path of yoga if our intention is selfish. This means to say that we cannot take to the path of yoga if we want to utilise the success in yoga for another purpose altogether which is subtly present in our mind. In that case we will receive a rebuff from the forces of the world, from the laws of nature, from the law of God Himself. We will be fools of the first water if we enter into the path of yoga with these motives.

The purpose of meditation is not to utilise the object of meditation for a purpose. It is not done for an ulterior end

which is other than the object of meditation. When I speak to you, my intention is selfish because I want something from you; that is why I speak to you. This is how we live in this world. Everything is utilised for some end. But no person, and no thing in this world, can be regarded as an end in itself. We do not love any person, we do not love anything in this world except for something else for which these are utilised.

A technique of this sort will not work here in this field of yoga—it will utterly fail. And so it has to be cautiously noted, in the very beginning itself, that the purpose of meditation is to gain a superior control over things—not by means of authoritative relationship exercised over the object externally—but by a sympathy of entry of oneself into the being of the object, wherein alone the object can be really friendly with us. That itself can be called real love or affection, if anything of that kind exists at all. However, when your being is outside my being, my love for you is tentative, artificial and subject to destruction, and that is why nothing comes to us, finally.

In the *sutra, kṣīṇavṛtteḥ abhijātasye,* etc., Patanjali points out that we become commingled with the character of the object of meditation. We get tinged with the attributes of the object of meditation. We absorb into our being the very being of the object of meditation, as a crystal would absorb the character of anything that is brought near it, so that we become the object for all practical purposes. There is no question of using that object for some ulterior end. The question itself does not arise, because we ourselves are becoming the object. The ultimate nature of reality is 'being', and we refer to this Supreme Reality as the Supreme Being. God is called Supreme Being—a very interesting word. It is Pure Being, Existence as such—that is the nature of reality. The nature of anything, ultimately, is 'being'.

Thus, to gain control over the reality of anything—of course we do not wish to gain control over the unrealities of things, as there is no meaning in it—if our intention is to gain mastery over the realities behind things, then we have to enter into the being of those things, because the reality of an object is the same as the being of that object. Its external structure is not its reality—the reality is something else altogether—and it is the essence of the object that has to become a part of our nature. Then only is there mastery, and not before. This cannot be done if there is present in the mind a subtle, extraneous desire of a type which is sensory, social, physical, or whatever it be. We have to become utterly philosophical here, and bereft of all the usual prejudicial ways of thinking which are the old grandmother methods which we have been taught. All of it has to be shed. Then, a new way of thinking has to be adopted, because here we do not expect anything from anything—we expect only the thing itself. So, here we are in a new world of thought. Not the world in which we are ordinarily living now, but in a different realm altogether where we do not want anything from any person or any thing, nor do we want anything through any person or any thing; we want only the very essence itself of the person, or being.

This is possible by deep absorption of thought into the characteristics of the object, which are the methods or the techniques that Patanjali has stated in his *sutra* (to which we have not made reference up to this time). However, this is the conclusion drawn: we get assimilated into the object, and the object gets assimilated into us; this is the purpose of meditation. Whatever be that object, this is the process that takes place. It may be a little pinhead, or it may be the whole universe—it makes no difference. The purpose and the method are identical, and here is the secret of mastery or success.

Here we have the psychology of success and the philosophy behind the fulfilment of all of the efforts in life, namely, *the identity of being*. Such is the purpose of meditation, and unless the inner significance of this purpose is properly grasped, there will be little success. The extent of our success in meditation depends upon the extent of our understanding the intention behind meditation, and the methods thereof.

Chapter 45

PIERCING THE STRUCTURE OF THE OBJECT

Sūkṣmaviṣayatvaṁ ca aliṅga paryavasānam (I.45). The gradation of the subtlety of the objects of meditation consummates in the indeterminable matrix of all things; this is the meaning of the *sutra*. As we proceed further, we begin to come into contact with more and more of the subtle aspects of the very same object of meditation. It does not mean that the object changes, but the intensity with which we perceive it and the subtlety of its constitution go on increasing as one advances. It is a precise prescription and advice that the object of meditation should not be changed. Once we take to a particular object, we must pursue it right through the very given object and not change its location or character. The purpose of meditation is to go into the very root of things, and once we get into the root of any particular object, we have simultaneously entered the roots of everything else also, because everything is made up of the same substance and everything is constituted in the same manner—whatever be that object, wherever it be, and whatever be the spatial or temporal location of the object. It is enough if one persists in concentrating the mind on any one given thing until one reaches the summit of the realisation of the essence of the object.

This *sutra* has reference to certain specialties of the Samkhya philosophy on which the yoga system of Patanjali, particularly, is based. Of course, it has no contradistinction from other systems of thought as far as the practical aspects are concerned, but the point made in this *sutra* is that the advance in meditation, or the progress one makes in

meditation, is commensurate with the various stages of the manifestation of what is called *prakriti* in the Samkhya. The indeterminable, or *alinga* mentioned in this *sutra*, is nothing but the *pradhana* or the *prakriti* of the Samkhya.

The cosmological doctrine of the Samkhya is that there is originally a common base for every form of material existence, and that the variety of this world is really a diversified form of one and the same substance. It is not really a variety of substance but a variety of form—forms taken by one and the same substance which the Samkhya calls *prakriti* or *pradhana*. This original material of all things, called *pradhana* or *prakriti*, is constituted of what we know as *gunas*, the essential properties—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These are peculiar things which are easily mistaken and misconstrued as certain conditions or attributes of *prakriti* or *pradhana*. However, they are not the ordinary attributes or qualities of *pradhana*, but are another name for *pradhana* itself.

There is, ultimately, no distinction between substance and quality, though in the world of ordinary sensory experience we are likely to make a distinction between substance and its attribute. It is not an attribute; it is a condition of the substance out of which *prakriti* is made. *Prakriti* has three conditions—known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—and what is known as the ultimate state of *prakriti* is only the equilibrium of these three *gunas*, wherein we cannot know which is preponderant and which is submerged. They act and react upon one another with equal force, so that their presence is not objectively felt. There is, therefore, no external consciousness or object-consciousness in the state of the ultimate condition of *prakriti*.

Any person who is absorbed in the condition of *prakriti* will not have world-consciousness, because there is no

externalisation caused by the preponderance of *rajas*. The externalisation of the objectification of consciousness by means of perception is due to the preponderance of the *rajas* quality of *prakriti*; but there is no such preponderance in the ultimate condition. They are all equally emphasised with equal intensity and, therefore, there is nothing special in the form of an individual experience. There is no individuality at all, because the individual consciousness is itself an outcome of the *rajas* preponderating, by which one part of *prakriti* is cut off from another part.

This condition of *prakriti* or *pradhana*—the *mulaprakriti*, as it is called—becomes the cause of the first manifestation in the process of evolution. This first form of manifestation, cosmologically, is called *mahat* in the terminology of the Samkhya. This is a Sanskrit word which practically means what is known as cosmic intellect or universal intelligence. This is, in the language of the Puranas and the Epics, the condition of the Creator or Brahma wherein all individualities are brought together into a single universal point of view. There are no various points of view there; there is only one point of view, and that is the cosmic point of view. Here, everything is directly experienced without the instrumentality of the senses. There is not even this mind as we see it in our own personal individuality. It is pure intelligence, subtly manifest in cosmic *sattva*, which is the first manifestation of *prakriti*.

Then the Samkhya tells us that there is a gradual solidification or concretisation of this state, and there is manifest a tendency to self-affirmation of a cosmic nature which is called *ahamkara*. This *ahamkara* is not the egoism of the human being, but it is a logical presupposition of the manifestation of variety. It is purely a logical 'x' without which we cannot explain anything that is manifest subsequently, but it has no connection whatsoever with the

pride or the individual egoism of the human beings that we see usually. Sometimes these states of *prakriti*, *mahat* and *ahamkara* mentioned in the Samkhya are identified with the principles of Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat which are mentioned in the Vedanta doctrine.

It is now that a condition or a state supervenes where there is a sudden split of this cosmic condition into the external and the internal. This is the beginning of what they call *samsara* or bondage of the *jiva*. There is no bondage as long as a bifurcation is not introduced between the subject and the object of knowledge. Bondage commences the moment there is a severance of the consciousness from its content, an isolation of the subject from the object. This happens subsequent to the appearance of *ahamkara*. So, on the objective side, we have what are known as the *tanmatras* and the *mahabhutas*. The *tanmatras* are the subtle principles behind the five gross elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether, and they are called *sabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa*, *rasa* and *gandha* in Sanskrit, meaning thereby the sensations of sound, touch, form, taste and smell which have connection with the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether—*prithivi*, *appu*, *tejo*, *vayu* and *akasa*. This is the external side of the world. Generally, what we call the world is constituted of these five great elements or *mahabhutas*. But the experiencing side, the subject side, is what is known as the *jiva*, the principle of individuality—you, I, and everyone included—who have an extrovert vision of these five *mahabhutas*, all of which we regard as something outside us, notwithstanding that every one of us, including the *bhutas*, have come from the same principle of *ahamkara*. It is something like the right hand looking at the left hand as an object of its perception, though both these are emanations of a single substance, a single unifying principle—namely, the bodily organism.

The subject side is the individual, the *jiva*, which has a physical body made up of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. Then we have the five *pranas—prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana* and *samana*. There are the senses—the five senses of knowledge and the five of action. And then there is the principle of mentation—the intellect and all these complexities constituting what is known as the subtle body of the individual. This is the subject side, while the object side is formed of the five elements mentioned.

The bondage of the *jiva* consists in the isolation of its experiencing unit, namely, consciousness, from the object of its experience. This is the reason why there is desire of every kind. A desire is nothing but an attempt of consciousness to gain what is not contained within its own self. The content of consciousness is what is desired by consciousness, but that content is cut off due to a peculiar phenomenon that has arisen, and the phenomenon is the principle of isolation of the subject from the object. The purpose of yoga is to bring about a reunion of this twofold principle known as the subject and the object, so that it may go back to the original condition where it was not so separated. The means of action in the process of meditation, of course, is consciousness itself. We may call it mind in a grosser form.

The mind is the principle of activity in the process of meditation, and in the lowest form of mentation there is a down-to-earth, matter-of-fact conviction that the object is completely outside the mind and it has nothing to do with the mind at all. This is the lowest form into which the mind can sink, where the desires become very vehement, very strong and uncontrollable. There is an intense tension caused by this feeling that the object longed for is absolutely outside oneself, and there is practically no control one has over the objects of sense which one needs. The method of meditation tries to introduce a technique which gradually thins out this

conviction that the objects of consciousness are external, and the internal relation that exists between the two is brought up to the surface of consciousness to a greater and greater degree.

So in the various methods of meditation prescribed by Patanjali, he takes us, stage by stage, from the grosser form to the subtler form, from the consciousness of the five elements, which is the lowest form of experience that we can have, higher up to the *tanmatras*, which are the subtler principles behind the elements, and then to the *ahamkara*, the *mahat* and the *prakriti*, and finally to the supreme *purusha* itself. The resting of the *purusha* in its own consciousness is called *kaivalya* or *moksha*. The aim of yoga is liberation—which is another name for the non-objectification of the consciousness of the *purusha*—by means of manifestation through the forms of *prakriti*, and a resting of the *purusha* in its own self, in its Supreme Absoluteness.

The externalisation of the consciousness of the *purusha* takes place by degrees, as it was mentioned in this cosmological process. In the beginning there is only a potentiality of such manifestation, which is the condition of *mulaprakriti*. Then there is an actual manifestation, though not a binding form of it, which is called the *mahat*. Then again there is a further concretisation of it, which is a lower condition still, yet not a binding condition because of the universality of consciousness still present there, which is the state of the cosmic *ahamkara*. Then there is a fall, a sudden cut of consciousness into the subjective side and the objective side, which is the problem of the *jiva*, the difficulty of man—every form of tension and unknowing. So, in the beginning, the grossest form becomes the object of meditation. From the gross, we go to the subtle. From the subtle, we rise to that state of awareness which is prior to the manifestation of even the subtle and the gross. And finally, we go to the ultimate cause of all things.

These stages of meditation are referred to in a *sutra* of Patanjali from his first chapter, and these stages are designated by him as *savitarka*, *savichara*, *sananda* and *sasmita*. These are all peculiar technical words of the yoga philosophy which simply mean the conditions of gross consciousness, subtle consciousness, cause consciousness and reality consciousness. Though he has mentioned only four stages for the purpose of a broad division of the process of ascent, we can subdivide these into many more. As a matter of fact, when we actually come to it and begin to practise, we will find that we have to pass through various stages, just as we do in a course of education. Though we may designate a particular year of study as being the first grade, second grade, third grade, etc., even in each grade we will find there are various stages of study through the divisions of the syllabus or the curriculum of study.

Similarly, in the process of meditation the stages are many, and we may find that practically every day we are in one particular stage. The details of these stages will be known only to one who has started the practice. They cannot be described in books because they are so many, and every peculiar turn of experience will be regarded by us as one stage. Each stage is characterised by a peculiar relation of consciousness to its object and the reaction which the object sets in respect of the consciousness that experiences it. In the beginning it looks very difficult on account of this aforementioned conviction—that the object is completely cut off from the mind—and that is why there is so much anxiety and heartache in this world. We seem to be completely powerless and helpless in every matter. We are helpless because the world is outside us, and it has no connection with our principle of experience, namely consciousness. To bring into the conscious level the conviction that the objects of experience are not segregated as much as they appear to be,

requires very hard effort, philosophical analysis and deep thinking bestowed upon the subject.

But Patanjali says that mere thinking and analysis will not do—it requires direct meditation. While analytical techniques are good enough for the purpose of bringing about logical convictions in the mind, direct experience of the reality behind the objects would be possible only by meditation, which is not merely an analytical technique but a profound attempt at piercing through the structure of the object by repeatedly hitting upon it by the use of a single technique which is practised regularly every day. When the object is bombarded in this manner by a repeated process of meditation, adopting a single technique, without remission of effort—the object gives way. The complex structure of the object, which appeared to be a compact substance, is revealed before the mind as made up of bits of matter and little tiny processes of force which can be disintegrated by the power of meditation. The object can be dismembered, and we will find that afterwards there is no object at all.

When we dissect an object into its components, the object ceases to be there; we have only the components. The appearance of a single, compact object before the mind is due to a misconception that has arisen in the mind. We dealt with this subject earlier when we discussed some aspects of Buddhist psychology and certain other relevant subjects. The belief in the solidity of an object, and the conviction that the object is completely outside one's consciousness, almost go together. They move hand in hand, and it is this difficulty that comes as a tremendous and serious obstacle in meditation.

Whatever be our effort in meditation, the conviction that things are outside us and that they are completely out of our control will repeat itself so vehemently and forcefully that we will be unhappy. Doubts will arise in the mind. "After all, am I

going to succeed? How can I control this mountain? What right have I over this mountain?" But we will realise, after repeated practise, that we have some say in the matter of the existence of even a mountain, though it may look that it is irrelevant to the question at hand. Ultimately there is nothing that is disconnected from us and, therefore, there is nothing which cannot be converted into an object of meditation. In fact, there is nothing, anywhere in this world, which cannot become an avenue for the entry of consciousness into the Universal Reality. Any object, for the matter of that, can be taken as a suitable object for the purpose of meditation, because *prakriti* is permanently present, pervading everything in one form or the other, and so whatever be the object that we take for meditation, it is a form of *prakriti*, this *pradhana* of the Samkhya. So, there is no need to worry oneself about the choice of the object of meditation. It depends upon the predilection of the mind, the tendency of the mind, and the suitability of the relationship one has with the object that has been chosen.

But once the object has been chosen, the advice given here is that we must persist through that object, and that there should be no change of the object. Otherwise, if we change the object, our efforts will not bring success. Whatever be the object that has been chosen, during the time one engages oneself in meditation upon it there should be a persistent effort to bring that object nearer and nearer to one's own self, though, in the beginning, it may appear to be far off or remote from oneself. There are various factors involved in object-consciousness. One thing is that it is far away from us. The second thing is that it is material in nature, while the meditating consciousness is not material. Another thing is that, because of the remoteness of the object and the isolation of the object from consciousness, one seems to have no control over the object. With all of these factors, there is a

desire for the object. This is the essence of *samsara*. We desire a thing over which we have no control and which we perhaps cannot get with all of our efforts, and yet we need it and we cannot live without it. This is the essence of suffering. But all this suffering can be obviated and eliminated if, through philosophical analysis and repeated meditation, the nature of the object is gradually made a part and parcel of the nature of one's own self.

The entire process of meditation is nothing but this peculiar technique of the absorption of the characteristics of the object into one's own self, stage by stage, though it may take years—sometimes it takes births. But the purpose is the same, and the method is this: namely, that the spatial isolation and the temporal distance of the object from the meditating consciousness should be diminished gradually, by repeated concentration. After repeated practise it will be realised that the object will reveal certain characters which are sympathetic with the constitution of the meditating consciousness. In the beginning stages, however, the sympathy that exists between the subject and the object cannot be visualised.

This impossibility of visualising the sympathy between the two arises on account of the intensity of the activity of the senses. The senses are very powerful, and the only business of the senses is to intensify the isolated condition of the object from the subject and to emphasise excessively the distance that the object maintains in respect of the subject—the materiality of the object, the desirability of the object, and so on and so forth. This is the work of the senses, which is an activity that is quite opposed to the attempt that the mind proposes in its meditations.

So the mind has to become friendly with the senses, and rather than oppose the activity of the senses, may have to convert the energy spent through the activity of the senses into

meditative forces. This process of the conversion of energy from sense activity into mental activity is called *pratyahara*, which we shall be considering later on.

Chapter 46

THE BARRIER OF SPACE AND TIME

Patanjali gives his doctrine of meditation: *vitarka vicāra ānanda asmitārūpa anugamāt saṁprajñātaḥ* (I.17). The first stage of this is described in another *sutra*: *tatra śabda artha jñāna vikalpaiḥ saṅkīrṇā savitarkā samāpattiḥ* (I.42). The secret of contacting an object in meditation is revealed in this *sutra*. The process of meditation is a gradual attempt at assimilating oneself with the object, and absorbing the character of the object into one's own being. This attempt is foiled by certain obstructing factors which generally do not come to the purview of one's knowledge, inasmuch as the very condition of knowing an object is a part of one's own individual nature. Therefore, one's personality and one's attitude to things get automatically identified with the process of knowing an object—so much so that a correct knowledge of any object would be impossible as long as this conditioning factor continues.

Here, in this *sutra*, Patanjali identifies the conditioning factors from which the object as it is should be freed in order that there may be a real communion of oneself with the object. In common parlance, even in ordinary life, there cannot be a real friendship between two persons if both persons are inwardly and secretively conditioned in their minds, and if there is already present in their minds a subtle pre-supposition which will prevent a real friendship between the two persons. What meditation aims at is nothing but an ultimate friendship of oneself with everything—such a friendship that it will never break, it will never cease, and it will know no end. "Every union ends in separation," is an old saying and a matter

of practical experience. But Patanjali, and yoga in general, prescribe a method of coming into union with things in such a way that there shall not be any further separation, and no bereavement of any kind.

But this ideal is made impracticable due to certain obstructions mentioned—the main obstruction being what Patanjali in his *sutra* says is *jnana* of the object: *tatra śabda artha jñāna vikalpaiḥ saṅkīrṇā savitarkā samāpattiḥ* (I.42). There is a mix-up taking place in our perception of an object, on account of which there is no correct perception. We cannot look at an object as it is in itself because of a predisposition already present in our minds to judge and to evaluate the object from a particular angle of vision or standpoint. The *jnana* mentioned here does not mean Self-realisation or wisdom in the spiritual sense; it simply means the idea of the object. Our idea of the object is the obstruction to our union with the object. This applies to each and every object in this world—organic or inorganic—human, subhuman or superhuman.

Anything that is conditioned by our idea will refuse to come near us, because the idea that is present in our minds is a barrier between ourselves and the object. The idea of an object is specifically that peculiar feature which we call space, time and relation. This is something very inscrutable, and it is this inscrutable factor that we have to isolate from the object in meditation. Various stages of such a meditation are prescribed. It is not done at once, at one stroke, because we cannot understand what it would be to conceive of an object independent of such notions as related to space, time and its connection with other people and other things. It is humanly impossible to conceive of an object as not located in space. Whatever be our attempt, it will fail, because non-spatial objects are inconceivable objects; therefore, there is no such thing as contemplating an object free from this factor. But

unless this freedom is attained, true union with the object cannot be attained. This is either a difficulty in meditation, or a success in meditation.

As Patanjali says, there are three factors which we mix up in the consciousness of an object—*sabda*, *artha*, and *jnana*. We cannot think of an object without associating a designation, a name, an epithet or an attribute with it. We cannot think of a tree without thinking the name 'tree' at the same time. This is the association of *sabda* with *artha*, or the object as such. If we try to think of anything in this world, immediately we also think of the name of that object. The object as such has no name. Originally there are no names to objects—neither you have a name, nor I have a name. Somebody foisted something on us for the sake of practical convenience, and this peculiar foisting has become a reality; it has become an encrustation upon our personality, so that we have made it an additional factor of our personality.

Patanjali says that this prejudice and the futile identification of the object with an extraneous collocation of words—namely, the designation of the object—these two factors should be separated. What is the object when it has no name? Can we conceive of such an object? Do not call it a tree. Who said that it is a tree? It can also be called a stone if the dictionaries all over the world agree that what we call a tree today is really a stone. These are only names that we have given for the sake of a certain convenience. But we do not think that they are merely abstract or unsubstantial epithets that have been coined by us for the purpose of practical convenience.

We identify the name with the object in a very substantial manner, so that the name becomes a concrete something rather than a mere abstract universal that we have conceived for tentative convenience. We can imagine the importance of name, as it is associated with an object. If something is said for

or against a particular name, the object that is rightly or wrongly associated with that name is stirred up into action in accordance with the suggestions made through the invocation of that name. We are so much identified with our name that we do not think that we can be anything other than the name, and this is an obstacle in meditation. If an object is presented before us for the purpose of meditation, we must try to think of it as being divested of its name. Suppose no one had given a name to it; what would it be? It would be slightly different.

Even you would be a little different if you had no name at all. Just imagine that you have no name; nobody is to call you, nobody is to designate you, and there is no purpose served by identifying you with a particular attribute of name. You will certainly see that it will make some difference in your life. What difference it will make cannot be theoretically explained; it is a question of practice. Suppose you were to live alone in an isolated place for some years where no one would speak to you, and there would be no necessity for anyone calling you, designating you or identifying you with a name. That would be a new type of experience; something startling to you. "I have no name, nobody calls me and I have no purpose in identifying myself with a name." This name, therefore, is not merely a set of words, but a psychological accretion that has grown over us. We should not think that the name is merely a word that we utter; perhaps it is ultimately so, but it has become much more than that. It has become a concrete something, which it really is not, and it has become an additional attribute of the object, so that we cannot think of the object minus the name.

The matter is made worse by the idea that we have of the object. This is the *jnana* of the object. Our idea of the object is not the same as the object. Now, this is a very difficult subject. It has a great philosophical connotation as well as a psychological meaning. The idea of an object is not a simple

notion within our heads concerning the object, even as the name of the object is not merely a set of words; it is something more. The idea of the object is a greater obstacle to our communion with the object than the name. While the name is an obstacle, the idea is a greater obstacle. It is a thick wall between the object and us, and it has to be pierced through. The idea is very strange, indeed. We look upon each other as objects.

When I look upon you as an object, I have a peculiar notion about all things associated with you. First of all, an object, according to our usual definition and experience, is such a thing that without it we can exist. I can exist without you. This is the meaning of my definition of you as an object. You are not an essential part of my life. Even if you do not exist, I can exist. This is the meaning of an object. But if you are a little part of me, if I can see a little of subjectivity in you, I begin to love you. It would then be difficult for me to live without you. I will cry if you go away or if you are dissociated from me. I feel grieved because my subjectivity has been impregnated into your personality, so that your being has something to do with my being.

The objects in this world have a double character. They have a relational connection with us on account of which we like them, or dislike them, or evaluate them in a particular manner. Secondly, they have a substantiality of their own. We are not really concerned, ultimately at least, with the relationships that seem to subsist between the objects and ourselves. The intention in meditation is to pierce through these outer forms and names to get to the substance of the object. But the substance of an object cannot be seen with the physical eyes, because the idea of the object that we have in our minds is there like a thick veil, not only preventing our real knowledge of the object, but also distorting the character of

the object in such a way that we have a wrong notion of the object.

First of all, we do not have a correct notion of the object because it is veiled due to certain conditioning factors that were mentioned. These conditioning factors twist the character of the object and make us feel that the object is something different from what it really is. It is then that we develop peculiar attitudes towards it—all of which lead to our bondage and constitute our sorrow. Our idea of the object is to be diminished gradually to a thinness, to an evaporating transparency, until we can see the object reflected clearly—as in a mirror or a clean glass—and not through a prism. Anything that passes through a prism is split and sometimes distorted, according to the structure of the prism. Our wish and our hope is that the object in meditation is brought into affinity with us, and not kept as a stranger in front of us. For this, the stages of meditation are prescribed. It is a very difficult job—a kind of intellectual and psychological circus, we may call it. It is a great feat, indeed, to conceive of an object independent of an idea about it and the name that is associated with it.

Patanjali says that the idea about the object is an obstacle to the correct knowledge of the object. But what does he mean by the idea of the object? How does it stand as an obstacle? If we have to experiment on this peculiar doctrine, we have only to turn our attention upon our own self, and find out if there is a difference between our idea of our own self and our idea of another person or another thing. Is there some distinction between the manner in which we look upon ourselves and the manner in which we look upon anything else in the world? Truly speaking, we cannot conceive ourselves as located in space; that is not our essential feature. We have a peculiar individuality of our own. Each person, each thing, each substance in this world has a status of its own, and this status is

non-spatial. Though it may look that our body is in space, our idea about ourselves is not spatial—it is something unique in itself. And this unique character of the idea that we have about our own self distinguishes us from other objects in this world.

We have a unitary character in ourselves, and to carefully note the difference between our experience when we contemplate ourselves, and our experience when we contemplate another thing, we have only to practise the almost impossible technique of identifying the characters of the object with our own characters—which is the beginning of meditation. We will find that our attitude towards the object changes when the characters of the object get identified with our own characters. This again is not an academic question, it is a matter of experience and practice. Every day this method should be put into practice. The chosen object may appear as if it is located in space outside for the time being; then it is that we have certain externalised attitudes towards the object, and then we also feel a kind of insecurity in respect of the object, which is born out of the feeling that we may be dispossessed of the object, or separated from it. The object may become invisible, and we may not be able to possess it.

All such difficulty evaporates, vanishes, when it becomes a part of the contemplation of our own self. Can we place ourselves for the time being in the status of another person, or another thing, or another object, and forget ourselves for the time being? Or rather, to put it the other way, can we transpose the location of the object into our own being? In either case, our personality goes. The personality or the character of the object alone persists. The idea of the object outside us slowly gets diminished in intensity, and we take the position of the object.

The highest goal of yoga is what is known as *samadhi*. It is the absorption of the subject into the object, and vice versa. This is indicated faintly in the very commencement of the

practice, namely, the contemplation of the characters of the object, so that the mind takes the form of the characters of the object. We were studying, awhile back, that in every act of perception the mind assumes the shape of the object, and our feelings are conditioned by the form which the mind takes in perception. The feelings that we entertain in ourselves are nothing but the deeper shapes which our mental forms take due to habitual perception. If we continuously perceive an object, in a sustained manner, without any change in the observation of it, this becomes the background of a feeling in respect of that object, so that the object assumes a reality in front of us. Though Patanjali mentions that this is the lowest form of meditation, for all practical purposes it is an impossible technique, because the mind has not been taught to think in terms of the assimilation of the characters of an object into one's own being. We always look 'at' an object. We see an object as unconnected to us; and meditation is the method of establishing a connection between the object and oneself.

We may wonder, have we no connection among ourselves? Are we bereft of relationship, truly? This is the reason why we can become enemies at any moment. Whatever be the friendship between persons, it can break in a second under certain circumstances, and it is because real friendship does not exist. But real friendship must exist in order that there can be real knowledge and intuition or insight into the nature of things. As we live in the body and in the context of social relations merely, bereft of insight into the essential nature of ourselves and of others, we are always in an insecure position, so that we have to be at daggers drawn in respect of everyone. Though appearing to be related, yet we are really not related. This is the peculiar, unfortunate character of the idea that we have about an object.

This is not true to the nature of the object. Every idea that we have about any object in this world is not true to the nature

of that object; therefore, there is an attempt of the object to flee away from us. *Sarvaṁ tam parātād yo'nyatrātmano sarvaṁ veda* (B.U. II.4.6), says the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Everything shall run away from us. Nothing will come near us in this world if we have an idea of the object in this manner, as if it is an outsider, a foreigner, or a stranger unrelated to us, and of which we have only a knowledge which is quite apart and away from what it really is. The gradual assimilation of the character of an object into one's own self is the beginning of meditation. For this, an object must be chosen.

The methods prescribed by Patanjali in his *sutras* are fairly advanced ones. Though he says they are for beginners, they are not for beginners. They are very difficult because, for him, the object, even in its lowest stage, is the entire physical manifestation, what is known as the lowest manifestation of *prakriti* in the form of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. He expects us to perform the difficult feat of conceiving the totality of physical matter as the lowest manifestation of *prakriti*, and then contemplate it as the substance out of which everything else is made, including our own body. The bodies of individuals are constituted of five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—and the world outside is also made up of the same substance. So, at once, this doctrine of the similarity of the constitution between the object and the subject introduces a kind of satisfaction into the mind of the meditator. "After all, there is a substantial sympathy between me and the object. I am not meditating on something impossible. The object before me is not a stranger or a foreigner to me. It is constituted of the same substance as my body, so that there is attraction of one in respect of the other."

In fact, the reason behind the possibility of sensory perception of an object is the similarity of structure of the sense organs and the objects outside it. This is the meaning of

the passage in the Bhagavadgita: *guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate* (B.G. III.28). The *gunas* of *prakriti—sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—which are the substances of *prakriti*, are the formative principles of our sense organs, and they are also the substances out of which the objects are made. These *gunas—sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—operating externally as objects and inwardly as senses, become the cause of attraction of the senses and the reason behind the very perception of the object by the senses.

It follows from this that, essentially, an object is not isolated from the subject. It only appears to be isolated because of a peculiar notion that we have about space and time. The space that cuts off the object from the subject, and makes the subject feel that the object is outside, is a part of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. These are the substances of the subject as well as the object, physically speaking at least.

But it is very strange that one of these elements, namely space, creates a peculiar circumstance in our perception, and manages to wriggle out the philosophical conviction that one must ultimately have of the identity of the object and the subject on account of the similarity of substance and structure, and creates a gulf between the subject and the object. How is it that space makes a distinction between the subject and the object, while space is a part of the very substance of which the objects are made, and of which our bodies also are made? This is a strange illusion, and we cannot explain it logically. Nobody can understand how such a thing is possible. The very element which has gone to form the substance of an object, and which is of the subject also, becomes the reason behind the difference between the subject and the object. And the peculiar character of this spatial distance between the subject and the object is also the reason behind our concept of time, which is associated with the motions of things.

So, space and time become the real barrier between the meditating consciousness and the object before it. It is this presence of space and time that is responsible for our idea of the object as being outside, as distinguished from oneself, and as conditioned in many ways. These conditions must be obviated before an attempt can be made to assimilate the object into one's own being.

Chapter 47

THE RISE FROM SAVITARKA TO NIRVITARKA

The contemplation of an object in the process of yoga is quite different from the contemplation of objects that people usually engage themselves in, in ordinary workaday life. Everyone thinks of some object or the other every day, right from morning till night. But this is not the type of thinking which is intended in yoga meditation. The mind functions in the ordinary cognition of things, and it also functions in yogic meditation, but in a quite different manner. The intentions behind these two enterprises of the mind mark the difference between these two processes. The intention of the mind in contemplating an object in yoga is quite different from its intention in contemplating the very same object in ordinary life. This makes all the difference, though purely from the point of view of analytic psychology, we may say that the mind is equally active under both circumstances. The difference is very important, and it is really the difference between life in a world of diversity, and life in spirit.

The purpose of sensory contemplation of the mind in respect of an object in the world is something very strange as compared with its intention in yoga. There are two aspects or sides to this issue. Firstly, there is a background of similarity between ordinary mental cognition and yogic cognition of the object, but there is also a glaring difference between the two processes. Is there not a difference between the feelings of a captive in a jail and a superintendent of the very same jail—both of whom live in the same building, breathe the same air and drink the same water, etc.? Their psychological

circumstances create all the difference. Both live within the same building, with the same walls around them; one is grieved, and the other is happy. The reason is obvious. Likewise, the mind thinks of an object in ordinary cognition or perception, and it thinks of the object also in yoga, in meditation. What is the difference? And, what is the similarity?

The similarity is mostly academic rather than realistic, namely, that the intention of the mind in any kind of perception is to have contact with the object for the purpose of bringing about a state of satisfaction within itself, which it lacks for various reasons. This it tries to achieve, both in ordinary cognition through the senses and their activities, as well as in yogic meditation. While there is a peculiar inharmonious reaction set up from the side of the object in ordinary cognition, there is no such inharmonious reaction set up in yogic meditation. In yoga, in the meditation process, the essential features or characteristics of the object cooperate and coordinate themselves with the meditating consciousness, whereas in ordinary sensory perception there is the opposite process taking place. Even in ordinary affection and love of objects, there is no cooperation of the object in respect of the subject, though it appears to be so on the surface.

There is an inherent repelling attitude, a kind of disparity of character between the subject and the object in ordinary perception, because of a peculiar selfish interest that is present in the subject in its contact with the object. It is the selfishness of the subject that spoils all its efforts. This selfishness is obvious, though it is covered by certain other extraneous manoeuvres in which it engages itself, making it appear that its enterprises are not selfish but are also concerned with the good of other individuals. But, as they say, *satyam eva jayate*—truth alone triumphs; our manoeuvres will not work. All this camouflage will come out because the essential nature

of things cannot be deceived by any kind of extraneous manipulation, either by the senses or by the ego. And so, while there is an apparent affection of the subject towards the object, there is an inherent selfishness present in the manifestation of this love, because the purpose of this contact of the subject with the object is the satisfaction of the subject—not the satisfaction of the object. This is a very important point to remember, and it is the essence of selfishness.

Why does the subject crave for the object? It is not for the good of the object, or for the satisfaction or the well-being of the object; that is very clear on the very face of it. The intention is purely self-centred, and this is what cannot be tolerated by the selfhood of the object. It is impossible to utilise anything in this world wholly as a kind of instrument for the purpose of something else because, ultimately, from the point of view of the essential nature of things, nothing is an instrument or a tool for the purpose of something else. The interrelated connectedness of the forces in the world is of such a nature that it prevents the utilisation of any object for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation is abhorrent to the nature of truth, and the forces of nature will not tolerate it.

So our affection for the object, our contemplation of the object, our thought of the object and our desire for the object is contrary to the law of nature; therefore there is always bereavement in the end. All union ends in separation. All love ends in sorrow. Everything goes to dust, ultimately; this is what we see by practical experience. The reason is that there is a mistake committed by the subject, and inasmuch as everyone is a subject from the point of view of another, and everyone is an object also in a similar manner, there is a universal confusion that has been created. This confusion is called *samsara*—a great mix-up of values that has taken place, totally unintelligible to the mind which is involved in this mix-up.

The yoga process is a remedy that has been prescribed for the illness that has been created in this manner. Because of the peculiar intrinsic character of this confusion, it is difficult to get out of it. It is intrinsic, inherent, and a part of our individual make-up; therefore yogic meditation is difficult because it requires a reshuffling of the very method of thinking, though thinking is present even in yoga. Though the same mind is working and it contemplates perhaps the same object, the intention—and therefore the methodology—is different. The purpose behind the contemplation of an object in yoga is not to exploit the object, as it is in the case of ordinary perception. The intention of the subject here is not to put to use, or harness, the circumstances of the object for its own selfish interests. The purpose here is quite different altogether.

What is the purpose? The intention of the subject is a union which is utterly fraternal, which is incapable of understanding by the senses which are involved in external relationships. This philosophical and psychological background of meditation was the point we previously considered in the context of the *sutras* cited from Patanjali: *vitarka vicāra ānanda asmitārūpa anugamāt saṁprajñātaḥ* (I.17); *tatra śabda artha jñāna vikalpaiḥ saṅkīrṇā savitarkā samāpattiḥ* (I.42).

We have a peculiar mode of thinking 'objects', and we are born into this mode from which we cannot usually extricate ourselves. As it was previously pointed out, there are at least three elements involved in the perception of an object—the object as such, which is called *artha* in this *sutra*; the idea of the object which is called the *jnana* of the object; and the nomenclature, the epithet, the name, the way by which we designate the object. These three are mixed up as if they are one single thing, though they are distinct features. An object has no name, really speaking. No object in this world has a name by itself. When an object is generated, when it is born or

brought into existence, it does not come with a name. It is doubtful if the tree knows that it is called tree.

Likewise, nothing in this world is associated with a designation of this character. It has a status of its own, independent of all these associations. But the worst of all things is the idea of the object. That we have some sort of an idea about things is not usually known to us, because we are born and brought up in the circumstance of the habit of holding an opinion about everything. We live in a world of opinions. We have an idea about everything in this world, and the idea that we hold about things is regarded as identical with the nature of the thing itself. Our opinion about an object is made a part of the nature of the object, so that we compel the object to subserve the definition that we give to it, according to our own perception of it.

This is another interesting feature, and it is the essence of exploitation, that we compel someone to come under the subjection of our opinion about them. What a strange thing! But this is what is happening, and our relationship with people and things in the world is entirely dependent upon the idea that we hold about these persons and things. The main question is, is this idea correct? Is the idea that we hold about persons and things correct, or not correct? One who holds an idea will always assert that it is correct, because no one can become something different from what one is essentially. The idea or opinion one holds, about anything for the matter of that, is a part of the structure of one's mind at that given moment. The idea, therefore, is not different from the mind. It is a condition of the mind—a form taken by the mind itself. It is the shape and structure of the mind at that time. The idea is the mind itself, and the mind is inseparable from one's subjectivity or individuality, which is the basis of all values or evaluations. Inasmuch as the idea is one with the mind, and the mind is one with individuality, the individual holding that opinion or idea

cannot, at any time, imagine that the idea can be wrong. How can we think that we ourselves are wrong? We are self-identical. The idea that we hold is ourselves, manifest in a particular manner.

So, we are the supreme judge of everything, and the whole world becomes a client before us, cringing before us for judgement, and whatever judgement we pass must be the final one. This is the opinion, this is the attitude, and this is the intention of every person, every individual in the world, from A to Z. There is a mutual suspicion created in the body of individuals, on account of this internal compulsion exerted by the subject upon the object. This difficulty that has been created, this intolerant attitude that has been projected towards the object, is naturally repellent to the object. There is, therefore, when it is deeply analysed, no such thing as love of an object by the subject. Such a thing does not exist; it is a misnomer. And because it does not exist, it does not succeed, though it is projected by the subject under a misapprehension of its own ways of thinking.

The method of meditation is a reverse one, where the subject and the object are enabled to stand on a par, and the fact that they really are on a par becomes recognisable. There is no such thing as subject or object, ultimately. It is only a creation of the minds of certain individuals. Every individual, having a status of his own, her own or its own, cannot be regarded as an object of someone else, because the moment one becomes an object, the status of selfhood vanishes. There is a selfhood present in even an atom. It has a say of its own; it has a purpose of its own and an intention behind its activity, which is not for the fulfilment of someone else. It has a mission of its own which it is trying to achieve through the process of evolution, through which it is moving. The fact that there is an inherent status in everything in this world is recognised in yogic meditation. There is, therefore, no

meditation by the subject on an object. The object ceases to be there. It assumes a different character, namely, the subjectivity that is present in it, which is similar to the subjectivity which is manifest by the mind meditating. This sort of assimilation of the selfhood of an object into the selfhood of the subject is a technique unknown to the world. Because it is not practised by anyone, such an attitude is unknown to people. But, with effort and the power of will, a new way of thinking is generated in yoga, by which that which is responsible for the creation of the false distinction between the subject and the object is obviated.

According to the *sutra* of Patanjali, that which creates this false distinction between the subject and the object and wrongly compels the subject to look upon another as an object is a peculiar complex—it is the idea, the name, and the space-time relation. These are the things that have to be given up. Really speaking, space-time is the real problem, and the idea that the subject has of the object is also due to the space-time complex that is present. We cannot isolate the idea from the presence of space-time. So, ultimately, it is a problem of space-time. These two elements—space and time—go together. We cannot have one without the other. The two types of meditation that Patanjali refers to have relevance to the conception of something as located in space and time, and the conception of the same thing as not located in space and time. The first one is called *savitarka*; the other is called *nirvitarka*. These are peculiar technical terms in the yogic language of Patanjali. The contemplation of an object as situated in space and time, and therefore defined by our idea of that thing, is *savitarka*. The freedom from these associations is *nirvitarka*.

The stage where we can contemplate the object as not located in space and time cannot easily be achieved, because the mind is incapable of thinking of an object as not being located in space and time. It itself is in space and time from its

own point of view, because the very idea or notion of individuality is a spatial concept. The fact that we are individuals is an outcome of the notion that there is space and time. How can we get out of this difficulty? The answer is, again, meditation. But what is the sort of meditation that we should practise?

The methods prescribed for this have already been studied in earlier *sutras*. To recapitulate, we may bring to mind the processes prescribed—namely, an intense contemplation on the characters of an object, even if it is located in space and time, minus its associations with other objects. While the spatio-temporal location of an object prevents the subject from knowing the object correctly, it is made worse by further associations of the object with other objects in the world, so that we always think of several things and not one thing at a time. Earlier, we also studied that our idea of an object is associated with a subtle idea of another object. By distinguishing the characters of a particular object from the characters of other objects, we are able to perceive an object. The red colour of an object is known on account of the presence of other objects which are not red, and so on and so forth.

So we are permanently and constantly under a pressure of the necessity to distinguish one from the other; and without this distinction, knowledge of an object is not possible. But this is a great effort of the mind and a kind of tiresome process. The mind gets tired merely because of this subtle effort which it has to put forth perpetually in the cognition of an object, though this has become a kind of habit to us—like lying. There are people who go on telling lies from morning to night, and it has become so much a part of their nature that they do not know that there is some pressure in their minds. Everything that they utter is a falsehood. If this is the case, the tension which is at the background of uttering falsehoods

becomes a part of our nature, so that we do not know that we are in a state of tension at all. Likewise, because of the perpetual habit of the mind to distinguish one thing from the other in the act of perception and cognition, it forgets that it is placed in the context of a perpetual tension. We are always in a state of tension and never free at all, merely because we cannot know anything without knowing something else, by distinguishing one thing from the other.

But in meditation, in yoga, there is an attempt to obviate this. We should not contemplate the object by distinguishing it from another object. We are not good merely because someone else is bad—that is not the point. We have an intrinsic goodness of our own. Does it mean that our goodness depends upon the badness of others? Suppose no one is bad; will we then not be good? It is not so. There is some positive element present in every object, and it is that positive element that we are trying to discover in meditation. But mostly we are unable to do this peculiar feat, because of the inherent selfishness of the individual in assuming a superiority of its own over everything else, and the necessity it feels in putting other things into use for its own purpose. There is no such thing as one's own purpose in the structure of things. This is, again, a mistake. Why should we work for our own purposes, while such purposes do not exist?

There is only one purpose for the whole world. For all things, there is a single aim, and we cannot understand this peculiar feature that is working behind all things in the world without properly going into the deeper relationships of things. Is there a differentiation of purpose among the functions in the various limbs of the body, even though the eyes see and cannot hear, the ears hear but cannot see, the stomach can digest food but cannot think, and the brain can think but cannot digest food? There is a diversity of function, no doubt. We may think that they are all independent organs, working independently

for different purposes; but they have no different purposes. All the organs and limbs of the organism function for a single purpose, and that is the point which makes every other function subservient to itself. Each limb cannot work for its own aim—it would create chaos. Bringing into high relief the aim that is ultimately present in everything in this world will be helpful in contemplating anything in this world from its own point of view. The moment the point of view of an object is taken into consideration, the limitation of that object in terms of space and time does not harass us so much.

Space and time are nothing but the conditions which the mind creates to expel the object from its own purview, to exile it from its own kingdom, and to utilise it for its own selfish purposes. So space-time means ultimately a type of condition of thinking. This has to be got rid of by transferring the thought to the point of view of the object, which is the first step that is needed in the rise of the mind from *savitarka* to *nirvitarka*. The point of view of the subject has to be got rid of. As long as that particular subjective point of view is predominant, the point of view of the object is forgotten, and then there is no such thing as gaining mastery over the object. All control is dependent upon the point of view that we take.

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad we have the famous dictum of Sage Yajnavalkya, where he points out that no possession of anything in this world is possible as long as the thing possessed is outside the possessor—*sarvaṁ tam parātād yo'nyatrātmano sarvaṁ veda* (B.U. II.4.6)—because the idea of possession is again involved in the idea of space and time. This means to say that the basis of the desire to possess an object is the conviction that the object is different from oneself. That which is different from us cannot be possessed by us. We have already declared that it is outside us and it is not us, and therefore, naturally, we have nothing to do with it.

So, desire is a contradiction. It is a kind of psychological tension. It is not natural to human nature or to anyone's nature and, therefore, it is always a source of pain and suffering to people. Everyone who is desirous is full of suffering, because desire is an unnatural mental condition that arises due to a misconception with regard to things, and this misconception is of a double nature. Inwardly we have a desire for an object, and, simultaneously, there is a conviction that it is outside us. So we create an impossible situation of asserting, on the one side, that the object is outside us and that we have no connection with it, and simultaneously asserting that we want it and we want to absorb it into our own nature. This tension is removed in meditation by removing desire itself, because the subject has no purpose to serve by desiring an object in the ordinary fashion. The purpose of the subject is to recognise the subjectivity in the object, and not to exploit the objectivity that has been foisted upon it.

This recognition of the presence of the selfhood in things, the presence of what is known as the subjectivity in things, is the initial step in the rise of the mind from *savitarka* meditation to *nirvitarka* meditation. This requires years of practice. It is not a question of a few days, because we have been born and raised with wrong notions for centuries—from births, since aeons, perhaps. We do not know for how many births we have been thinking wrongly, and therefore it is almost a Herculean feat to turn the tables round and prevent the subject from thinking of anything as an object, and to recognise the subjecthood in the object. This is achieved by a repeated hammering into the mind the idea that the object in meditation has a substantiality of its own, independent of the characters of the object—the features of the object—which are perceived on account of the relations of that object with other objects.

Thus *nirvitarka* is a non-relational contemplation, whereas *savitarka* is a relational contemplation. The relations are spatial, temporal, and individualistic. *Desa kala vastu sambandha*, is the Sanskrit term. The *sambandha* of *desa* is spatial. The *sambandha* of time is temporal; the *sambandha* of *vastu* is individualistic. This means to say that an object is in space, an object is in time, and an object has a relation with another object, which is the causal relationship. To put it more philosophically, space-time-cause are the obstacles before the subject in its attempt to enter into the nature of the object, or to try to possess it, or enjoy it, or become one with it.

By repeated meditation on the substantiality of the object, independent of these relations, a revelation takes place. The mist before the mind is cast out. There is a response from the object in a friendly manner, which was absent up to this time. In loves and hatreds, which are almost the same thing—there is no difference between the two—there is no such response from the object. The objects try to flee away from us whether we love them or hate them, because of our unnatural attitude towards them. This is the meaning of Yajnavalkya's dictum—*sarvaṁ tam parātād*—everything runs away from he who tries to see in objects natures which do not really belong to them.

The response from the object in a friendly manner becomes possible when there is a gesture from the subject that the selfhood of the object is recognised. Though we have not entered into it or had a vision of it, at least it is recognised, just as when a new nation is formed, the other nations recognise it. Then, immediately, it becomes a friend of the other nations. Though there has not as yet been any commercial dealing or ambassador appointments, etc., which are yet to be, there is a declaration, at least, that the nation's existence has been recognised; and this is the beginning of friendship.

Likewise, the subject begins to accept the point of view of the object, though it has not taken action on this point of view. This is the stage where the mind begins to rise up from the condition of *savitarka* to that of *nirvitarka*.

Chapter 48

ENCOUNTERING TROUBLES AND OPPOSITION

The object in meditation does not get properly reflected in one's mind due to a certain torpidity which infects the mind and prevents anything from being properly reflected through it, as a dirty mirror does not allow any clear reflection of any object. The impurities of the mind are the obstacles to a proper communication of the meditating consciousness with the object. There is plenty of dirt in the mind. This dirt consists mainly of various kinds of impressions formed by perceptions, feelings, etc., which have been generated by the mind earlier—even from many previous births. The impressions formed in this manner, due to earlier perceptions of objects, condition the mind in such a way that there cannot be a reception of the object into the structure of the mind except through these conditioning factors. Meditation is that technique by which this obstructing factor in the mind is removed by purification, which is another way of so adjusting the mind to the circumstances of the object that the nature of the object is, to a large extent, reflected in the mind in its proper form, and not as conditioned by the internal structure of the mind that is filled with past impressions.

The memories of the past become great obstacles in any satisfactory endeavour. In a *sutra* which describes the next step in meditation, Patanjali uses the word '*smrtiparisuddhi*'. *Smṛtipariśuddhau svarūpaśūnye iva arthamātranirbhāsā nirvitarkā* (I.43). *Nirvitarka* is the second stage in meditation, while *savitarka* is the first stage. Ordinarily, the second stage cannot be reached as long as the memory is not purified, as

long as *smrtiparisuddhi* is not there. The memories of the past are not ordinary obstacles; they are very serious impediments. We have, no doubt, a part of the mind working in a new direction altogether, especially when one takes to a spiritual life—lives in a monastery, takes to *sannyasa*, and lives a life of devotion to God, etc. Nevertheless, the memories of the past will not easily go, and these memories are terrible conditioning factors. For example, one cannot forget one's parentage, the village from which one comes, the relationships one has, and even one's nationality, colour, and all sorts of things such as qualifications, capacities, status in society, and whatnot. All of these are the residuum left by past experience and the type of life that one has lived, which becomes, again, a new type of condition even in a fresh life that one has taken to—the spiritual life.

The purification of the mind by the purging of all of these impurities in the form of past memories has to be done with tremendous effort. *Āhāra-śuddhau sattva-śuddhiḥ, sattva-śuddhau dhruvā smṛtiḥ* (C.U. VII.26.2), is a saying from the Chhandogya Upanishad. When the intake through the sense organs becomes pure, *sattva* manifests itself within, in a larger measure, and all the distracting factors get diminished in quantity. When *sattva* thus reveals itself within, there is the steady memory—not memory of past sensory experiences or contacts, but memory of what one really is in one's essentiality, independent of artificial relations which are meaningful only in respect of the present incarnation.

Our incarnation through this body, in this present birth, has its own antecedents, and whatever relationships we are able to remember in our mind are connected with this body, this particular individualistic incarnation, and we have no memory whatsoever of our previous births and our previous relations. This peculiar, limited form of memory that we have, which is only to this present lifetime, is a very strong obstacle

in front of us because it creates such a type of prejudice in our mind that we cannot look upon anything in this world except in terms of this relationship that has cropped up for the time being, on account of this present bodily incarnation. The son of a mother in this birth might not have been a son in the previous birth; he might have been anything. And, in an earlier birth, the son might have been a third thing, and so on and so forth. If we were to have a memory of everything—all of the connections of all the lives that we have led through countless births—the present conditioning memory would have no meaning. It would snap immediately, and our life itself would lose all its sense.

So, this limited memory to the present life alone cannot be regarded as any kind of aid; it is, rather, an obstacle. It has to be purified by self-analysis in various ways, such as the understanding that the relationship that we have with something is not all. It was not there in an earlier birth, and it is going to change in the next birth. Which relationship is to be regarded as real—the earlier one, the future one, or the present one? Why is there so much emphasis on the reality of the present relationship alone, completely divested of the earlier relationships and the future ones that have yet to come? Which particular incarnation is to be regarded as real? It is, therefore, illogical on the part of anyone to lay excessive emphasis on any specific incarnation of the body, minus all of its earlier relations and future possibilities. If we define ourselves in terms of relations, let the relations be taken in their totality. Otherwise, we should contemplate ourselves as independent of all relations.

The continuous meditation on an object, independent of space-time relation, a matter which we have discussed earlier, enables the mind to purify itself of all past impressions. When these impressions gradually evaporate, the centrality of the mind, the substantiality of the mind, the solidity of the mind,

or rather the affirmative capacity of one's own individuality, gradually gets thinned out into almost nothing—*svarupasunye iva. Svarupa sunyata* is absence of the personality, absence of the selfhood of the individuality. The mind, which is the king of all principles that contribute to the affirmation of individuality, gets thinned out to such an extent that we begin to lose consciousness of our personality, stage by stage. The hard affirmation of self through this body and its physical relations diminishes, to a large extent, by continuous meditation. The consequences of this affirmation—namely, likes and dislikes, loves and hatreds, etc.—also diminish gradually. The personality loses its self-importance. It gives equal importance to other personalities so that there is a tendency to the realisation of the ideal that we are speaking of—the universality of brotherhood and the fraternity of beings, namely, the recognition of equal worth in other things as one feels in one's own self—which had become impossible on account of self-affirmation.

An affirmative act on the part of the mind in terms of its body is what is known as the ego. The purpose of the ego is to repel other egos, to cut them off from all the importance that they may assume, and make them subservient to the position and the desires of one's own ego. It is this principle of egoism that has prevented—and always prevents—attaining the ultimate aim in meditation, which is the coming together of the object and the subject in their essential nature. *Svarupa sunyata*, mentioned in this *sutra* of Patanjali, is a gradual manifestation of the deepest nature of oneself, minus its encrustations in the form of body-consciousness, ego-consciousness and sense impressions.

Smṛtipariśuddhau svarūpaśūnye iva arthamātranirbhāsā (I.43). In this meditation, which we should regard as advanced, there is, together with a loss of the sense of one's own personality, a maintenance of the consciousness of the

personality of the object. We have transferred ourselves from one location to another location, as it were. That which is the object of meditation becomes our self, and our original self—the old self, the bodily self of so-and-so—vanishes. There is *arthamatra nirbhasata*. *Artha* is the object of meditation, and *arthamatrata* is the object shining alone to the exclusion of the consciousness of anything else, so that the being of the object becomes the being of the meditating consciousness.

We have had occasion to discuss the subject of the relationship of consciousness to an object. Ordinarily, the existence of the object is generally outside the perceiving consciousness, on account of which the consciousness rushes towards the objects to make itself feel complete. The object, being the content of consciousness, cannot be outside consciousness. As long as it is outside, consciousness seems to be empty of content and, therefore, it is restless. The restless consciousness, which is empty of content, rushes towards the content in order that it may be filled with the content. This is what is called desire, or love, or affection, or aspiration—whatever we may call it.

Meditation is that technique by which the content is absorbed into the perceiving consciousness. The desire for the content ceases thereby, due to the being of the object, which is the content of consciousness getting identified with consciousness, so that there is no further feeling of emptiness in oneself. We are restless because the objects of our desire are outside us. They are not connected with us. Whatever we want is outside us in space, in time, and in distance, etc. This is the difficulty of every human being. This difficulty is obviated through meditation by the affirmation in consciousness of there being an inward relationship of oneself with the content, with the awareness that it is not true that the content is really bifurcated from consciousness.

Establishing this habit of the mind in the affirmation of the object as a content not bifurcated from itself is the step taken in the second stage of meditation. As I mentioned previously, all of this is a terrible task, and only one who passes through these experiences and stages will know what hardship it involves. We will have to regard ourselves as reborn, almost, into a new type of birth in order to be able to undertake such a task as this—namely, our affiliation with a single content, which is the object of our meditation. Ordinarily, such a thing is not easy because of the presence of various desires.

It was mentioned in earlier *sutras* that meditation is not for a person who has desires in the mind, because the diversity of desires start pulling the mind in different directions and prevent it from moving in the given direction which is the object of meditation. By *abhyasa* and *vairagya*, deep practice and continual habituation of the mind to the object, and by analytical methods and philosophical contemplation, one should develop *vairagya* or dispassion in the mind towards objects of sense. It is only then that the mind will yield to this arduous task of meditation on the object.

The network of things, which is called *samsara*, is constituted of individual objects, which themselves are networks of forces. The hammering and bombarding of the object by the force of concentration breaks this network and reduces the object to its components, so that the object does not anymore look like a solid something which is impregnable or impervious. It assumes its real nature of being a composite structure of various elements, and these elements are nothing but the forces of nature of which one's own personality also is made.

The desire of the mind for objects of sense arises on account of a wrong notion that the structure of the object is different from the structure of one's own self. "I am made up

of something which is different from that of which the object is made and, therefore, I have something which is empty of meaning, whereas all meaning is present in the object." That is why the mind goes towards objects. This analytical meditation reveals the truth that the internal pattern of the object is similar to the internal pattern of one's own self, even though the external form may be different. It is the arrangement of forces that looks like an object, and makes an object look different from other objects. The inward pattern is the same; the substances are not different, but the shapes taken by these objects differ. This is difficult for the mind to understand, inasmuch as it always looks upon the object through the senses and does not find time to analyse the inner structure of the mind. The deep focusing of the mind on the object in meditation, for a protracted period, not only enables the mind to free itself from association with other objects of sense, but also enables it to have an insight into the inner structure of the object of its meditation.

To sum up the meaning of this *sutra*: *smṛtipariśuddhau svarūpaśūnye iva arthamātranirbhāsā nirvitarkā* (I.43), we may safely conclude that intense transformation of the psychophysical personality is bound to take place in these processes of meditation. When empathy is established between oneself and the object in meditation, everything that constitutes the individual will undergo a change. Not only will the physical and the psychic constituents of the personality undergo a transformation, but all of the relationships that are external and connected with this personality will also undergo a corresponding change. It is believed and affirmed by adepts in yoga that advance on the path of meditation will be parallel to the perception of a transformation, both from within and without. The conditions outside will change in respect of us, and the attitudes of people and things towards us will also change, because the attitudes that others have towards us have

something to do with the attitudes that we have towards them, so when the one changes, the other must also change correspondingly.

Also, even physical changes are pointed out, but these changes vary from person to person. They are not uniformly present in all individuals, on account of the varying characters of *prarabhda karma*—the stages of evolution each one finds oneself in. There can be a feverish feeling on account of a sudden shake-up of the cells of the body, and the meditation will cease. This is regarded as an obstacle among the nine obstacles mentioned earlier in the *sutra*: *vyādhi styāna saṁśaya pramāda ālasya avirati bhrāntidarśana alabdhabhūmikatva anavasthitatvāni cittavikṣepaḥ te antarāyāḥ* (I.30). The first of the obstacles mentioned by Patanjali is disease. Various kinds of illness may manifest themselves which cannot easily be medically diagnosed, and which cannot even be treated by any method of medication, because they are the effects of certain pressures exerted on the physical, as well as the psychological, constituents of one's individuality. But one has to pass through all this difficulty.

This arduous technique is like an ordeal, indeed, and as the Bhagavadgita mentions, it is a terrible, bitter thing that is before us when we actually start it. *Yat tad agre viṣam iva pariṇāme*' *mṛtopamam* (B.G. XVIII.37). In the end it is like nectar, they say, but that nectar will not come easily. The story told in the Puranas of Amrita Manthana, the churning of the ocean for the sake of nectar, has a great mystical significance. It is nothing but the churning of life itself—the shaking up of whatever is our individuality and our personal relationships for the sake of bringing out the nectar of the divinity that is within. But this nectar will not come out so easily. *Pariname*—in the end it comes; perhaps, it is the last thing that comes. In the earlier stages we had various other things which did not even indicate that the nectar would be coming.

What was it that came first? Poison—deadly venom that suffocates, stifles, blinds and repels. It is this that comes in the beginning. Dirt, dust, smoke, fear and whatnot—all of these become the visions of a *sadhaka* in the beginning, as if he is going to get nothing, or perhaps he is going to get the opposite of what he is asking for.

These are the troubles that one has to face with courage, as this venomous encounter is not going to subside so easily. Like a thunderstorm, it will pour hail on the head. It will appear that every relationship is snapped from its support, and we will be totally helpless in this ocean of wilderness. But once this venomous encounter subsides, will nectar come? No, nothing of the kind. The Puranas say that so many other gems start coming up to tempt us in the other direction altogether. So there is a terrific opposition and an attempt to cow us down completely—to press us down and destroy us, as it were.

When we face this difficulty, it does not mean that our effort is complete, or that the achievement is over. There is then the other realm of temptation—objects. Before they reveal themselves in their essential divine character, they present a tempting character, which is an earlier stage than the divine stage in which they will manifest afterwards. In the beginning, it looks as if they are inimical; they will not at all yield. They oppose us in every form possible. But when this stage of apparent opposition is tided over, they put on a new colour and contour and appear as the most tempting riches, which is the stage that is indicated by the various gems emerging in the process of Amrita Manthana. We will completely forget the nectar; that has gone forever. We are here in front of many beautiful things, charming scenes, grandeurs and magnificences which will simply draw our soul, and the aim will be forgotten. If we read the sixth chapter of Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, we will get an idea of the

torture that Buddha underwent. Poison, temptation—all of these things had to be faced by him in an intolerable manner, and it is not possible for the mind to understand what these difficulties are.

But, God-willing, if all of these oppositions and temptations are overcome, if they are faced with courage and adamantine strength, at last Dhanvantari comes up with the pot of nectar. This is perhaps what Bhagavan Sri Krishna had in his mind when he said: *yat tad agre viṣam iva pariṇāme' mṛtopamam, tat sukhaṁ sāttvikaṁ proktam ātma buddhiprasādajam* (B.G. XVIII.37).

Chapter 49

THE RISE TO SAVICHARA AND NIRVICHARA

After the mind has been habituated for a protracted period to the object of meditation, the very constitution of the object appears to undergo an inward transformation, so that the mind begins to gain a sort of insight into the subtle character of the object rather than merely its outer gross form. In this stage of meditation where the gross form of the object is stepped over and its subtle nature is grasped directly by the mind, independent of the senses, there is a new type of perception altogether of the world as a whole. The world does not look like a conglomeration of solid things, but as a web, as it were, knit out of subtler forces which are more affiliated to one another than they would appear to be on the surface, merely from the point of view of their gross bodies.

This subtlety, which is the essence behind the gross forms of objects, is known in Yoga and Samkhya terminology as *tanmatra*. The vibrations which are at the background of all the gross forms are the *tanmatras*. These vibrations are not merely some functions or activities proceeding from the objects, but they are the very stuff of the objects themselves. The forces or the energies which emanate from the objects are not something extraneous to the essential nature of the objects. They are not attributes or qualities which inhere in substances called the objects, but they are the inner essences of the objects. To give an instance as to what it means: the electrical forces that are inside a solid object, such as a piece of granite or a stone, are not attributes of the stone but are the substance out of which the stone is made—the atoms, the

molecules, the electrons, etc. They are not qualities that emanate from the object of perception, but they are inherent principles, which can be made visible only to a microscopic vision. The physical perception cannot be adequate to the purpose.

When we go deeper into the structure of an object, we also begin to realise that there is a new feature present in the object. That is, it is more friendly towards others than it appeared to be on the surface. To give another example, we have waves in the ocean. If we concentrate the mind only on the waves—the crests of water—naturally we would conclude that each wave is different from the other wave. There is a vast difference between one and the other in formation, as well as distance of one from the other, etc. But the constitution of the waves is the substance of the ocean, and the vision that can go deep into the body of the ocean can visualise the affiliation of one wave with the other, notwithstanding that one wave may dash against another as if they are enemies, as if one has nothing to do with the other and they are absolutely distinct from each other.

In a similar manner, objects look distinct in the world; one is cut off from the other in every manner—in shape, in contour, and even in the intention, purpose, etc., of one's behaviour. But all these differentiations that are visible outside from the standpoint of grossness of bodies enter into a new realm of a greater unity and a coordination of forces when insight into the background of these bodies is gained. This step in meditation is, for the common audience, only a theory. It is of no use for practise because one cannot enter into the subtle nature of things by any amount of effort. This is a stage of experience, and not merely of understanding. When we gain mastery over the object in its relation to the subject which we are, the subtle nature of the object automatically reveals itself in direct experience, and it is not merely an object of

academic consideration. We can only imagine what our experiences could be up to the level of the grossness of forms, though we may conceive of them in their interrelatedness. But beyond that the mind cannot go, because what the eyes cannot see or the ears cannot hear, the senses cannot sense and the mind cannot think. These subtle elements, the *tanmatras*, are imperceptible things; they are like the electrons in a stone. We can only imagine, theoretically, that there are electrons inside. We cannot see them with any amount of stretching the imagination, but they can be seen with a new type of apparatus, and perhaps a greater type of concentration of mind.

However, Patanjali is concerned with giving us techniques of concentration and meditation, and he takes for granted that these are stages of experience rather than merely of instruction, because yoga is not instruction—it is practice and direct experience. Every stage is one of experience, and any stage that is divested of experience is merely a theory which will be of no use in one's practical life. So, the higher step cannot be known unless the lower step is mastered and overcome. In one of the *sutras*, it is pointed out that the extent of mastery that one gains over the lower stage indicates what the next step would be. A person who is in the first stage cannot know what the third stage would be because a second stage is intervening, and unless the second stage is also stepped over in direct experience, the third stage cannot be known.

Hence, the process of yoga meditation is very graduated, and not one link in this chain can be completely ignored. Every step is a necessary step. When all the steps relevant to the grossness of forms are taken in their completeness, and every aspect of the gross form of the object is considered analytically and experienced, the inner nature of the object is revealed. This apperception of the subtle nature of the object

is a more advanced state of meditation than the earlier states described; and this condition is described by Patanjali as *savichara*—far above the *savitarka* and the *nirvitarka* states. Here again a distinction is drawn between the subtle condition in its related state and the subtle condition in its unrelated state, so that a distinction between what is known as *savichara* and *nirvichara* is drawn.

In this condition where the absorption of the mind into the object becomes almost complete, the mind ceases to be merely an instrument of cognition as something extraneous to the nature of the object. It does not remain there merely as an apparatus with the help of which we come into an artificial contact with the object outside, but it becomes, again in its essential nature, something which is akin to the object itself in its essential nature. There is some basic similarity of character between the structure of the mind and the structure of the object, the absence of the knowledge of which is the reason behind the attachment of the mind to objects. Any kind of running of the mind towards external objects is due to the inability of the mind to perceive the consubstantiation of its own nature with the nature of the object. If there is, inherent in the mind itself, the characters of that towards which it is moving, the motion itself will cease.

This is what happens in these stages of meditation known as *savichara* and *nirvichara*. Not only that—even the meditating principle, the subjectivity there, becomes one with the nature of the object, and as it was described in an earlier *sutra* which we have discussed, it becomes impossible to distinguish between the meditator, the object that is meditated upon, and the process intervening. This was the condition described in *sutra* forty-one which we have studied earlier: *kṣīṇavṛtteḥ abhijātasye iva maṇeḥ grahītṛ grahaṇa grāhyeṣu tatstha tadañjanatā samāpattiḥ.*

Nirvicāra vaiśāradye adhyātmaprasādaḥ (I.47), says the *sutra*. In the state of *nirvichara* where deliberate argumentation, analysis, etc. cease, the logical function of the mind comes to an end and there is no deduction or induction process any longer; there is only direct visualisation. Here, the peace of the Self manifests itself. Where does it manifest itself? It manifests itself in the luminous condition attained through the meditation known as *nirvichara*. *Nirvicāra vaiśāradye adhyātmaprasādaḥ. Prasadah* is peace, serenity, tranquillity—complete self-absorption free from all distractions and *rajasic* agitation.

Here, again, a novel experience supervenes, which was unexpected and unknown to the mind in its ordinary cognitions. The mind gets filled to the brim with the truths of things. *Ṛtaṁbhara tatra prajñā* (I.48)—*rita* is 'truth', *bhara* is 'filled with', *tatra* means 'there', *prajna* is 'consciousness'. Consciousness, or mind, is filled to overflowing with the nature of truth. What is truth? It is the nature of things as they stand in themselves, unrelated through space, time, or causality. In this experience of the truth of things, the mind rests in its own nature like the profound ocean whose depths cannot be fathomed, like the deep Pacific whose bottom no one knows. The steadiness of the mind, which is attained here, is comparable only with the magnificence of the Infinite. Here again, theoretical discussions will not work, because we are now stepping beyond the realm of ordinary perception and intellectual analysis. The means of knowledge known as rationality, intellection, logic, perception, sensation, etc. cease, and we are here in the realms of immediacy of knowledge—*aparokshata*, and not merely *parokshajnana* or indirect knowledge.

The truth with which the mind is filled here is not merely a condition of things, is not a truth about which we speak in ordinary life, but it is the very being of all things. When we say

"speak the truth", we refer to a state of affairs where our idea corresponds to a fact. When the notion that is in the mind is consonant with what is already there, we call this notion a truthful notion. And when we express in language this notion that is in consonance with the facts as they are as sensorily perceived, we say, "The person is speaking the truth." But this is not the truth that we are speaking of here when we are studying this *sutra* of Patanjali, where we are told that the mind is filled with truth. The mind is filled with being—this is what he means, because truth is the same as being. It is not merely a way of expression and not a correspondence of idea to fact, because here the ideas themselves cease in the stages of *savitarka* and *nirvitarka*, which we have discussed already.

The apparent distinction that is there between the idea of an object and the object as such has been properly understood and mastered. Ideas were known to be merely descriptions of the nature of an object; and the object is not the same as the idea of the object. Hence, the question of the correspondence of the idea with the object does not arise where the object has become a part and parcel of one's own being. So, this truth is something different from the ordinary empirical truth that we speaking of or with which we are acquainted.

It is not humanly possible to know what this truth is or to know what is this condition known as *ritambhara.* If the stuff of the whole universe is pressed into your mind, and you are laden heavily with the substance of the whole universe, and you are carrying that weight in your mind—the weight of the whole cosmos, the substantiality of all things in the whole universe, the entire magnitude and substance of the universe is pressed into your mind, is stuffed into your consciousness, and you are moving with it heavily laden in yourself—what would be that condition? That is, perhaps, the state called *ritambhara*, where you become a vehicle of the universe. You become the universe itself. When you walk, it looks like the

universe is walking. The entire substantiality of things is injected into every cell of the body of this meditating consciousness. This is not a human condition. Here, human nature is completely transcended, and divinity takes possession of humanity. In the perception which is *ritambhara*, the ordinary means of cognition get absorbed into a new type of means altogether. It is not the eyes that see, or the ears that hear—it is not even the mind that thinks here. It is that superior principle within us, of which these are the manifestations, that becomes the instrument of direct awareness of all things in their simultaneity, and not in succession.

We cannot have a simultaneous knowledge of anything in this world; everything is known one after the other. If we enjoy a sunset or a scene in nature, we enjoy the discrete objects, one after another in succession, and not at one stroke, in their totality or completeness. We cannot enjoy everything at once, simultaneously. Even if we take our lunch, we cannot stuff everything into our mouths at one stroke; the food goes in item by item. Even when we think thoughts, ideas come one after another, in succession. Everything that is known to man is a processional activity and not a simultaneous grasp of being. But here, in this condition of *ritambhara*, the state where the mind is filled with truth, there is no successive procession of ideas and no necessity for the senses to function. We need not open our eyes to see objects, or keep our ears open to hear sounds—nor is there a necessity for the functional activity of the mind, as we are acquainted with usually.

There is a direct grasp due to the entry of the mind into everything, at one stroke, in its pervasiveness. Even in this pervasiveness, it does not remain as an instrument of knowledge but becomes the very substance of that which is to be known—*jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ jñānagamyaṁ* (B.G. XIII.17),

as the Bhagavadgita puts it. It is the *jnana* as well as the *jneya*. *Vettāsi vedyaṁ ca* (B.G. XI.38) is also a statement of the Bhagavadgita, which means we are the known as well as the knower. It is the knower that becomes conscious of one's own self in the cognition of an object. Very strange indeed is this knowledge that in the awareness of an object one becomes aware of one's own self, and vice versa; in the knowledge of one's own self one becomes aware of the object so that to possess oneself is to possess things, and to possess things is to possess oneself.

This is the nature of the mind where it is filled with truth, *ritambhara*. Here, the processes of knowledge known as perception, inference, and verbal testimony, etc., cease, because these empirical processes are valid only as long as the objects lie outside in space and in time, and are causally related, while this is not the case here. The means adopted under those conditions become inadequate. *Śruta anumāna prajñābhyām anyaviṣayā viśeṣārthatvāt* (I.49) is a *sutra* which describes the nature of the knowledge which comprehends objects here. *Sruta* is what is heard—verbal testimony; *anumana* is induction, deduction, logic, inference. The knowledge that we gain by inferential activity of the mind and by verbal testimony, as well as by sensory cognition and perception, is different from the intuitive grasp of things, into which we enter here in this state of filledness with truth—*ṛtaṁbhara tatra prajñā* (I.48). *Vishesharthatvat*. The reason is given here: the object of knowledge here is completely different from the object in ordinary knowledge. The objects in ordinary knowledge stand outside as strangers to the means of perception, never allowing themselves to be absorbed into the means but always standing outside, requiring a communication by means of extraneous apparatus through the mind and the senses.

Whatever be the hospitality that we show to a foreigner or to a stranger, whatever be the love that we may have towards an object which does not really belong to us, whatever be the feeling that we have towards the most valuable of things in this world—if it is not ours, we will know the inadequacy of our affections and the futility of our efforts in that direction merely because we stand outside that which we are seeking, perceiving, loving, etc. So there is a sense of insecurity and unhappiness present in all processes of knowledge and activity in the world, for obvious reasons. But this insecurity and unhappiness vanishes immediately here, in this state where the object of knowledge is not an object at all, but it is the subject itself that enjoys itself. *Ātma-krīḍa ātma-mithura ātmānandaḥ, sa svarāḍ bhavati* (C.U. VII.25.2), says the Chhandogya Upanishad. Here, in this state, one enjoys one's own self, and not an object outside. The question of enjoying an object does not arise, because the self has assumed such a magnitude that it has comprehended all of the objects which it desired earlier through the senses.

The activity of a person who has attained this state is not a movement of the limbs of the body, but a movement of self within itself. It is the rumbling of the ocean of consciousness within its own bosom. As the Chhandogya Upanishad beautifully puts it in this passage, one keeps the company of one's own Self; one is the friend of one's own Self; one rejoices with one's own Self; one plays with one's own Self, and one enjoys, in every way, the Self that is there. Such a person has a passport into all worlds, says the Upanishad—*sarveṣu lokeṣv akāma-cāro bhavati* (C.U. VII.25.2). We can enter into any place without any permission. Who is to give us permission? One is the master of every house, one is the owner of every piece of land anywhere in the universe, and one is the lord of the realms through which the universe manifests itself. He enjoys

through every mouth, sees through every eye, and becomes the soul of all things. Not all the gods put together can obstruct him in his activity, says the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

All this is because the object of his knowledge and experience are identical, whereas in our ordinary life, the objects of mere knowledge are different from the objects of experience. We may be professors of knowledge of many things in this world over which we have no control and which we do not possess. Therefore, this professorial knowledge is emptiness because we have no knowledge of the essential nature of the objects of which we have information. We have an informative acquaintance with the location of the objects in space and time in their relatedness causally, but we have no possession of them. So a professor of knowledge is not the owner of that knowledge, because he owns only an informative description of the outer character of the object as it stands outside him.

But here, *visheshartha*, the object is special. What is the specialty of that object? It is no more an object. The word 'object' is inapplicable here because it becomes merely a manifestation of what one's own self is. This condition is called intuition or insight—a direct entry into the being of things by not merely becoming, but by being those things. The self becomes all.

The *purusha* overcomes the clutches of *prakriti*, and stands in its own pristine purity. Here is the borderland of *kaivalya* or *moksha*, towards which the yoga practice is directed. These are some of the peculiar technicalities Patanjali has mentioned in the higher stages of meditation.

Chapter 50

THE STATES OF SANANDA AND SASMITA

When a profound state of concentration is reached, a joy ensues within oneself, and the mind gets absorbed in this experience of joy. This is a delight, which is not merely imagined by the mind but directly grasped in concrete experience. It is quite a different type of joy from what we are acquainted with in sense contact. The sensation of happiness or pleasure that we experience in contact with objects is utterly different from the positivity of experience that we are speaking of as an emanation of the character of Being as such. This is the great *ananda* of which Patanjali speaks as the third stage of experience in meditation. Here, the rooted-ness of oneself in happiness does not get shaken up by any other experience whatsoever. The winds of the world cannot shake it anymore. Not even the worst sorrow can shake a person when one is fixed in this joy that automatically, spontaneously, manifests from the nature of Being itself.

The sensations of happiness in the world have to be distinguished from bliss that is divine, because sensations have a beginning and, therefore, they have an end. Not only that, they are not endowed with any type of positivity in them; they are mere reactions. A reaction is a temporary phase or condition which is roused into experience due to the collocation of various factors involved in that experience, and when those factors get dismembered, when they are dissociated, the experience also comes down and vanishes. Therefore, there is no permanent happiness in the world since happiness is caused by certain conditions, and these conditions cannot always prevail. Inasmuch as the causative

factors are passing, the effect, which is joy, is also passing, and no one is perpetually happy.

But here in this condition of *sananda* experience, which is experience attended with joy of a spiritual nature, there is no vanishing of the causes and therefore no cessation of the effect, because the cause is the essential nature of the object of meditation, and the essential nature of an object cannot vanish. The conditions may vanish, the form may change, circumstances may vary, but the essential nature cannot change. Inasmuch as one contacts the essential nature of things here, the bliss that emanates therefrom is permanent, because the essential nature is permanent. This experience is *sananda*, as Patanjali puts it.

This *ananda* is unthinkable—most ecstatic and rapturous in its structure. It is here that saints burst into songs, dance in ecstasy and exclaim in a manner which a mortal mind cannot understand, because their visions are supernatural, super-sensual and super-contactual. This is a stage which is precedent to the total absorption of the essence of the object into one's own being, wherein in this condition of absorption there is an experience of a superior type of comprehensive existence which one enjoys, which is quite different from the individual existence that one is supposed to enjoy in empirical life. Individual existence is not comprehensive—rather, it is exclusive—whereas here we are referring to a state of existence which is inclusive. Inclusive of what? It is inclusive of the object of knowledge, whereas in individual existence there is an exclusion of the object of knowledge.

This is the reason why there is restlessness of mind and an intense urge for activity for the purpose of the acquisition of things which are desired or felt as needful. But in this condition which is referred to as *sasmita*, there is a feeling of 'I-ness' in respect of the object, and not merely in respect of oneself. No one feels a sense of 'I' in respect of another

person. We always refer to another as 'you', 'he', 'she', and 'it', etc. Now here, the object does not any longer remain as a 'you', or a 'he', or a 'she', or an 'it'. The object remains as an 'I', and that is why this condition is designated as *sasmita*. *Asmita* is Self-consciousness. The self-consciousness, which is usually the character of individuality, isolated personality of egoism, is overcome, and a new type of 'I-ness' manifests itself in respect of the object of knowledge.

That which appeared as something outside the process of knowing, that which was the object that was desired, that towards which the mind moved for the purpose of possessing and enjoying it, becomes a part of the desirer himself, so that the attitude of consciousness in respect of the object here is the same as the attitude that the desirer has towards its own self. Then, the movement of the mind ceases, because one cannot move toward one's own self. Even when we look at an object, we will not move towards it because there is no looking at an object here—there is an insight into the nature of the object. Here the sensory observation does not work anymore, nor is it felt anymore as being necessary. We need not open our eyes to see things, or hear through the ears, because the objects of these sensations become commensurate with the structure and substance of our own being, with which we have identified the 'I'.

The 'I' or the pure Selfhood, which is wrongly limited to the bodily encasement, is now made to enlarge its gamut and comprehend more things than it could. It is released from the prison of the body. It does not remain inside like a lion, tied into the iron bars of imprisonment. It comes out and finds its comrades in the world outside, and lives a really friendly life with the forces, persons and things which it ordinarily regarded as enemies and as distinct from its own self. Here is an experience which surpasses human comprehension totally, because with all of our imagination we cannot understand

what it could be to feel ourself in another—not merely to feel, but to be another, to exist as another.

In this *sasmita* condition, one does not merely imagine one's friendship with another or experience ideationally the relationship that one has with other things in the world. It is not a psychological function in the sense of thinking, feeling, and willing, etc.. It is an absorption. The object is no longer an object that is sought but that which is experienced, and this is complete mastery over the object, just as one has complete mastery over one's own limbs. We can tell our legs to walk in any direction; they will walk in that direction. The legs will not tell us, "We will not listen to you." No such fear need be had from the limbs of our own body. There is a complete mastery over everything in the world at this stage, because of the organic connectedness of all objects with experience.

This experience, as we noted previously in studying one of the *sutras* of Patanjali, is an insight, an experience, an intuition—and not a sensation, a perception, cognition, or understanding. In this *sasmita* state, the world ceases to be an external atmosphere or an environment that is outside us. It becomes an emanating force of our own personality. We do not live in a world anymore; we live in our own Self. We do not walk on the streets; we enjoy the bliss of our infinity, and the things of the world cease to be things inanimate. The inanimate character of the objects ceases. It is not matter that we are looking at, but vital force—energy that is living, as much alive as the living consciousness which is experiencing this. This is supposed to be the penultimate condition of total isolation, which is *kaivalya*.

All of these stages are cryptically stated in a single *sutra* of Patanjali: *vitarka vicāra ānanda asmitārūpa anugamāt saṁprajñātaḥ* (I.17). The term '*samprajnatah*' is used as an epithet to explain or to characterise these experiences, by which is meant that there is a peculiar, inexpressible

consciousness of a state of Being. We can identify this with God-consciousness itself. This is what practically amounts to the Realisation of God, where the feeling of the 'I' is not anymore a mental state, but a character of Being—*satta*. It is not the mind thinking an object, but consciousness becoming the object, which is the state of Divinity. One cannot ordinarily explain or express, in any language, these states which are supernatural, because they are not objects of any kind of knowledge with which we are acquainted, be it perception, or inference, verbal testimony, or comparison, or whatever it be.

All the ways of knowing in this world are inapplicable here, in the same way as these processes of knowing are inapplicable in our knowledge of our own self. I know that I exist, but not because I perceive myself with the eyes; nor do I infer the existence of myself by logical reasoning. I have a correct grasp of what I am, even if I close all my senses. I can know that I am, due to a faculty that is working in me that is different from seeing, hearing, or touching, etc., different from even logical reasoning; and this is what is known as direct intuition. You cannot ask me to prove that I am; it does not require any proof, because all proofs proceed from this experience that I am. The proofs are subsequent to this experience, so they cannot be applied to the experience itself. Likewise, the intuitive grasp of one's being gets extended to all things, which are apparently recognised as external in ordinary sensory experience.

The condition of a person here is really unthinkable. The person ceases to be a person anymore; there is only a faint sensation of one's being, and not a concrete experience of a bodily existence of oneself. There is only an impression, as it were, left of one's existence. One begins to feel that one's 'being' itself is vanishing. There is a little memory, if it can be called a memory at all, for want of a better word, which

indicates that one perhaps exists. It cannot be called existence in ordinary terms because, to us, existence is a solid physical existence. Other than physical existence, we know nothing. By physical existence we mean bodily existence as isolated from the bodily existence of other things. We are used to diversity of experience—*avidya*, *kama*, *karma*—ignorance of the universality of things, desire for external objects, and activity towards that; such is our essential character. But all of this vanishes at once, in one stroke, and the peculiar sensation of 'being' that one experiences here is also regarded as a precedent condition to absorption.

It is not that we pass through only six or seven stages as mentioned here. There will be infinite, minute details which one would be experiencing when one passes through these stages. Just as if we have to go to Badrinath, and we ask a tourist officer, "What are the things that I will see on the way when I move from Rishikesh to Badri?", he will tell us, "Well, the first thing that you will see would be Deoprayag; then you will see Karnaprayag, etc.", but he will not tell us what we will see between Rishikesh and Deoprayag. He is not interested in that, though we will see many things between these two. The guides tell us only the important signposts on the way, but do not tell us the details which we as pilgrims will see when we actually pass through the road, because every step, though a little step it be, is a distinctive experience. At every stage one will have a new type of experience. It is not that there are only eight types of meditation, etc. There will be infinite stages for the person who actually experiences them. Every minute will look like a new world has opened up before one's eyes, and every experience may look startling, though sometimes there are indications that a certain type of experience will ensue.

There are premonitions of what will come in front of us, but this is not always the case. There can be a sudden burst, like a whirlwind that blows without our knowing a day earlier

that it will take place subsequently. The experiences vary from person to person, according to the various types of *karma* which one is passing through or experiencing. We cannot generalise experiences for all persons in the world, but one thing can be said in a general manner—that the experiences are mostly startling. They are not experienced gradually, with previous notice. We will find that all great things in the world happen suddenly—whether it is a sudden promotion, or it is an earthquake. It can be anything—we will not know it one day before. Rather, we will get a notice that such a thing has happened. It may be a birth, or it may be a death; even these cannot be known earlier.

Likewise, revelations from the bosom of nature, which are the experiences in meditation, will suddenly come like surprises, shaking the very foundation of our earlier thoughts and ways of thinking. Every new experience will be a new world that we enter into, and not merely a way of thinking or a refashioning of the way of living. Infinite worlds are there, say the scriptures. It is not that we have only fourteen worlds, as the Puranas sometimes tell us. The fourteen worlds are like the so many *chettis* (halting places along a pilgrimage route) that we find on the way to Badri. But, as I said, they are not the only things that one will pass through—there are many other, smaller things. Likewise, though tentatively, for gross classification, we may say that there are fourteen worlds or fourteen realms, etc., the experiences will be much more, and every minute will be a new world for the advanced *yogin*.

Then, what happens? The sensations of the presence of things outside, let alone the desire for things, gradually get transmuted into the direct awareness of their being part and parcel of one's own self. The Yoga Vasishtha has a detailed essay on these stages of knowledge. There are four stages of knowledge, as Patanjali also mentions in his own language, where, in the beginning or the earliest stage, we are supposed

to have only a flash, like lightning. It is not like a brilliant sun that is perpetually hanging in front of us, but a flash which comes and goes. This is referred to as *sattvapatti*, the manifestation of *sattva* in us in its uncontaminated purity, which is what the Yoga Vasishtha tells us. We have flashes—sometimes they can be daily flashes. It does not mean that these flashes will come every minute. They may come every day, or they may come after one year. So many complain that they had some experiences of seeing a light, etc., and these experiences have not recurred. Well, as I mentioned, we cannot generalise the rules of the way in which these experiences manifest themselves. Sometimes they will not be there for years together. Sometimes they can recur again and again, as the case may be. The flashes can become frequent as time passes, and inasmuch as these flashes are nothing but the sudden spots of the light of consciousness itself, and not merely the light that comes from an external source like that of the sun or the moon, every flash will shake the whole personality. It will rebuild every part of one's body and mind, so that there will be an experience of strength, of confidence and happiness—all coming together at once. It will look as if there is nothing impossible for us. Though we may not be doing anything, we will have a feeling that nothing is impossible, because the difficulty in achieving anything arises on account of the isolation of the object from the process of knowing.

When the process of knowing has become one with the object, in substance, we have no doubts as to the possibility of achievement, even as we have no doubts as to whether we will be able to lift our hands. We know that we can lift our hands if we want to. All doubts cease forever, because we have become a 'master' in the real sense of the term. Not a master as a boss is in an office, but a master due to the identity of being that has been established between the knower and the known.

Here, the Yoga Vasishtha tells us that one experiences *asamsakti*, a total detachment from all externality of sensation. We will not even perceive externality at this stage, inasmuch as objects in the world appear to be hanging from our own body, as it were. It will look as if the huge structure that constitutes the cosmos, and maybe even the planets and the solar system, are hanging from our own body, and we will be wondering what has happened to us. There are stages where we get puzzled and perplexed and need direct guidance from competent masters. We can be startled so vehemently that it may be difficult to experience this stage and to predict what we would do at this stage.

Lastly, the Yoga Vasishtha points out that there will be *padarthabhavana*—non-perception of the materiality of things. What we call matter will look like spirit. Walls will begin to shine like transcendent, transparent crystal. Opaque objects will cease to be opaque—they become translucent and the light of knowledge will pierce through any object, because they are no longer objects. The objects which looked impervious and impregnable become transparent and allow the passing of any light, because they have become part of the knowing process. The object of knowledge has become knowledge itself, or rather, the other way around—we may say 'knowledge' has become the 'object'. *Jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ jñānagamyaṁ hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam* (B.G. XIII.17), says the Bhagavadgita. That which is situated in our heart as the light of consciousness is the knowledge which knows objects, and it is also the objects that are known by that knowledge.

Here, therefore, the materiality of things does not arise. Matter is no more. There is only spirit. It was spirit that appeared as matter when the senses projected themselves outwardly and transmuted spirit into matter. When there is an externalisation of spirit, it looks like matter, and when there is a universalisation of matter, it looks like spirit. So, one and the

same thing appears as two things. But when this condition is reached in deep meditation, materiality gets transformed into spirituality. This is called *padarthabhavana*, where *padartha* is nothing but the ultimate substance which is the Reality, the Absolute, directly cognised in experience.

All of the scriptures point to the same stages of experience and the same passage through which one has to pass. As we are concerned here more with Patanjali, we shall restrict ourselves to what he says as regards to the aims of life, which are gradually realised by the methods he prescribes. He points out that a sensation remains of Being; that is all. Nothing else will remain there. We will not see the world, we will not see persons and things—we will only feel that we exist. But we may ask, "Even now I feel that I am existing. What is the difference?" There is all the difference in the content of the sensation of Being. The content of individual being is body and anything that is restricted only to the body and bodily relations, and this sensation of individual physical being is automatically bifurcated from the physical existence of other things known as objects, due to which there is desire, action, etc.

In this pure sense of Being that we are referring to in yoga, there is no objectivity in consciousness, because all that was to be the content of consciousness has been merged into consciousness in its menstruum. *Virāmapratyaya abhyāsa-pūrvaḥ saṁskāraśeṣaḥ anyaḥ* (I.18), is a *sutra* which points out that there is a state of experience where meditation practically ceases and there is no longer any effort. There is no activity of the mind, even in the slightest degree. There is only a subsidence of all activity, a cessation of movement and a delight that surpasses knowledge on account of the satisfaction and the conviction that everything that was expected, everything that was needed, everything that was desired, has become one's own self. This experience is what is

indicated in this *sutra*: *virāmapratyaya abhyāsapūrvaḥ saṁskāraśeṣaḥ anyaḥ. Samskara shesha* is the name of this experience, which means to say, there is only a slight trace of the impression of one's Being—not the being of the body, or the individuality, or the local personality, but the Being of all things grouped together in a blend of experience. This again, as I mentioned, is God-consciousness.

Blessed are those who can even think of these things, let alone experience them. In one place, the great Madhusudana Saraswati points out in his exposition of the Bhagavadgita that even a moment's thought along these lines—we are not talking of actual realisation—even a moment's contemplation of these ideas will burn up all the sins of past lives. This is equal to all pilgrimages that are conceivable; and all charities that we can think of, and any good deed in this world is not equal to a fraction of this deep contemplation, says Madhusudana Saraswati.

Chapter 51

SAT-CHIT-ANANDA OR GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS

Sūkṣmaviṣayatvaṁ ca aliṅga paryavasānam (I.45) is a *sutra* which indicates the stages through which one may have to pass to reach the goal of yoga. The experiences in yoga, in meditation, sometimes may look conclusive because of an intensity with which the experience may come upon the consciousness, though they may not be, and there is the possibility that further stages may not become the content of one's awareness, just as it happens in our daily life. When we are sometimes possessed with a very intense feeling, a mood, or an emotion, or if we pass through a very forceful experience which takes into possession the entirety of our being, as it were, we are likely to ignore the existence of other factors in life than the one through which we are passing.

Intense desire, intense anger, intense happiness and intense sorrow are such instances where these inward conditions may be taken to be conclusive experiences. But when the intensity subsides for various reasons, it will be seen that there is something beyond. Every stage has a 'beyond', and though it is true that infinite may be the stages through which we have to pass, a broad outline is given by Patanjali, in a *sutra* here, that we should not regard any experience as final or as the goal itself until a conviction and a realisation arises that even the least distinction between consciousness and its content has been abolished. This is because the distinction can be grossly visible as in physical perception, subtly latent as in inward conditions, and not visible at all as in the causal state.

The disparity between subject and object is visible in waking life. We can see that one thing is different from the other. But, in dream and in such conditions, the distinctions get thinned out. Even in waking life, when we are under the influence of a particular type of psychic condition, the demands of other possible conditions of a similar nature may not be known to us and we may be thrown into those experiences at a later stage, while, in such conditions as sleep, the distinctions are not visible at all. It looks as if they are not there, but they are there. The presence of an object need not necessarily be physical or gross; it can take any shape, and we should not mistake one condition for another.

The meditative processes which have been described in this chapter, in the *sutras* which we have studied up to this time, are the ranges of the mind from the gross to the subtle, from the subtle to the equilibrated condition of the mind, beyond still to the pure selfhood of consciousness, and the experience of the Absolute. But when a powerful, concentrated state of the mind supervenes, the other conditions of the mind, the other qualities which it can assume, get suppressed for the time being. We are accustomed to ignoring the presence of anything and everything which does not become a content of direct experience in consciousness. That we do not know a thing is not the criterion for its absence, because psychic conditions have various techniques of submerging themselves or manifesting themselves, as the occasion may demand. The aim of yoga is to eliminate even the least trace of psychic impression, so that our knowledge does not become a process of psychological function but is a character of Pure Being. This is our aim.

As long as there is any kind of movement in consciousness—even subtly present—we can safely conclude that there is the presence of the psychic condition. The mental urge to cognise an object is so forceful that it can present itself

in any form, almost at any time. But, deep concentration on a given object of meditation obviates the interference of the *rajasic* characters in the mind, and frees the mind from the clutches of those forces which distract it towards other objects than the one chosen for meditation. And then, due to an assimilation of the very being of the subject with the object chosen, there will be joy supervening, a happiness that becomes manifest. In the state of happiness, thus experienced, the distractions cease.

Distractions manifest themselves when there is no happiness in the mind. Nothing is achieved, and there is only effort and sweating and toiling, and no positive experience has come. But when there is a positive experience of joy, at that particular moment that the joy is experienced, there is no desire for any other object, though this may be a temporary phase. But higher still has the mind to go, which is what is meant by the gross form of meditation mentioned in the *sutra* by Patanjali—the physical substance as such, which constitutes the whole universe, becomes the object of meditation. In the end, it is not any particular object that we are concerned with in meditation, but 'object' as such. This is a higher stage still. It is not any particular person, but 'person' as such. It is not this thing or that thing, but anything, for the matter of that, which is what we are concerned with.

The object in meditation is something difficult to understand. In the beginning it is said that a form may be chosen, to the exclusion of other forms. This instruction, of course, is a type of kindergarten instruction for those who do not know what an object is—just as when we teach arithmetic to a small child, and say that two and two make four. If we abstractly make a statement that two and two make four, the child will not understand what two is, and what two makes, and what four is, etc., so we bring two objects. We put two mangoes here and two mangoes there and show that there are

four mangoes. Physically the calculation is applied in order that the abstract concept of addition, etc. in arithmetic is introduced into the mind of the child. Likewise, we are told that a gross object may be taken—an image, a concept, a diagram, or a picture, etc.—for the purpose of meditation. But the idea behind it is to introduce an abstract concept of the object into the mind and not to give us merely a concrete concept, because the object is anything that can be presented before the consciousness. It is not necessarily any particular shape, because ultimately all objects, animate or inanimate, are constituted in a similar manner. Everything is made up of the same elements which go to constitute the substance of the universe.

The elements which form all things in general, living or non-living, are what have been designated as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. We have already noted that these terms—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—denote conditions in which a particular object may exist or persist. Inasmuch as it has also been pointed out simultaneously that these conditions or properties—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—are not mere extraneous attributes of an object but are the very substances of the object, it follows automatically, as a corollary, that an object is nothing but a condition of being; it is not something that has existed outside. Inasmuch as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are only conditions, and because an object is made up only of these conditions, there is no such thing in the world as a solid object. There is only a fluidity of substance which can permeate the presence of other objects by the impact of its condition on the conditions of other objects. Hence the purpose of choosing an object in meditation is not to lay any excessive emphasis on any particular shape or form of the object, but to enable the mind to conceive the objectness as such in any object. What troubles us is not the object, but the objectness in the object—the externality that is present, the grossness, the

tangibility, the visibility, the sensibility, etc. of what we regard as an object.

Thus, for the purpose of yoga meditation, the object has to be defined in a very scientific manner. We are not thinking of any particular sensible object. We are thinking of the very character of sensibility itself, so that any object can be chosen for the purpose of meditation. It may be even a pencil, or it may be Brahma, Vishnu or Siva. It makes no difference, because all of these objects are ultimately constituted in a similar manner, though one may be microscopic and the other macrocosmic, etc. The condition of objectivity is what is meditated upon.

Now we are laying emphasis on a different aspect of the matter. The meditation is not on an object, but on the objectivity of the object. The purpose in meditation is to eliminate the object from its objectivity; free it from what we call externality, spatiality, temporality, causality, relatedness, etc., so that, ultimately, it may reveal its true nature of Selfhood or Pure Being. The grossness of the object, which Patanjali refers to in his *sutra* as the 'gross form', is nothing but the intensity of sensibility felt by the mind in respect of anything which it regards as an object. When the sensibility becomes less, the grossness of the object vanishes gradually and the subtle nature of it reveals itself. The subtle character of the object is called the *tanmatra*, as we have studied earlier. As we proceed further and further, the externality that is invested in the object becomes less and less visible. The character of objectivity, which we have foisted upon an unknown something outside, called the object, gets diminished in content and force, so that the object becomes more and more proximate to the subject that is meditating.

The *sutra* which I cited just now—*sūkṣmaviṣayatvaṁ ca aliṅga paryavasānam* (I.45)—points out that the subtlety of an object culminates in *mulaprakriti*. If we recall to our

memory what we studied earlier, we will remember that the cosmology of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras indicates that the stages of evolution or manifestation are many. But, broadly speaking, they are the stages of what are known as *prakriti*, *mahat*, *ahamkara*, *tanmatras* and the *mahabhutas* on one side, and the individual constitution on the other side. These stages of meditation that Patanjali is speaking of are nothing but the stages of the *mahabhutas*, the *tanmatras*, the *ahamkara*, the *mahat*, and *prakriti*; it is these that we have to cross through. The *mahabhutas* are the five elements or the gross objects; rather, they are one object. What we call the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—are the substances of the cosmos, physically speaking. These are the bases for the appearance of the various gross forms in the shape of objects. But, inasmuch as they are all made up of the same *tamasic* base of *prakriti*, they can be regarded as a single object, so that it matters little where we are sitting, what we are looking at, and what this physical environment is, because everywhere the same five elements are present. These five elements, in their conglomeration or totality, become the single object of meditation because they are the grossest principle of the most intense form of externality.

We are supposed to be living in a world of bondage—not because of the elements, the *tanmatras*, etc., which seem to be surrounding us, but because of the peculiar character of externality that seems to be inherent in these things, that repels us from them and converts them for our purposes into objects of sensation and experience. It is this repellent character of the externality that is present in these elements that has to be overcome in meditation, by deep absorption of consciousness. We rise from the five elements to the *tanmatras*, from the *tanmatras* to *ahamkara*, from *ahamkara* to *mahat*, and then to *prakriti* and *purusha*. *Purusha* is the Pure Self. The aim of yoga is the absorption of consciousness into this ultimate

principle called the Pure Self or *purusha*, which is the state of *kaivalya*.

We have been studying a condition of meditation, an experience where everything vanishes and gets transcended except a sense of Pure Being—*asmita matra*. There will be no consciousness of any object, except for the fact that we 'are'. There is only the awareness, *aham asmi*, which includes the presence of all the other features that are called objects. *Tajjaḥ saṁskāraḥ anyasaṁskāra pratibandhī* (I.50) is the *sutra* that follows. These *samskaras*, or impressions that are formed in the mind by the cognition of objects of sense, are inhibited totally by this new impression that has been created by deep meditation, whose consummation is this sense of Pure Being or universal *asmita*. Here, in this stage of experience, the impression, psychically created, though in a cosmic manner, suppresses to utter annihilation all other impressions of the mind generated by sense experience, through which the individual has passed earlier, either in this life or in earlier lives.

Thus, we come to a stage of Being where the faculties of the individual no longer become necessary, either for knowledge or for action. There is no need for the intellect to understand, for the mind to think, for the senses to cognise and perceive, nor is there a need for the limbs of the body to function for the purpose of executing any action, etc. It is a state of all-inclusiveness—One Being Alone in Itself. In this condition, knowledge and action combine and become a single feature. While in ordinary life knowing and acting are different from each other, here knowing and acting mean one and the same thing. One's very existence is knowledge, and the very knowledge is action. This is God-state. An individual cannot conceive what it is.

Everywhere, in every condition, there is the possibility of everything, because while in individual life—the ordinary life

of senses and mental cognition—there was a bifurcation of the seer and the seen, here the bifurcation has ceased, and therefore the necessity for the mind to move towards objects in respect of desire and action also ceases.

What is action? It is nothing but the movement of the subject towards an object for a particular purpose. This movement is possible only when there is externality, spatiality and distance, etc. between the subject and object. This has been eliminated thoroughly, and therefore there is no movement of the mind towards an object. Therefore there is no desire for the object and there is also no possibility for any activity, because the very goal of activity has been achieved by the merger of all conditions of action into the very subjectivity of consciousness.

This is the state of *sat-chit-ananda*, as the Vedanta tells us—Pure Existence, Pure Knowledge, Pure Bliss. The existence of all things becomes one with the consciousness that knows. The *satta* or the Pure, All-Pervading Essential Being of everything becomes the universal content of the knowing consciousness which, to keep itself abreast with the extent of this content that is universal, also has to be universal, so that the consciousness that knows this universal object is also universal. It is not an individual's mind or consciousness that cognises a universal object, because the subject and the object should be on a par. The individual object can be cognised or perceived by an individual subject, but the universal object or the universal content cannot enter into an individual's consciousness. So here, the object is universal. *Śruta anumāna prajñābhyām anyaviṣayā viśeṣārthatvāt* (I.49). Here, this knowledge takes an infinite shape. This is called *brahmakara-vritti* in Vedantic language.

A *vritti* is a condition of the mind, a psychic state. This state which the mind assumes or reaches, where its content is infinity itself, is called *brahmakara-vritti*, apart from what is

known as *vishayakara-vritti* or the psychic condition which projects itself towards an object outside. The *vritti* or the mental state which tends to move externally towards an object is *vishayakara-vritti*. It is motivated by desire, and further action to fulfil the desire. But *brahmakara-vritti* is the fulfillment of all other *vrittis*, as the ocean is the fulfillment of all rivers. Here the mental condition does not require the motion of itself towards any external existence; rather, there is an identity of the object with itself. This *vritti* destroys all other *vrittis*. As it is sometimes said, the clearing nut (called the *kathaka* nut), which when dissolved in water, allows all the dirt in the water to subside—and then itself subsides too. Though soap is applied to the cloth to remove dirt, the soap itself does not become dirt. It cleanses itself together with the process of its cleaning all dirt out of the substance. Likewise, this *vritti*, which is infinite in nature, which is the universal expansion of the mind, makes it impossible for all other *vrittis* to manifest, because it has taken into possession every existent feature. It compels all of the other *vrittis* to subside and destroy themselves in its own bosom, and then it itself subsides. Then there is a subsidence of all *vrittis*, a coming down of all features tending towards individuality and externality, etc. All impressions vanish in toto. The very seed of further rise into individuality is fried in the fire of knowledge.

The impression or sense of Being that we are referring to, pure *asmita matra*, is also no longer felt. *Tasyāpi nirodhe sarvanirodhāt nirbījaḥ samādhiḥ* (I.51). When even the *brahmakara-vritti* ceases; when even the consciousness of the universe as an object is not there any more; when the very question of objectivity loses its meaning; when consciousness does not know anything as an object, not even the universe itself in its completeness; when what is known by consciousness is its own Self and not somebody else, not even

the cosmos—that is known as the resting of consciousness in its own Self.

Tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe avasthānam (I.3) is one of the *sutras* near the beginning of this *pada.* The Seer rests in its own Self. There is no longer a necessity to move towards an object outside for the purpose of acquiring knowledge, because knowledge does not mean acquaintance with an object. It is the entry of the subject into the being of the object. This is intuition, and this is equal to the resting of consciousness in its own Self. The knowing process no longer exists as a process—it becomes part of Being. The process of knowing, which was earlier valid in respect of objects outside, becomes a movement of the ocean of knowledge, and gets identified with the Being of the Knower.

This, as I mentioned, is the meaning of the term '*sat-chit-ananda'* mentioned in our scriptures—the state of God-consciousness or Realisation.