

# SPIRITUAL ASPIRATION AND PRACTICE



SWAMI KRISHNANANDA  
The Divine Life Society  
Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India  
Website: [www.swami-krishnananda.org](http://www.swami-krishnananda.org)

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## Chapter 1

### UNDERSTANDING ONE'S SPIRITUAL AIM

We have now before us a continuous series of sessions for the coming days of special deliberations commonly known as Sadhana Week. It is so called because during these days we are supposed to devote our time especially for intense considerations along the lines of our inner focus towards the goal that we have placed before ourselves. It is also called Jnana Sathra, offering at the altar of Knowledge. What we need is an enlightenment into the manner and the method that we have to adopt in bestowing serious thought on this subject.

We are aiming at the achievement of a purpose. Every person in the world has some aim or motive, a purpose before himself or herself, without a consciousness of which no one would even lift a finger. If you see a thing, hear a thing, do a thing or move in any direction, there is a purpose behind this activity of yours, and the purpose is psychological, physical or social. Purposeless actions are unthinkable. But what is the purpose? Each person in the world will give his or her own answer. Why are you doing business? Why are you studying in schools and colleges? Why do you go to temples? Why do you do anything at all? What are you aiming at finally? Though the answer seems

to be ready at hand for all people, on a careful probing into the matter you will realise in the end that every answer to this question is tentative, relative, and never final. In the end you have to say, "I cannot say what it is that I am seeking."

At the outset you will feel that, right from the early morning onwards, you are face to face with certain realities. Your life presents itself before you as a kind of confrontation, and you have to handle it in a particular manner. The moment you wake up in the morning, you are face to face with a reality. On the one hand, it is the reality of the physical universe—the sun, the moon and the stars, the mountains and rivers, and so on. On the other hand, you have the world of human beings.

Instinctively, we make an adjustment of our personality with the conditions imposed upon us by physical nature as well as the social context in which we are placed. If it is hot in summer or cold in winter, or if a powerful wind is blowing or it is raining, whatever the case may be, we adjust ourselves by various ways and means according to the prevailing natural conditions. We do this spontaneously. At the same time, we are conscious of people around us, beginning with the nearest person with whom we have to adjust ourselves in a particular manner. We cannot simply imagine that the person does not exist. A visible humanity and a conceptual humanity are both there before us, to be handled in a particular manner.

Is this the only thing that we are expected to do in this world—to make a kind of self-adjustment with natural forces and human conditions? We do that every day. Everyone does it, and that seems to be the be-all and end-all of all things. Everybody is very busy. Busy with what?

Busy with these adjustments only. We have to somehow or other see that we survive, and keep both our body and soul intact in the context of this confrontation before us with physical nature as well as with human society. We are actually fighting with something with which we cannot easily accommodate ourselves. This fight may not take the form of a material or a physical presentation, but it is a conscious tension in the mind.

Do you believe that it is a happy thing that you are required to be always adjusting your mind to some conditions prevailing outside, and do you do anything else in the world except this? You have to adjust yourself with this physical body which has its own peculiarities, predilections and demands, and with other things which I have already mentioned. Is life just an adjustment of the personality with prevailing conditions, or has it any qualitative meaning? Does life have an intrinsic worth? An activity which is just an adjustment to the conditions prevailing outside has no intrinsic value. It is purely an extrinsic arrangement of the context of your individuality with the individualities of people outside. This is a little battle you are facing every day—a thing that you must do, and have to do, to see that you do not come a cropper in your attempt to place yourself in a state of harmony and cooperation with the world outside.

The world is before you. What are you to do with this world? Is it your friend? Is it going to bow down to all your requirements and demands? Will it say yes to everything that you say? The world does not seem to be prepared to accept this requirement on your part. Mostly it appears that you have to bend before the world. It has its natural laws, which will not change just because you would like

them to change. The sun will shine, the rivers will flow, and the winds will blow.

Do people in the world feel comfortable to adjust themselves because of your personal requirements? Would you wish that all people think as you would like them to think? You would, of course. You would wish that everybody thinks as you think, and do what you want them to do. It may be a very satisfactory feeling in each individual. But if each one entertains this feeling that everybody else should bow to the psychological requirements of one's own self, there is a clash, and a kind of preparation for the great Mahabharata war will be the consequence. If each one wants everything, no one will get anything.

The context of the Mahabharata, which is beautifully placed before us in the First Chapter of the Bhagavadgita, is, briefly, a traditional epic presentation of the few words that I spoke to you just now. There is a great fear inside—the fear not that something will happen, but that something can happen. If you stand before an elephant, there is a fear—not that the elephant is really going to do anything, it may be keeping quiet, but that it has the capacity to do something. You dread the ocean, you dread an elephant, you dread the world—not because they are going to swallow you, but because you are aware that they have the capacity to swallow you. So is the case with the world at large. You are frightened of it.

Right from birth to death, you are in a state of fear of it being perhaps not possible for you to place yourself in a state of perfect harmony and friendliness with the world. This is not a normal way of living. To be compelled to perpetually adjust oneself at every moment of time and to do everything according to the requirements of conditions

prevailing outside is a submissive life, a kind of slavish existence, a surrender to conditions which are totally abstracted from freedom. As long as nature is there as your schoolmaster and people are there to see that you bend before their wishes, you have no freedom. Neither will the world of nature give you freedom, nor are people around you prepared to do that. But, you ask for freedom.

This freedom that you are inwardly contemplating in the deepest recesses of your heart is a veiled expectation from your side, an asking for something which does not seem to be in this world because nobody seems to be really free in this world. No one can be one hundred percent free as long as there is another thing conditioning this freedom by its very existence. The freedom that you want will limit the freedom that another person requires, so no one can be one hundred percent free. There is limited freedom granted to the extent that you are also prepared to grant the very same freedom to others which you expect from others. So there is only relative and limited freedom. Absolute freedom cannot be seen in this world.

In the same way, perfection is not seen in this world. Everything is defective. There is something wrong with everything that you see or touch or that is placed before you. What is it that you are asking for? You are asking for absolute, unconditioned and unlimited freedom, and utter perfection. This, you cannot see in this world. How is it that you are asking for things which are not available in this world? Nobody can be one hundred percent free, and yet you are asking for that only. There is nothing perfect in this world, but you are seeking perfection only. Is there any sense in this asking, or are you just pursuing a wild-goose chase? Is there such a thing called freedom, and is there

such a thing called perfection? If you open your eyes and look at the world, you will find that there is nothing of the kind. It is all bondage, suffering, crying and expecting, but getting nothing. Yet, the soul says, "I shall be free and I have to be free, and everything has to be perfect to the core." From where does this aspiration arise in the human being who is encased in this brittle personality of the body and who has no idea of perfection or freedom as long as the eyes are open before this world?

The aspiration in us presents a picture of a transcendent existence which alone can be our solace. If perfection is not in this world, it has to be somewhere else. If I cannot have one hundred percent freedom in this world, I shall have it somewhere else, somewhere not in this world. How is it possible to see any meaning and sense in our asking for that which is never existent in this world? The meaning is that it must exist somewhere. The soul is not so foolish as to expect that which can never exist. It exists somewhere, and we are trying to pursue that which certainly exists, because how can we expect a thing which does not exist? The mind is not crazy. It does not ask for things which never exist anywhere. Freedom, freedom, perfection, perfection—there is nothing else that living beings seek. Even a plant or an animal wishes its freedom. It requires a perfect existence by itself.

Where does this freedom exist? We concluded that it is not in this world. Then we picture before ourselves a world of existence which is different from this world. Critics of religion sometimes tell us that we are otherworldly in our outlook when we think in this manner. "Seek the Kingdom of God." "Know thyself." "Come unto me, all ye who are heavy-laden." "Abandon all other laws in this

world and come to me alone for solace.” Proclamations and characterisations of this kind do not seem to speak of anything that is connected with this world.

Are you to exist in this world for the sake of another world? This is another question before you. You are not satisfied with anything in this world because the thing that you expect cannot be had here. You are expecting to find your solace only in another world, a mental picture of which you seem to be presenting before yourself. So you live in this world for the sake of being in another world. What is this situation, this state of affairs? Can you live in two worlds at the same time? Is such a thing possible?

Would you like to sever your relationship with this world and devote yourself only for the sake of reaching another world? There are some people who go to the extreme of asceticism and have a general perspective of an otherworldly attitude, with a hidden conviction that there is nothing sensible in this world. But there is a contradiction in these people. A feeling that there is nothing valuable in this world cannot go hand in hand with your existence in this world. The very fact that you would like to exist in this world shows that the world is not so meaningless as it may appear to you. Would you like to abolish your existence in this world because neither perfection nor freedom are possible here? No. You would like to live as long as possible in this body. You pray for a long life and good health, do you not? What is the meaning of praying for longevity, good health and perfection in this world which, to you, on this analysis, is meaningless?

A religious consciousness, an awareness of an initial concept of spirituality may involve you in a tension and a contradiction of this kind—a kind of shunting of yourself

between this world and the other world, sometimes feeling that the other world alone is meaningful and that this world is nothing, and so everything should be renounced. But sometimes the soul says you cannot destroy this body as long as it is involved in this world. There seems to be a connection between this world and the other world. This world which denies you freedom and perfection seems to have some vital connection with the other world which is going to grant you freedom and perfection.

The Bhagavadgita is a masterly teaching on the way we have to adopt in our life, the manner in which we have to conduct ourselves in this world, so that we may strike a rapprochement between this world and the other world. This art is called karma yoga. Action is in the very skin of this world. *Na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhatyakarmaḥ* (B.G. 3.5): There is nothing, not even an atom, that is immovable. Everything is action, everything is activity, everything is movement, everything is evolution. We are involved in this process of evolution. Every cell in the body is moving and transforming itself into a new condition. Every moment we renew ourselves, rejuvenate ourselves; we become new every moment. There is activity within and without.

This compulsion to involve ourselves in continuous activity makes us part and parcel of this world, but it is activity for the achievement of a purpose, to which I made reference in the beginning itself. What is the purpose of this activity? Why should there be evolution? Why should atoms move? Why should the sun shine? Why should there be planetary movements? Why should there be anything at all? The present seems to be giving us an indication of the future. A logical conclusion can be drawn

from present conditions in respect of a future that is before us. We always live in the future in the sense that at every moment we are expecting something different from what we already have. Every moment is an expectation of a future achievement, transcendent to the present condition which is not satisfying. So, in a way, we are always living in the future and are trying to lift our legs from the present. We are on an onward march towards a future possibility of a greater freedom and perfection. This is a picture that we may find placed before us when we go deep into the question of spiritual practice or living a religious life.

This world is very valuable because this body is also valuable. It is a part of this world. As threads are connected to a piece of cloth or fabric, this body, this personality is vitally connected to the whole world of nature. This entire world is a large spread-out fabric, of which you are a thread. So when you speak of renunciation in the light of a religious enthusiasm or on account of a spiritual call from inside, when you think of renouncing, as every religion speaks of renunciation, ask yourself what you are going to renounce.

You say you are renouncing the world, but it is already mentioned that you are a part of the world. It is like a thread saying that it is renouncing the cloth. When the cloth goes, the thread also goes, so when you renounce the world, you are also gone. Would you like to place yourself in this condition where you too have to go, together with your renunciation? Mostly, novitiates do not understand this difficulty. They think that the world can go, but they should not go. If the renouncer also goes, what is the purpose of the renunciation? Do you understand the difficulty before you? You cannot renounce the world unless you renounce yourself first because you are a part

of it, organically connected with the very fabric of nature. But, who is going to renounce oneself? The meaning is not clear. What is meant by 'renouncing oneself'? Here again the great Bhagavadgita is before you. I am not speaking to you today on the Bhagavadgita, I am only taking its name to mention that here is a great guide light before you which has to be read carefully, thoroughly, with intense probing into its meaning and connotation.

This question of the way in which you have to live a life of religious renunciation has to be properly answered to the satisfaction of your own soul. You do not live a religious life so that others may think that you are religious. You seek God not because others should know that you are seeking God. That is not at all the case. You do not live here for the sake of other people's opinion about you. Many a time this difficulty, this hidden problem, will insinuate itself into you. You may like to behave in such a way that you may be considered as a renunciate, a religious person or a spiritual seeker. Would you like people to think that you are nothing? You will be very unhappy with this state of affairs, so you somehow or other try to place yourself in a condition where you are something before other people.

Religious life is a life in the presence of God. It is not a life in the presence of the world outside, or in the presence of people around you. You are face to face with the Ultimate Reality when you take the first step in religion. It is as if the eyes of God are looking at you, the Chief Justice of the cosmos is seeing you, and you know how to conduct yourself at that moment. This is true religion; this is true spirituality. It has no connection with the physical world outside or with people around you. It has a direct connection with that which you are asking for in the end,

your final destiny. The final Reality is gazing at you and demanding some manner of behaviour on your part. The consciousness of one's being perpetually in the presence of God is true religion. If any other consciousness is in you, that is a dilution of this true aspiration.

This world goes together with the other world, as I mentioned. This world which God has created goes together with the God who has created it. The relative and the Absolute are components of a single indivisibility of purpose. The body and the soul have to be together; they cannot be thrown to different sides, with the body here and the soul somewhere else. In the same way, God and the world have to be blended together into an indivisibility of consciousness. You are simultaneously in this world and in the other world. You are simultaneously transcendent and immanent. You are simultaneously here and there. You are conscious of a perfection around you and above you, while you are simultaneously active towards the achievement of that purpose. You become a hero, a heroic soldier of the Spirit who is bent upon achieving his goal and is girding up his loins in every way possible to see that the thing that the soul is asking for, this utter perfection and freedom, is attained as early as possible.

Many a time you have another doubt in your mind: Is it at all possible in this world of problems and in this very life, or will you have to take many lives? There is no necessity to take many lives. The characteristic of spiritual practice, or religion, does not depend upon the quantity of the performance, but upon the quality of it. A few minutes of qualitative thinking is superior to many years of mere quantitative thinking. The way in which you think is more important than the quantity of work that you do or your

performances in the world. One thought which is correctly directed towards that which is your aim and purpose will burn all your karmas, destroy all that is heaped up in your psyche from your past lives, much more intensely than all the appurtenances of religion in the form of temple, church, paraphernalia, dress, behaviour, scriptures, rituals, and so on.

Your value lies in what you are, and not merely in what you do. Your being is your essence, and all the becomings of nature are converged into this true expectation, the enhancement of your being. The goal of life is the enhancement of being, which in Sanskrit is called *sat*—the expansion of *satta* in you, the widening of your consciousness of existence. In Sanskrit, consciousness of existence is *chit* of *sat*, and existence of consciousness is *sat* of *chit*. Utter perfection, the great freedom, is called *sat-chit* or *chit-sat*, as you like. Because it is total freedom and utterly perfect, it is tremendously blissful. Therefore, it is called *ananda*. The utter perfection is *sat-chit-ananda*, existence-consciousness-bliss. It is not existence and consciousness and bliss; it is existence which is conscious of its own bliss. Such a thing is before you. It is around you. It is flooding you. It is within you, calling you, and never giving you a moment of rest unless you seek it.

I propose to speak to you some more along these lines for the benefit of both my own self and other people, so that I may be able to contribute something from my side to the achievement of this valuable thing for which you have come here, to be seated in this Sadhana Week session, in this Jnana Sathra. May God bless me with the strength to speak to you and tell you what is of real utility to you. God bless you.

## Chapter 2

### BECOMING A TRULY RELIGIOUS PERSON

There is a secret teaching known as the Isavasya Upanishad, which makes reference to two worlds, about which I spoke something in the previous session. *Anyad evāhur vidyayā anyad āhur avidyayā, iti śuśruma dhīrāṇām ye nas tad vicacakṣire; vidyām cāvidyām ca yas tad vedobhayam saha, avidyayā mrtyum tīrtvā vidyayāmṛtam aśnute* (Isa 10-11). There are people who say that this world has no connection with the other world. There are others who say that the other world has no connection with this world. Some say that only this world exists and the other world does not exist. There are also people who say that only the other world is of consequence and this present world has no meaning. Those who deny the other world and assert only this world are called materialists. Those who deny all the significance and meaning of this world and assert only the other world are called ascetics, sometimes known as renunciates. In the previous session I uttered a few words in connection with what renunciation ought to be, and how difficult it is to even conceive it on account of the fact that the renouncer is involved in the very object of renunciation.

The difficulty in understanding the relationship between this world and the other world arises on account of a subtle implication hidden in the very concept of these

worlds. The difference between this world and the other world is not actually in the worlds themselves, but in a peculiar characteristic of these worlds. The renunciates, or the ascetics, are right in thinking that there is something wrong with this world and that which is wrong has to be renounced, but it is not so easy to understand what is wrong with this world. Often, when we try to renounce or abandon the wrongness in the world, we may also try to abandon the rightness in it. In hating the disease, we may make the mistake of hating the patient himself. Do we dislike the disease or do we dislike the patient? Sometimes we mix up the two issues. We dislike the patient, though our idea is actually to dislike the disease itself.

‘This world’ is a phrase in which ‘world’ is the subject or the nominative, and ‘this’ is the adjective. When we say ‘this world’, ‘thisness’ qualifies the world. There is a difference between ‘this world’ and the ‘thisness’ of the world. There is, similarly, a difference between the ‘other world’ and the ‘otherness’ of the world. The objection of the materialists and the socially-oriented workers in the world against clinging to the other world is due to their mixing up of two issues in connection with the concept of the other world, namely, the other world itself and the otherness of the world. This is something very subtle, which you have to think over with great care. The otherness of the world is not the same as the other world, because the word ‘other’ is that which distinguishes it from this world. When we speak of the otherness of the other world, we mean that it is totally segregated from this world. Similarly, when we say ‘this world’, we mix up the world, which is the so-called ‘this’, with the thisness of it, or the immediacy of its perception. The contradiction is not between this world and the other

world, but between the thisness and the otherness involved in the characterisation of these worlds. The other world is not really other, and this world is not so very immediate as it appears to our eyes. The other world is not distant in space and time, and this world is not as immediate to the senses as it may appear to be.

This world, which seems to be so very close to us and looks as if we are able to touch it with our fingers, is actually outside our grasp. No object in this world can actually be touched in the sense of a possession of it. It maintains an otherness nevertheless. I touch this desk with my finger, but my finger has not become the desk and the desk has not become my finger. Therefore, even a sensory contact with anything in this world need not necessarily mean union with the world. So is the case with all sensations including the eyes, ears, etc. When you see a thing, you are looking at a thing and are under the impression that you have a contact sensorily, perceptually, with the world, but the world remains outside your perception. The world cannot become your eye, nor can your eye become the world.

This, incidentally, will tell you that you cannot possess anything in this world as your property. The concept of ownership is automatically abrogated by the very nature of the things in the world, which refuse to get into the fabric or structure of the perceiving individual. You go with nothing in your hand, in the same way as you came to this world with nothing in your hand. All the accumulations of your so-called land, property, money, relations, which you thought were vitally connected with you, will be shown to be totally disconnected with you at the time of your departure from this world. Naked you come, and naked you go. Helplessly you come, and helplessly you go. As a beggar

you come, and as a beggar you go. This world deludes you, though you thought that this world is your world and the other world is far away from you.

In the previous session I mentioned incidentally that the otherness of the world attracts us so much that we immediately become religious by the very notion of the existence of another world. "What is there in this world? I aspire for the other world." Now, this statement that there is nothing valuable in this world is, again, the consequence of a mix-up of ideas. The wrongness in the manner in which the world presents itself before us is the thisness attached to it, and not the world itself, because the world which we call 'this' is internally connected with the other world which we call 'different from this'. There is an immanent relationship between this world and the other world. So the Isavasya Upanishad verses that I quoted just now tell us that it is wrong to think that this world is different from the other world and that we can afford to reject this world for the sake of the other world or, conversely, that we can reject the other world for the sake of this world.

Both the materialists and the ascetics are wrong in the extremes of their concepts. We cannot live in this world even for a minute without a notion of a future that is before us. The so-called materialist, who does not believe in the existence of the other world, knows that there is such a thing called tomorrow. What makes one feel that there is a thing called tomorrow? How does this idea of a future arise in one's consciousness? It is an inference that we draw from the present about the existence of something which is not yet a part of our knowledge. Nobody has seen the future, and yet one believes in the future. 'Future' is only a word which can easily be transported to the concept of

the otherness of the world. Even the materialist believes in the other world because he wants to achieve something which he has not achieved just now. That futurity is the transcendence of the present condition. Whoever believes in the transcendence of what is present is a religious person. So even the materialist, who seems to be denying the existence of the other world, is unwittingly, unconsciously, becoming religious and aspiring for the other world because of his longing for the achievement of a future which is not yet there, of which he has no perception, and yet about which he has full faith. That is to say, even the rank materialist is inwardly, unconsciously, a religious candidate, only he is confused in his mind.

Likewise, there is a mistake in the ascetic attitude. We reject this world as not belonging to us, and we want nothing to do with it. There is a famous illustration in the Vedanta doctrine of what is known as the snake and the rope. In twilight, when you cannot perceive things properly, a rope may look like a snake. In right perception you reject something which is not there and catch what is really there. Now, what is it that you saw in your wrong perception? Did you see a rope or did you see a snake? Think over this matter carefully. Did you see a snake there, or did you see the rope? There was no snake there. You saw the rope, which looked like a snake; therefore, the rejection of the falseness in perception, in the case of the perception of a snake in the rope, is not the rejection of the rope itself. The substratum is perfectly all right. It is only the erroneous characterisation that is rejected.

The worlds are, therefore, perfectly all right in their own nature, just as the snake and the rope are not two substances. You cannot say here is the snake and here is the

rope. It is only one thing, appearing as two things. It is one world that looks like the other world and this world. There is only one world finally, and there is no such thing as the other world and this world. So there is some difficulty in conceiving the object of our religious consciousness and also the concept of what it is that we have to renounce in this world in becoming a religious apostle or a religious seeker.

The Isavasya Upanishad tells us that rejection either way is not permissible because when we reject the snake, the rope also goes, and when we reject the rope, the snake also goes, because one and the same thing appears as both. So the otherness and the thisness characterising the world is what causes an apparent distinction between this world and the other world, as if there are two worlds. Actually, we are in the other world even now, as when we see the snake we have already seen the rope. When we are living in this world, we are also hiddenly present in the other world. The other world's immanence, or practical permeation, in this world is the reason why we cannot be happy with anything in this world. The high value, superior quality and permanency attached to the higher thing which is immanent in this world are what keep us restless.

Is any one of you perfectly happy? Is any one of you completely satisfied with all things in this world? Is there anything in this world which you love one hundred percent? No. It is not possible. You have a partial clinging to the specific characters of things tentatively presented before you in an act of illusory perception, and your objects of love and hatred go on changing from moment to moment.

You are living in a total world. The Isavasya Upanishad says that no question of rejection arises. Both the extreme

ascetic and the extreme materialist are wrong in their notions and denials. Religion is not a denial, it is an affirmation. It is an affirmation of what is there, and not merely a rejection of what is not there. When you wake up in the morning, night automatically vanishes. When you awaken in the morning, you need not have to brush aside the night that was behind you, pursuing you. Do you tell the night to go away because the sun has risen? The sun has risen, well and good, and night is no longer there.

Religion has to become a positive doctrine and a practical affair in the world, a question of living in the nature of Reality, and not a theory of rejection or of clinging. Neither can you cling to the other world and reject this world, nor can you cling to this world and reject the other world. It is like clinging to the body or the soul separately. There are people who torture the body for the sake of the soul. This torture is condemned in the Bhagavadgita as *asuric*. There are others who torture the soul for the sake of the body. Sensualists, who go with the doctrine of physical comfort, have no concept of the soul in the body. Those who think of renouncing the facilities provided by the body, and the needs of the body, cling to a theoretical concept of the soul, and they wrench the connection of the soul with the body.

The worlds—this and the other—are something like the body and the soul of a human being. The body and the soul are not two distinct things, as you know very well. You are one psychophysical individuality, the soul and the body—not two different substances dovetailed together, but a blend, a comparison with which is difficult to find in this world. It is difficult to imagine what a blend is. When you mix water with milk, they seem to become one. Can

you call this a blend? In some way, they look like that, but you will realise that the water can never become the milk, and the milk can never become the water. By a process of heating, you can remove all the water from the milk and the milk alone will remain. You cannot see anything in this world which will get into the substance of another thing and become that. Everything in this world maintains its individuality.

The blending of the otherness and the thisness of the so-called worlds before you is something of a novel nature altogether. Even the concept of the body and the soul is not adequate here as a comparison. Sometimes it looks as if the soul is inside the body, and the body is outside the soul. Here again you are making a mistake. The soul is not inside the body, and the body is not outside the soul. The body is nothing but a spatio-temporal expression of the soul itself, and the soul is nothing but an inwardisation of the principles of the physical personality. The transcendent world which you are aspiring for in your religious practices is connected with this world in the same way as the soul is connected with this body.

In the previous session I made reference to the Bhagavadgita, and today I am making reference to the Isavasya Upanishad. Both these scriptures, both these doctrines, both these verses say the same thing. The 'here' has to get transmuted into the quality of the 'hereafter', and the 'hereafter' should absorb into itself all the characteristics of the 'here'. Spiritual aspiration is a journey, an onward march, a process of evolution where you conserve what is in the present and absorb it into the future. The lower gets merged in the higher. The renunciation of this world is only the renunciation of the externality which appears

to be characterising this world. The renunciation of the world is actually the renunciation of its being a kind of external object. The object is perfectly all right; it is only the externality that is not all right. If you remove the spatio-temporal externality from this world, you will find the world has merged into yourself. You yourself have entered into the world. It is space that creates distance, and it is time that creates the idea of duration. If time were not to be there, you would find yourself present everywhere. You feel that you are sitting only in one place, but actually you are everywhere, which you can know only if time is not present. The pastness, the presentness and the futureness of time, which dichotomises the movement of duration, creates the illusion of something being at some time only. If time were not to be there, you would be in eternity. If space were not to be there, you would be pervading all places. So if space and time were not there, you would immediately become eternity and infinity. This is what you are longing for in your religious practices.

These verses quoted from the Bhagavagdita and the Isavasya Upanishad say that you have to be very cautious in taking even the first step in religion. Many a time you go to religion with emotions—by a sorrow, by a tragedy, by a death, by a loss, by a humiliation—the absence of which would not have engendered in you any kind of desire for God. Because you have lost all the values of life, you seem to be searching for a value which is not in this world. That is a negative renunciation because if those things which you have lost were to be returned to you, that aspiration may cease. So religion is not the consequence of not having something worthwhile. It is the result of wanting something which is really worthwhile.

The religious consciousness is the great question of the hour, and there are many religions in this world, many denominations, one saying this and another saying that. These distinctions in the denominations of religious consciousness have arisen, again, due to the parochial associations of religion, geographical distinctions, ethnic distinctions, psychological distinctions, cultural distinctions, historical distinctions, and even the distinctions of the prophets who speak in different languages, all which make it appear that there are many religions in this world. If we remove the prophets, remove the cultural, ethnical, anthropological, geographical and historical backgrounds, we will find that all the rivers of religion will merge into the sea of the total religious consciousness.

It is necessary for you to know at the very outset what it is that you are seeking. Every step in religious practice will make you feel happier and healthier. If you complain and feel a sense of despondency even after twenty years of religious practice, you should be cautious and honest to yourself that something is wrong with the method of the practice itself. Every step that you take in the direction of the solar orb will make you feel warmer and warmer. In a similar manner, every step that you take in the direction of the Infinite will make you feel wider in your personality, broader in your outlook, healthier in your views, and happier in your daily life.

What is the test of spiritual progress? It is a feeling of inner satisfaction that today you are better than yesterday, and also a satisfaction arising from the fact that it is the only worthwhile thing, and there is nothing else worthwhile in this world. There should be no doubt whether it will be possible or not possible. When you have taken the right

step for the purpose of achieving something that is perfectly right, the result has to follow. When you have done the means, the end will automatically follow as the completion of the means. When the farmer sows the seeds, manures them, gives them water and protection, he does not have to worry about the crop that has to come. Conditions being made favourable, the crop will automatically grow. Have the means well-guarded, and you will find that the end automatically manifests itself as a fruit ripening from a tree. What is important is not so much the eagerness to catch what is ahead of you but the manner in which you are trying to catch it. You need not have difficulty in catching God, because God will not run away from you at any time. The problem is how you catch Him.

The method that is adopted in contacting God is called religion. This methodology is a hard thing to grasp, at least in the earlier stages, because of the fact that we are physically and sensorily conditioned in every act of perception and thought; therefore religion, which is not sensory, not physical and not merely a perceptual activity, lies beyond the grasp of ordinary consciousness. Every religious seeker should have a guide, a mentor, a Guru, a master who has already trodden the path. Otherwise, you will be conditioning your religious aspiration with the qualities of sensory perception. God will look very far away. Because all things in the world appear to be away from you as objects of perception, God will look like a future and not like an eternity, to be contacted tomorrow and not just now. These psychological difficulties are to be averted by the process of proper initiation. Initiation is the technique of getting oneself introduced to the art of right thinking, which means to say, the art of thinking in the

way in which the Ultimate Reality is to be entertained in one's consciousness.

Religion is mainly a question of practice. It is not merely a theory or a study or a scriptural narration. What you do, what you live, what you feel, that is your religion. To completely transform yourself into a new thing altogether, to become a truly religious person, you must have certain basic amenities. You should not have worries, which harass your mind constantly, coming from different sides of the world—either from the material side or the physical side or the social side—or have any relationship with things. The great injunction of what generally goes by the names of *yama* and *niyama* in yoga practice is directly connected with adjusting oneself with the conditions of the world in such a way that you are not repelled by the world, nor do you repel the world.

*Yasmān nodvijate loko lokān nodvijate ca yaḥ* (B.G. 12.15) is a passage from the Bhagavadgita. Can you live in this world in such a way that you do not reject anything in the world? Can you live in this world in such a way that the world does not reject you? You do not shun things, and things do not shun you. It is well said, but how will you manage yourself? The friendliness that emanates from your soul will come upon you as a reaction of friendliness from every leaf on the trees and every flower.

In the Kenopanishad there is a wonderful passage: *tadd ha tad-vanam nāma, tad-vanam ity upāsitavyam* (Kena 4.6). The ultimate aim, which is God-consciousness, God Himself, is to be conceived as an object of love. God is great love. As God is everywhere, the love of God means the love of all things; and so the love of God—the love of Brahman in the language of the Upanishad—will immediately set

up vibrations in the world outside, and you will be loved as you have loved the world. The world will embrace you because you have embraced it. It will love you because you have loved it. You have not rejected it, and therefore it shall not reject you.

Certain nominal basic facilities are necessary for religious practice, as I mentioned. Firstly, you must have a proper place to live, and you should not live under conditions of starvation, because if these difficulties are there before you as deterrents, you will be thinking more of the means of getting your daily provisions rather than the purpose for which you have been isolating yourself away from home. "When shall I have my meal? From where shall I get it?" Many a time people who have renounced things and live far away in forests, in *kutirs*, have a problem of finding food, and much time goes in thinking of it. Sometimes they have to walk a long distance to *kshetras* to collect their bread, and many a time it is also a very unreliable source of supply. There is a fear of falling sick. These are physical difficulties.

There can also be mental imaginations. You might have lost something very near and dear, due to which you have rejected things and come here in the hope of contemplating on God, but you will be contemplating only on memories of the past. "I have lost my wife, I have lost my child, a tragedy took place, and I have nothing with me." Will this idea easily leave a person even if one were to be a hundred kilometres away from the place where this event took place? "What was I, and what am I now? If this had not been... O God, place me not in this condition. Bless me." What kind of blessing do you want from God that you may not be placed under such tragic conditions of life into which

you have been driven by fate? This, again, is a negative characterisation of your religious aspiration.

The moderation that the Isavasya Upanishad prescribes in the manner of a blend of this world and the other world is also the moderation that you have to adopt in your spiritual practice as seekers. Do not go to extremes. "I will not eat. I will not sleep. I will not bathe." Why should you go to such extremes? If you go to extremes of this kind, you will find that some trouble will arise either in your mind or in your body. The means of practice itself will be destroyed in the eagerness to reach the goal prematurely. You have to guard yourself and see that you survive before you are enabled to do something worthwhile. This world, as I mentioned to you, includes this body of yours, and in the mistake that you can easily make in rejecting this world, you may make the mistake of rejecting the body also. You may think, "What is there in this body? It is an illusion. I will throw it away." You cannot so easily throw it away because when you throw away the snake, the rope will also go.

Much good work that you have done in your past has brought you to a place of this kind. Much charity that you have done in your previous life, many good thoughts that you entertained, many loves that you extended to people, many services that you have rendered to those who are in need have fructified into the form of your longing to come to a place like this and breathe the fresh air of the Himalayas on the bank of the river Ganga. May not this bank balance that you have accumulated, and which you are enjoying now in the form of a happy, spiritually aspiring life, be exhausted by merely utilising it without replenishing it with further effort. The good deeds of your past have made you good people today, but what about your

future? The good deeds will expire; and when they expire, the result that they produce will also expire. All the facilities that you are enjoying in this world will also expire. So that such difficulties may not arise, you must keep the stock of your goodness and your virtues continuously replenished by daily practice, because every action is perishable. Every good work produces a result that one day comes to an end; therefore, you have to go on adding to it every day, like your bank balance which will get exhausted if you go on withdrawing from it and put nothing back into it. Continuous vigilance in the religious practice is called for.

In the Mahabharata, Sanat Kumara speaks in his great gospel, called Sanat Sujathiya, that there is no greater blunder than heedlessness. Heedlessness is not bestowing sufficient thought on what is good for you, and contemplating things which are not at all necessary for you—engaging yourself in frivolous activities, in chit-chat, in gossip, in going to clubs and cinemas, in unnecessary travels, instead of confining yourself to a suitable place for a constructive building up of your psychophysical personality and religious values.

Therefore, have some prescription before you. The prescription is that all the necessary conditions for your meditation should be available to you at least in a minimal degree; and when you are honest in your practice, all the facilities that are necessary for you will flood you. Do not be surprised if I say the very gods will pour their blessings upon you, if your heart is honest in the practice. The people around you will become friendly, even if they have been otherwise. The world of nature will facilitate your existence, and the gods—who see everything correctly and know what you are doing and what you aspire for, what you are asking

for—will descend from the heavens and protect you. The Yoga Vasishtha says that all the divinities of the quarters will converge upon you and protect you just now, provided you ask for them. The great saying “Ask and it shall be given” is not false. The very guardians of the cosmos will protect you just now. The army of the gods will guard you, and whatever you want shall be given to you, provided your soul, and not merely your lips or your tongue, asks for it.

With this earnestness, let us find some ways and means of taking the necessary steps in what we call spiritual practice, sadhana. In the time left ahead of us we will consider further some details of this—what actual spiritual sadhana is, what yoga is, and how you may manage it effectively under the conditions in which you are placed in this world.

## Chapter 3

### SPIRITUAL RENUNCIATION

In the previous session we concluded with the observation that if time were not to be there, we would find ourselves at all times; and if space were not to be there, we would find ourselves at all places. It is on account of the peculiar characteristic of the time process dividing itself into the past, present and future that we feel that we are only at some time and not at all times. It is because of the dividing characteristic of space that we feel that we are only in some place and not in all places, we feel that the other world is really far away from this world and this world is disconnected from the other world, and we feel that people in the world are outside us and one person has no connection with another.

Space and time work a threefold havoc in a gradually systematised manner. Firstly, we are compelled to feel that everything is disconnected and nothing is connected in any manner whatsoever. Everything is different from everything else. Every person is totally dissociated from every other person. One person has nothing to do with another. Then it creates a psychological dichotomy in our personality, a very serious matter indeed, making us aspire for something which is not here and yet compelling us to stick to this life and want to never die. Our longing not

to be in this world because of the imperfections of the world—our longing to be in another, better world as early as possible—keeps us psychologically disconnected from seeing meaning in this world.

At the same time, there is a contradiction in this peculiar outlook, namely, it is not true that we are willing to get totally disassociated from this world. Our inner and outer aspects clash between themselves and speak to us in two different, contradictory voices. We are well aware that the physical body in which we are encased is not going to last long. Everyone knows that life is mortal and that one day they have to pass away, yet nobody wants to pass away. How is it that we entertain two feelings at the same time, knowing well that nothing here can be permanent and yet wanting to perpetuate our existence here? “Let me live as long as possible, even for ten thousand years. There is nothing wrong with it.” But we know very well that it is not possible. How would we expect to achieve a thing which is impossible, a fact which we have accepted and are fully conscious of?

The feeling that life cannot be a limitless endurance, and a simultaneous feeling that it would be good if it is limitless, is a psychological conflict in our own selves. We are asking for that which we cannot get. What makes us ask for that which we cannot obtain in this world? Are we totally crazy, or is there some rationality behind it?

Actually, it is not craziness. It is a wonderful logic that is operating even without our actually knowing what is happening. We belong to two worlds at the same time. We are citizens of two existences. We belong to this mortal world through this world of space, time and objectivity. Well, perfectly so. That is the reason why there is a fear

of passing. But, we do not always entirely, totally, belong to this circumstance of spatio-temporal mortality. There is something which defies space-time.

Here is an interesting point before us to consider. If space and time are such powerful masters over us and we are virtually involved in their fabric of operation, and we have almost become space-time itself, subjecting ourselves as slaves before space and time, we will not even be aware that there is such a thing called space and time. The consciousness of the fact that there is such a thing called space and time brings before us the illuminating factor that we are the knowers of space and time, and we ourselves are not involved in it. If we are inseparable from the space-time complex, who will be there to know that there is such a complex? Now, here is an induction, a kind of inference that we draw from our present experience that there is a chaotic mix-up of feelings and perceptions in our observation of our own selves, of human society outside, and of the great goal that we are aspiring for.

To clinch the whole matter, briefly we may say that the other world is not away from this world, the people around us in this world of humanity are not disconnected from us, and there is a meaning in our being frightened about the possibility of self-annihilation in this world of mortality, simultaneous with a longing that one day everything will be all right. Even if we sometimes feel, under the pressure of given conditions, that things in this world are very bad, almost wretched, incurable, in our heart of hearts there is something which tells us that it will not be so bad always. We will never lift a finger to do anything if everything is going to be chaotic and meaningless. We have a hope that one day things will be better: "Let all things look bad, but

one day they will be better.” There is a hope in our heart of hearts that things will become all right one day or the other. We will not go to hell. Heaven has to descend on us, though it looks as if there is hell everywhere around us. The expectation of a future betterment is the voice of some eternal spark that is scintillating within ourselves, and the grief that we feel from our being sunk in this world is due to our mortal association with this perishable, brittle body.

Now, you may bring back to your memories what I told you during the last two sessions about the great conflict that we have between our responsibility towards this world and our responsibility towards the other world. To which world are you going to affiliate yourself? I mentioned that there are extremes of view among people. There are those who deny this world and theoretically, conceptually, cling to another world of imagined perfection, and there are those who go the other way, completely deny the other world and assert only this world. The mistake committed by these two types of people is very obvious. The obviousness is in the fact that the two are not disconnected in such a way that you can take one segment of it and reject another segment. I also mentioned that you cannot keep your body somewhere and your soul somewhere else. It is not possible to keep your soul in a box and your body in a marketplace because they are integrally, vitally, meaningfully connected.

This meaningfulness, this immense significance of a wondrous relationship between the here and the hereafter, escaping our notice always in our daily sensory perceptions, is brought before us in a new vision altogether by the Isavasya Upanishad, to which I referred in the previous session. One aspect of the Isavasya Upanishad to which I made reference is its insistence on the blending of both

this world and the other world in our integral approach to things. Now it is telling us something more than that. The whole universe is pervaded by one single Reality. *Īśāvāsyam idam sarvam* (Isa 1). The pervasion of one meaning in all the apparent meaningless diversities of the world is the very first instruction, the initial message, the very beginning of this masterly teaching of the Upanishad known as the Isavasya. *Yat kiṁ ca jagatyām jagat*. In all this evolutionary process and flux of nature, in all this dichotomy of disparity we will find a cementing factor operating in every nook and corner, right from the split of an atom up to the solar system and the galaxies. *Tena tyaktena bhujjitha, ma ḡṛdhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam*. There were saints and sages who held that if all the scriptures in the world were to be destroyed and only this one verse of the Isavasya Upanishad were to be left, that would suffice. The entire world gospel is concentrated in this one single verse of the Isavasya Upanishad: *Īśāvāsyam idam sarvam yat kiṁ ca jagatyām jagat, tena tyaktena bhujjitha, ma ḡṛdhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam*. Many of you must be reading this Upanishad, but it is difficult to know how much meaning has gone into your minds. There is a literal meaning, a grammatical meaning, an outward appearance of its significance, but there is also, at the same time, a mystical hidden import.

You may ask: “When it is said that all things are pervaded by one thing, what exactly is meant by that? How is this pervading of one thing by another thing to be conceived?” Now, the very idea of ‘one thing’ and ‘another thing’ precludes the total merger of two things. I have many a time given the example of cloth being soaked in a bucketful of water. If you soak your dhoti or sari or any cloth in a bucketful of water for some time, you will see

that water permeates every fibre of the cloth. The water is immanent in the entire structure of the cloth. Everywhere in the cloth you will find water. Is it in this sense that the Ultimate Reality is present in everything in this world? There is a peculiar snag in this analogy. Whatever be the extent of the permeation of water in the fibrous structure of the cloth, the water has never become the cloth. The cloth remains outside the water always. You can wring the cloth and totally remove the water, and the permeation ceases. Can you get out of this intrusion of God into the world by wringing God out of the whole cloth and fabric of this world? That is not possible. The permeation of Isa, or the Absolute or God, in this world of nature is not like water permeating a fibrous cloth, because they are two different things. It is also not the mixing of two things such as water and milk, because water is not milk and milk is not water. They can be separated by boiling. Are the world and God so distinct that one has to be inextricably involved in the other? Is it a kind of involvement of two things?

The Isavasya Upanishad tells us that this kind of idea of permeation has to be given up. It is not something permeating another thing; it is something becoming another thing. People say that, logically, A cannot be B. A is A, and B is B. If A becomes B, either B ceases to exist or A ceases to exist. Maybe in this sense the merger of the here and the hereafter, the permeator and the permeated, would entail the consequence of one thing being totally absent in the presence of the other. An engulfing activity takes place in the process of the permeation of something by another thing, which looks like 'something' and 'another thing' for us because of the interference of space and time in our very thought structure. We have heard of mythological figures

such as Ravana, Kumbhakarna, Shishupala, Dantavakra, Simhamukha, Shurasena, and all sorts of dual forces such as Madhu and Kaitabha, and Shumba and Nishumba. These dual forces are nothing but space and time. They are the demons before us. They will never allow us to see things properly. Even when we attempt to see things independent of the space-time involvement, we will find that the mind itself is sunk in space and time.

When you start thinking in terms of space and time, how will you conceive a thing independent of space and time? There are methods of completely absorbing ourselves from this intricate involvement, which is called yoga samadhi, which is not our subject now. A peculiar intricate something, which makes one almost giddy by the very thought of it, is the practice of yoga. In spite of the fact that it is true that your consciousness is inextricably involved in space and time, it is possible for you to be free from them. Otherwise, the aspiration for God has no meaning. The aspiration for God is an aspiration for that which is free from space and time. *Īśāvāsyam idam sarvam*. It means that the Absolute is in the relative. The relative, what is called the appearance of the world, is not segregated from the Absolute.

In the previous session I mentioned the analogy of the snake and the rope. The snake is not sitting somewhere outside the rope. You cannot take two things separately: here is the rope, and here is the snake. It is one and the same thing appearing as two, such as a mirage of water. A mirage looks like water. It is identical with itself. It is not something appearing as something else. It is one thing itself scintillating as if it is other than itself—A appearing as if it is not A—as if you are in a dream world where you

begin to visualise things which are not there by projecting into a conceptualised space and time process objects which are not there, but are only concocted by the mind by a process of externalisation. In this world of movement and fluxation, God is present in all things.

*Īśāvāsyam idam sarvam yat kiṁ ca jagatyām jagat:* There is not one point in space where this eternity is not dancing with all its glory and force. Deathless wonder is performing its Rasa dance in the midst of this brittle arena of the structural variety of this world. Eternity is in time. It gives a magical touch of transmutation to the iron of diversity. The steel metal of world perception not merely gets galvanised, but it is transmuted into the gold of eternity itself. There is a perpetual longing in us to ask for eternal existence. Human beings have only two desires: I shall be always, and I shall have everything. You do not have any other desire in the world. Even if you have millions of so-called desires, you will find they are all capable of being boiled down to this. You want everything, and you want everything for all time. That is to say, you want to overcome the spatial limitation of possession and the temporal limitation of duration. Eternity is negation of duration, and infinity is negation of spatiality. Such being the case, what does the Upanishad tell you? Be a true renouncer: *tena tyaktena*.

*Bhuñjitha:* Enjoy. Would you enjoy after renouncing a thing? Generally, when you renounce a thing, you have lost the very taste of it. The Upanishad says that the greater is the joy that will accrue to you, the more is the spirit of renunciation. What is it that you renounce in order that you may be filled with a joy that is more than what you will have by the possession of things?

Remember the few words that I uttered to you in the previous session. There is nothing that you can possess in this world. The space-time factor keeps you always segregated from every object which you seem to be possessing. Even if I hold this watch tightly, it does not become my hand. It is always outside. All the wealth of the world, all the glory, all the name and fame, everything that you call yours has a tentative appearance of being possessed, while it actually stands outside you. This is why one day you will be dispossessed of all things. You have been living in a fool's paradise throughout your life, from beginning to end. Thus, the Upanishad warns you with the message that you have to do a very specific type of renunciation for the sake of the joy of the Self, of Ishvara.

Remember once again, renunciation does not mean renouncing the pillar and the mountain and the river. They have been there even before you were born. Who are you to renounce them? The renunciation spoken of here by the Upanishad is the renunciation of the spatio-temporal externality involved in your perception of things. You desire the objects of the world because you feel that they are outside you. The fact is that they are not outside you. So what are you desiring? You try to renounce a thing because you are under the impression that something is outside and you can just kick it away. But things are intricately connected with you, inextricably related to you. Then what will you renounce? Since the illusion of space-time is the cause of the perception of the diversity of things, the renunciation of something outside is also an illusion, and the feeling of possession of property is also an illusion. You are under a twofold illusion of the possession of property and also the idea of renunciation. As property does not

belong to you, you cannot renounce it. So renounce the idea of possessionship. Have no greed for the wealth of anybody: *ma gr̥dhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam*.

When you ask for the wealth of this world, you are actually acting like a miser, wanting to have that which does not belong to you. How does anything belong to you? Is there any guarantee or document signed by the judiciary of the cosmos saying that it belongs to you? Did you bring anything when you came to this world? Are you taking anything with you when you go from this world? You have brought nothing, and you will take nothing. How is it that in the middle have you started thinking that everything is yours?

The idea of property has, therefore, to be given up in the context of the fact that in this world one thing does not belong to another thing. Even one finger does not belong to another finger. One limb of the body does not belong to another limb of the body. All these parts belong to a total whole which is none of them, but is transcendent to them. I do not belong to you and you do not belong to me, but both of us belong to a total whole, in which context we seem to be inwardly related in a new fashion altogether. In the sense of a soul filling all things, we have an intricate, intimate, perpetual relation among ourselves. We can never be separated, one from the other. Yet, from the other side, we are totally different from one another.

Spiritual renunciation, therefore, the so-called sannyasa, the ascetic life of a religious mendicant, is not actually the renunciation of physical objects, because they do not belong to that person; it is the renunciation of the very idea of possession. If you have renounced the things of the world but the idea of possession still persists and

you know that it is possible to possess a thing—you have renounced all things, you possess nothing in this world, but you know that you are in a position to possess things if it becomes practicable—this spoils the very idea of renunciation. Renunciation is not the incapacity to possess. It is not a state of helplessness. It is the realisation of the meaninglessness of the very idea of possession. So renounce the idea of possession, *tyaktena*, and then enjoy. What do you enjoy when you have renounced everything? You enjoy the bliss of the total perfection of the absolute Ishvara the moment this idea of possession, externality, is removed from your consciousness. The greatest renunciation is the greatest happiness.

Again, underline the meaning of renunciation. Being physically far away from objects of attraction is not renunciation. The idea of possession is the crucial point. Do you believe that it is possible for you to possess things in the world? If you believe you have not got anything but you are in a position to possess things, you have spoiled the whole case. The mind is the maker of all things. *Mana eva manuṣyāṇām kāraṇam bandhamokṣayoḥ, bandhāya piṣyāsaktam muktamye nirviṣayam smṛtam* (Amrita Bindu 2): The mind is the cause of your bondage, and it is the cause of your freedom. The mind connected with the thought of an external object is your bondage. The mind freed from the idea of there being such a thing as an object is your freedom. The more are you free from the idea of there being such a thing called possession, the more is the capacity of the Infinite to enter into you. The forces of nature will enter into your body as a gale entering into a house. *Ma grdhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam*. As the property of the world does not belong to you—it belongs to the Maker

of all things—have no greed in respect of anything in this world.

Do you feel helpless and beggarly when you do not possess anything in this world? “What have I got? I have nothing. Rich people are enjoying in this world. I have not even a morsel of food to eat.” Do you feel like that? Then you are not a renunciate. You are only a miserly wretch, crying because you do not get what you would like to have.

Spirituality is not a physical activity, it is not social work, it is not political governance, it is not a give-and-take policy, it is not commerce with God, and it is not any kind of business even in the mind. Quite different from all these ideas, which are so important for you, is spirituality. It is the entry of yourself into yourself. *Ātmānam viddhi* is the sum and substance of all teaching: Know thyself and be free. You may say, “I know myself already. I am the son of Mr. So-and-so, I am an official in the government, and I am having this kind of profession. I come from this place. This is what I know about myself.” This is a fragile understanding of yourself and a distortion of the meaning of what you really are.

Who can know one’s own self? The knowledge process generally involves a difference between the knower and the known. Unless the known is outside you, what will you know? If the knower is the knowing object, there will be no knowing process. So to know one’s own self seems to be a peculiar quandary: “What are you telling me? I am to know myself?” There is no process of knowing here. Unless there is an epistemological connection between the seer and the seen, the perceptual process continues and no knowledge is possible. There are doctrines of philosophy which tell us that knowledge is the outcome of the contact of the mind

with an object outside. If the objects are not there and you yourself are the object, knowledge cannot be conceived. Here is the difficulty in spiritual concepts. Here you are the teacher and also the student. You can teach a student, but how will you teach yourself? Who is to teach whom?

*Yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati, tad itara itaram paśyati, yatra tv asya sarvam ātmāivābhūt, tat kena kam paśyet; yenedam sarvaṃ vijānāti, taṃ kena vijāniyāt, vijñātāram are kena vijāniyād iti* (B.U. 2.4.14), says Yajnavalkya in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad to his great consort, the blessed Maitreyi: “One can see the other, one can know the other, one can think the other, when the other is really there. When the soul itself is the object of knowledge, the knower himself is the object of knowing, who will see whom?” All things in this world are possible. The only thing that is not possible is the way in which you can know yourself. Everything is possible. You can control the stars and the heavens with your mechanism of modern industry and invention, but you cannot know yourself. You can tame a lion, you can subjugate an elephant, you can catch a cobra with your hand, but you cannot catch your mind. You cannot tame your mind. You dread yourself. You are your own fear. You are afraid of your own self. The doubt about your own self is so much that all the doubts you have about other things are inundated by this doubt about your own self.

Do you know who you are, or are you in a state of confusion about your own self? Without going very deep into the psychological meaning, think of a great man—great because he has power given to him by the electorate, the power of money, name and fame. He is alone in one place, and his bank balance is somewhere else. People who consider him as great are not near him. He is sitting alone

in his room, and all his possessions are virtually separated from him at that time. Alone he stands. What does he think about himself? Where is his greatness? He is a little vegetable, finally, with a little breath flowing through a material encasement.

Your breath is your property—not your money, not your glory of name and fame, not all the mansions that you have built or all the land and property that you own. Your breath is your wealth. Let there be everything, but you cannot breathe. Let the potentate of the Earth not breathe for some time, and let us see what happens to his property. He is a little breathing creature; finally, he will realise this. A non-entity, as it were—such a thing is trying to possess things of the whole world, going to the moon and the stars, controlling nature. What control can he have? He cannot even control his breathing. He can become a corpse in one second by the disassociation of the breath, the vital force, from his body. In one second, the great elephantine genius of man lies there like a speck of dust. This is the glory of man. This is the immortality that the mortal is seeking in this world. Perpetuate not this feeling. Renounce this idea. Have no greed for things that are not yours. All things belong to that from where everything has come. I am repeating what I told you. I do not belong to you, and you do not belong to me. Neither is money mine, nor am I its slave. Not one electron can belong to another electron. They are totally different from one another, but they are infused into a pattern of cohesion by the nucleus that is central; and the nucleus is this pervading principle, Isa.

Therefore, find time to contemplate this great truth in your life. Do not say that you have no time. Do you have time to breathe? Do you have time to exist, or no time to

exist? To exist, you do not require time because existence is superior to time and beyond time, and the consciousness of your existence in this pattern is actually your spiritual sadhana.

I mentioned during the first session itself that religion is the consciousness of your being in the presence of God. If this consciousness is absent, all your routine of religious practice becomes empty tinsel. All these rituals become meaningless the moment this force—the perpetual consciousness of your being in the presence of God—enters into you. You are not imagining that you are in the presence of God; you are, actually. Millions of eyes are looking at you even just now. Every atom has an eye. Walls have ears, and every leaf knows what you are saying. Every little grass on which you tread knows what you are doing. Biologists have discovered that if you think that tomorrow you have to cut this tree, the tree will know what you are thinking. It will vibrate: “Oh, this man is thinking that he will cut me.” On the other hand, if you lovingly speak to the tree, it will flourish. Nothing in this world is dead. All is living because these are the eyes of the *sahasraśīrṣā puruṣaḥ* (P.S. 1). The million-headed perceiving Eternity sees all things. Even your hairs are counted, and the movement of a mouse hidden in a far-off jungle is known to the Centre of the cosmos. You cannot have any private, secret commerce between yourself and somebody else in this world. The One who has eyes everywhere will see what you think and feel in your heart. This will decide your future. What you have done in public is not what will save you. What your heart says, that will come with you.

If this conviction has gone deeply into your heart, you are a God-oriented individual just now. Honestly, I should

say, you can become a Godman in one second. Only your heart should open. Your dream must cease, your eyes have to open, and you have to realise what you really are. To open your eyes and behold the daylight after a deep slumber does not take years for you to achieve. Dark, dark, abysmal is the night of sleep. How far daytime is from that condition, nobody knows, but in a split second this conviction will take you to the other world of the direct perception of daylight. This mortality, these grievances, this suffering, this idea of possession and renunciation will all vanish like hobgoblins and immediately melt like mist before the sun.

You may ask, "Why are you saying all this to us? Is it possible for us?" Everything is impossible in this world, but this is the only thing that is possible. You are the greatest of realities in the world. The greatest meaning is in you only, not in that which you have outside you. The most important thing in this world is yourself, not other things, because the other things are separated from you by the otherness that you have foisted upon them. The 'otherness' is a word which I emphasised a number of times, which is the thing from which you have to be free. This so-called otherness, this intriguing characterisation that you have about things, is the devilish activity of space and time working together. When you think, when you speak, when you work, when you laugh, when you eat, when you walk, you are in the midst of space and time. The demon is pursuing you. This side is the devil, that side is the sea. You do not know which one is better for you.

Forces of God, powers of nature, are ready to be at your service. This is also what I uttered to you in the previous session. That which is always, cannot forget your existence.

You may want God, but God wants you much more than you want Him.

I conclude by telling a story. There was an ascetic, a respected saint living in a small village. People used to come and prostrate themselves before him. One lady from the village came every day and prostrated herself before him, and kept a mud pot full of sweet porridge in front of him. Neither did she utter a word, nor did the saint say anything. This went on for a year. Every day she would come with a mud pot full of *kheer*, sweet porridge, prostrate herself before him, and then go.

After one year the saint asked the lady, “Why are you coming every day with this offering to me? What is the matter?”

Then she said, “Maharaj, I have never felt the courage to speak to you. I am a married lady. It is now twenty-five years after my marriage, and I have no progeny. This worries me very much. You can bless me with a child because I heard that you talk to God every night. If you can talk to God tonight, ask Him what He feels about me. Can I have a child or not?”

“I shall talk to God and let you know tomorrow,” the saint replied.

Next day the lady came. “What has God told you?” she asked.

“He has told me that you cannot have a child,” he said.

“All right, I shall not live anymore. This is the last day of my life. If God Himself does not want me, who will want me?” She ran with dishevelled hair and clothes along the bank of a river, crying and muttering incoherently.

There was a person looking like a crazy man, sitting with a mud-covered body, and he heard her yelling and saw

her running. He called to her. "What is the matter? Why are you crying?"

She said, "I have no time to speak to you. I am going to end my life."

"End your life! Is it so bad? Can I hear what it is?"

"I have nothing to say. God Himself does not want me. Therefore, I have no meaning in my life."

"God does not want you? Who told you?"

"I have no time to speak to you, Maharaj. I am going."

"Let me hear one word. What is your problem?"

"I wanted one child, and God has denied it."

"That is all your problem? How many children do you want?" he asked.

"One," she replied.

"You will have two," he said.

She was intrigued. How is it possible? How is this man saying that she will have two children when God Himself has said she would not have even one? Anyhow, a good word is always solacing. If the doctor tells a patient who is in a dying condition that he is perfectly all right, the patient feels happy, though he may be on his deathbed. So she felt relieved. "After all, there is somebody who speaks a sensible word to me." She gave up the idea of committing suicide, and went back home.

After two or three years, she came with two children to the very same saint who said that God had denied her request.

The saint recognised this lady and asked, "Who are these two boys?"

"Yours," she said. "They are your children."

He said, "How is it possible? God has told me categorically that you cannot have children. How is it

possible that you have two? I shall quarrel with God today. He has told me a lie.”

The saint talked to God. “Great Master, you have painted my face black. You told me a lie that this lady cannot have a child. Now she has two children.”

Then God said, “My dear devotee, please listen to me. I was in a helpless condition. Actually, she was not deserving a child under the law of nature and the law of karma, so what I told is correct. You love me very much. You are my devotee, and so I could not have said anything contrary to fact. I told you the fact.”

“Now what is the matter?” asked the saint. “Why does she have two children?”

God replied, “You are a person who runs after me, but that crazy man is a person after whom I am running. So I could not deny anything when he uttered a word. You are running after me, that is quite right, but I am running after that man though he appears to be crazy.”

Is there anyone in this world after whom God is running? If you are that person, you are blessed.

## Chapter 4

### THE PROCESS OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

We continue from where we left off in the previous session. Our subject is an in-depth analysis of the process of spiritual practice. Understanding precedes doing; theory is at the back of application; knowledge precedes the performance of anything. Before we do a thing, we must know what we are doing, how we are to do it, and why it is to be done. Some of the implications of this interesting theme were considered during our earlier sessions.

We found, after all these investigations into the importance of knowing what spiritual practice is, that it is not so simple a matter as it appears on the surface. It is like medical science. The entire anatomical, physiological and even psychological structure of the personality should be at the fingertips of a doctor in order to handle a patient effectively. Partial, fractional, limb-wise treatment is no treatment. Such is the approach of a spiritual seeker to the expected attainment. It is an understanding from all sides, or something like a military march. It is not just going headlong without understanding what it is all about. The front and the rear, the right and the left, the top and the bottom, everything should be clear to the Major General. Otherwise, he will not succeed. A total understanding of every situation has to be at our fingertips. Then we put

on the switch, and immediately there is illumination. Otherwise, if electrification is not properly done, any amount of putting on the switch will not bring light.

To continue our subject, there is an interesting anecdote recorded in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. There was a war in the heavens between the gods and the demons. The gods decided that they would ask their friends to chant a powerful mantra called the Rathantara Saman from the Vedas, so that if there is any onslaught from the demons, this mantra shakti will counteract their approach. They told the eyes: "Please chant for our sake." When the eyes started chanting, the demons came to know of it. They immediately attacked the eyes so that the chanting would cease. Due to this attack, the eyes could not see things properly. The Upanishad says that this is the reason why we always see certain things as good and certain things as bad. The distinction that we make is due to the attack of the demons on our eyes. We cannot say everything is bad, nor can we say everything is good. We always make a distinction between some part of the world as being of this character and another part of the world as being of another character, though there is no proper justification for this classification that we are making.

When the eyes failed, the gods told the ears: "Please chant." The demons attacked the ears. Due to this reason, we hear what is good and hear what is bad. When something is said, we always make a judgment on it that it is all right or not all right. Now, who told us that it is all right or it is not all right? It is our own predilection arising out of the infected way of hearing due to the contact of the sense of hearing with the demoniacal forces. What are the demoniacal forces? They have only two things to do.

Either they throw a thing out from its location to some other direction, or they split one thing into two parts. This is what demons do. If we are in one place, they make us feel that we are in another place, and if there is only one way of thinking, they compel us to think in two different ways.

The gods then told the tongue to chant. The tongue chanted, and immediately the demons attacked the tongue also, which is why we can taste what is palatable and what is unpalatable. So is the case with smell and touch. All these sense organs failed. These sense organs are also attendants of the organisation of the gods in heaven. They did not succeed.

The idea is that we cannot know anything correctly through the sense organs. We cannot open our eyes and see things correctly. We always have a prejudiced outlook of things, and whenever we try to contact the facts in this world through any sense organ, everything is prejudiced in every way. The real cannot be contacted through the sense organs because of this demoniacal attack. In the previous session I mentioned that these demons are mainly space and time. We should not forget this. The Shumba and Nishumba, Ravana and Kumbakarna, as I said, are space and time. They always interfere with every attempt of ours to think correctly and do things properly.

So what was the fate of these gods who had been thrown out of gear by the attack of the demons? They had no other alternative, finally, than to approach the total energy of the system, which is called prana shakti: "Please chant for us." When this total energy, which is not any one of the sense organs, started chanting the Rathantara Saman mantra, the demons attacked, but here they did not succeed. Anything that is partial cannot attack the whole.

A part cannot interfere with the structure of the totality to which it belongs. If a fraction tries to interfere with that of which it is a fraction, it will not succeed in its attempt. When the demons attacked the prana, which is the total vital force in our system, they were thrown back with a jerk and a kick by the prana shakti, and they broke into pieces as a mud ball breaks when it is struck on a hard rock, says the Upanishad.

This analogy, this anecdote, this story in the Upanishad is instructive in a very special sense. All our ways of thinking are conditioned and sensorily infected. Even if we are introducing a new system of thinking in our mind logically or impersonally from our own point of view, we will realise that there is some kind of connection of our thought with one of the sense organs. We think according to what we have seen with the eyes. Now, who asked us to think in terms of seeing? It has already been mentioned that we cannot see things correctly. We externalise a thing in perception, and bifurcate a thing which is one into two. "I have seen it, and therefore I think in this manner." So we feel that our seeing is the final judge in the ascertainment of facts. The Upanishad says that our seeing is not a criterion at all. It is not a reliable guide. If we have heard something, we pass a judgment on it through our mind: "This is what I have heard." We might have heard anything, but how do we know that we heard things correctly?

Our psychological or even logical judgments are mostly partial, oriented by the influence of some sense organ. We like to eat a particular thing, smell something, touch something, hear something, and see something. We have a desire to have a particular contact of some type for our own satisfaction. That desire for a particular contact influences

our thought. Even a judge can be influenced by family problems or a stomach ache or liver trouble. Only human beings, not gods, are living here in this world, whatever position they hold. If a great official, a powerful organiser, a judge, a magistrate has intense physical troubles and psychological tensions, he cannot perform his functions properly, whatever be the authority invested in him. Internal conditions determine external performance and social relations.

Much more so is the case with spiritual seekers. Conditioned thinking cannot take us to the unconditioned reality. Philosophers have told us many a time that our thoughts are also sensorily conditioned. We think as we see, as we hear, and so on. Total abstract independent thinking in a purely rational way, though it is possible with great effort on our part, is not usually resorted to, on account of the extremely intimate affiliation with the sense organs. There is nothing in the world that we do except through our eyes, ears, and so on.

The Upanishad warns us in this anecdote. When the senses were freed from the attack of the demons on account of the total chanting of the mantra by the vital force in our cumulative existence, the senses, freed from the demoniacal influence, saw things correctly. The ears heard properly, the tongue tasted correctly, and everything was in order. What is meant by saying the senses were in order?

Here, we go to the story of the creation of the universe that is found in the Aitareya Upanishad. How did the sense organs come into being at all? Who compels us to see things as we are seeing them, and so on? The beginning of creation is said to be a multiple manifestation in a perfectly organised manner of a total living entity called God

Almighty, the Absolute Being, Ishvara-shakti, or whatever it is called. In the beginning, there is One Alone, the 'I am I', the 'I am what I am'. This 'I' consciousness includes everything that it is conscious of. It is not an I-consciousness that is counterposed to a you-consciousness. There was no 'you'; there was no 'he' or 'she' or 'it'. It was just one blended 'I', in which space and time were also engulfed.

The next step in creation is the will to be conscious of oneself. In the primordial condition, it is Being as such without having any differentiation even in thought or feeling. There should be a clear distinction between Being as such and the consciousness of there being such a thing as Being. If I am, and also I am conscious that I am, these two are different states altogether. The consciousness that I am is a step downward from the higher state where I am just what I am and there is no necessity to be conscious that I am. The creative principle operates in the second stage of the process of evolution, where the I alone becomes conscious that the I alone is.

The third step is a diversification of the total 'I' into a visible multiplicity, with the consciousness that the many are me only. I am aware of the limbs of my body. I have ten fingers and ten toes, and many organs of this body. Although they are many in number, I am still aware that they are all me only. So the diversity of perception is not always bad, provided the unity consciousness is there, immanent, permeating it, and the many is known to be the manyness of the One that is beholding it, or is conscious of it.

Up to this time, creation is wonderful. This state where the One is aware of the multiplicity of its own manifestation is called the Vishvarupa, a description of which is given

in the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgita, and in the Purusha Sukta of the Veda, and so on. It is the grand manifestation of the One as the form of the manifold cosmos, and the One being aware that it is all these things.

Up to this stage of creation, there is no bondage. Where is the bondage? Who is to create the bondage, when the I alone is there, and it is knowing everything as itself? It is a dance of the One in the form of the many. *Reme ramešo vraja-sundarībhir yathārbhakaḥ sva-pratibimba vibhramah* (S.B. 10.33.16) is a verse from the chapter on the Rasa Lila in the Srimad Bhagavata, where Suka Maharishi says that Sri Krishna danced in the middle of the Gopis as a child dances in the midst of its own reflections seen in multiple mirrors. There were no Gopis there. It was Sri Krishna himself—a child dancing because it sees itself in a multiple form through millions of mirrors kept around itself. It sees, it sees, it sees. Everywhere it sees itself, and yet it sees many. This dance of the cosmos is the Nataraja dance, also known in theological parlance as the dance of Siva, the dance of God in the act of cosmic manifestation, where He rejoices in knowing Himself, where He is blissful because He has flooded Himself overflowing, as it were, throughout the extent of space and time and externality. This is the dance of God in the form of this wondrous creation.

There is no audience to visualise this dance. Who is to see the dance? Only the dancer knows himself. Somebody speaks, somebody hears. Somebody performs, another visualises. Here, such a thing is not there. The director of the drama, the audience, the light that illumines the stage and the performer all are one. The director himself dances, he is the audience, he is the lamp illumining the stage, and all of the dramatic enactment on the stage is that One

Being taking all forms, mad with the bliss of its aloneness. We cannot put it in any other way.

Then something happens, which is worth knowing because none of us were there at that time. There was no me, no you, no he, no she, no it, no this, no that. Suddenly a triplication of process takes place. Here is the beginning of what is called the fall of man. We come down to a tragic state from this otherwise blissful universality of Self-awareness. The One splits itself, as it were, into a threefold manifestation of the seer, the seen, and the process of seeing. I am seeing you, and you are the object that is seen, and there is something between us. This is the trouble with us. Inasmuch as the seer cannot exactly know the proper relationship of the seer with the seen, there is always conflict, tension and a desire to artificially adjust oneself throughout the day and night.

The connecting link between the seer and the seen is invisible. I do not know how I am seeing you, though seeing is taking place. You do not know how you are hearing me, though hearing is taking place. There is a gap of distance between us. How are you seeing me, and how am I seeing you? There is some mysterious principle operating between us. That is the mischief-maker, the real butter thief of the Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana. That peculiar thing between us does not introduce itself into the arena of perception. Neither do I know myself properly, nor do you know yourself properly and, also, nothing is known about how we are relating to each other in our social concourse.

At once the process of perception starts. There was no perception in the Universal enfoldment of God-consciousness—no eyes, no ears, no limbs. *Sarvataḥ pānīpādam tat sarvato'kṣīromukham, sarvataḥ śrutimal loke*

*sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati* (B.G. 13.13). In that glory, everywhere there were eyes, everywhere there were ears, everywhere there were feet, everywhere there were fingers, and everywhere there were limbs. The eyes could walk, the legs could hear, the ears could see, the brain could digest, the stomach could think. Every part could do as every other part. Intuition is a faculty which can see, hear, touch, smell, taste; it can do everything. All the sense organs, which are spread out in a fivefold manner, get concentrated in intuition, and there is one knowledge. Likewise, all the sense organs were melted down into that cosmic dance.

Now, in the triplication of the process, they get separated. The consciousness of 'I', which was originally identical with the consciousness which was the whole, gets separated from the whole and projects itself outwardly through space and time and begins to see, as it were, something outside itself. God does not see anything outside Himself, but I see something outside myself, and you see something outside yourself. The infection of the demons takes place. The war between the gods and the demons, to which I made reference a few minutes before, has already started. At once they fall upside-down. The little parts of the cosmic process appear to assert themselves independently, as it were. They attempt a cessation from their relation to the whole, and every little part of the cosmic process secedes by an affirmation of itself. This is the biblical story of the fall of Lucifer into the satanic condition where he asserted independence from God. Everyone falls, and they fall not with legs down and head up, but with head down and legs up, like Trishanku. So we see everything in reverse. The external appears as the internal, the internal looks like the external, the top looks like the bottom, the bottom looks

like the top, the right looks like the left, and the left looks like the right. Everything in our perception is topsy-turvy. We are all in this condition today, every one of us, all created beings whether celestial, human or subhuman. In this condition of a tragic performance of God's creation in which we are involved, what spiritual practice is possible?

Spiritual practice is possible, and it is necessary. We have to free our sense organs from the infection of the demoniacal forces of space and time—Shumba, Nishumba, and others. We should not think as we see or hear or taste or touch or smell, but we should think rationally in an independent manner. Is there such a thing as independent thinking? Have you ever heard of totally independent thinking? Mostly it is somehow or other influenced by conditions prevailing either in one's own mind and feelings, or outside in society. Geographical conditions, and historical and cultural backgrounds, all influence our thought. We think like a Hindu or a Muslim, like a Jew or a Christian. We think like a man or a woman. Can a man think that he is a woman? Can a woman think that she is a man? They think like men and women only. Why? It is because the consciousness has delved into this structural pattern of physiological differentiation, cultural disparity, difference of language, and so on.

In this difficulty, you are now to gird up your loins for an onward march in the direction of the attainment of that which was there before you fell down. You have to do a *sirsasana* of consciousness. The head of consciousness should be down, and the legs should be up. You do hatha yoga *sirasanas*, but a mental *sirsasana* is also necessary. That is, in spiritual practice you reverse the process of perception. Instead of seeing that something is outside you, you begin

to behold it as a part of you, so that you do not have to make a business bargain with that object. Our dealings with people are generally business-like, a give-and-take policy. Though we do not think it is so, it is really so. "What will come from that person, and what will not come? What is the outcome of my relationship to that person?" and so on, is the background of our thinking and activity. The intimate organic connection of your object with yourself is a remedy, a panacea for any kind of difficulty you will have in dealing with other people. Whatever you think about other people, they will also think about you. The world is not so far away from you, as I mentioned in earlier sessions. If you smile at the world, it will smile at you. If you grin at it, it will grin at you. If you say something to it, it will say something to you, like a mirror. Whatever you do to the mirror, it will do to you.

The desire to be sensorily happy, socially comfortable and physically in a state of pleasure, so strongly fixed in your mind and psyche, will not allow you to go ahead so easily like that. "Why not have a little physical comfort? What is the harm? I will have this gadget, and will watch some kind of performance that will give me satisfaction. What is the harm if people consider me a great man? Let me behave in such a way that people respect me. Why not have many followers? Why should I live alone like a pauper? Why should I not utilise the objects of the world for my satisfaction? To some extent, it is permissible. What is the harm?" These voices will slowly start manifesting themselves from inside and pour salt into the beautiful *kheer* of your attempt at God-realisation.

At the very outset in spiritual practice, what is essential is that you should have time to sit by yourself. All of you

may bestow some thought on it. Are you alone to yourself for some time in the day, or are you always with somebody or talking on the telephone? Think over this matter. Totally unseen by people, not seeing anybody, not talking to any person, closeted in your own room at least for one hour continuously—have you ever tried this? Many people become fidgety if they are alone. They immediately open the door and call out to somebody who is nearby: “Hello. How do you do?” Let him do anything, why are you worried? “How are you, sir?” Why are you unnecessarily interfering with people? It is accepted that you are busy people. Everybody has some occupation and you have to do hard work and contact people, but can you not sit alone for one hour in the early morning, after lunch, before dinner, after dinner, as the case may be?

You may wonder what you are to do by sitting alone. Let there be no such question. Let anything be thought by the mind: this thought, that thought, a distracted thought, a useful thought, a useless thought. You have a complaint that you are not thinking anything useful when you are alone. Let it be. Give a large margin to the mind that it can do whatever it likes, that it can go on dancing, but do not get up from that place. Sit. After some days or weeks of practice, the mere fact of your sitting, a kind of *asana jaya*, we may say, will physiologically compel the mind to behave properly. The body and the mind are intimately connected. Though for some time the mind may be erratically thinking a hundred things while the body is sitting quiet, it does not matter. Let it go on for even a month. The influence exerted by the stability of the body and the calmness of the muscles and the nerves will have such a sedative effect upon the mind that the mind will also become quiet.

Children in a family become naughty. They go on chatting and making noise. Let the parents keep quiet for some time. Father, mother, brother, sister, let them not speak while the children dance and make noise. They need not tell the children to keep quiet. They should keep quiet first. The parents should not speak. Let them keep quiet and not say anything. Let us see whether or not this calmness of the parents has any influence on the children. Without telling them anything, they will become calm because how long can they go on making noise when everyone else is keeping quiet?

The body, which is associated with the mind, is keeping quiet, and it is continuously keeping quiet. One hand cannot make a noise; two palms are required to make a clapping sound. The mind will automatically learn the lesson of being composed by its association with the composed body. So do not be upset, saying, "What am I to do by sitting alone? My mind is wandering in a hundred directions." Let it wander. After a month, you will see that you are perfectly fine. This is the first suggestion that I am giving to you so that you may compose yourself in yourself. Do not be disturbed. The world is very good, finally. It is your friend. It has a remedy for all problems.

In this way, you can achieve this little success in attaining mental composure. I am not saying you must be doing this the whole day because everybody has some routine of work, some duty, some office work and engagements. What I am suggesting is, only one hour a day may be devoted to this. No busy person can say he has not even one hour to spare. Certainly it is possible. If you have the will, there is a way.

After accommodating oneself to the practice of being alone for at least one hour every day, the next step would

be to organise the thoughts. "All sorts of thoughts were coming to my mind, and I don't know what I was thinking." Now take up a diary and a pen or a pencil. For one hour, what were you thinking? Make a list. A hundred thoughts came. Let the thoughts be jotted down. The next day also, do the same practice. This is a kind of spiritual diary I am suggesting.

There are two aspects of this practice. After a continuous attempt at jotting down all the thoughts that occurred to you in one hour, you will find they will slowly diminish in number because even a thief does not want to be looked at continuously. He will feel miserable. He will get up and go away. If you go on looking at some people, they do not like it and think, "What is the matter that they are going on looking at me?" They move away. So these thoughts which are now made a target of observation every day will see that they no longer become an object of your observation. The number of thoughts will slowly decrease, and you will find that one hundred will become ninety-nine, and so on, until they become fifty percent, thirty percent, etc. This will certainly take place without your actually having to put forth any special effort.

After achieving this very interesting success that has come to you like a windfall without your knowing that it will come, you begin to bestow some thought on the nature of the ideas that arose. "What are these thoughts that came to my mind? What did I think—fifty thoughts, thirty thoughts, twenty thoughts? Why have these thoughts come to me?" These thoughts say, "I want something." "I want to see." "I want to touch." "I want to go." "I want to do." Each thought should be taken independently, like a patient to be examined by a physician. A hundred patients

are not examined at one time, but each one is examined independently, and the others will be sitting there until the doctor calls. Each thought is to be taken up. Why has this thought arisen? It comes because there is a desire to obtain something.

As an educated person and a person with some common sense, you may think that you will know whether this desire is justifiable or totally unjustifiable, but you will never be able to make a judgment. Certain things look very bad from a traditional point of view, and certain things also look very good from the very same point of view. But spiritual ethics are a little different from social ethics. It is not just a heap of dos and don'ts. Read the Bible; does it tell you what to do and what not to do? Read the Manusmriti; does it tell you what to do and what not to do? Nothing of the kind. Even a doctor has to use common sense. It is not that this is the disease, so this is the medicine. It is not a computerisation or a statistics of the medicines that have to be given to the patient. It is a vital, on-the-spot, intuitive grasp by the doctor of the condition of the patient.

Your problem is not in the books; therefore, the solution cannot come from them. On *ekadasi* days, you should not eat. I am giving an example how you have to use common sense. Tradition says that you do not eat on that day. Suppose there is a person who has been deprived of diet for the last many days. He is emaciated. He is breathing his last, as it were, without proper food. It is *ekadasi*. Will you give him some suitable diet at that time to revive his consciousness—some little milk, some glucose? Or will you say that this is *ekadasi*, so today he must die? According to tradition he must die, but common sense says he must live. You should not steal. It is a tradition. Well, very good. You

should not take something which does not belong to you without the permission of the person who possesses that thing. Suppose there is a crazy man who is brandishing a sword and running here and there in the midst of a crowd of people, so you slowly go behind him and steal that sword. Is it a permissible stealth or a condemnable one? Therefore, sometimes stealing is good, and sometimes eating on *ekadasi* is also good. Drinking liquor is very bad. Nobody should drink liquor. If a person has fallen from a tree and is unconscious, doctors generally put a few drops of brandy in his mouth so that he regains consciousness. He is drinking a little brandy as a medicine. Every rule has an exception.

In spiritual practice these questions will come in hundreds galore. You will never be able to answer any question before you. Even if you have a headache, you will not know what is the matter with you. One day you will be despondent and will not like to speak. You tell your Guruji, "Today I cannot speak." Why should you not speak? Only Guruji will know your background. Your stomach will ache, your back will give pain, and all sorts of impediments will be before you. Sometimes you will even feel that the spiritual path is a meaningless attempt and you will get nothing out of it. All sorts of demons will come again and again and tell you, "Get up from this place. Why are you wasting your time? Do something better."

Ethical spirituality is a God-oriented envisagement of things. The ultimate purpose of spiritual vision is to see things as God sees them, to feel about things as God would feel about them and, if possible, to also work as God would work. Do you know that God sees everything? He knows that you are seated here. What is His opinion about you?

What does God think about you all? Incidentally, it is a good idea for you to bestow some thought: If God sees you, what will He think about you? “Idiot, fool!”—will He think like that? Will God think that you are a good-for-nothing, or will He think that you are a very wonderful being? You will be miserable even to think of such thoughts. You cannot go near Him.

Endeavour to develop the capacity to think in the way in which God would think. You will say, “How can I know what God thinks? Have I seen God?” You need not see God, but you can adjust your mind to the position or the locality of the existence of a total whole which sees all things with one eye. You may psychologically place yourself in the position of the Creator Himself. “I am the Creator of the cosmos. I am at the apex of creation, above space and time, and I am seeing all things. What do I think about this creation? This is my friend, this is my idiotic enemy, this is good for me, this I would like to have.” Will you think in this manner about things around you? You will have no such thoughts. You will see yourself spread out everywhere.

I am giving you a prescription to maintain a psychological awareness of what God would think, though you have not seen God. Though we have not seen God, we have some instrument in us which can tell us how God would be thinking. That is called the higher reason, the higher *buddhi*. *Uddhared ātmanātmānam nātmānam avasādayet, ātmaiva hyātmāno bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ* (B.G. 6.5). The lower mind says all things are divided, but the higher mind says the division consciousness arises on account of there being a consciousness which is not so divided.

Many people are sitting in front of me. How do I know that there are many people unless my consciousness is above

the manyness? If my consciousness is also divided and split into parts as the people seated in front of me, I would not know that many people are sitting there. I have a unifying consciousness in me which overcomes the limitations of that dividedness of people in front of me, and therefore I know that many people are sitting here. Otherwise, how can I comprehend manyness with my single mind?

There is a higher mind in us, which is superior to the dividing mind. It is the pure reason, as we call it, and it is a kind of ambassador of God. It will speak the message of God and tell you what you are supposed to do in light of God's requirements.

Thus, in your honestly attempted positive effort at achieving true spiritual success, do not be merely a routine performer of your mechanical devices of sadhana—chanting, reading, and so on. Let a vitality be injected into your daily practice, and try to know what you feel in your heart of hearts at the time of your performance.

In one sentence I conclude: Be aware that God sees you just now; and if He sees you, what does He think about you? Let your heart be satisfied that He thinks correctly about you.

## Chapter 5

### LIFTING THE CURTAIN OF SPACE-TIME

The intention of this Sadhana Week is to see that you benefit inwardly, spiritually, wholly, perfectly, and substantially. It is a very serious occupation. If the mind has not been satisfied, if the heart has not felt the touch of a transformation inside, if a modicum of change has not taken place in you for the betterment of your true being, your coming here may not be of much utility.

In this direction it is that we have been speaking and you have been hearing many things connected with this important aspect of your own personal life, because one day or the other this personal life will cease. It may be today; it may be tomorrow. You have lived a very comfortable social and physical life. All this will go like a wisp of wind when the call comes from above. When the time comes to leave this world, one may feel finally that one has achieved nothing and has done nothing worthwhile in this world. This should not be the fate of anyone. When you go, go smiling with a tremendous satisfaction that you have used this life for that purpose for which you have been brought here by the law of God. This satisfaction can arise in your mind only if you have done something for the benefit of your soul, and not merely for your family members, your office and your political structure. All these external

associations, which I mentioned as a foisting of false values on you by the interference of space and time, will make a mockery of you in the end. They will show their teeth: "See what you have done!" And you do not want to see the teeth of space and time when you leave this world.

The question arises now, after hearing all this that has been said, how you can overcome this impediment that seems to be there between you and the great blessedness that you are expecting to attain. Space and time are considered as a metaphysical barrier, a natural obstruction which manages to twist your very process of thinking and compel you to think wrongly, even if you feel that you are thinking rightly. The obstruction is the spatial and temporal way of thinking, to which we give the designation space and time.

For the time being, we shall confine ourselves to space only. If that impediment is overcome, time will also go. You will find that when the dog goes, its tail will also vanish. Space is nothing but the distance that you maintain between yourself and another. It is the distance that is maintained between consciousness and its object. This is called space.

From all the considerations on which we bestowed thought earlier, it will be clear to you that there is no such distance between things. There is some apparent distance between the head and the feet, maybe some five feet or six feet. You can measure this distance, and you accept that there is a distance, but really it is an organic oneness that is there between the head and the feet. You will never feel that you are so long, so high, so wide, etc., when you are looking at yourself or dealing with yourself. Are you always thinking that you are five feet or six feet tall? Why

do you not feel that your feet are so far away from your head, though it is a fact that there is some distance? The distance-consciousness gets transcended by the pervasion of an integral consciousness which is 'you'. I say, "I am here." I do not say "My head is here, my legs are here" though they are also there.

Now, here the spatial intervention is overcome by the very consciousness of the pervasion of your true being over and above all the limbs and the structural variety of your body. I mentioned that distance is nothing but the spatial difference that you seem to be seeing between yourself and another thing that you considered as an object. The moment you think, you think something. That 'something' is not the same as the thought. You do not think the thought itself. You think through the mind about something which is not the thought. Thus you create a gulf, psychologically or even physically, between the thought and its object. This is called space. As long as this spatial distance is there between consciousness and its object, whether it is physically seen or mentally conceived, you can never have contact with that object. Even if you see an object through glass, you cannot touch that object because of the impediment, the obstruction of a glass pane between you and the object. No object in this world can be contacted. Nothing can be possessed, finally. There will be bereavement, separation, isolation, loss, and a feeling of desolation in the end, after having tried your best to possess things and own all the wealth of the world. This is so because of the fact that this spatial distance between you and that which you considered as your possession or belonging will never allow you to possess anything.

Not only that, you cannot even come in contact with that thing. It appears that you are in contact with some

reality, but you are away from it. A curtain is there between you. Here, the curtain is spatial difference. Mark this word 'difference'. There is a difference between you and that which you want to possess. If this difference continues, how will you possess it? How can you possess anything when there is a difference between you and that which you want to possess? Is it not a fool's paradise in which you seem to be living and feeling a false satisfaction that you have property? Even the imagined distance between your feet and your head is a spatial intervention. That is why the body is called a mortal frame. Consciousness has no distance, due to which presence you do not feel the distance between your feet and your head. Yet, you can visibly measure this distance. That measuring process is made possible on account of the body being involved in space. A thing being in space means it is somewhere, and not somewhere else. A thing is only somewhere, and not everywhere. You are also somewhere, and not everywhere.

This great problem is before the spiritual seeker. For ever and ever, you will be in this mess. Even the gods are not always successful in their battles with the demons. Though they try with all their might, it is not always of much avail. Great masters tell us that the demons in the world are larger in number than the gods. That is to say, the objects of the world are larger than the subjective awareness of things. That is the implication.

Now you are face to face with a terrible situation. Are you to go from this world achieving nothing, or are you to become a better spiritual entity in your next birth? Merely because you want something, it does not necessarily mean that it shall come. It has to be asked for by the thing that you really are, and you should not ask from your mouth. If the

soul asks for a thing, it has to be supplied instantaneously. As Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to humorously say, the whole thing is a question of demand and supply. Ask and it shall be given. You may say you are asking every day, but you are asking through the mind, through the speech, through the throat, through the tongue, through your outer expression. The soul does not want it.

Go deep into your own recesses and put a question: Do you really want that which you are thinking that you want? You will be posing a tremendous question before yourself. We may not call ourselves hypocrites as that is a very strong word but, by impartially looking at our own selves, we may be convinced that we maintain a dual personality even in respect of our own selves. We seem to be wanting a betterment of our existence, but we would not like to give up the so-called associations with which we seem to be connected on account of these pleasurable situations created by the contact of space-time. This world is something for us, even now. "Maybe God is great, but what does it matter? The world is also something." Do you not feel like that, or do you feel that the world is nothing? Nobody will say that the world is nothing, because the soul has not felt the touch of the contact with that which it sees perfectly. The screen is there in front of the soul, and it is seeing God through the screen.

The Yoga System is the panacea before you. This is a medical science for the illness of humanity. Abolish the distance between you and that which you want, and it shall be yours. Instantaneously, the treasures of heaven will be on your lap, provided you do not maintain a distance between you and them, because you are unnecessarily creating a problem by feeling that they are outside you, separate

from you, and yet you want them. If they are not yours, they cannot come to you. If they are outside you, they mind their business. How can you ask for them? So let this psychological distance between you and the thing that you want, even if it is God Himself, be lifted. Let the curtain be lifted. How do you do this? This is the secret of spiritual meditation. Everybody is doing some meditation, but the crux of the matter may not be in your hand always. You go up to a certain distance in your meditation, and when the final step is to be taken, you are forced back. "Thus far and no further," says that which is there as a guard who will not allow you entry into this forbidden area. *Devair atrāpi vicikitsitam purā, na hi suvijñeyam, aṅur eṣa dharmaḥ* (Katha 1.1.21): "Even the gods are in doubt about this matter, my dear child," says Yama Dharmaraja to Nachiketas. "You, little lad, are coming and asking me questions of this kind of how you can pierce through space. Not even Indra's grandfather can understand this."

'Yoga samadhi' is the term we use for describing this intricate process of our plunging ourselves into this tremendous onslaught, we may say, with that which we want to grasp and make our own. If there is no distance between us and that which we want to make our own, it shall be ours in this moment, at this instant.

Again comes the question of how to proceed. There are various methods prescribed. I can suggest to you one or two at this moment. You must listen to me carefully in this matter. Instead of looking at a thing, look through that thing. Now I am seeing you in front of me. It shall be my endeavour to enter into you through my mind, thinking process or consciousness, and not see you, but see as you are seeing. I hope you catch the point. This process can be

applied to anything, even to a pillar. There is a pole. The pole is outside you. You have no right or authority over it. It is its own, and you are different from it. You enter into the pole by feeling that you yourself are the pole. The pole will immediately dance. That is how material objects can be moved by the thought of a person. You have heard that Sri Krishna lifted a mountain. How is it possible? Who can lift a mountain?

Are you lifting your hand? An ant cannot lift your hand. Your hand is like a hill to a little ant, but you do not feel the weight of it. An elephant has such thick legs that even two people cannot lift its leg, but does the elephant feel the weight of its leg? The elephant is so large that even a hundred people cannot lift it, but the elephant moves easily, as everybody moves. How is it that the weight of one's body is not felt, even by a heavy person? There are stout people who do not feel their weight. They can walk, but you cannot lift them. The consciousness of their body is identified with their body and their weight. Sri Krishna lifted the mountain because his relationship with the mountain was like the relationship of the body with its hand. I can tell my hand to lift, and it lifts. So he told the mountain to lift, and it lifted. It was not the mountain that he lifted; he lifted his own arm. By an expansion of his personality, he became the mountain itself.

Somebody else cannot be controlled. You can control only yourself. Nothing can be managed unless you are part of that management. If you are a boss, the subordinates will not obey. You must also become part and parcel of the atmosphere of the structure of the working pattern. You are the soul of the atmosphere of the work, and not a chairman sitting somewhere and ordering people to work.

A chairman cannot always succeed. The administration of an office is nothing but the pervasion of the spirit of the administrator throughout the entire atmosphere of the work, even if it is very large. Then he becomes an object of affection and consolation, and his word is respected, not feared.

So, in our meditations, which we practise for the purpose of the liberation of our soul, the soul has to divest itself of the spatial difference between itself and anything in this world. In the Eighth Chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishad there is a passage: Think a thing, and it is with you. Think of your departed father, and there he is standing before you. Think of the wealth of the world, and it is on your lap. Think of the gods in heaven, and they will descend just now. You may say that you have thought of them a hundred times but nobody came. It is because you were not thinking properly. You were thinking that they are outside you.

Moving away from the main subject for a little diversion, I shall relate to you what happened when Bharata went in search of Rama and had to stop for a night near the ashram of Sage Bharadwaja. The sage was living in a little hut in a thick forest filled with thorns and bushes so Bharata, knowing that the great master should not be disturbed by the noise of his trumpeting elephants and army, etc., which also followed him, told them to stop several miles away. He removed his royal dress and his footwear, put on an ordinary cloth, and humbly went to the sage.

He prostrated himself and said, "I am Bharata coming in search of my brother. Please bless me."

The sage said, "Bharata! You are coming from Ayodhya. Have you come alone?"

“No, Master. Thousands have come with me. I did not want to bring them here lest they disturb this holy atmosphere,” replied Bharata.

“No problem. All of them will come here today. Thousands will have dinner here,” said the sage.

Bharata was intrigued, amused, and did not know what to say. How could the sage feed some thousands, along with their animals? Nothing was there; he had only a little hut in the jungle.

The great master felt that Bharata did not believe him, that Bharata thought he was a pauper, so he said, “I am telling you, royal Bharata, bring everyone just now, including the horses and chariots and elephants and footmen and everybody. They shall have dinner here in my cottage.”

Bharata could not understand what kind of dinner the sage was going to give, but as great masters’ words have to be respected, Bharata brought all of them.

What did the sage do? He went into the *yajnasala*, poured some *ghee* into the fire and said, “Indra, come. Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, flow. Kubhera, bring your treasures. Gods in heaven, I have a good guest here. I want to feed him sumptuously with a divine dinner. Come!”

Light flashed in the whole forest. There was celestial music from all sides. The denizens of heaven descended with golden plates containing dishes that mortals have not tasted. Everywhere there were gardens and swimming pools and singing peacocks, and palatial buildings, thousands of houses and attendants and musicians.

Bharata thought, “Am I going crazy? Am I seeing things properly? Am I really seeing all these things, or am I dreaming?”

Sage Bharadwaja said, “All of you may be seated.”

Then the celestial angels served food in a masterly fashion, dishes which no mortal had tasted anywhere.

The soldiers felt, it seems, “Let Bharata go in search of Rama. We shall stay here. This is a nice place.”

This story is an indication of the power of consciousness when it identifies itself with the fourteen worlds. It was the work of the Vishvarupa that Sage Bharadwaja demonstrated.

Whatever one has achieved, another can also achieve. Everybody is heir apparent to the throne of immortality. You are the possessor of the treasures of God. Children of the Immortal, fear not, says the Upanishad: *amṛtasya putrāḥ* (S.U. 2.5).

In your meditation, then, what are you supposed to do? Abolish the consciousness of a difference between you and that which you think and see. Turn the tables around. Instead of looking at a thing, look through the thing. This is one simple recipe I am placing before you. I am not going into the details of any other yoga technique. This little thing will do for you. If you think through that thing which you otherwise think as an external somebody or something, immediately you become that thing. You have control over that thing in the same way as you have control over the limbs of your body. “Come!” means it comes. “Go!” means it goes. “Bring!” means it brings—not merely this thing or that thing, but the world as such.

When Sri Sukadeva—the great sage who gave the Bhagavata Mahapurana to Parikshit—as a little lad of sixteen years was unclad, walking unconscious of his body, the great master Vyasa Krishna Dvaipayana summoned him by loudly calling *putreti tan-mayatayā taravo bhinedus*

(S.B. 1.2.2): “My dear child, where are you?” And the response came from where? The response came from every leaf of every tree, from every flower, from every plant, and from every stone: “Father, I am here.” Everywhere were reverberations of this response, “Father, I am here.” Where are you? Everywhere. The soul had permeated the fibrous structure of every leaf of the trees.

You may be thinking, “This is a terrible thing. I am not meant for it.” I am telling you that you are meant for it. Doubt about one’s own self is a worse evil than doubt about other people. You doubt your own self. Can there be a greater tragedy for you than that? “We are our own traitors,” said the poet. Doubts are our traitors. There are no traitors in this world except our doubts about our own selves. You say, “I am incapable.” Instead you should say, “I am capable. I am honest in my asking. I love God sincerely. I have not deceived people. I have not harmed anybody. There is nothing wrong with me. Why should I have any diffidence? Certainly I will have it. Yes, I have girded up my loins for this achievement.” Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Patanjali Maharshi, the Bhagavadgita, the Upanishads, the Bible, and so on, all give the same message.

Once again, I come to the point that I mentioned in the previous session. Every day, find one hour for yourself to think like this. If you can find more time and you can entertain this inner thought even during your busy hours, there is nothing wrong. Even if you are very busy, very much occupied, you cannot afford to forget this essential thing. If a large amount of cash is in your hand, will you forget that it is there even if you are busy in an office? You may be doing any work, but you will be conscious that something is there. If you can be conscious of the treasure

in your pocket together with being conscious of all the work that you do, why should you not be conscious of this greater treasure when you are busy with other work? It is a question of wanting. You see the value of that which is in your pocket, but you do not seem to be seeing that much value in that which looks like an abstract occupation of the mind and not a reality for you. Very unfortunately, you feel that the world is a reality, and that for which you are asking is an ethereal, otherworldly abstraction. The reverse is the case. This world is the ethereal abstraction; it is an illusion, and the reality is somewhere else.

Thus, the meditation should be carried on every day. Adopt only one method: See through the thing by being that thing. It may be anything in this world. Immediately you will become the friend of all people. In one second you are the friend of all people, and whatever you feel about others, others will also feel about you. The world is ready to be at your service, provided you are ready to consider it as your friend and well-wisher. Are you not inextricably involved in the fabric of the structure of the universe? Where is your friend? Where is your enemy? Why harbour evil in the heart of hearts, making remarks about things and talking nonsense about whatever you see? As I told you, you cannot see things properly because the demons have attacked the eyes. Therefore, you see beautiful and ugly, pleasant and unpleasant, sweet and bitter, soft and hard, though no such things exist in the world. The beautiful and the ugly do not exist, and so on. The demonical attack of space and time is the cause of your seeing such duality perception, the worst thing being the duality between you and others, between yourself and the world, between yourself and God Himself.

Thus, get up in the morning and be seated on your bed. If you want to have your ablutions, have them; if not, be seated there itself. Close your eyes for a few minutes and chant Aaaaauuuummmmmmm, Aaaaauuuummmmmmm, Aaaaauuuummmmmmm. Do not say Om, Om, Om, Om, Om. Chant sonorously, melodiously, musically, harmoniously, beautifully, and a vibration will be generated in your body. You will feel a thrill, as if ants are crawling through your nerves. The distracted manner in which the pranas move in many directions through the body will get focussed into a harmonious movement. You will feel a titillation and a sensation of movement throughout the body. A pleasurable sensation will be felt inside if this chant is sonorously, calmly, beautifully carried on for at least fifteen minutes. You will be healthier in your body, more composed in your mind, and blissful within. Then, after this chanting, the mind operates in the direction of these principles that have been placed before you.

For these several days you have heard so many things, but you will not be able to remember them always. Some five percent of what you have heard may be in your mind; ninety-five percent has gone because of the inability of the mind to grasp everything that is told. Therefore, Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's advice is: When you go to a satsang, have a diary or a paper and a pencil with you. Take down important points that have been told to you. Who can remember everything? This point has struck you, that point has struck you; write them down. Then go to your room and ponder over these thoughts. You have attended many satsangs, and many mahatmas, many great, learned people might have told you interesting things. One thousand things you have heard, and how much can you remember?

Make a note of all these things. Let your diary be a scripture for you. Go on brooding, thinking, contemplating.

After hearing all this, you will have a problem of how to practise. In the earlier stages you seem to be quite at hand with all these things that have been told to you. It is after several days of attempt that you will find that you are not up to the mark. You will never be able to practise this technique that I told you. The mind will refuse to do that. At that time, take a trip from your house to the place where you find guidance. Be there for one or two days and tell your guide, "I have missed the point. Simple though it appeared, I am not able to catch it. I cannot turn the tables round and make my mind think reversely. I think objectively, but I cannot think subjectively. I can think of the object, but I cannot think as the object. This is not possible." You have understood what I said. Even now you know what it is. Perhaps you are able to think it just now, but after some time it goes. You will think of *roti, chapatti, sabji*, this and that. It is still an outside object.

The daily practice of a session in the early morning hours or in the evening, as the case may be, for even a few minutes, will have a salubrious effect on your personality. If all this mental exercise is hard for reasons of your own, take a passage of a scripture such as the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgita. *Nāhaṁ vedair na tapasā na dānena na cejyayā, śakya evaṁvidho draṣṭuṁ drṣṭavān asi mām yathā* (B.G. 11.53): "Nobody can behold Me in this way as you have seen Me, O Arjuna. Everybody sees Me as if I am in heaven, in Vaikunta, in Kailasa or in Brahmaloaka. They do not know where I am, really. I am there where the seer of Me himself is, herself is, itself is." This Great Being whom you are beholding is not anywhere else than in the heart

of hearts of the one who beholds it. This is the reason why there was fright in the mind of Arjuna when he beheld it. It looks as if you are about to swallow the whole ocean through your little mouth, and it has inundated your whole personality.

A passage from the Bhagavadgita may be studied every day. A passage from the Isavasya Upanishad may also be studied: *Īśāvāśyam idaṁ sarvaṁ* (Isa 1.1), or any passage from any Upanishad or from the Ramayana or the Srimad Bhagavata may be studied.

When Sri Krishna was tending the cows and Brahma took them all away, he became not merely the cattle, he became the cowherds, and even the sticks of the cowherds, with the same height and length, and with the same knots. Every little thing was perfect. *Sarvaṁ viṣṇumayaṁ giro 'ṅga-vad ajaḥ sarva-svarūpo babhau* (S.B. 10.13.19), says Suka Maharshi in this great context. *Sarvaṁ viṣṇumayaṁ*: All this is the Absolute Supreme Being. This verse manifested itself physically, as it were, palpably, visibly and materially when Sri Krishna became even the bamboo sticks with the same number of knots, and the same faces, the same manner of speaking, the same gesticulations as the cowherds and the cattle. O wonder! *Sarvaṁ viṣṇumayaṁ giro 'ṅga-vad ajaḥ sarva-svarūpo babhau*. You will be thrilled by hearing all this. These little things that you hear are not merely stories told to you, but are medicines which will purge you of all the dross in your personality. You become clarified, cleansed completely.

After a few days here, will you become a different person when you go back? No, you will not. This is only a recharging of your batteries while you are here, but it has to work continuously, even when you are elsewhere. Knowing

that this life is short, knowing that the call can come at any moment, knowing that nothing can come with you, not even your closest friends, be cautious. Do not be heedless. Every night, go to bed with a feeling that tomorrow morning you will not wake up. This is one of the instructions of great sages. Your balance sheet is closed tonight, and there are no figures carried forward; otherwise, the figures will come up. Today is your last day, and if tomorrow you wake up, it is a long lease given to you by God; and if you do not wake up, well and good, you have cleared your accounts. No unfulfilled desire may be maintained in the mind when you go to bed; otherwise, you will have to reap it in the next birth. Do not owe something to somebody when you go to bed. Discharge the debt today itself; otherwise, you will have to repay it in the next birth. When you go to bed, do not have the feeling that you owe something to someone. Do not have the feeling that you have hurt somebody's feelings. Immediately go and touch the feet of that person and say, "I am very sorry. I cannot sleep because I have done this. Excuse me." Then the heart is calm. Go calmly to your bed thinking, "I have not hurt anybody. I owe no debt to any person, and I have not begged anything from anybody. My accounts are clear. I go freely." It may be that you shall get up in the morning, or you may not, also. So why take a risk?

Someone said, "If God does not exist, it does not matter; you need have no fear. But suppose He exists? Be careful. See what will happen to you." So if you continue to exist tomorrow, it is the grace of God. If you do not exist tomorrow, what will happen? Where will you go? What will be your condition then? Who will receive you? What laws will operate in that new world? Who will

call you their own? Those people whom you considered as yours will leave you, depart from you at the cremation ground. Those people, those things, those laws whom you disregarded as if they never existed will be there face to face with you: "Do you recognise us?" Do not have that question posed to you. Be a friend of all the laws of nature, of all the fourteen realms: Bhuloka, etc., till Satyaloka. Be a friend of the world that God has created. Be a blessed soul, and the world will be yours. God shall be yours.

Therefore, have this little program, as I suggested. I am repeating the same thing again and again. Be alone to yourself for some time every day, because it is the most difficult thing for you. You are always busy running here and there; but if you want to mind your business, and if you think that you are also something worthwhile in this world and not only business is important, that you are also important to some extent, and if you honestly feel that something good should be done to you, you have to find time for it. Some price has to be paid for all things, whatever they are. Thus is the message of the great saints and sages, the masters of yore.

Be happy. Be happy because you have not borrowed anything from anybody. Be happy that you have not hurt the feelings of anybody. Be happy that you have not uttered unkind words about any other person. You have seen things as God would see; you have performed your actions as God would expect you to perform them. You have lived here as an ambassador of God Almighty, which you really are, as a representative of That which sent you here for Its purpose. With this message planted in your heart, rejoice, be thrilled, dance in ecstasy, and be blessed.

## Chapter 6

### SADHANA CHATUSHTAYA

Forces of the world are going to be friendly with us. God is waiting for our arrival there. But we also have to bestow some thought on another important aspect of this matter. How are we to make ourselves a fitting instrument and a proper conducting medium for the influx of universal forces into ourselves? The medium of contact is as important as that which will flow through that medium into the expected location. This is the very specific practical side of something that we are expected to do about our own selves. An unfit instrument cannot be a good conductor of powerful forces. These ways and means of making ourselves fit for the reception of divine grace, and for the entry of universal forces into our own selves, are traditionally known as *sadhana chatushtaya*, a fourfold discipline of one's own self. Discipline implies a restraint of the usual impulses of the psychophysical personality. The usual impulses are well known to you because you have been hearing about them for some days, the impulses being those which operate in terms of the conditioning factors imposed upon us by space, time and externality.

To withdraw ourselves from excessive involvement in this conditioning factor which is externalising us and making us sensorily, physically, socially, externally motivated—to

withdraw ourselves from these usual well-known normal impulses, which actually are not normal—this whole process is called discipline, the bringing about of a total integration of our own selves. We have to be ourselves before God becomes what He is to us.

*Sadhana chatushtaya* is the fourfold way of self-control, cleansing oneself, purifying oneself, making oneself fit for the entry of that which is supremely divine. These four ways or methods of practice are known as *viveka*, *vairagya*, *shad-sampat* and *mumukshutva*.

When we are after something, we must know what it is that we are after. This clarity by which we know what it is that we want, as distinguished from that which is different from what we want—a discrimination that we exercise in knowing what it is that we are after, what it is that we are expecting, other than what is secondary and redundant—this faculty of inner discrimination is called *viveka*, correct understanding. What is correct understanding? It is the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood. What is the truth here, and what is the falsehood? The falsehood is the appearance before us in terms of the variety of objects of sense, this vast creation of space and time which acts as a screen before us, preventing us from visualising what is behind the screen; and what is behind the screen is Truth. The distinction between these two aspects of experience has to be drawn.

To some extent, we are emotionally conscious of what it is that we are expecting in our aspirations. Young children, boys and girls brought up in a religious atmosphere, are after a religious life. “I chant the name of God. I pray to God. I live a life of religion.” These ideas are not uncommon among children, perhaps known to them through their

parents, but they may not be clear in their minds as to what they actually mean when they speak like that.

When we want to become religious, what do we really mean? The meaning is, we have immediately differentiated between the kind of life that we wish to live, and the kind of life that we have been accustomed to. All that is necessary to enable us to perceive Truth behind the curtain is the discipline spoken of, as anything that will give us a temporary satisfaction through the sense organs and the body is that which has to be abandoned for the time being.

When we are after something, we have to pursue it. A research scientist in a laboratory, pursuing a course of tremendously important investigation into the structural pattern of certain subtle things, will not remember whether it is lunchtime or breakfast time, or whether it is daytime or night time, or whether anybody else is there at all. An automatic discrimination takes place in the laboratory because of the concentration of the mind on what is there before one's aim, and all other things become redundant.

Now, this capacity in us to distinguish between what is redundant in this world and that which is essential for making ourselves fit to tread the path of Truth is discrimination, called *viveka*. When we know what is necessary and what is unnecessary, what is proper and what is improper through this exercise of *viveka*, we also know what is to be rejected and what is to be caught hold of. That process of rejection of what is unnecessary, redundant, meaningless, an interference, is called *vairagya*. It is the understanding of the meaninglessness of certain things we are pursuing that will enable us to abandon them from our considerations in daily life.

There is a sutra in Sankhya which says that always thinking of something which is not connected with our spiritual progress becomes our bondage, as it was in the case of Jada Bharata, whose story is told in the Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana, because whatever your heart is contemplating, that alone will you get. Your heart cannot contemplate a thing in the world and then be able to direct the aspiration towards something which is beyond the world. A careful distinction between the necessary and the unnecessary, the meaningful and the meaningless, the beneficial and the harmful, is the principle of renunciation. It is not that we are abandoning a part of the world for the sake of catching some other part of the world, and it is not even that we are thinking of another world and totally rejecting its connection with the present world. That also is not so. We are thinking of the present relevance of certain factors in the context of our existing condition of spiritual endeavour.

It is not true that everything is irrelevant at all times, and it is also not true that all things are useful always. Here is a difficulty in understanding how we are to conduct ourselves in the spirit of renunciation. What are we to abandon? At every stage, the factor that is to be abandoned changes. So there is a perpetual vigilance required on our part to understand what it is that we have to take hold of, and what it is that we have to abandon.

As we advance further and further on the path, as light dawns more and more clearly before us, the idea of what is essential and what is not essential will also vary according to the context and the position in which we are placed at that time. Therefore, there is nothing which we can totally avoid always, but there is also nothing which we can cling to

always. All things are what they are. We cannot love a thing permanently, and we cannot hate a thing permanently. It is not true that we always want the same thing, and it is also not true that we never want it. The world is relative. It is an internal adjustment of parts into the pattern of the whole, which also changes its characteristics as the wholeness goes on advancing from its lower condition to its higher condition.

Here, I would like to mention what this wholeness is. A newborn baby is a whole individual. When it grows, it is a whole individual. When it becomes an adolescent, it is a whole individual. When it is an adult, it is a whole individual. An old man is also a whole individual. Even the little embryo of the child in the womb is also a whole conspectus which will develop into larger and larger wholes. The world is not working on the principle of fractions connected with fractions. It is always a movement from whole to whole. This is what is sometimes called holistic evolution in modern philosophical language.

Yet, there is a difference between these wholes. One paise is a whole money by itself; it is complete in itself. A rupee is a complete money by itself. A penny is a whole money, and a pound is a whole money. They are not to be considered as fractions. They are entirely complete in themselves. Even an insect is a whole by itself. It is not a part or a fraction of existence. An ant is a complete individual, as complete as an elephant. The hunger and the appetite and the likes and dislikes of an ant are similar to those of an elephant. The pinch of hunger which an ant feels is as intense as that which an elephant feels. The size of the body is not of any significance here. It is wholeness that characterises the whole situation.

Our mental structure is also a whole. We do not think in parts or bits. The mind operates as a whole, and never as a bit or a part. Though we are apparently thinking only of some particular thing, that apparently particular thought that we are thinking at a given moment of time is inwardly connected to other parts which are not consciously connected with this particular part that we are thinking of, but which subconsciously influence it.

There are strata of the mind. Many categories are there, of which three are important: the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious. You are now on the conscious level, but you also have an unconscious existence which is deeply hidden within you and is covered over by the impress exerted upon it by the conscious mind in the waking state. You are not thinking for the whole day the very thing that you are thinking just now. There is a force exerted upon you to think in only one way because of the particular nature of this session. When you get up from this place and go into the kitchen, your mind will think in a different manner; and in days to come, when you advance in age, the hidden store of your subconscious will manifest itself little by little into the conscious mind. What is inside you will condition and determine what you think outwardly in your waking experience. And there are greater secrets in yourself. There is the vast soul of the unconscious, which is nothing but a cloud of unknowing, as it is called, a large mass of dark layers piled up one over the other of forces of thoughts, feelings and actions accumulated during all the lives through which you have passed, right from creation. They are your creditors. They are waiting to see when they can contact you. They contact you only during the waking state. At other times you are not conscious of their

existence, as you are not always conscious of everything. So a little of something from inside comes up at a given moment of time, as people come out of ambush only when it is time for them to come. Now these forces are all lying inside in ambush, and you think everything is heaven. It is nothing of the kind. The entire world of every kind of intricacy is hidden inside you.

Due to this fact of the tremendous stratified nature of your own individuality, the understanding of what is to be abandoned and renounced is a graduated process of a further advancement of your own consciousness and experience, and at every moment you will have to change your idea of what is to be renounced and what is to be grasped. Here, again, is the necessity for a guide. It is like walking on a tightrope in a circus or rowing a boat on a flooded river. This is *viveka* and *vairagya*.

*Dr̥ṣṭa ānuśravika viṣaya vitṛṣṇasya* (Y.S. 1.15): To one who is totally free from the desire to contact that which is seen as well as heard, true *vairagya* dawns. There are some things which you see and some things which you hear. That which you see is, of course, very clear to you, and you would like to have these things which you see. Certain glories are only heard about, such as glorious things in another country, so you would like to make a trip to that place. Glorious things are in the heavens, and the heavens are described in the scriptures in very attractive terms, so you would like to go there and have a little experience of it. Those people who do not entertain a desire for anything that is seen with the eyes or even heard about—*vaśīkārasamjñā vairāgyam*—to such persons comes a kind of renunciate spirit which is called *vasikara*, a power of control exercised, or capable of being exercised, on anything.

Only he who has renounced a thing can control a thing. A master of things is a person who wants nothing from anything. He who wants a thing has no control over it, and cannot get it. You cannot get that which you want. Only that which you do not want will come to you, because in your wanting it you commit a mistake of keeping that object outside you by thinking, "You are there." And it will reply, "If I am there, why should I come to you?" No desire can be completely fulfilled because of this basic psychological error in even exercising the desire. You are wanting and not wanting a thing at the same time by saying that you want it. You may be glibly saying that you want a thing, but in that process of wanting you have kept the object outside you, without doing which you cannot even want it. If it is not outside you, there is no wanting. So what are you wanting, finally? You can imagine the illusion and the delusion behind wanting itself. Can you understand this difficulty before you? Every desire is a self-contradiction because to desire a thing, it should be other than you, and if it is other than you, you cannot get it. Then what is the purpose of desiring anything? It is a fool's paradise. Thus, inwardly exercise this spirit of control over your own self, by which you will have control over everything. So much about *viveka* and *vairagya*, discrimination and the spirit of renunciation.

There is a third thing which is very important, and it is connected with your feelings and emotions. *Viveka* and *vairagya* are more of an intellectual and rationalistic nature, where you have to exercise your understanding and logical thinking much more than anything else. But there is something else, which is called your feelings. "Whatever be the thing you say, I want this." This is what the heart of hearts will tell you. This heart has also to be disciplined in

the same way as the intellect has to be disciplined through *viveka* and *vairagya*. Your heart is yourself. Your brain and intellect are not so connected with your existence as your feelings and heart. "My heart is what I am." Now, this third requisite is called *shad-sampat*, the acquisition of six virtues. They are called *sampat* because they are actually treasures, very valuable things. The six virtues are *sama*, *dama*, *uparati*, *titiksha*, *sraddha* and *samadhana*.

*Sama* is a determination on your part to be always calm and quiet under any kind of condition, even aggressive conditions. It is very important. Hate does not cease by hate. Hate ceases by love. Reaction is not the way in which you have to conduct yourself towards an action. Two persons are necessary to quarrel, and you need not be a party in that. Restrain your mind with the help of the understanding that you have already exercised through *viveka* and *vairagya*.

*Sama* is the restraint of the internal organ, which is the mind, and *dama* is the restraint of the sense organs, the discipline of the organs outside. There is a distinction between the internal organ and the external organs. The internal organ, or the psyche proper, is called the *antahkarana chatushtaya*. *Mano buddhi ahankara chitta*: the mind that thinks, the *buddhi* or intellect that decides and determines, the *ahankara* that identifies everything with itself, and the *chitta* or memory that remembers past things; these are, broadly speaking, the functional aspects of the psyche. Because they are four, they are called *chatushtaya*; and because it is an internal faculty, it is called *antahkarana*, not external. That is the mind. In Western psychology, the word 'mind' is used for all these four aspects. Sometimes they divide the mind into understanding, feeling and

willing. This is the limitation of psychology in Western thought. But there is much more about the mind than only this threefold classification. So much about the internal organ, about which we said *sama* is to be exercised.

*Dama* is the restraint of the five organs—the eyes, the ears and sensations of every kind. There are five senses of knowledge and five organs of action. The eyes have a passion to see certain things, and there is a passion for every sense organ. Passion is an uncontrollable desire. A desire that has overcome you and flooded you is called passion. Desire is the beginning stage of an overwhelming, consuming longing. Desires insinuate themselves into you gradually, like diseases that crop up inside without your knowing that they are there and manifest themselves only afterwards through the body.

The assistance that you can have in the practice of this kind of control over the sense organs is to live in a place where there is not so much attraction. It does not mean that merely the absence of the physical existence of objects of attraction will make you free from the attraction. Even then, it is one method—the quarantine method, as it is called. You should not completely sever the connection of the senses from their objects. Then they will revolt. You must give up the sense objects little by little, like people who want to give up cigarette smoking. If someone smokes fifty times today and you tell him to give it up tomorrow, that is not very intelligent advice. If today it is fifty, tomorrow it is forty-nine. He will not feel the pinch of it so badly because only one has been reduced. Like that it becomes forty-eight, forty-seven, etc., and gradually the number diminishes until he becomes accustomed to smoking less. Simultaneously with the reduction of the number of

cigarettes, there is also a suggestion to divert the mind into a more positive occupation. Instead of smoking, have a cup of tea, because you want some kind of titillation. A cup of tea is not as harmful as a cigarette, so have something like that, some occupation so that there is a reduction of the quantum of longing on the one hand and an alternative substitute for this desire on the other hand.

Homoeopathic doctors give a medicine called *tobaccum* to those people who are addicted to tobacco. It has the effect of producing the sensation of actual tobacco, but homoeopathic methods do not work like allopathic drugs; their methods of working are different. They appear to create a sensation of the same thing that you want to avoid, but they actually work differently, contrarily, and reduce that longing. This is how you can handle your mind and sense organs. I am not going to tell you much about all the sense organs; you can use your own discretion to know what the sense organs are. Even when you handle a rogue or a thief, you must use your discretion. You must be cautious, and not go headlong. Be very careful, very careful.

I usually relate an old Chinese anecdote in connection with self-control. The mind is like a wild bull. You cannot go near it. From a distance the bull will snort and try to gore you. Your intention is to sit on it and ride it, but at present you cannot go near it. From one furlong it will look at you with ferocity. What is the method to tame it? The first step is to put a fence around the place where the bull is. It may be one furlong. Now you know that the bull cannot go outside that barrier. You have gone one step forward in the art of controlling this wild bull. Though not much has been achieved, something has been achieved; you need not be afraid that it will come and attack you. It cannot reach

you because you have put a fence around it. This is the first step.

What is the second step? Bring green grass and throw it inside the fence. The bull will come near. It is not fond of you, and it will gaze at you with ferocity even now, but it will come to eat the grass. It will go on looking at you, gazing at you, and then it will eat the grass. Do this practice every day so that every day it sees you and gets accustomed to your presence there.

Then what do you do? The third step is to hold the grass in your hand and thrust it through the wire fencing, but do not throw it down. The bull will come near you and eat that grass with a lesser ferocity in its mind. You have taken three steps: first the bull is very far, then it is nearby, and now it is almost touching you. You can even pat it on its head. It will do nothing because it has become accustomed to your presence there with green grass. Then go on patting its head every day until it ceases making a threatening sound towards you. Hold its horn, but stand outside the fence. It will do nothing to you; it will be gazing, even trying to lick your hand. Then slowly open a little passage in the fence and touch the bull. The fear has gone. It does not fear you, and you no longer fear it. Keep touching it and patting it on the back. Then you can hug it. It will become your friend. You can sit on it and ride it. You have mastered it.

The mind is like a wild bull. In the beginning, it is atrocious and impossible to handle. It will not yield even one inch to your requirement. With the help of your Guru, try to find out how you can apply the logic of this anecdote in your daily practice. Do not hate what you would like to avoid. Understand how to handle that which you would like to avoid. Even if there is a person who is something

like an enemy, do not say, "Hey, you are my enemy." This is not the way of handling it. No public relations officer will speak like that in an atmosphere of coordination, which is necessary. The art of handling things is actually the art of life, and these things include your own self. This art of handling things, including yourself, is the art of harmoniously, cooperatively, organically, holistically associating yourself with whatever it is. *Sama* and *dama*, therefore, mean internal control of the mind and external restraint of the sense organs.

*Uparati* is cessation of all worldly longings. "I have eaten well for sixty years. What is the use of going on eating well?" The same thing you are eating every day, but the desire to eat is not leaving you. You have put on nice clothing, have you not? Why do you go on wanting more and more nice dhotis, saris, and a good diet? You have lived in a good house. How many times will you go on asking for a new house? You have land. You have enjoyed the harvest. Why do you go on repeating it again and again? You have had enough of it. Desire is like a gulf which will swallow any amount of water, and however much you may try to feed it, it will not be satisfied. *Na jātu kamaḥ kāmānām upabhogena śhānyati, haṁṣhā kṛṣṇa-vartmeva bhūya evābhivardhate* (S.B. 9.9.14): Desire cannot be quenched by the fulfilment of desire. Desire increases by its fulfilment, as when clarified butter is poured over fire it increases the ferocity of the flame; it does not make it cease. No desire can be fulfilled by its fulfilment. Knowing this, the Yoga Vasishtha says that all the wheat and the rice and the delicacies and the wealth of the whole Earth cannot satisfy even one person completely. Such is the vastness of human desire. Knowing this, be calm. This is *uparati*.

*Titiksha* means a kind of endurance and tolerance that you have to exercise. You cannot expect everything to take place the way you want it to. Things are not always at your beck and call. Where it is possible to change a thing, you can change it. Where you cannot change a thing, you have to bear it. There is an old saying, "Give me the power to change what I can, the will to bear what I cannot, and the wisdom to know the difference." The difficulty is, you cannot know the difference between what you can change and what you cannot change. This mixture of two aspects causes tension in the mind. So bear what you cannot change, and change it if you can. If you can change the world, change it. Who is objecting? But if you cannot change it, tolerate it; otherwise, you will be in emotional tension. Be not in that condition. *Uparati* is cessation of desire; *titiksha* is tolerance in regard to conditions prevailing outside, natural as well as social.

*Sraddha* is faith in that which you are asking for. You should not go to God doubting whether He is there or not. "O God, if You are there, please come." He is certainly there. "God is certainly there. It is certain that I am going to attain Him. It is certain that the method I am adopting is correct. It is certain that I am progressing every day. I have signs and experiences which tell me that I am progressing every day." Have faith in yourself, faith in the art of the progressive practice of sadhana, faith in God Himself, faith in the scriptures which are your guides, and faith in the Guru. *Sraddha* is faith in your own self first, faith in the method of practice which you are adopting, faith in your Guru who has initiated you, and faith in the existence of God.

*Samadhana* is concentration of mind. Always be attentive on that which you are seeking. Your eye is

always on that, like the consciousness of a bowman who strikes the target with an arrow. Concentration is the consciousness inside, fixing itself with its attention on that which it wants. When you want a thing, why should you not be concentrating on it? People say, "I want a thing, but my mind cannot go there." The reason is that you do not really want it. You have got a divided psyche; much of the mind goes somewhere else, and a fraction of it goes to what you are thinking you want. If you really want a thing, the mind must go there; and when the mind is not going there, you are not really wanting it. Thus knowing, concentrate your mind.

*Sama, dama, uparati, titiksha, sraddha, samadhana* are the six virtues, the six treasures that you have to psychologically, emotionally, feelingfully entertain in yourself. You will be happy inside. Through *viveka* and *vairagya* you become clarified in your understanding; through the sixfold virtues you become calm in heart and mind.

Then comes the last stroke—the last, but not the least: *mumukshutva*, intense longing for it. Actually, it is said that there is no qualification necessary on your part except wanting it. If you want it, it has to come. This applies to anything. Even a mountain will move if you want it to. "O ye of little faith, if you have a modicum of faith the size of a mustard seed, tell the mountain to move and it shall move." This is a passage from the New Testament. But a mustard seed of faith is not there, so why will it move? If you are already certain that it cannot move, what is the use of telling it to move? *Mumukshutva* is wanting it. You have to remember this. If you want a thing from the bottom of your heart, it shall be given to you. It may be given to you today itself. It depends upon the intensity of your

longing. A very intense longing means today it shall come. With a mild longing, it may come after some days; a very lukewarm wanting means that thing will be provided to you in the next birth, or after ten births. But what you want must be given. You must know what it is that you want. Do not want the wrong things.

By the clarified understanding through *viveka* and *vairagya*, and by the discipline of the *shad-sampat* method, know what it is that you are longing for, and ask from the bottom of your heart; it shall be poured upon you. Like the cloud of virtue pouring a rain of nectar through a samadhi called *dharma megha*, to put it in the language of Patanjali Maharshi, God's grace will be showered upon you as a monsoon flood pouring from all sides and making you feel a thrill of completion which passes understanding. These are the *sadhana chatushtaya*—*viveka*, *vairagya*, *shad-sampat*, *mumukshutva*. These are the ways by which you can make yourself a suitable conducting medium for the ingress of forces which are universal in their nature, natural as well as divine.

During these days I have talked to you sufficiently on almost every aspect of spiritual life, leaving nothing unsaid. All kinds of things, inward as well as outward, visible and invisible, near and remote, subtle and obvious, everything has been placed before you on a golden plate in this holy atmosphere. Receive this gift from Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Be blessed. God bless you.