

# **The Great System of Yoga Propounded by Patanjali**



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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

People the world over are not only acquainted with the word 'yoga' but there may be perhaps as many ideas or definitions of yoga as there are people in the world. It is often said that there is a world under every hat, so each person has his own or her own concept of what yoga is, which is sometimes overemphasised, sometimes underestimated, sometimes misconstrued, and oftentimes deliberately misrepresented due to motives of one's own.

But seekers of what we may call perfection, call it God or by any name you like, would do well to take things seriously and not to dabble with the subject as a sociological problem or something that will win you name, fame and wealth. Nothing of the kind is yoga. It is something which is as dear to you as anything else. Nothing can be dearer to you than yoga, if you can know what it really means. It is not merely a subject that you choose for your studies as in college in order to get a degree. It is a system which you are trying to accommodate into your own personal and practical day-to-day life as an art by which you place yourself in a greater proximity to that great ideal of all life than is your circumstance or situation today at this hour.

There is a glib definition of yoga as union, an offhand description of it with which you are all familiar, but it is not easily intelligible as to what this union is about. Who is going to be united with what, and what for is this union, are also doubts that may occur to your minds. Firstly, it may not be clear as to which items are to be united in this so-called union called yoga. The second thing is, why should you struggle with that union? What do you gain out of it? What is

the purpose? What is the mystery about it? These psychological difficulties may present themselves, all which have to be cleared at the very outset.

The system of yoga is a practice, and this practice is nothing but the conduct of your life in your day-to-day affairs. In the light of the nature of things, or we may say in the light of the structure of the universe, we cannot behave in a way which is irrelevant to the nature of things because we are in the world; we are not outside the world. Hence, the system or principle that is operating behind the world, or the universe, will expect us to respect the law which is reigning supreme in the universe, and anyone who is adamant enough to turn a deaf ear to the calls of the law of life will be penalised by the law by an automatic working of this great rule of the universe.

The system of the universe is so spontaneous and automatic that it does not require an operator. In a way, we may say the universe works like a large computer system. It works of its own accord. A reaction is set to action automatically, without any person operating this machine. Action and reaction are equal and opposite, which is something known to everyone in the physical and mathematical realms. This is so because of the arrangement of things called the universe. Never forget that you are not outside the world or the universe. Neither are you outside human society, nor are you outside the world, this planet Earth, nor are you outside this astronomical cosmos. Inasmuch as you are inseparably related to this large atmosphere called human society, the world or the universe, your conduct should be in consonance with the way in which the large atmosphere of the universe works. To put it more precisely and pointedly, it may be said that yoga is that necessary character and conduct of the personality or the

individuality which abides by the requisition of the law of the universe.

We many a time go wrong in our outlook of life, in our judgment of things, and in our behaviour in general due to the fact that we have no adequate knowledge of the way in which the universe is working; therefore, we do not know precisely what our relation to the universe is. It follows naturally from this ignorance that our conduct in life can be an aberration from the requirement of the laws or the rules of the universe.

Hence, the first and foremost thing that would be required of us as students of yoga would be not to suddenly jump into certain techniques of practice, because the practice is only a necessary consequence of your knowledge of or insight into the structure of things. If knowledge is lacking, the practice can go wrong. Hence, it is often emphasised in philosophical circles that ethics is based on metaphysics. Ethics means anything that is practical. It is not necessarily what is called social morality or personal behaviour in the usual sense of the term. Philosophically speaking, ethics means any kind of practical requirement on the part of any individual in the light of the structure of the cosmos. The knowledge of the structure of the cosmos can be said to be metaphysics, and what follows from it automatically as a demand on your natural behaviour is the ethics thereof. Therefore, yoga is a part of ethics in this generalised sense. So before you know what this practical aspect of yoga is, you should know how this practice comes about at all under the nature of things.

You must have heard it said many a time that yoga is based on *sankhya*, which means to say, ethics is based on metaphysics; action is based on knowledge. You cannot move an inch unless you know how to move, where to move, and also why to move. These questions are clarified in your

consciousness before you take any step in any direction, whether it is yoga or otherwise.

*Sankhya* is a technical Sanskrit term representing knowledge of reality, an acquaintance with the makeup or structure of things in general. What is this world made of, what is meant by the universe, and what is our position here? If you know your placement in the atmosphere of things, you will know what to do under a given condition. You need not be told that you should practice yoga. You will know that it is necessary because of the very nature of the circumstances. No one need tell you that you should eat food, as your hunger will tell you that you should eat it, and so on. A particular circumstance which is clear to your mind will also tell you what you should do under the given circumstance. Hence, to go on dinning into the ears of people to do yoga is not necessary. What is necessary is to enlighten them into the nature of the circumstance under which they are living. People are ignorant. That is the main disease of humanity. Ignorance is a sort of bliss: All is fine, and nothing is wrong anywhere.

Education is the primary requirement of everyone. What we lack is not money or building or lands, so much as education. We may think we are educated people, but this education will help us in getting on with things somehow by a kind of day-to-day adjustment; but getting on with things is not the same as having the wisdom of life. The wisdom of life is *sankhya*. You may be under the impression that *sankhya* means some sort of a doctrine propounded by an ancient sage called Kapila in a series of aphorisms called sutras, one of the systems of philosophy well known in India. This may be so. *Sankhya* is that, of course, but it is not necessary to take *sankhya* in this restricted sense merely. Though *sankhya* is a system propounded by the sage Kapila, it need not be associated with any personality.

The word *sankhya* occurs in Indian scriptures other than the sutras of Kapila. There are texts which may be said to be anterior to the system promulgated by the sage Kapila. For instance, the word *sankhya* occurs in the Manusmriti, in the Mahabharata, and essentially and principally in the Bhagavadgita where it is used in a broader sense than the meaning that may be associated with the sutras of Kapila, because the Sankhya of Kapila is a clear-cut and precise mathematical procedure of defining things according to the vision which must have propelled Kapila under the conditions of his time. But as our interest is practical and not merely theoretical, and we are more interested in living a good life, a better life, than knowing so many things, we need not go too much into the technicalities of Sankhya in Kapila's sutras. We may do well to understand that it generally means the knowledge of things as they are, and as they ought to be, as a logical consequence that must follow from our own daily experiences. What is called philosophy is only an implication that follows spontaneously or automatically from an observation of the facts of experience. If you have time enough and patience enough to probe deeply into your own daily experiences, you will realise that there is something beneath the surface movement of your life you call your experiences.

Generally you are dashed hither and thither by the waves of your daily activities, due to which, you have neither the time nor the capacity to read between the lines, as they say, in respect of your daily experiences. The general pattern of the universe presented to us by our ancient adepts is such that its contents are an integrated family. The universe is full of citizens, or inhabitants, we may say, not necessarily living beings like us, but even other elements which you may, from your point of view, regard as non-living, inanimate, etc.

The great scriptures of yoga visualise a universe which is larger than what we now see with our naked eyes. The universe is not merely what you see with your eyes just now, though it includes this also. You look up to the skies, and all around, and you see something. This is the physical universe, wherein you find the solar system—the sun and the moon and the stars and the vast sky, inaccessible to ordinary sensory perception, and you see all around you people, animals, plants, hills, and so on. But the vision of India has gone deeper than what is available to the naked eye, and has proclaimed a truth that there are various planes, or levels, of the manifestation of what we may call the universe.

This physical structure around us is one plane. It is a sort of density, we may say. It does not mean that there are many universes. There are many levels or degrees of densities through which the universe reveals itself by a graduated arrangement, through experience. These levels, these degrees or planes of densities, are called *lokas*: Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka, Satyaloka. There are said to be levels above, ranging beyond the ken of ordinary perception and invisible to the naked eye, such that we cannot even think what they could be. We are also told that there can be levels far below this Earth, or the physical world, known as Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talatala, Mahatala, Rasatala, Patala. There are seven above and seven below, and so we are told there are about fourteen planes. Well, there can be more than fourteen also. These are roughly the calculated arrangements made by the ancient seers of the degrees of experience through which one has to pass in the evolution of oneself.

These planes of existence, or *lokas*, are stages through which everyone has to pass. It is possible that we have already passed through the lower levels. We have to take for granted that we have come to the physical level by rising

above the lower levels by transmutation through ages and ages of achievements. Biological and physical science today is very fond of insisting on an evolution of life. As they say, there has been a movement from matter to life, from life to mind, from mind to intellect or the human reason, in which state we are today. This is something like what I told you already, namely, that there seems to be a series in the levels of cosmic experience, called *lokas*, or levels of being. We are on the human level. It does not mean that the human universe is the entire universe, as there are levels below and also levels above.

Hence, there is a necessity for us to evolve further from the state of man, and many have said that we have to become a superman. Now, this superman is only a kind of name associated with the possibilities ahead of us, superior to our present state of experience. It is not possible for us to rest contented here. We are thoroughly dissatisfied with everything because this is not our permanent home. It is not our permanent habitat because we are on a process of rising up. We are moving further and further. As we have already come from lower levels to the human level, we have to go further on to the more advanced, subtler and more pervasive levels: the levels of angels, gods, celestials, etc., that we hear of in scriptures.

An indication of these experiences is given in the Taittiriya Upanishad, for instance, where we are told that above man are the Pitris, above the Pitris are the Gandharvas, then we have the Devas or the gods or the angels, then the ruler of the angels, called Indra, then the Guru or the preceptor of the gods, called Brihaspati, the great depository of wisdom. Beyond that is the Creator. Such details of the existence of higher realms of experience are available in scriptures of this kind, not only in India but in other countries also. So we can imagine what our position is

here in this world. It is so because happiness is nothing but an automatic consequence of the attainment of perfection. The more we move towards perfection, the more are we happy, and perfection seems to be far away from us in the light of this little analysis that we have done just now. If we have to go far, far above the human level through these series of ascents, the indication of which is available in the Taittiriya Upanishad, in light of the various *lokas* that seem to be above the physical level, we cannot be happy here. Nothing can satisfy us. Not the possession of the whole world and the emperorship of this Earth can satisfy a person, for reasons quite obvious and clear to every one of us. You cannot have satisfaction here because you cannot be perfect here. You cannot be perfect here because you have not completed the stages of your evolution; you are in a lower level yet.

Now, these ideas have something to do with the knowledge of the structure of things, *sankhya*. I am giving you some ideas which are not contained in the sutras of Kapila or in any particular compartmentalised textbook. These details which are available to you will make you open your eyes a little bit to the situation in which you are today, and you would be very anxious to know what would be your future and what you can do under the given circumstances here to improve yourselves in the direction of your movement or ascent higher. Why should you not take to the practice of yoga if yoga means your effort to evolve yourself into the higher realms of being, towards the achievement or attainment of the ultimate perfection which alone can make you satisfied ultimately? Who on Earth can forego the practice of yoga if this is the state of affairs? And why should anybody need to tell you that you should practice yoga? It will be clear to you like daylight.

So again I reiterate, the practice of yoga is not the important matter, but the need that you feel for the practice of it is important. That is first, and the practice comes afterwards. If you don't feel the need at all, where comes the practice? And the need is not available to your eyes. You do not feel the need because you are totally ignorant. We are living in a fool's paradise under the impression that everything is okay when everything is really dead wrong. The universe is moving rapidly towards its destination like a fast-moving railway train, and you are as if seated in this vehicle, this moving train. You cannot keep quiet. You have to move with the train that moves, because you are in it. When you are in the universe, it moves and evolves. Therefore, you have to move.

Hence, you are not a steady, independent, indivisible being, as you appear to be. These friends, these students seated here are not self-identical, indivisible individualities. They are masses of process. You must be able to visualise the meaning of what I say. You are bundles of movement, rather than a stable existence, because of the fact that you are moving; therefore, you cannot be a stable and self-identical indivisibility even for second. Therefore, great thinkers like Gautama Buddha were tirelessly telling us that you cannot touch the same water in a river the next moment. Every second you are touching new water in the river. Likewise, when you touch your own body after a few minutes, perhaps you are touching something different. It is not the same thing that you saw or were a few seconds or minutes before. Similarly, when a train is moving, every second you are seeing something new because the train is passing through areas which have not yet been covered, because it is moving. The universe is moving, and this unavoidable movement of the universe is called evolution; whether it is the evolution that is described by Darwin or

Lamarck or the Upanishads, it makes no difference. There is such a thing called evolution, which is only another name for the necessity felt by the finite to move towards the infinite.

No finite can rest contented with its own self. Nobody likes limitations of any kind. You do not like bondage. You resent it wholeheartedly. "I do not like any kind of restriction imposed upon me by anything from outside." This is the call for freedom, and we are limited in every way. This body is a limitation. My existence here is limited by the limitation of people in the world outside. And there are other limitations of a social and political nature, which we are not happy about because who likes to be limited, restricted, bound together in a prison, as it were? We want to be free birds with a say of our own in everything. This is not possible in this world. Real freedom that your soul is asking for is unavailable in this finite world of finite individualities and limited patterns of experience.

Now again I tell you why yoga is necessary. You will yourself appreciate how it comes about and where you stand. I am not going to touch upon the practical side of yoga immediately, inasmuch as it is necessary to throw some light on the background of this practice before we actually enter into it. We are too much enmeshed in prejudices, psychologically and even rationally. There are emotional and psychological prejudices in our minds, and we also have intellectual and rational prejudices. They may look highly reasonable, but they are also prejudices. They look reasonable because the mind and the reason have been tied up with knots to these ways of thinking. A great Englishman, Francis Bacon, called them the idols of the cave, and idols of various types, which are the prejudices of the mind and the stereotyped movements of our ways of thinking, into which we are born. Our parents have told us something, and our schoolmasters and professors say something, our society

tells us something, and we are born in a particular nation which has its own ways and methods of thinking and ideologies on which it has to work, and so on. These are the ways in which we have been brainwashed right from childhood. We have to decondition ourselves if we are to practise yoga. Any kind of conditioned mind is unfit. You should shed all these preconceived notions that you are such and such and this and that: that you are this religionist, that you are a Hindu or a Christian or a Muslim, you are a monk, you are a householder, you are a man, you are a woman. These are also prejudices which are hard-boiled and cannot leave us easily because they are part and parcel of our consciousness.

Existence is the same as consciousness, and our prejudiced existence has become one with our consciousness so that we cannot even detect that we have any prejudices in our mind. Everything looks very fine, and we seem to be spotless in our ideas and ideologies. That is why we have been told again and again that a sort of teacher is necessary—a Guru, if you would like to call it so—because the mind has been enmeshed with various types of inborn traits which are not necessarily compatible with the nature of the universe.

Secondly, this universe, this world, this large atmosphere around you is not constituted of bits of matter or isolated units with no connection of one with the other. The universe is a very appropriate word for this atmosphere. It is the opposite of chaos. Chaos is a confused medley of particulars which have their own way and move in their own directions, absolutely having no relation with one another. But the universe is a word which signifies an arrangement or order of things where the particulars have internal relations, not merely external connections.

You have to be a little bit awake in your mind when you try to define what an internal relation is as distinguished from an external connection. I can give you an example. A body of people forming the Parliament in a government have a connection with one another because they form this corporate body. They have a relationship with one another. But this relationship of the units constituting the body of the parliament can be broken any day by various methods of political manoeuvring, about which everyone knows well, so there is no real internal relationship of the members of the parliament among themselves. One man can shed his relationship tomorrow or even now, if he likes. He may resign his post as a Member of Parliament. Even when he works or functions as a Member of Parliament, internally he is not related to anyone. He is an independent person. He has a connection with all of them, but it is an external connection. The internal relationship is an inviolable connection, whereas an external connection can be snapped if necessity arises.

Our relationship with the universe is not like the relationship of a Member of Parliament to the corporate body. Our relationship to the universe is internal, inviolable, inexorable, and eternal. It cannot pass away. We are related to the universe forever and ever, and we cannot sever this relationship at any time. Well, we may consider the limits of the body as inviolably related to this body, but even this organic connection of the limbs of the body to the structure called the body is of an inferior type because a part of the body can be severed. You can amputate an arm or any other limb, and the relationship of this part with the body ceases. But under no circumstance can you sever your relationship with this world, or the universe. No amputation is possible here. No kind of severance of relationship of the particulars or individuals is possible under any circumstance in respect

of this vast world called the universe. You are eternally related to it.

If evolution is a fact, and you have risen to this level of humanity by rising from the bottom, you did exist even before you were a human being. The prior existence of the individual in other bodies or other species of beings is automatically proven by the fact of the evolution of things, and it also proves post-existence, post-mortem realities if really evolution is a fact, and mankind is not the ultimate pinnacle of the process of evolution. If there has been evolution backwards and also it is to be there forwards, you will be surprised to see that you did exist centuries and aeons back, and you will also exist aeons ahead. Perhaps you are an eternal unit of this large structure called the universe. You are a citizen not of this world merely. Neither are you from Orissa or Madras. What puny, petty ideas we have got in our minds! I am a Maharashtrian, I am a Punjabi, I am a Keralite, I am a TAMILIAN, I am a Karnatak. How low we have come, how shameful is our existence when we think of these little things as our real associates while we seem to be belonging to a structure which is larger than any ocean that we can conceive of and the universe that was behind us and is ahead of us through various realms of being.

We cannot rest for a moment thinking of these things. We will be in consternation every moment of time. You will be looking round all sides, trying to find out as to where you are standing. Am I of this world? I am I in this world? Am I in the world at all, or am I somewhere else? Your mouth will be shut. You will not be able to say anything. Such would be your wonder and consternation at this little insight into which you will be drawn by your analysis of the circumstances.

Thus, this little picture I have given of the structure of things or the nature of the universe may be regarded as an

introduction to certain other details that you may have to know about the universe itself. It is true that this large structure is so vast; it extended behind you in the lower levels and it is going to be ahead of you in the further levels of evolution, but there are minuter details associated with these analyses we have made, about which you also have to know something in order that you may have no doubts left in your mind regarding the practice of yoga.

Before you step into the realm of the actual practice, you should be free from every kind of intellectual doubt and emotional tension. These two things should be cast out like devils. Intellectual doubts and emotional tensions are your greatest enemies in spiritual pursuits. All doubts have to be cleared by studies and consultation among your own selves as students, and also advice from your teacher, whoever your teacher be.

This large universe was one large mass, indivisible and undifferentiated in its nature; this is something that every religion tells us. Whether it is the Bible or the Upanishads or even modern science, they all tell the same thing practically. The universe was one indistinguishable, undivided mass of being. Science tells us it was an atom. The universe was an atom originally, and it split into two and became four, it became eight, it became sixteen, it became thirty-two, sixty-four—endlessly, a millionfold, unthinkably multifarious and multitudinous as it is now. This is what our modern physics tells us. In the beginning was the word, says the Bible, and *āsīdidaṃ tamobhūtamaprajñātamalakṣaṇam, apratarkyamavijñeyam prasuptamiva sarvataḥ* (Manu 1.5) says the Manusmriti at its very commencement. So is the proclamation of the Upanishads and the Vedas, and practically every scripture. Biology tells us there was one cell originally; we were originally a single cell, a monocyte or

a unicell, and one cell splits into two. It becomes a bicell, a quadricell, an octicell, etc.

I met a physician in Bombay, a very great expert. He told me, "Swamiji, today medical science is concluding the very same fact that the Upanishads have said many years back. The universe was one. It started with one single, undivided Being. We also say the same thing now. There was one single unit of individual, and this little drop, or perhaps something smaller than a drop, something which is minuter than what you can call a cell, was the origin of this large body of the human being." The doctor said, "Swamiji, this little cell, when it is scientifically analysed, can tell us how long this body is going to live, what are the experiences one has to pass through, and every blessed detail of the individual till the death of the individual. It is already decided in this little cell." What else does the Upanishad tell us? It says that the great will of the Supreme Being is the original determinant of all the details of this universe. Even a sparrow cannot fall without the will of the Father. A leaf cannot live without the will of the Supreme. You cannot lift a finger unless it has been permitted by the law of the cosmos.

Now, this seems to be the origin of things—a single undivided unity which, as our Masters tell us and scriptures proclaim, somehow appears to have divided itself into two. It has not really split itself into two. Therefore, I added the word 'appears', because if it really had become more than one, it cannot become one again, and so there is no chance of reaching God. But the possibility of attaining liberation and the chance of attaining God just at this moment should also be added to the proof of there not being a real split. Vedanta philosophy goes so far as to say the split is something like the split that appears in dream. There has been a bifurcation, a modification, a multiplication into individualities and particularities in the dream world, but it has not really taken

place because when you wake up from dream the particulars get absorbed into the unity of your mind as if they had never taken place at all, notwithstanding the fact that you saw the particulars.

This is a distinguishing feature of the Vedanta philosophy which makes a departure from the other doctrines by emphasising that if there had been a real bifurcation or division, there would be no chance of liberation of the individuals. You would be always divided. You cannot even think of this unity if it had not been implanted in your mind. A finite which is really finite cannot think of the infinite. The idea of the infinite cannot arise in the finite brain because they are contradictories. But the idea of the infinite does arise in your mind, and you are trying to break the boundaries of finitude and reach the endlessness of your being, horizontally as well as vertically, in quality as well as in quantity. So it is true that God has not ceased to be God when He created the world, if He has created it. He is still the same God that He was. He is the same thing, and He shall be the same thing, for He is eternal. He is not a modifying substance or an object that has ceased to be the cause it was in becoming the effect. This is a highly intricate philosophical point, into whose details we need not enter at present, as our interest is more practical.

This universe that was one, and is one, does not appear as a multitude suddenly, but it becomes two first, and this becoming of the one into two is what the Sankhya calls *purusha* and *prakriti*, consciousness and its object, the spirit within and the world outside. The original bifurcation, or division, is of the One Being into the seer and the seen, the subject and the object. The one becomes two, or we may say there was a state of being which was prior even to this division of the One into the seer and the seen, namely, a consciousness of being. You have to stretch your imagination

to feel as to what the state could be because even the awareness that one is, is a kind of limitation on absoluteness. Unless there is a sensation of space, time or something like that, there cannot be any chance of one's being aware that one is. Therefore, it is not even a self-awareness or a consciousness of One Being and a feeling of 'I am', but something transcendent to it, far beyond it.

Subsequent is the state of 'I amness', 'I am that I am' or 'I am what I am', Yahweh or Jehovah, or *aham asmi*, as the Upanishad puts it.

Posterior to this universal self-awareness is the division of the One into the twofold so-called realities, consciousness and its object, *purusha* and *prakriti*. The classical form of Sankhya makes much of these two principles, *purusha* and *prakriti*. There are only two things in this universe, nothing else: consciousness, and what is not consciousness. There cannot be anything else. There is the perceiver and what is perceived. Here you are on the lap of classical Sankhya, of which the practical implementation is said to be yoga.

## Chapter 2

### THE PROCESS OF CREATION

The stages of yoga as a practice are actually in direct correspondence with the stages of the descent of the soul from God or, the other way around, the stages of the ascent of the soul to God, the Supreme Reality. This is the reason why we should have a philosophical background of the structure of the universe and the nature of its descent or ascent, as you would like to put it, before we actually take to a serious study of the practical techniques of yoga.

I told you something yesterday about the general character of the universe. We concluded with the stage where the one appears to split itself into *purusha* and *prakriti*, consciousness and its object. The whole of our experience is comprised of these two aspects: consciousness and matter, the seer and what is seen. In our study in the present context of this course in the Academy here, we shall be strictly following the enunciations in the ancient texts without any innovation or departure.

The yoga texts tell us that our experience as constituted of the seer and the seen is what can be called in Sanskrit *vyavaharika satta*, or in English we may say “an empirical experience.” It is empirical, *vyavaharika*, or of practical utility, because though it is workable and seems to be the only reality available to us, it is not the whole of reality. The seer aspect and the seen aspect, the consciousness aspect and the object aspect, the *purusha* aspect and the *prakriti* aspect, are designated in ancient texts as the *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta*. The *adhyatma* is the inward-perceiving, seeing consciousness lodged in the individuality of the seer. The *adhibhuta* is the objective universe—what appears as a material expanse before us. Sankhya, to which I made

reference yesterday, as propounded by the sage Kapila, confines itself to these two categories, *purusha* and *prakriti*, and does not feel the necessity for anything else. But the yoga texts are not all based entirely on the Sankhya as propounded by Kapila. I mentioned to you yesterday there is a modification, and an improvement, rather, of the concept of Sankhya in other texts like the Manusmriti, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavadgita, and the Upanishads.

In the deeper analysis of this circumstance of there being the *purusha* and the *prakriti* as the only possible realities in experience, the Upanishads particularly, and also the Bhagavadgita, proclaim by way of implication the necessity to accept a third principal—which may be called the *adhidaiva*, or the superintending divinity transcending the subject and the object, *purusha* and *prakriti*—because the connection between the seer and the seen cannot be explained merely by the seer and the seen. The subject relates itself to the object, and vice a versa, in the subject's awareness of the presence of the object. This relation is inexplicable on the assumption that there are two isolated realities, the seer and the seen. Two entirely demarcated principles cannot come in contact with each other, and cannot know each other. The possibility of the perception or awareness of an object outside by consciousness within can be accounted for only by the presence of something that is there as a connecting link between the subject and the object. This is invisible to the naked eyes, but logical deduction requires or demands the presence of such a principle, without which it is not possible to explain how we are aware of the existence of the world at all. How can anyone know that there is something outside if the outside is totally cut off from the one who beholds it? That things are not entirely severed from the seer of the things implies again that there is a link between the seer and the seen. This link is

something transcending both the seer and the seen. Hence, beyond the *adhyatma* and *adhibhuta*, there is the *adhidaiva*.

Therefore, the one Infinite Being, about which we discussed a little yesterday, appears as the two, the subject and the object, but it remains yet as a unity. God does not become the world as milk becomes curd, because once the milk becomes curd, it cannot become milk once again. There is no internal transformation of the Supreme Being into the world. If that had taken place really, there would be no possibility of return to God, as curd cannot return to milk. Such a transformation has not taken place, and it cannot take place, inasmuch as the Supreme Being is indivisible, and indivisibility cannot undergo transformation of any kind. Thus, the unitary aspect of the Supreme Being is maintained even in spite of the apparent division into the seer and the seen, the subject and the object. So behind the duality of experience, there is a unity of a transcendent principle which persists in spite of the multiplicity and the duality of experience. So there is a tripartite creation, we may say, over and above the dual concept of creation, which we considered earlier. On the one side, we have the universe, which is the *adhibhuta*. On the other side there is the *adhyatma*—the viewer, the beholder of the whole universe, you, I and everybody. And above these two we have the connecting link, the transcendent, called a divinity, a *devata*, God, an angel or the spirit of the cosmos.

People among you who might have read Plato, for instance, may recall to your memories his ideas of there being a superintending archetype, as he calls it, transcending the world of opinion, sensory perception, and mental cognition. Two things cannot relate themselves with each other unless a third thing is there. This third thing is called “the Idea” in Plato’s metaphysics, and in Indian philosophical

parlance we generally designate this third principle as the *devata*, or the divinity.

Generally, people think that in the religions of India there are many gods, a sort of polytheism. This is a thorough misconception of the philosophical foundations of India. They are not many gods. They are the manifold levels through which the one Supreme Being manifests itself by densities of descent, becoming grosser and grosser as it comes further and further down for the purpose of maintaining this relationship between the subject and the object. As there are several levels of descent, it appears as if there are many gods, but they are levels of the one supreme connecting principle, and several levels of one and the same thing cannot be regarded as many things, so there are not many gods. This wrong idea should be brushed aside from the mind. This superintending principle is the *adhidaivata*, a very essential reality without which no experience can be accounted for.

The yoga texts and the philosophies tell us that the objective side is to be visualised as constituted of five subtle forces. These forces, which are five in number according to the yoga or the Vedanta, are termed in Sanskrit *tanmatras*. *Tanmatra* is a Sanskrit word meaning the basic essential building brick of any substance in this world. As electric energy is said to be the foundational reality of all physical objects according to modern science, *tanmatras* are regarded as the basic foundational essences of all objects. Perhaps they can be equated with what we call today the electrical continuum of the cosmos.

Now again we have to remember that this fivefold classification of the forces does not imply that there are five different forces, even as the many superintending divine principles do not mean that there are many gods. The manifoldness is only an appearance of the levels of descent,

and likewise this fivefold appearance of the forces constituting all things is because of the five senses that we have through which we pursue objects. Corresponding to the faculty or sensation of hearing, we have a *tanmatra* called *shabda* or sound. Sound is the object of the sense of hearing. Unless this object is present, hearing will not be possible. We have only five senses of cognition, or knowledge, and so we have to conceive the object also in a fivefold manner. Perhaps if we had one thousand senses, we would have imagined that there are one thousand foundational principles outside. Corresponding to the sensation of touch, or tangibility, there is the *tanmatra* of what in Sanskrit goes by the name of *vayu*. *Sparsha* is tangibility. There is a corresponding outside principle which causes this sensation of touch, called *vayu* in Sanskrit. *Shabda* is the corresponding Sanskrit term for sound. Corresponding to the sensation of sight, there is the objective principle of *rupa*, or colour. Similarly corresponding to the principle or the sensation of taste, there is the liquid form of things or anything that contains this liquid essence in some percentage or proportion. Then, finally, the sensation of smell requires a solid substance which emanates this smell. So the five senses of cognition correspond to the five basic objective elements known as the *tanmatras*: *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa*, *rasa*, *gandha*. The objects that you see with your eyes which are hard, substantial, solid, are constituted of a further intensified density of formation of these basic five elements when they are mixed in certain proportions by permutation and combination, and this admixture of the basic principles of *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa*, *rasa*, *gandha* are said to be the reason behind the formation of five gross elements. The five gross elements are ether, air, fire, water and earth. These are known in Sanskrit as *akasha*, *vayu*, *agni*, *jala* or *ap*, and *prithvi*. We have only these things in the world. If you cast

your eyes all around, you will see only these things, and nothing else. The varieties that you see are only the variety of the formation of individuality constituted of these basic five elements, which again are the outer manifestations of the basic principles *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa*, *rasa*, *gandha*. We come down to the lowest material level: earth.

Now, from this stage onwards, we come to what we call the doctrine of evolution as propounded by the West especially. The Western outlook of life does not consider these aspects of reality which we have analysed up to this level, up to this stage. Biology in the West, and the theory of evolution there, starts from the lowest material level, from which there is a rise into larger and larger organisms manifesting life, mind and intellect, which can be correspondingly seen or respectively seen in plants, animals and human beings.

The Western education which has been imparted to us may make us think that we are advancing from the lower level to the higher level. We are always told that there is an ascent—and therefore, an improvement—from matter to life, from life to mind, and from mind to intellect. Man is always said to be the pinnacle or the summit of creation. We are superior to animals in every way, animals are superior to plants, and plants are superior to inorganic matter. This is the way we generally think, as we are told by our educational syllabi. But this is not wholly true. It does not mean that we are moving towards reality as we are rising from matter to life, life to mind, and mind to the intellect, or the reason of man. Why it is not really an improvement can be known only by a little bit of subtle thinking, to which a little hint is given in an Upanishad known as the Aitareya Upanishad. The subtlety of this thought is almost unparalleled, and cannot be easily available in other systems of thought.

I will give you an example. Number two is more than one, three is more than two, four is more than three, five is more than four. If you have two dollars, naturally you are richer than the one who has one dollar, and so on. So if you have five dollars, you will think that you are richer than the one who has four, three, two or one dollar, merely because two represents a larger number than one, three is larger than two, four is larger than three, five is larger than four, etc. But minus two is not larger than plus two, or even larger than plus one. Minus two is less than plus one, though two is larger than one, ordinarily speaking. The mere quantitative measurement is not the only criterion in our judgments here in these processes of analysis. There is a kind of reflection, as it were. The only way we can put it is this way, this manner. And the reflection somehow has the characteristic of removing the reality away from its base in an opposite direction, and so the more we go away in the direction of the reflection, the more also may be said to be the distance that we maintain from the original reality, an important point which is made out by certain thinkers in the West such as Henri Bergson, for instance.

Bergson was very sure that animals are nearer to Reality than man, for an important reason which may not occur to the minds of people ordinarily. The instincts of the animals are nearer to the Truth than the reasons of man because the reasons of man are laboured. They are mathematically calculated with tremendous effort, whereas animals have a sudden response. Maybe they are blurred and dim, and not clarified, but this dimness of the instinct of animals is said to be nearer to Reality than the clarity of the so-called intellect of man. There is a sensation in the lower creatures which is not available to man. Even dogs and cats have a peculiar sense of contact with Reality which is not accessible to us.

There are, it is said, very minute animals like the snails living some three or four kilometres below the level of the ocean waters, a depth to which moonlight may not reach or sunlight may not touch. These animals are crawling at the base of the ocean and might not have even seen the light of day. Such creatures are now discovered to be guided by the waxing and the waning moon moving in the sky two lakhs of miles away from the surface of the earth, at a depth in the ocean to which the moon's rays are not likely to reach at all. This is a prosaic example to give us an idea of the sensitivity of these little creatures, which is not accessible to us. We are very dull in our brains compared to all these sensations which ants and honeybees feel. Even a month before the rainy season starts the ants will know that the rains are to come. We cannot know if it will rain tomorrow unless we go to the meteorological department, and even there something goes wrong oftentimes. Even the plants know what vibrations are around them. The great discoveries of Sir J.C. Bose are a standing refutation of our old belief that plants do not think, do not feel, and know nothing.

The Aitareya Upanishad, as I mentioned to you, tells us that there has been a kind of catastrophe that has taken place when individuality asserted itself. This, in my opinion, is the same as the fall mentioned in the Genesis of the Bible. The fall is nothing but a catastrophic isolation by an affirmation of egoism. The isolation is bad enough, but something worse seems to have taken place, by which we cannot even know the fact is such. The point that is made out in the doctrine of the isolation of the individual from the whole may make us feel oftentimes that the part is at least qualitatively the same as the whole. One grain of sugar is qualitatively the same as a mountain of sugar. One drop of Ganga water is qualitatively the same as the whole river. A little bit of the ocean is qualitatively the same as the whole

ocean. So are we qualitatively the same as the Supreme Being though we are a little jot or a fraction thereof? This is not so.

While it is true that we are isolated or cut-off parts from the Universal Being, it is not true that we are qualitatively the same as That. We are not little gods thinking here. It is not so. We have not got that godly or divine thinking in our minds even in the smallest of a fraction, notwithstanding the enunciation of the scriptures that we are isolated parts of the whole. A sudden reversal of perception takes place. This is the unfortunate thing that has happened to everyone.

The reversal is difficult to understand. We have been exiled from the Garden of Eden, thrown out from the realm of godhood, banished totally from the angelic status which we were occupying in Brahmaloaka. We have completely been boosted out from our status. We are away from our home. But when a member of the family is away from the home, he does not cease to be a human being; he is still the same man, though he is not in the family. But we have ceased to be in quality the thing that we were in the originality of things; otherwise, we would be thinking like God in a little fractional manner. That has not been possible for us.

## Chapter 3

### THE YAMAS OF PATANJALI

In our study of the preliminary stages of the practice of yoga, we observed that a very important phenomenon which the seeker has to confront is the social consciousness. When we try to analyse the structure of society, we could also discover that the society that we are referring to in its philosophical connotation, especially in its relevance to the seeker in yoga, is not merely a group of people. Society is not merely a conglomeration of persons. There is a peculiar feature in what is known as society, independent of the physical individualities of people that may appear to constitute its essence.

By way of analogy, we noticed, for instance, that a heap of stones is not called a society. A stack of bricks is not called a society. Why do we say that a group of people, human beings alone, is a society? The reason is that there is a specific character in the structure of what goes by the name of human society, that is, the psychological relationship among the individuals. Society is, therefore, not individuals taken by themselves independently, isolated. Society is a psychological relationship. If this relationship is not there, there is no society. We may regard ourselves as a society of people seated here in this vast hall, provided that we have a relationship among ourselves of some sort or the other. We bear a connection among ourselves psychologically, a connection of a particular nature. If each one is absolutely independent in the strictest sense of the term, having nothing to do with others in any manner whatsoever, then we cannot be called a society of people even if we are physically hanging on one another's neck. This feature is

something that can escape the notice of even an analytic consciousness.

The *yamas* of the system of Patanjali particularly have a bearing upon the involvement of the human mind in human society. In order to abstract the senses from their involvement in the social network, the various canons of the *yamas* have been prescribed. Otherwise, the human individual, in its psychological aspect, may go out of bounds and can create situations and circumstances which are difficult to handle, and which it may be difficult to even understand in their pros and cons.

The reason behind the necessity one feels to connect oneself with other people in society is also a very important subject of study. Why is it that we feel compelled to have relationships with other people? Can we not be independent? If we study the cosmological process through which there has been a descent of individuality from the Universal Being, it would appear that society is not prior to the individual; the individual is prior to society. We are told by the Upanishads, for instance, that the Virat, or the Cosmic Being, split itself, as it were, into individualities. The Aitareya Upanishad is a standing exposition of this great theme of the manner in which divinities started jetting forth like flames or sparks from the conflagration of the Virat. We are not going into the details of this process of cosmology now. Our subject is something different. What I mean to say is that the individuality of the *jiva*, or the person, seems to precede this relationship called society. That is why *niyama* comes afterwards, and *yama* comes first. *Niyama* has a greater relevance to individuality, or the personality of the seeker taken by itself, whereas *yama* has a social connotation.

Now, the question that may raise itself before us is: What is this social consciousness, and how is it that we seem to get

involved in this relationship? Philosophically—or metaphysically, to put it more technically—the reason is the objectification of individuals. Upanishads like the Brihadaranyaka expatiate on this theme of the way in which we externalise or objectivise persons. Society is a peculiar characteristic of the human mind by which it externalises people. It does not regard other people as organically connected with itself. They are separate in some way or the other. The isolation of individuals is taken for granted. I am absolutely different from you. This differentiation of individuals, one from the other, becomes very gross and marked, becomes very dense in its expression in the physical level, but it is not so marked in the higher levels—the astral or the causal levels—of the psyche.

The individual personality is constituted of various layers, known as the *koshas*, the sheaths, as they are usually called—*annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya*, *anandamaya*. The *annamaya* is the grossest sheath. It is so gross that it spatially cuts off one individual from the other, as if there is no connection at all between one and the other. It is only in the mind that we seem to feel a kind of relationship among ourselves. Bodily there is no relationship. We cannot see any physical relationship of one with the other, but psychologically we sense some kind of kinship with other people, which also assumes a dual enigmatic character in human psychology. There is a self-contradictory attitude of the human mind in regard to its visualisation of other people. It has a simultaneous like as well as a dislike in respect of others. It is not true that we like everybody one-hundred percent. It is also not true that we dislike everyone a hundred percent. A hundred percent love is not possible, and a hundred percent hatred is also not possible. Why is this so? Why do we seem to be partially

attached to persons and things, and partially get repelled also from persons and things?

Merely on a casual outer look into the structure of society, this question cannot be answered. There is nothing in this world which we can love a hundred percent. There is nothing in this world also which we hate one hundred percent. This peculiar feature has been touched upon in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. We like and dislike things at the same time. How is it possible? Sometimes the characteristic of like is evoked in us by certain behaviours on the part of other people. At other times, the feature of dislike can be evoked in us. A person can behave in such a way that in a minute he can become an object of detestation, or he can conduct himself in another way that he may be very endearing, liked and taken care of, and sympathetically treated. The reason mentioned in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is that basically we are not disunited. The rock bottom of the so-called individualities, known as persons, is not really so divided as it appears on the surface. There is a basic interconnectedness, harmony, or similarity of nature among individuals. That is the reason why one is pulled towards another. At times we feel a kind of sympathy towards people. There is a sense in us which is called servicefulness, an instinctive reaction towards others in the form of affection and a tender feeling, a pity and a desire to be of some help to other people. This is the positive side of the human personality. The negative side is the dislike that is sometimes evoked. We hate certain things in the world from the bottom of our heart, for reasons quite different altogether.

The Upanishad is the answer. Ordinary general psychology cannot touch upon the subject. It does not go so deep. The reason for the love that is evinced in the minds of people in respect of other persons and things is due to the

essential unity that is at the base, or the root, of all individuality. There is the principle of the Atman which is not your Atman or my Atman, but is *the* Atman—the ocean at the base of all the crests appearing on the surface as individualities or persons. That ocean of unity at the base is the reason why we feel a kinship and love, and a sense of servicefulness in respect of other people.

But what is the reason for the other attitude, which is dislike? That is because we are not merely Atmans; we are also empirical individuals, minds caught up in the meshes of the senses and working in terms of space, time, and causal relationship. Space-time compels us to see a difference where a difference is really not there. The empirical difference, the spatio-temporal distinction that we are compelled to see as an inseparable character of individuals, also compels us to assert our individuality and disconnect ourselves from other individuals, and this is the reason for the feeling of dislike. Now the question will arise: Why should this spatio-temporal distinction evoke dislike, and not any other trait in the mind? What is the peculiarity about this feature?

Dislike is an external or a grosser expression of the basic impulse of self-assertion. There is in us what is called the ego, which is a distorted spatio-temporal expression of the pure subjectivity of the Atman in us. The Atman is pure Subject; it is never an object. It can never be externalised, and it cannot brook the presence of any externality or any object in front of it. It resents the very presence of objects because the Atman cannot have an object in front of it. It is the all-consuming, all comprehensive pure Subject infinite. Now, this infinite subjectivity gets distorted through the human individuality when it passes through the psyche and goes by the name of the ego. The ego has all the bad characteristics of this subjectivity, and not the good points of

the universal Atmanhood. There is self-assertion, and there is also universality. These are the two characteristics of the Atman. The universal aspect of the Atman is completely cut off on account of the interference of space and time, but the self-assertive aspect is maintained on account of self-consciousness still being present in us. This self-assertive character is less present in animals, plants and stones, but it is more marked in human beings because we have risen to a more intensive form of self-consciousness, which is less distinct in animals and plants, and not at all visible in inanimate matter.

The fact that this consciousness has risen to a level of self-affirmation in the human individual cannot be regarded as a virtue on the part of the human being. We are superior to animals because of the self-consciousness which is in us in a more marked manner than animals, but this superiority itself is also a bane that has descended upon us because in this self-assertive attitude we forget the more positive aspect, namely, that other persons are also subjects of a similar nature. This charitableness or concession cannot be acceded to by the individual ego. It asserts itself to the exclusion of other individual egos. It resents externality, as the Atman resents every externality. But the mistake that the ego commits is that in resenting externality it resents persons, and it resents things. What we should really renounce is the sense of externality, and not persons and things. Actually, renunciation means the relinquishment of the sense of externality in things, which has introduced itself in our life on account of our involvement in space and time. The main function of space is to cut off one individual from another and to make the one appear as the object of another. This is the reason why there is exploitation, hatred, attachment, and all sorts of vices in human society.

The Yoga System gradually takes us from this external entanglement into the internal substance of our individuality. When we go from *yama* to *niyama*, we are actually not moving from a psychological relationship in the form of society to our personal individuality, but to a larger concept of this individuality. When we rise from one stage to another stage in the practice of yoga, we rise from a lower level of completeness to a higher level of completeness. In the lowest level of completeness the ego feels self-sufficient. The ego says, "I am complete in myself. I don't require the assistance of anybody else." This is the assertion of a proud person: "I am all-in-all. Everyone should be subservient to me." This is the dictatorial attitude of the ego, by which it tries to subject every other individual to its own mandates. This is the essence of selfishness, an unfortunate phenomenon that has arisen on account of the involvement of consciousness in space and time. But this is such a peculiar mix-up in our psychological setup that we cannot easily understand what has happened to us. We ourselves are the doctors as well as the patients. This is the difficulty. If the patient is somewhere and the doctor is in another place, there is a chance of one examining the other, but here we are both. This is the problem before us. *Uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ* (B.G. 6.5). It seems that the Atman has to help us in pulling the lower Atman into the higher one.

So, to cast a retrospective look upon what we observed just now, it is necessary for the seeker to be a good psychologist of his own mind. He should be a psychologist—not that he should teach psychology to others, but he should understand his own mind especially, because all problems arise on account of not understanding the behaviour of the mind and the reason behind its behaviour. Very often we cannot even understand why the mind behaves in a particular manner, and when we try to understand that it is

behaving in this way or that way, we cannot go into the rationale behind it. What has happened to it? What is the malady at the root?

The discovery of this root of the malady requires a more philosophical attitude. We must be true philosophers in the sense of people who are intent upon discovering the ultimate causes behind all phenomena. When we discover, by a careful analysis, that our loves and hatreds are misconceptions—that they are certain psychological involvements—and as it is often said, we hate the sinner instead of hating the sin by an error of attitude, we begin to hate the people outside instead of hating the outsideness which has been foisted upon the people who are equally subjects as one's own self. It is very curious that a person should regard himself as the subject and regard everyone else as objects. Is it not very curious and most illogical? If it were not for the fact that we regard others as objects, how could it be possible for us to harness them for our own purpose, to utilise them for our ends, to exploit people, to subject them to harassment, and to put them in the position of instruments or tools for a particular individual or a group of individuals for satisfactions of various types? If everyone has such an erroneous attitude, what would be the fate of human society? There will be complete chaos. When this becomes very intense, it leads to warfare, battle, and intense sorrow in mankind. There is a psychological muddle which is the reason behind our erroneous notions in regard to persons and things.

Yoga does not require you to abandon people or abandon things in the spirit of renunciation, or *tyaga*. The whole of the Bhagavadgita is a gospel on this great theme. It is not persons and things that trouble you, not the world that harasses you. It is something else. *Vairagya*, which is the keynote behind the canons of *yama* in the System of

Patanjali, means the withdrawal of this consciousness of externality, spatio-temporality in the things that we see with our eyes, and giving up this wrong attitude, seeing an end rather than a means in persons and things. Other people are ends, as I myself regard myself as an end. Because of the fact that I regard myself as an end, I try to use others as a means. Why should we not be equally charitable in respect of other people and accede that others also can regard themselves as ends, and use us as a means for themselves?

The great teacher Nagarjuna is supposed to have said that samsara and moksha are in the same place. Here itself is hell, and here itself is heaven. It is not that hell is some million miles away from heaven. They are two viewpoints, one opposed to the other, simultaneously existing. If everyone is an object, there can be no subject in this world, and this is called hell. If everyone treats the other as an object, which means to say that I too can be treated as an object, then immediately there is dissension, battle, warfare, and that is called hell. But, on the other hand, if you concede that everyone is a subject, the objects vanish at once. The vanishing of objectivity and the assertion of the subjectivity of all is moksha. That is actually the Virat consciousness where there is only a totality of subjectivity in the universality of consciousness. And when there is a totality of objectivity, just the opposite of it seems to arise, and that is the sorrow of individuals.

We are to rise, therefore, from a lower level of thinking to the higher level. The various levels through which we have to pass until we reach perfection are the stages of yoga: *yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana*, etc. We have heard these stages mentioned so many times that we are likely to mistake their true meaning, significance and relevance in our practical life. These stages of yoga described by Patanjali in his sutras are nothing but

the stages of evolution. It is the way in which nature evolves into higher completeness until it reaches total perfection in the Absolute: *brahmasakshatkara* or *kaivalya moksha*.

The earlier stages of yoga are more difficult to grapple, as is the case in the educational process also. You will find that children, in the earlier stages, find it very difficult to understand anything. They fumble and struggle and scratch their heads, and it appears as if nothing can be understood. But in the later stages of education, one is enabled to utilise one's intelligence in a better manner than in the preceding stages. Likewise, perhaps, there is a necessity for greater caution and vigilance to be exercised on the part of everyone in the earlier stages, and it is foolhardy on the part of anyone to think he has reached a higher stage. It is better to be humble before the mystery of the cosmos and the glory of God than to be too self-assertive and to be wrongly complacent under the impression that one has reached a higher stage. There is no harm in imagining that you are in a lower stage, but there is a danger in thinking you are in a higher one.

The earlier stages of yoga are very difficult because the mind is not accustomed to such discipline and practice. That is the difficulty. We are used to an easy-go-lucky life of indulgence, enjoyment, and an instinctive reaction to things rather than the application of higher understanding. We rarely use our higher reason. We are instinctive like animals, and this truth will come to the surface if we make a thorough, dispassionate analysis of our own minds. The earlier stages, therefore, are difficult stages, and one has to be more cautious in the earlier stages than in the later ones. The later stages are like putting on a switch in an electric switchboard. Immediately there is a flash of light. But what time you take in installing the electrical setup you know very well, and that is all the labour.

There is a necessity at the very outset to understand the great goal of life. I am only repeating what I told you last time, for your memory. First and foremost, it is necessary on the part of everyone to be very clear about the nature of the ultimate aim of life. If that is not clear, nothing else can be clear afterwards. You should not have a nebulous notion of your goal of life. It should be very clear, like daylight. When your aim is clear, to a large extent the way of realising this aim will also be clear. And you should not be impatient. You should not hurriedly jump from one step to another step. It is always a gradual movement systematically, which is evolutionary in its character, and not revolutionary. The movement from one stage to another should be so slow and firm that there should be no need to retrace one's steps to the lower stage afterwards. It is better to take more time in understanding a level completely than to hurriedly jump to the higher one and break one's legs.

So these are a few words in connection with the philosophical implications and the spiritual connotation that is behind the great ordinance known as the *yamas*, which Patanjali has placed before us, and when we try to understand what are the *niyamas*, we will also be enabled, at the same time, to know something about the relationship between the individual and society, after which, the real yoga starts in its relationship to the universe, and to God ultimately.

## Chapter 4

### THE STUDY OF ONE'S OWN PERSONALITY

*ōm saha nāvavatu,  
saha nau bhunaktu,  
saha viryam karavāvahai,  
tejasvi nāvadhitamastu,  
mā vidvishāvahai,  
ōm sāntih, sāntih, sāntih.*

The study of yoga and its practice is actually a study in the involvement of consciousness. It is not a practice in the sense of legal practice or professional practice in the economic sense of the term. Yoga practice is of a different order altogether. It is not a profession that we are undertaking, nor is it an activity in the usual sense. It is not a work that we undertake. It is an inward reorientation of the outlook of life, which cannot be identified with the usual activities of mankind. A transfiguration of the entire perspective of consciousness is the significance behind yoga.

We have been trying to analyse the social situation on earlier occasions, and attempted to discover some meaning in the human relationship in terms of society in its relevance to the practice of yoga. While the connection of an individual with externals may involve what is known as social relationship, there is an internal connection which subsequently comes to light, and that is the next step which is considered in the stages described by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras. The *yamas* in the language of Patanjali pertain to social relation, the psychological involvement of personality in a spatio-temporal connection. But there is a more significant relationship which is internal, and that is the discipline of the personality which has to be taken up

subsequent to the discipline of one's relationship with human society. Therefore, *niyama* comes after *yama*.

We will be able to recapitulate the points that we discussed on certain occasions previously, namely, that a relationship with outer persons and things is the first thing to consider, and this relationship is nothing but a psychological projection of the personality of the individual in terms of space and time. When we speak of social relationship in the philosophical sense of the term, we are not actually speaking of persons outside but the peculiar psychological reaction set up by the individual with relevance to the existence of other persons in the world. As far as any particular individual is concerned, a social relationship is a psychological reaction, and it is not merely an impersonal conception of people outside. We will have occasion to go deeper into this subject when we study the distinction that Patanjali makes between what he calls *klishtha vrittis* and *aklishtha vrittis*: painful psychoses and non-painful psychoses. What we may call indeterminate perception or impersonal perception is the *aklishtha vritti* of Patanjali, but the determinant perception and the involved perception, which is mostly studied in abnormal psychology, not in general psychology, is the *klishtha vritti* of Patanjali.

Therefore, it gradually becomes necessary on the part of the seeker to disentangle oneself from the networks created by the abnormal situations in one's psyche and turn to the more general ones. Questions may arise: Are we abnormal persons? Why should we have anything to do with abnormal psychology when we are students of yoga? From the point of view of the requirements of yoga, we have several abnormal traits. Now, the term 'normal and abnormal' has to be explained before we can say whether we are normal or abnormal. To philosophers and masters of yoga like Patanjali, any tendency to move away from the centre of

Reality is a tendency towards abnormality, and any tendency of the psyche to move towards the centre of Reality is a tendency which is normalcy. Loves and hatreds are regarded as abnormal reactions of the mind, at least from the point of view of yoga. For us people living in the so-called normal society of the world, loves and hatreds do not appear to be abnormal conditions. They are natural reactions of the mind. Everyone loves and everyone hates, so we are likely to regard likes and dislikes as themes to be discussed in general psychology, rather than in abnormal psychology.

But to Patanjali, and to his school of yoga, normalcy means an approximation of consciousness to the character of things as they exist in themselves, and not a tendency of the mind to read meaning into the objects, a meaning which is not inherent in them but read by the mind on account of a certain lacuna in it, or predilections of its own. To give an example, when you like or love an object, you are not actually perceiving it as it is in itself, nor do you perceive it as it is in itself when you hate it. The object is neither lovable nor hateable from its own standpoint. It is just an impersonal existence by itself, as anything else is. The character of attraction or repulsion is not an inherent quality of an object; therefore, to get attracted to a thing or repelled by a thing is not to have a normal perception of an object. Therefore, this subject is regarded as a part of abnormal psychology in the system of Patanjali. He groups them under what he calls painful psychoses, *klisha vrittis*, because loves and hatreds create pain in our minds, whereas an impersonal perception, such as the perception of a wall in front of me, for example, which neither belongs to me nor does not belong to me, is non-painful. No reaction is set up in the mind by the mere perception of a wall or a tree in a jungle, but a reaction of a different nature is set up when I look at an object which is mine or an object which I would

like to disconnect myself from, for reasons of my own. Where an emotional reaction is involved, the activity of the psyche should be regarded as abnormal, so there is no person in the world who is totally free from abnormalcy in this sense, because no one is free from such emotional reactions. But they have to cease if one is to ascend the steps of yoga.

Yoga is an ascent of the soul, and not merely an ascent of a fraction of the personality in the form of a psychological function. The soul is a totality of being. We had occasion to refer to this point earlier. When we ascend from one level of yoga to another, the whole of our being rises from one level to another. It is not merely the intellect that moves or the emotion that moves. So it is not possible for the total personality to get integrated, as required in the ascent, while there is an emotional movement towards an object positively in the form of love or negatively in the form of hatred.

Now, social relationship is nothing but this. It is an involvement in likes and dislikes. Hence, a thoroughgoing incisive analysis was made in our studies under the section of *niyamas*, but this is not enough. Mere freedom from the *klishtha vritti*, or the painful reaction of the psyche, is not the whole of yoga or even an important step in yoga. It is supposed to be the initial step. The worse condition that we could find ourselves in is the emotional reaction which we set up in regard to objects. That which agitates our mind, that which hurts our feelings, that which keeps us restless in our moods and makes us out of sorts and not normal either in our thinking or feeling, that sort of situation is an abnormal situation, and it is the thing into which we are thrust automatically either when we turn towards an object in affection or turn away from an object in hatred. Either of these things are uncalled for and unwarranted in an earnest

seeker of Truth because the search for Truth is a search for integration of personality. It is the attempt at bringing together, or mustering in all the forces of one's being, into a concentrated focus so that I, as a whole being, move towards Reality. I do not merely think of Reality or feel Reality as a psychological being. As a metaphysical individual I move upwards, not spatially but logically, and this is the attempt in yoga.

Now we come to the point of the practice of the *niyamas* which follow the *yamas*, a discipline which is personal, superior to the discipline which is social and merely external or spatio-temporal. When we deal with our connections outwardly, we deal with spatio-temporal relations. Patanjali uses the word *chitta* advisedly to signify the total psyche in us, and the *chitta* of Patanjali includes the whole of the psychic nature: conscious, subconscious and unconscious. It is not merely the mind thinking outwardly at the conscious level.

This is the subject that comes to high relief when one enters into the next stage of yoga, the practice of the *niyamas*. Self-discipline is the meaning of *niyama*. It is not discipline of something else; it is discipline of one's own self. Questions may arise: What do you mean by discipline of your own self? What have you to do with your own self, and why should you discipline your own self as if you have gone out of order? Yes, one's own self is out of order. It is out of order in the sense that it has been moving along the track chalked out by the senses, which run in the direction of the objects outside.

Thus it is that the empirical self has been always a sensory self. It is not even the rational self, let alone the spiritual self. We have been living a surface-life, a life of sensory reaction, of likes and dislikes, of a pursuit of the pleasant, etc. This is a centrifugal movement of the

personality out of the centre of one's own self in the direction of space, time and objects. Self-discipline here means a bringing together of the various ramifications of the psyche which have been moving in terms of various objects of sense, and centring them in certain ideals, which means to say, tethering the various rays of the mind to certain pegs fixed forever, at least until this stage is transcended.

For this, a deep study of one's own mind is necessary. The habit of foisting the feelings of oneself upon external persons and things has to cease. The rationalisation of instincts and the displacement of personality by way of projection of oneself upon others has to cease before one can study one's own self. We are at present looking at our own selves in terms of other persons and other things. Love of another object or hatred of another object is a positive or negative reflection of the feelings of the mind inside, which lacks some substance in itself and which it seeks in outer things. The displeasure that one feels in one's own self on account of a gap felt in one's own self is reflected, as it were, in the external objects.

This is a mysterious process that is taking place without the knowledge of any person who is subject to this process. It is not easy to understand why a person likes or dislikes anything. A glib answer can be given, but a rational answer is difficult. The like or dislike of any object is a highly mysterious process. You may call it a psychological process, but there the matter does not end. It goes deeper still into a new type of psychology which you will not find easily described in any books or textbooks of general psychology. How the personality gets transferred to an object outside, and then that object appears as a target of love or hate—how this process takes place is beyond one's understanding. We cannot even understand how a picture that is in a cinematic film moving through a camera is projected out on

a screen through the media of space, away from that film. How it travels, we cannot understand. The picture is somewhere, and we see it somewhere else. How does this picture travel to the screen which is many, many yards away from the camera? Something happens. A mysterious transformation takes place in the ether of space in combination with the effect of life, etc., and the projection is seen there on the screen. The picture is not on the screen; it is in the film, but you see it on the screen. Likewise, perhaps, to some extent at least, is the process by which the emotions and the needs of the psyche within are cast upon objects outside in space and time, and they are looked upon as either desirable or undesirable.

The process is mysterious, but a study of this process is obligatory on the part of any student of yoga if he has to rightly practise self-discipline, because self-discipline is a stage where one has already overcome the need to entangle oneself in external relations. It is not merely social discipline that we are speaking of, but self-discipline; that is *niyama*. The layers of one's own personality are also to be studied. We are not merely the physical body. The Vedanta, the Upanishads and the Yoga System all tell us that within the body are forces. There is a vibratory motion of the *prana* which is not visible to the eyes but which works every activity of the physiological system. There are the senses which cognise the presence of objects, senses which are different from the organs we call the eyes, the ears, etc. The sense of sight is different from the eyeball, the sense of hearing is different from the eardrum, etc. There is a faculty or a capacity which cognises the presence of things in a particular given manner; that is the sense, which is present inside. It is internal even to the *prana*. It works in conjunction with the mind, and the mind works in collaboration with the senses. In a way we may say the

senses are the rays of the mind itself. Like the rays of the sun moving from the centre of the sun, the senses move outwardly from the mind through the avenues of the organs, or the apertures of the organs.

We have the intellect, which is always in coordination with the mind which thinks. Some persons make a distinction between the mind and the intellect as faculties of indeterminate cognition and determinate cognition. The mind becomes indistinctly aware of things, and the intellect becomes distinctly aware of things. The senses give the report that something is there. The mind confirms the existence that a particular thing is there. But what kind of thing it is, and what one's reaction to that object will be, is decided by the intellect. While the senses give information in regard to a particular object outside, and the mind synthesises the various reports supplied by the senses into a coherent whole, the intellect passes a judgment on this information gathered from the mind in terms of the senses. A very complicated process takes place through the muscles, through the nerves, through the mind, through the intellect, etc.

The psyche is not merely the mind and the intellect. It is a very gross sense. There are faculties such as feeling. Feelings of hunger, of thirst, of survival, of fear, of like, of dislike, of action, of reaction, and many other kinds of psychic function are discoverable. All these are the building bricks of our personality. We are not made up of mere flesh, blood and bones. In fact, when we speak of ourselves, we are not speaking of this body. We always refer to something other than the body when we refer to our own selves. "I like it, I do not like it, I want it, I do not want it, I am happy, I am unhappy, I go, I sit, I do this, I do that"—all these statements do not refer to the body. They refer to something else which is the psychic individuality, and this psychic individuality is

constituted of various functions of the psyche, even as a building is made up of various structural items like brick, mortar, etc.

Thus, the study of one's own personality is incumbent upon oneself before one studies the art of self-control. How can you control yourself without knowing what you are made of? What are you going to control, and who are you to control what? The whole question will look like a muddle, a mess and an impossible thing before any person who has not made an analytical study of the structural pattern of one's own psychic personality. This is an important thing to be discussed in the yoga of Patanjali, and one cannot be established properly either in the discipline of the *yama* or the *niyama*, much less in the higher stages, if one is not to understand the structure of one's own psychic makeup. As I mentioned earlier, one has to be a very good psychologist of one's own self, and one has to be very dispassionate in the study of one's own mind and the various layers. To this subject we will move later on.

## Chapter 5

### THE INTERNAL DISCIPLINE OF THE NIYAMAS

We had occasion to discuss in adequate details the external discipline propounded as the *yamas* in the system of yoga doctrine of sage Patanjali. It took some time for us to go deep into this subject of external discipline, which implied a psychological grasp of the structure of human society and a philosophical understanding of our relationship with the makeup of society. We could discover that the canons of the *yamas* mentioned by Patanjali suggest an all-round adjustment of our personality with the atmosphere constituting human nature and the world outside, a balancing of ourselves at every moment of time with due consideration to the various stresses and vicissitudes of time's passage, through which we have to pass. We had also occasion to observe that this adjustment of ourselves with outer society is not a stereotyped movement along a beaten track but a dexterous arrangement of ourselves from moment to moment, as a driver of a vehicle has to be cautious in adjusting his driving technique from moment to moment in accordance with the nature of the road along which he travels. It does not mean that he moves forever in the same direction. There is an incessant vigilance required of every seeker of Truth in the manner of this self-adjustment with the outer atmosphere. So much about our discipline in its quintessence, about which we studied earlier.

The next step is internal discipline, which is known as *niyama*. It is akin to the external discipline in its basic fundamentals, but varies from the *yamas* in certain other aspects of methodology which have to be adopted in its practice. Internal discipline is a higher step than external

discipline, and we know very well that we are heading towards a high integration which moves gradually from the external to the internal, and rises further to the Universal Reality. Thus, even internal discipline is not a completed practice. Nevertheless, it is superior to the external discipline, and it immediately follows.

The internal discipline known as the *niyamas* in the System of Patanjali is the ordering of our nature, the total makeup of our personality in consonance with the structure of Reality. While external discipline is used to adjust our personality with the nature of outer society, and we were not very much concerned with the internal makeup of our internal personality at that time, now the time has come to pay attention to the inner layers of our personality which have to be properly aligned in consonance with the nature of things, towards which the person has to evolve.

Internal discipline means a total reorganisation of the attitude of our personality in regard to things. It has very much to do with our daily routines, and our very way of thinking itself. Every one of us evidently has some daily routine right from morning to evening. Among the many aspects of this internal discipline, one item is this daily routine. It has very much to do with our internal progress. It would be advisable for every seeker to have some sort of idea of the various items through which he has to pass during the day. In addition to the allotment of the duration of time for executing the various items of duty in the day, a very important aspect of the method would be the way in which these items have to be executed. It would not be very difficult for you to allot some duration of time for various activities in that particular day. But it would not be so easy to decide the way in which they have to be executed, because the way of execution of a particular work, or the performance of the duty, means an understanding of our

total attitude towards things in general. That total attitude will determine the general structure of the way in which we execute the functions in life.

We have in Sanskrit two important terms, known as *samanya dharma* and *vishesha dharma*. *Samanya* dharma is a general law that we observe in the execution of things. *Vishesha* dharma is a specialised law that we apply under given circumstances. Throughout the day we have a set of duties to perform. Each one of us has some duty or the other. The duty is not something imposed upon us by circumstances, but a vocation which we have accepted as a necessary process of the evolution of our personality into the higher order of things. We must be very cautious in distinguishing between duty and drudgery. Slavish drudgery and being subjected to painful labour is different from the performance of duty. Sometimes the performance of duty can be painful, but pain itself is not a definition of duty. Whether a performance is a duty or a drudgery can be decided by the attitude that is at the back of its performance; the main outer form of the work is not the way of judging it. I may be ploughing a field, and you may not know whether I am performing a duty or performing a mere slavish drudgery. Only I will know it from my own attitude towards it. I may be sweeping the floor. You may not know why I am sweeping the floor, what attitude and what intention I have behind it. If somehow or other I am able to discover an inner significance or relevance between this particular performance and the ultimate aim of life, then it becomes a duty. Every performance has to bear a conscious relevance to the aim of life.

In fact, there is nothing which is irrelevant in this world. Everything bears some sort of connection with everything else in the structure of things. But the point is, to what extent are we conscious of this fact? What gives value to things is

the awareness that we bestow upon them. This is the difference between the mechanical evolution of nature and conscious ascent in yoga. Though the ascent through the processes of yoga is the same as what is called evolution in nature, the difference here is that while in the process of evolution you are per force dragged together with the impulse of evolution as a railway train would drag you merely because you are sitting inside it, yoga is a conscious endeavour to accelerate the movement of one's personality in the direction of this evolutionary activity of the cosmos. This is something out of the point I am mentioning merely to give an idea as to what duty is, as distinguished from mere work in the commonsense significance of things.

So the daily routine of the daily performance of duty is a series. It is very important that a seeker of Truth should learn to see significance in things, and then everything becomes a process of delight, a rejoicing, and any grievous complaint in regard to circumstances would not arise in the mind. The whole of nature is an organic completeness, and each part of this completeness is an inseparable element of the whole. Inasmuch as there is an organic balance and equilibrium maintained by the structure of things, there is also a justice in the order of things. The whole universe is governed by a supreme justice. Just as our physical organism has a justice of its own, there is a compensation paid by the parts of the body in respect of that part which is neglected in some way or the other, biologically, physiologically or anatomically. These are things we can very easily appreciate.

There is always an attempt on the part of the organism to maintain its balance. Any kind of lopsided development is resented by the organism. The same law applies to everything, from the subatomic electronic field right up to the solar system and the whole cosmic order. This general law is that which determines every activity; it also

determines the general attitude we have to adopt in the performance of our duties throughout the day. I have a general attitude towards things, and it does not vary from day to day, but a specific attitude may change from moment to moment. This is what is known as *vishesha dharma*. One nation may adopt a general policy towards other nations. This is the *samyana dharma* of a particular nation, for instance. The government of a nation adopts an external policy in relation to other nations in the world, but it may have some specific ideas about given circumstances from day to day, or even from moment to moment, as the exigencies may arise. You cannot have one stereotyped attitude for all times, notwithstanding the fact you have a general attitude towards things.

So while there is a fixed pattern of attitude towards the performance of duty every day, there is a necessity to adjust oneself in terms of the harmony required at any given moment of time. Again to come to the analogy of the driver of a motorcar, for instance, he has a general idea of driving but he has also a specific control over the mechanism and uses common sense, if you would like to call it, when he drives. He is ever vigilant and never daydreams when the vehicle is moving. Life is nothing but a veritable moving towards its goal. It is a journey, as people sometimes call it. It is an endless movement, a procession of bits of experience rising one above the other in a series of influxes and adjustments and relevance gathered up into the personality, all tending towards the finest and widest integration and inclusion in the realisation of the Ultimate Reality, the Supreme Absolute.

It is not easy to be a spiritual seeker. One should not be under the impression that you can take up spiritual life when everything else fails. It is a most unfortunate way of looking at things. Everything else is secondary compared to

the dexterity that is required of the spiritual seeker in the performance of the sadhana to which he has taken. *Adhyātmavidyā vidyānām* (B.G. 10.32) says the Bhagavadgita: Of all sciences, the science of the Self is supreme; therefore, the art of practising it is most difficult. It is more difficult than mathematics or physics, or any art or science that you can think of.

While there is a mathematical or arithmetical system laid before you for the performance of duty in respect of the fields of life where arts and sciences operate, in the field of spiritual life this arithmetical computer will not work because here a conscious dexterity is necessary. To give another example, it is like the attitude of a general in the army who is actually operating in the battlefield. A general of an army has a current grasp of the science of fighting, but that is only a general knowledge that he possesses. He has to exercise common sense as well as that special attitude that I mentioned, *visheshā dharmā*, from moment to moment when he is active in the battlefield. Sometimes he may have to move forward; sometimes he may have to move backward. He may have to manoeuvre the army in various ways according to the circumstances and the needs of the time. Likewise, the spiritual seeker has to condition himself by adjusting his personality using the inner discipline, the *niyamas*, so that he stands in harmony with the environment at every moment of time.

Now, 'environment' is a word that requires a little explanation. When we discussed the nature of external discipline, we spoke of the environment as constituting human society especially. But now in the technique of the practice of internal discipline, the environment is whatever is within us, not what is outside, because we have already dealt with that. There is a world within us as wide and as complicated as the world that is without. We are a miniature

cosmos. Whatever is the world is also inside us, and the problems of the world are also problems of the psyche.

There are layers of our personality like layers in the outer world. These layers are, broadly speaking, the physical, the vital, the sensory, the mental and the intellectual. These are the levels of our personality. There can be minor classifications or subdivisions of these layers but, broadly speaking, these are the layers. They have to be aligned, to put it precisely. Mostly they are disbalanced. We do not think as we feel, and we do not feel as we think, and our pranas and the senses act in a particular manner with a vehemence of their own due to past impressions and many other factors with which the thought and the feelings are automatically dragged. We generally think and feel in terms of the sense organs, in terms of the reports that the senses give us of the objects outside. Nevertheless, we feel unhappy. We are not harmonised in our personalities because harmony is happiness, harmony is yoga.

*Samatvaṃ yoga ucyate* (B.G. 2.48): Wherever there is balance, there is joy. Physical balance is health. When the physiological system is working in harmony, we call it health. When there is a disbalance in the working of the physiological organs, there is ill health. Likewise, when the various aspects of the psyche work in harmony, we call it sanity. When there is disbalance of the various functions of the psyche, we call it absence of sanity. It can lead to insanity. Likewise are the emotions. If the emotions are not in balance, there can be a revolution of our whole personality and we can immediately be out of gear. We can be in a state of melancholy, depression, and in a state of intense nervous tension. There can be agitation in the whole personality, as it happened to Arjuna as described in the First Chapter of the Bhagavadgita. All the five layers of the personality began to disintegrate, as it were. The body does

not cooperate with the senses, the senses do not cooperate with the pranas, the pranas do not cooperate with the mind, and the mind does not cooperate with the understanding. There is, therefore, a need to bring about some sort of a balance in the various layers inside us. For this purpose, we have to have some understanding of what we are.

We are not merely sons and daughters, etc. Whenever we think of ourselves, we define ourselves as relations of some people. I am the mother of so-and-so, the daughter of so-and-so, the husband of so-and-so, the friend of so-and-so. I am an officer, I am a clerk, I am a secretary. These are the ways in which we define ourselves. We are teachers; we are students. We are none of these, unfortunately. Our true personality is not a father or a mother, is not a brother or sister. These are all social conventions foisted upon us for the purpose of linguistic definition and social existence. What are you yourself independently, minus every kind of relationship? This is the stage where your internal analysis begins. "When nobody sees me, when nobody speaks to me, when I do not think of anybody else in the world, what am I? Am I a son or a father or brother or sister?" All these ideas will convey no sense when you are absolutely alone somewhere; but still, you are something. Minus relationship, you do not get reduced to nothing.

This is not the conclusion of internal analysis. It is only the beginning of the stages of internal analysis. You have, first of all, to learn that you are an independent being with a status of your own. You are neither this nor that socially. Can you not have a non-social existence? Just imagine you are far away in the wilderness, for instance, in the Sahara desert or in a jungle. You are just no one in human society, but you are still something in yourself, and I don't think that you will evaluate yourself as a father or a mother or a brother or a sister at that time, because these evaluations will convey no

meaning to you. They have no sense at all. You are just a human being. That is the only idea that will come to you about yourself: I am a human being, not merely a social entity or a unit of the organisation of nations.

Now, I have mentioned that this is the first step in your analysis internally: to regard yourself as a human being, that is all, and not as someone related to someone else. Let the external ties snap before the internal analysis begins. The moment you begin to interpret yourself as a relative of somebody else in some way or the other, you are in an external relationship. You are in a state of *yama*, and have not come to *niyama*. You are just a unit in the ocean of forces, which is all existence. You stand alone to yourself. When you were born into this world, you came absolutely alone with no kind of relation whatsoever. The other social relationships developed later on due to circumstances. Similarly, all social ties get snapped when you depart from this world. When you are about to quit this world, it is difficult to believe that a person would go as a mother or a sister, etc. One would leave this world in a different attitude altogether, which could not be possible for the mind to conceive at the present moment because unless the time comes, the mind will not be prepared for such an attitude. When you get drowned in water, you will not be thinking of yourself as a father or son, etc. You will be thinking something different altogether. Your life is going, so what is the use of thinking that you are a father or a brother or a sister, etc.? You are just an entity that lives; that is all the consciousness that you will have at that moment.

So to come to the point, before internal analysis begins, external relationships should cease, which means to say, the attitude of the mind by which it starts interpreting things in terms of external relationships ceases. You may see people, but you need not interpret things in terms of these people.

You see many trees, for instance, many stones, and you do not take them into consideration in your evaluation of things. Then why should you take people into your evaluation of things? In a similar manner, you have to learn to see yourself as independent of these external relationships. Then it is that an insight dawns within you, an insight which speaks in a language of integration, by which I mean that you get an idea of the totality that you really are, and the substance that you independently stand as. We have been taught right from childhood to look upon ourselves as things capable of definition in terms of other things.

You can close your eyes for a few minutes and imagine what you are. You cannot help defining yourself in terms of things other than you. All sorts of ideas will come to you which are not you yourself, and your importance or value or significance seems to lie more in what other things are than in what you yourself are. This is very strange that we seem to look upon ourselves as a conglomeration of definitions foisted upon us by the relationships that we maintain with other things. Are we not something in ourselves? Are we always something because of what some other things are?

This is something higher for the mind to grasp. We look upon things as objects of definition. Everything is defined. Whatever object we see in the world, we find that it is seen as an object of definition. We may define it merely psychologically, though not verbally. We do not give a linguistic definition of an object when we look at an object outside, but we interpret it psychologically. We have an opinion about it, and this opinion is the definition that we give about that object in our mind itself, though we do not speak it.

When we define ourselves, we define ourselves as a unit of relativities, and not as a substance by itself. Logicians tell us that every object is defined in terms of positive and

negative relevances of that object in respect of other things. A cow is that which is different from a non-cow, is a definition. If non-cows do not exist, cows cannot be signified, etc. This should not be the way in which we look upon ourselves. We are some independent significance in itself. You have something in you which is different from the relations that you seem to establish socially outside, and this significance it is that sometimes speaks in the language of self-assertion during the life of everyone. When you assert yourself in some way or the other, you manifest the status that you occupy as an individual in society, minus relationship with society because if you are made up merely of relativities or relations with people, self-assertion would be impossible because there is no such thing as an individual self if it is accepted that it is an object that is defined only in terms of relationships with other things and other persons.

This appearance of one's being a bundle of definitions in terms of other things automatically gets flouted when self-assertion manifests itself. That is what they call the ego. The ego is the affirmation of the individual as it is in itself, independent of relations. You psychologically cut yourself off from all external relations when you make a self-assertion from your own point of view. Now, it does not mean that self-assertion is a virtue. An ego is an ego, but it is an indication that you are something at the background. It is a distorted manifestation of a significance or reality that is at the base or the back of the apparent individuality of ours which connects itself with people outside in social relationships.

So you can imagine how many layers there are through which you have to pass in self-analysis. First of all we had to analyse social relations, and when we have defined and understood social relations and, as a consequence thereof, realised that we have a status of our own as individuals. We

begin to feel as independent substances, as bodies constituted of psychological and rational values. But these assertions of the individual are also defects from the point of view of the higher reaches, which have to be climbed over in the further ascent. Just as it is not true that we are merely a bundle of definitions in terms of social relationship, it is also not true that we are mere bodies or individuals in the physical sense. So just as defining oneself as a father or a mother or a brother or sister is not a correct definition, to regard oneself as a body is also not a correct definition. Both are inadequate terms for two different senses. There is something else which urges us in the direction of these definitions, and that something is beckoning us at every moment in the process of evolution.

So in the practice of the *niyamas*, with which we began, the process of internal discipline in the teaching of Patanjali, we have to divest of all accretions outside the true personality of ours, and psychologically assume an independent existence. *Ekaḥ prajāyate jantur eka eva praliyate, eko 'nubhunkte sukṛtam eka eva ca duṣkṛtam* (Manu 4.240). This is a passage from the Manusmṛiti. One alone is born, and one alone goes. Two people are not born together as friends. Coming and going are a process of aloneness, and your experiences also have to be passed through by yourself independently. You cannot share them with others. The deeds that you perform yield fruits which you yourself have to reap. *Nāmutra hi sahāyārthaṃ pitā mātā ca tiṣṭhataḥ, na putradāraṃ na jñātir dharmas tiṣṭhati kevalaḥ* (Manu 4.239) says Manu: Neither father nor mother will come to you to help you. Not any relation of this world—wife, children, etc.—they completely forget you. They cannot bear any contact with you because of the fact you belong to a different order altogether.

In the same way, perhaps, the relations in dream bear no connection with you when you wake up. You might have had children in dream, for instance. Those children have no connection with you now because you have woken up from dream. They cannot assist you in any way. Likewise, when you go to a higher order of being, your connections get cut off, and you cannot even recognise their very existence. This is to understand oneself truly divested of false relationships that sometimes grow up upon us like accretions, due to erroneous ideas about things. We had fathers and mothers umpteen. Nobody knows how many fathers we had, how many mothers, how many sons. We were anything at any time. One cannot say what one was, and it is the absence of the memory of past lives that keeps us sane at this moment. Otherwise, anybody can simply go out of their wits if all their previous lives were to be remembered, and they could recollect the relationships with all things.

That means to say, ignorance is bliss. We are happy merely because we know nothing. If we were to be awakened to the relativities in which our personality is involved then, as the Buddha said, we cannot live in this world even for three minutes continuously because it is a transitory process which moves fast, and it does not exist by itself even for a single moment. There is a flux of events, and even our bodies and individualities are only an illusory complacency of various relevances pinpointed in one concentration of mind. Various relevances gathered up in one point in space and time by concentration of mind, that is the personality. Just as you can psychologically imagine that there is a drop in the body of the flowing river Ganga, you can psychologically imagine that you exist independently, though you do not because there is only a flowing substance called the river. The drops cannot be seen independently. Likewise, there is a flux. The whole universe is moving like a

river rushing towards the ocean, and you are only an assumed individual, a psychological abstracted drop in the river that flows. There is no physical existence isolated from this process.

Thus, just as there is a need for abstraction from falsely imagined external relationship by tentative conditions in life, there is a need for abstraction from the false notion of personality itself in the higher analysis of the stages of yoga, particularly the internal discipline known as *niyama*, about which we are concerned now. We shall take it up further later on.

## Chapter 6

### THE WHOLENESS TO WHICH WE BELONG

In our study of the processes of yoga, we gathered that the ascent is a gradual movement from the external to the internal, and from the internal to the universal. We have had occasion to go into some detail as regards the external adjustments that we may have to make in our personal lives when we live as units in human society. When we move from the external to the internal, we enter into the subject of psychology, or more properly, as what people call it today, in-depth psychology. In fact, it is not easy to understand the nature of even the external society until and unless we understand the individual that constitutes the unit of society. The individual is a miracle by itself. The personality, the internal structure that we are going to study in our understanding of the art of yoga, is a complex structure of various layers, and valuations of different types.

For instance, broadly speaking, we have been told that there are five sheaths in our personality: the physical, the vital, the mental, the intellectual, and the causal—known in Sanskrit as the *annamaya*, the *pranamaya*, the *manomaya*, the *vijnanamaya* and the *anandamaya koshas*. The three bodies, known as the physical, the subtle, and the causal, include these five sheaths. Thus, it should be apparent to every one of us that we are not merely physical bodies; we are a very complicated structure inside, and the health of the personality depends upon the extent of alignment that is achieved in relation to these layers within. There has to be an alignment of the layers of personality; then we say the person is healthy. Just as physical health is supposed to be a harmony of the humours—*vata*, *pitta*, *kapha*, as we are told—there is a general health of the total personality which

is not merely an equivalent to physical health. There is a satisfaction which is the outcome of what we know as the total health of the personality. Even a physically well-built person may not be a satisfied person, for various other reasons. An unsatisfied person cannot be called a healthy person in the true sense of the term, notwithstanding the fact he may be a strongly built physical personality.

The inner satisfaction or freedom that one feels in oneself is the sign of true health. You should be happy, and that happiness should be a genuine expression of the harmony that has been established within the layers of personality. The happiness is not an outcome of the position of external objects. It is not the pleasure of the senses in their contact with the objects that we are speaking of when we refer to the satisfaction of the personality within. One can be happy even when one is not actually in physical contact with things. The satisfaction of this nature is genuine, spontaneous, and is the essential nature of the person himself. Your essential nature is happiness, and that happiness is not a product of the contact of the senses with the external objects, just as when you are healthy even physically, you feel a kind of satisfaction. Don't you feel happy when you are physically healthy? Is it because you are in contact with some objects outside that you are happy at that time? A person feels a kind of relief, a satisfaction and a great delight inside after recovering from a high fever, for instance. When the temperature becomes normal, a person feels a satisfaction. That satisfaction itself is the indication that the temperature has come to normal. This satisfaction is not due to eating any delicious diet, or any kind of pleasure of the senses by means of contact outside. It is a natural condition of the system. The more we become natural, the more also we become satisfied and happy.

The Yoga System proceeds to explain the ways in which we can be truly happy, happy because we are free. It is the happiness that is born of freedom from within, and one should not imagine that the so-called happiness of the senses in their contact with objects is a sign of freedom. It is the other way round. It is bondage. To seek pleasure in the objects of sense is not a sign of freedom, it is a sign of yielding to impulses. A pressure from inside exerted by the instincts through the senses in terms of objects outside cannot be regarded as an insignia of freedom. Freedom is that state or condition where you exist independent of relationships with things that are outside, and the more you are independent in this sense, the more also you are delighted and satisfied independently within. Merely because you exist, you feel happy. One cannot imagine how this could be. How it is possible for me to be happy merely because I exist? But this, you have to remember, is true satisfaction. Your mere existence should make you feel happy, not because you see things, hear things, touch things, or eat things. That is the prosaic pleasure of the senses which will end finally in sorrow. The joy of yoga is not the pleasure of the senses, or the pleasure of the body. It is a unique type of relief from tension enjoyed on account of the harmony that is established in the various layers of personality: primarily the intellect, the will and the emotion.

Our will, our understanding and our feelings should be in harmony with one another. In a more broad sense, we should think and speak and act in a harmonious manner, which means to say, we should understand things, will things and feel things harmoniously. It is not that the intellect accepts one thing and the feelings resent it. Most of our academic acceptances of the conclusions of philosophy or metaphysics, for instance, may not be agreeable to the feelings of man, so much so that geniuses in intellectual

philosophies may not be satisfied persons due to the disharmony between their feelings and their understandings.

Yoga is a different art altogether. It is not an intellectual science. It is not going to teach you something which is purely rationalistic in an academic sense. It is going to make you a whole being. The word 'whole' has to be underlined. We are not whole persons, normally. We are partial beings. In our day-to-day life, a part of our personality manifests itself, and the whole of it is not revealed to the surface of consciousness. Psychologists tell us that there are layers of the psyche. For instance, they speak of the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious levels. There can be even more levels than these, but we shall be satisfied with these: the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious.

We are all these at the same time, and we are not merely what we think on the surface. Now we are here in this hall thinking something in our minds on the conscious level. We may apparently be looking like persons who have nothing buried inside us, apart from what the mind is thinking at this present moment. Perhaps we are thinking noble thoughts and we are contemplating ideals which are highly enlightening and inspiring, but this contemplation of ours should not be merely an activity of the conscious level. Then it is not yoga. Then it is not meditation. It is merely listening, *sravana*, an understanding of the superficial level of our personality, because we have also to remember that we have deeper levels in us than the conscious level, which are keeping quiet in ambush, and they shall have their voice at a later time when an opportunity arises.

Do you know that you are not in the same mood throughout the day? Each one may look into himself or herself and see what are the moods through which one passes from morning to evening. Are you in the same mood

at all times? Are you always happy, or always unhappy, always agitated, always wanting something? Nothing of the kind. You have varying attitudes. Just now you are something and at another time you are something else, and you cannot know what mood you shall be in after a few minutes. You cannot say that you will not be in a mood of rage after a few minutes. You may say, "Why should I be angry? I am quite all right." But circumstances can rouse your personality to that condition, about which you may not have any apprehension at the present moment. Sudden impulses may arise which are put down at the present moment on account of an activity on the conscious level—for instance, just now, the listening to a speech. But this is not the whole of your personality working. Only the conscious level of the personality is working, and that is not enough. That is why adepts in yoga, the great Masters, tell us that *sravana* alone is not sufficient; *manana* is essential. They go further and mention what is called *nididhyasana*. This means to say, this conscious acceptance of yours at the present moment has to go deep into the subconscious in *manana*, and also to the unconscious in *nididhyasana*. Thus, the whole of the personality is brought to the conscious level. The entire being is conscious, and there we have no hidden personality. This is one of the functions of psychoanalysis: to bring out what is inside in the deeper layers of personality. But many of us are incapable of doing this work of searching what is inside us, mostly because many of us may be busy in outward activities, engaged so much in some work that there may not be time for the mind to think what is inside it. It is concentrated only on a particular aspect of the manifestation of its contents which is engaged in that particular activity. The other aspects are buried inside.

In yoga, this will not do. Mere listening and mere study will not do. You have to go deep into your personality. An analysis of the whole personality is called for. This is taken up when yoga proceeds along the lines of *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, etc. As you go further and further, you go deeper and deeper into yourself. Not merely that, when you go deeper and deeper, you also become larger and larger in your dimensions, a thing that you cannot understand at present. What actually will take place when you ascend higher is something which your mind cannot comprehend at this present moment.

When you go deeper and deeper, you also become wider and wider. This is something very interesting. Thus it is that you approximate yourself to the Atman within, and at the same time approximate yourself to the Brahman without. The Universal Being is the Brahman, the Absolute, and the deepest essence of ours is the Atman, so the more we go near the Atman inside, the more also we become expanded in our consciousness in the direction of the Absolute, Brahman, the Universal Reality.

So, coming to the point, it is essential that we should see that our layers of personality are set in alignment. We should not be double or triple personalities—thinking something, feeling something, speaking another thing, and doing a fourth thing altogether. This kind of thing will not succeed in the world for a long time. There is no use deceiving oneself. What is the use of deceiving oneself? What does it bring? What is the purpose? It is nothing but sorrow, untold suffering, to adopt personalities in oneself which are false to one's true nature.

For various difficulties which are of a social character, people adopt double personalities, triple personalities, etc. We have already gone into this detail in our study of the social existence of the human being. There should be no

occasion in our life when we have to so project our personality in society that we are false to ourselves. That is the work of the principles or the canons of yoga, known as the *yamas*, about which we have made some study earlier. The practice of the *yamas* is nothing but the art of adjustment of the whole personality in respect of society outside in such a way that you will be true to yourself, and also true to society. It does not mean that you have to be false to yourself in order to be true to society. That is not a proper way of living. Nor should it be that you are true to yourself and false to others.

It is difficult to live a life of yoga, no doubt, but it is not impracticable. We have to learn this technique because yoga is, as the Bhagavadgita puts it, *samatva: samatvam yoga ucyate* (B.G. 2.48). This is a pithy aphoristic statement which is not explained further in the Gita itself, but it has an abundance of significance: Alignment, or harmony, is the secret of yoga. What this alignment is, what this adjustment is and what this harmony is, it is up to us to understand by a deeper study under a Guru, a competent teacher. It has to be harmony in every level and in every respect. 'In every level and in every respect'—this point should not be forgotten. It is not only in some levels and only in some respects. It is not that I am in harmony with you under certain conditions, and not in harmony under other conditions. That would not be a healthy way of living.

We are ultimately aiming at God. That is what we have to remember. Our aim in the practise of yoga, our aim of even life in this world, the aim behind our day-to-day activities is God-realisation, the attainment of the highest perfection in the Absolute, and that is True Being, Pure Being, Complete Being, Universal Being. I began by saying you have to learn to be happy merely by being yourself, not by being in contact with something else. This is so because when the being of

the Absolute is reflected in your personality in some measure or some percentage at least, the bliss of that Being also is reflected in you. The Absolute has no contact with something outside. It is called the Absolute because it is non-relative. It has no relationships with anything else. It has no external object to come in contact with. It is being and consciousness and happiness—*sat-chit-ananda*. A ray of it, a faint reflection of it in our personality, is enough to make us immensely happy and satisfied, merely by our being itself.

There is, in modern parlance, a philosophy known as 'holism'. It is fantastically spelled as 'holism', but what is intended is 'wholism'. It is a philosophy designed by General Smuts, who was in Africa. The philosophy behind it is that there is an ascent from one whole to another whole. That is why he calls it 'holism of evolution'. When there is an evolution of things from one level to another, it is not that some part evolves into another part. It is not that one part evolves into a higher level. The whole being evolves into another whole altogether. To make it more clear, we can give an example, for instance, of the growth of a child. At every level of the growth of a person, there is a wholeness that is rising from one level to another. The baby is a whole being. You cannot say that the adult is a whole and the baby is a partial expression of it. Not so. There is a wholeness of personality and a completeness of being even in the baby that is born just now, and in the next moment it is a whole, after one month it is a whole, after one year it is a whole, after ten years it is a whole; at every step it is a whole. It is a movement from one level of wholeness to another level of wholeness.

Thus it is that in the practice of yoga we have to learn the art of rising from one wholeness to another wholeness—not merely biologically as the child grows into the adult, for instance, but in a more significant and deeper sense. The rise

from one level to another in yoga is not merely a physical rise, like the child rising into the adult or the youth. It is a total rising of all the sheaths of the personality—the physical, the vital, the mental, the intellectual, and the causal—the *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya*, *anandamaya*. Only then it can be called yoga; otherwise, it is merely thinking. Yoga meditation is not thinking of some object. You have to draw a distinction between these activities. When you think of something, you are not meditating on that object.

Meditation is a very sacred term. It is significant of the absorption of the totality of your being and that objective on which you are concentrating. When I am thinking of a tree, the whole of my mind may not be absorbed in the thought of the tree. Very rarely in our lives do we see our whole personality rise into action. Never it happens. When we go to bed and are in a state of deep sleep, profound sleep, they say the whole personality is absorbed. There are a few other occasions also when the entire personality rises into activity—for instance, when it is confronted with the fear of death. If you are sure that death will come now and you are not going to live more than a few minutes, then your personality works in a way that the whole of your force is roused into activity.

In the practice of yoga, therefore, a conscious attempt is to be made to bring the whole of our personality into action, action towards God-realisation through the various stages by which we have to pass. Thus it is that we are genuine wholes at every level and every step of practice. The stages mentioned by Patanjali—*yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, *samadhi*—are such wholes. We are not partial expressions.

The study of the sutras of Patanjali is a little difficult for beginners who are not acquainted with the technical

approach of the great Master, because the sutras were written for the purpose of memorising only, and not for teaching. In those days textbooks were not available. No printed books were there, so you could not purchase books from shops or read them in libraries. Therefore, you had to remember the teachings of the Master by certain aphorisms which could create circumstances of remembrance of all the teachings of the Master. So these sutras—Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, and so on—are available today as aphorisms signifying certain essentials of the teaching, and they are not expanded teachings. Thus it is that when you read merely the sutras of Patanjali, you will not make much sense out of it. *Yogaś-citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ* (Y.S. 1.2). The art of yoga is described as the process of the inhibition of the activities of the psyche. Now, you do not know why these should be done at all. He does not tell you all these things. All this is implied already. Why should the mind be controlled in the practice of yoga? What do I gain by that? The answer is not given there; only the technique is given. The answer as to why it should be done at all, the rationality behind it, is in the Sankhya, on which the Yoga is based. That is the metaphysics or the philosophy on which the practice of yoga as described in the sutras of Patanjali is based.

So, first of all, we have to maintain in our minds a clear idea before us. That is the Sankhya, which has to precede the Yoga. *Eṣā te 'bhihitā sāṅkhye, buddhir yoge tv imām śṛṇu* (B.G. 2.39), says Bhagavan Sri Krishna: I have mentioned to you the principles of Sankhya; now listen to the Yoga. The Sankhya is the preceding background of the actual technical practice, which is Yoga. To put it precisely, Sankhya is nothing but the consciousness of the ideal. It is the knowledge of the great goal that is before you. The entire process through which you have to pass is rationally placed before you as an explanation; that is the philosophy of the

Sankhya or the Vedanta. The ideal has to be clear; otherwise, what is Yoga? People say, "I sit for meditation," but they must know on what they are to be meditating and why they are to meditate. These two questions have to be answered, each for oneself.

The aim should be clear, such that there should not be any necessity to change the ideal afterwards. Today you feel that God is the ultimate goal of life, tomorrow you think that social service is the ultimate goal of life, the third day you think that something else is the goal of life, etc. That is, you have not clearly thought of the problem. Your logic has been very feeble. You have to be logically able to deduce the final conclusion in this respect, so that the final aim is clear and there is no necessity to change the ideal afterwards. When you know the nature of the ideal, you will also know the nature of your relationship with that ideal, just as when you know that you have to go to Delhi, you will have an idea as to how far Delhi is, how you have to move towards it, etc. The relationship between yourself and the ideal becomes clear automatically when you know the character of the ideal. These should precede the actual practice. Otherwise, there can be doubts in the mind: "Am I doing the right thing or not? Am I being taught the right thing? Is it the proper practice?" and so on. When the Sankhya principles are clear in the mind, the ideal is perspicuous and there is no doubt in the mind whatsoever as to the goal of life; the relationship of oneself with the ideal is clear, and the path also becomes automatically clear. You know how to tread the path.

You move gradually from one stage to another stage in such a manner that you need not have to retrace your steps. This is another important caution to seekers. They should not be in a state of enthusiasm and excessive emotion by which they jump over certain stages, imagining that they are well up in the practice. Sometimes the regression would be

very painful and the rising further would be a more difficult affair. Therefore, it is better to go slowly, rather than go hurriedly under the impression that God has to be achieved in this very life and so you must jump quickly. You know very well that you go gradually. A child does not become an adult in one day. The seed does not become a sapling or a plant in one minute. Everything has its own time. Nature is an evolutionary process, and not a revolutionary activity. You should not undergo any revolutionary practice in your practice of yoga. Let it be a gradual evolution, without missing even one link in the chain of development. It has to be done very cautiously and very patiently. Even if it takes millions of years, it does not matter. Miss not a link, because once you are sure that you have not missed even one link in the chain of development, you need not have to retrace your steps and fall back upon the old stage from which you are attempting to rise.

Therefore, one has to know where one stands in one's psychological and social setup. Where are you placed psychologically and socially, and what are your duties and calls under those circumstances? Many of these things may appear very difficult to beginners. They cannot even understand what all these things mean. That is why they say a Guru is necessary, a teacher is necessary. This is a path which is not visible to the eyes. It is not like a beaten track on which you can drive a motor car. It is an inward path which is not visible to the eyes. It is cognisable only to the subtle mind, which is purified of all the dross of instinctive desires. Thus, to emphasise again, a competent teacher is necessary, and you should not be in a hurry. Go slowly.

So we are at the beginning of the analysis of the internal adjustment of personality that is called for when we tread the path of yoga through *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, etc.

It would be beneficial for every seeker to maintain a spiritual diary every day. A specimen given by Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is available here. It is not that you should follow the very same pattern. You can change those questions or queries according to the needs of your own psychic nature or your nature of sadhana, etc., but broadly speaking, this is the way a spiritual diary is to be kept. Every day you put a question to your own self: What progress have I made, and what are the difficulties that I had to confront? Why have these difficulties come before me? Which are the ways that I can obviate these difficulties? And, am I genuine in my aspiration or have I a double motive? Are my feeling and emotion and understanding in harmony or not? Have I a conflict with anything? Have I hatred for anything? Is there an inward resentment towards anything? All these analyses have to be made, each for oneself. I think it was Christ who said, "Before you turn to God, make peace with your brother." You cannot have an enemy in this world and then make friendship with God. That is not possible. It is wiser to be very slow and contend with what one has achieved in the lower level—but perfectly, rather than inadequately.

Many of our difficulties are emotional and sentimental—psychic, we may say. We have emotions of various types which are oftentimes in a state of evolution. The emotions are not in a state of harmony or balance. They are upset, disturbed, due to events that take place outside. Now, the fact that your feelings or sentiments get upset due to events that take place outside shows that you have not taken even the first step in yoga. The *yama* itself has not been practised. It means there has not been an external adjustment, what to speak of the internal adjustment? And you are trying for the higher Universal Reality, which is far off.

We have to be, first of all, sincere in our motive, and we should accept that this is the creation of God. That means to

say, the creation that is God's should have also the godly element in it. The effect has a characteristic of the cause, as philosophers tell us. Everything that God has created must have the element of God in it, and we cannot see the devil in it, because God has not created the devil. If God created the devil, and the devil is the effect of God, then God also would be a devil. It is very strange to come to such conclusions. I don't think there are devils in this world. It is a misconceived attitude of ours that sees ugliness and distortion in the creation of God. There is perfect harmony. The Ishavasya Upanishad tells us *yāthātathyato'rthān vyadadhāc chāśvatībhyas samābhyah* (Isa 8): God has created the world in such a way that it requires no amendment. It is perfectly ordered, and His Constitution requires no further enactment of Parliament. It is arranged so beautifully that it is okay forever, but it does not look okay to us. It appears as if there is something wrong in the creation of God. This is the result not of a mistake that is committed by God, but an error in the alignment of our personality with the whole to which we belong. We belong to the world, of which we are a content. The world is the whole, and we are a part. When the part is dissociated from the whole, it cannot see beauty in the whole because it is no more a whole, it is an object. That is why we look upon the world as an object outside and not as a completeness to which we belong.

So in our attempt at the adjustment of our personality inside in the various levels, we have to take advantage of this awareness of the fact that we are parts of a whole. Therefore, the world, which is the whole of which we are a part, is not an object outside which attracts us instinctively or sentimentally, emotionally, or disturbs us in any manner, but should be a field of training for us so that when we look at the world, we look at our larger personality. We look at our own selves in a greater completeness.

The individual who looks at the world is not looking at an object, but at a larger wholeness to which he himself belongs. The very thought of this great fact or truth will bring about the needed harmony in one's personality. The clash between the subject and the object, the seer and the seen, is the cause of trouble within ourselves. There is a clash between the seer and the seen. This seer and seen are not in harmony with each other, so there is a disturbance in the emotions and the feelings and the sentiments of the seer. When the harmony is established, the emotions subside and get in tune with the structure of the whole to which it belongs. This is a subject of psychology to some extent, which we shall try to look into a little later.

## Chapter 7

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE YAMAS AND NIYAMAS

Why do you want to lead a spiritual life? Originally this idea arose in your mind because you want God, the vision of God, the realisation of God. That was the original intention—a very holy, pious and good intention. But later on it got diluted due to a persistence in the old way of thinking, and this social thinking got mixed up, and gets necessarily mixed up, with spiritual attitudes and the spiritual life in general which you have to live.

Spiritual life, even meditation, may become a means to an end other than itself. You may like to be a spiritual person in the eyes of people. Is it not worthwhile? It is a great thing: You are a great saint, a great mahatma, a great yogi. If everybody starts saying that, will you not be happy? This is a devil that is working from inside. Satan is working. He will start telling you, “You are a great man.” Satan started telling this to Christ, and he started telling this to Buddha also. “You are a great man, a great yogi. There is nobody equal to you.” In the beginning nobody will say this. You are just a beginner; who will tell that you are a great person? So at that time you will be really honest because you are a nobody. Nobody cares for you, so you are very honest and very sincere in your yoga, *japa*, meditation, etc. Something is achieved either by accident or by your own effort, or maybe by God’s grace—let it be by anything—and you find that you are somehow or other recognised as a spiritual adept. Some people even think that they are spiritual giants, more advanced than other persons. It may be even among the few friends only, not the whole world. It may be a small monastery or a nunnery. There are only five monks or five nuns, and one is the head there. That head will have an ego.

Why is the ego? “Because I am more spiritual than others.” What a pity! How can spirituality bring egoism?

Spirituality is the annihilation of egoism, but the desire to get recognition—that is, that old type of thinking in terms of social relationship—gets emphasised in a different manner altogether even in spiritual life, and you cannot bear a word that is uttered against you, or at least not complementary to you, which will entirely upset your spiritual life and meditation, and all your pious hopes.

So when you take to meditation and spiritual life, be very, very, very careful to make things clear to your mind. “Am I doing meditation for others’ sake, or for some other purpose?” You cannot answer this question even if I put this question. Even if you put a question to your own self, a proper answer will not come. You will say, “It is all right, nothing wrong, I am quite all right,” because that is very necessary. Everybody has to say they are quite all right because if they start saying they are not all right, the world will not go on. The world will cease to be if everybody realises what the mistake is within oneself.

Very cautiously analyse yourselves, when you become spiritual especially. The spiritual attitude, the meditational attitude is the attitude of the soul that you are to the soul that is universal. Your relationship is with the universal soul, not with other persons and things in this world. What is spirituality? It is the attitude of the individual soul to the universal soul, not the attitude of one person to other persons. That is not spirituality. And what is the attitude of the individual soul to the universal soul? Can you tell me? Words are inadequate to describe this. Try to think as to what your attitude would be towards the universal soul. Understand what that soul is. The Absolute Self, the all-pervading spiritual Reality, what is your attitude towards it? That attitude is called spirituality. It is not reading the Gita

or the New Testament, ringing a bell, and so on. That is not necessarily spirituality. Your inner soul's attitude—not merely an intellectual attitude, not even an emotional attitude—the deepest soul's feeling for that absolute Self, that is spirituality. It has little to do with social relationships, etc.; therefore, the ordinary connection of a give-and-take nature we have with people should not interfere with our inward attitude towards the Supreme Being. Otherwise, you may live in an ashram for fifty years, meditate for forty years, and you will get nothing. You will say, "There is no God. I have lived in the Ashram for fifty years; I have seen no God. I am going back." This is what you will say; that is all. Okay, all right, you can go back. Whose mistake is it? Well, you understand whose mistake. It is not the mistake of anybody else. It is your own mistake because you had no proper guide; you have no Guru. I was telling you yesterday, "Why do you start all these things without a proper competent guide before you?" If you go wrong, that guide will tell you that something is wrong with you, that you are not all right. You cannot find what is not all right with you. That is impossible because you always identify yourself with your mental condition; whatever the mind thinks is all right for you because the mind and you are the same, so who can find out your mistakes except the person whom you have taken as your spiritual director? So the Guru is necessary. Again I come to the point: The Guru is very, very necessary. Don't start this business without a proper guide.

Hence, when you take to meditation, be very cautious, and if you are careful in the beginning itself, success will come to you in a trice. In three days you will know the success in meditation. It does not take months and years. You must be very careful in the beginning itself. Don't make mistakes in the beginning and then start scratching your head. Why waste your time like that? So every step that you

take should be a very carefully taken step. Don't take two steps; take only one step, and take that step as a very firm step so that you may not retrace that step thinking that it is a mistaken step.

With this clarified understanding you take to spiritual life, whose consummation is meditation. Meditation is the crowning glory of spiritual life. It is the last step almost. It is the last step. I had emphasised this. It is not the first step. When you take to meditation wholly and soulfully, you have reached the climax of spiritual life. But to reach that climax, certain preparations are necessary. You cannot reach the last stage in the beginning itself. Certain initial steps have to be taken in order that you may reach this last crowning glory of achievement called meditation.

The initial steps are a disentanglement of your tangled personality. You know what is a tangled personality: a personality that is caught up like this in various confused relationships. In Hindi they call it *janjat*. Some *janjat* you have entered into, a kind of mess. Your personality is involved in a psychological mess. It has to be disentangled gradually before you take to meditation; otherwise, in a confused state of mind meditation cannot be done, and there will be no purpose in trying to meditate in such an unprepared state of mind. So you have to clear the path by freeing yourself from unnecessary tangles in which you might have got yourself.

But you must understand what these tangles are. How will you extricate yourself from these unnecessary tangles unless you know what these tangles are? In order to take such a determination in your mind not to do a mistake in future, you must know what mistakes are already committed and what is wrong with you. Then you can know: "This is the mistake I am doing. I should not do this from tomorrow." But you must know what it is at least; otherwise, how will you

rectify yourself? So you must know what are the mistakes you are committing every day, what are the entanglements.

The entanglements are mostly psychological. All our troubles are psychological because our life is psychological. We are minds, rather than bodies. Our thoughts affect us, and we act according to our thoughts and feelings. You know all these things. So it is necessary to clear up the relationships of the mind with its objects. The mind has its connection with what are called its objects. An object is that which the mind thinks. It need not necessarily be a physical thing; it can even be merely an idea or a concept. That also is an object of the mind. Anything that the mind thinks is its object.

Now, what I called a tangle or a confusion of mind is nothing but a thoughtless relationship that it has developed with its objects. An untenable—illogical, you may say—relationship which the mind has developed towards its objects is the psychological mess. The mind has its objects, and these objects are either physical or psychological. You can think of a physical object, or you may think of a mere idea. As I said, these are also objects. Hence, your relationship is twofold. Your mind has a relationship with the physical things and persons, and it has also a relationship with certain notions it has in the mind. It may have an external tangle or confusion due to wrong relationships with physical things and persons, or it may have an internal confusion due to wrong relationships with its own imagined objectives, aims, etc., which are only inside itself. They are not visible outside.

So to repeat, a tangle is a wrong relationship of the mind with its object, either physical or purely psychological. This has to be cleared up before anything else is done. For that you must also understand what are these objects with which the mind is connected. Yesterday I told you it would be good

for you to make a list of your desires, and these desires are the same as what are called the mind's relationship with the objects. The mind's relationship with the objects is called desire, positive or negative. When you like it, it is called love and when you don't like it, it is called hatred, but it is a kind of desire, positive or negative. Either you desire to have something or you desire not to have something; anyhow it is a desire only. So, as I mentioned yesterday, it would be good for you to have a private diary of your own, just as we have what we call the spiritual diary in the Ashram. You can have your own diary, questions put to your own self by yourself: What are my weaknesses?

Now again I come to that point of the Guru. Some people who are very honest, deeply honest, may find out their own weaknesses. It is not very difficult. But some people will not find it easy to find out their weaknesses because they get identified with the weaknesses themselves. You are the weakness; how can you know that it is there? So then you must go to the Guru again: "Master, am I on the right path? Would you give me any proper advice if it is necessary?" He will tell you if it is all right. If it is all right, ok, you go on. Otherwise, he will say that this is not all right and you must rectify your procedure and attitude in such and such a manner. So the Guru's role in your spiritual life is to be repeated again and again. You cannot avoid it.

The point is that you have to understand what are these objects with which the mind is connected externally or internally so that you may know whether it is necessary to bring about a change in this relationship. Have you any attachments? That is one question that you have to put to your own self. Do you love something? You may say that "love" is a very strong word. Do you like something? Then you will not mind it so much. Yes, of course, so many people have got so many likings though they may not call it a love.

Do you like something? Make a list of these things. What are the things that you like? Are there things which you don't like? Make a list of those things also: I don't like these things. I like these things. This is a very important step that you have to take in self-analysis. Now look at the list of those things which you like. What are those things? Now, is it proper on my part to develop a liking for these things? That is another question: Spiritually, as a sadhaka, as a seeker of God, the ultimate Supreme Being, am I justified in liking these things, having a special love for them? Your mind will tell you. An honest answer will come. In the eyes of God will this attitude be justified? Your conscience will answer this question. In the eyes of God this may not be justified. Then I shall not have this from tomorrow.

But certain likings may be a necessity. You may like to have one blanket because it is so cold in winter. You may like to have an umbrella because it is raining and you cannot go out to have your lunch or meal. Are these likings? You may call them likings, yes, but these are not harmful likings. To have one pair of shoes for your feet or an umbrella or a blanket, well, these are pardonable, excusable, perhaps necessary likings. But other likings are there which are not necessary for your spiritual life. They are to be cut off by self-analysis and proper understanding. And when you do not like a thing, also put the same question: Am I justified in hating these things? In the eyes of God, will this dislike be justified? No, in the eyes of God this dislike may not be justified. Then you must remove this emotion from your mind. You must develop a little more impersonal attitude towards those things which you are likely to dislike. This would be the first step that you take in freeing yourself from tangle.

In the Yoga System of Sage Patanjali, he has laid down certain rules of discipline for disentangling yourself from

this confused relationship with things. They are called the *yamas* and the *niyamas*. The *yamas* are the disciplinary measures that you take to free yourself from unwarranted relationships with other people and other things in the world. These are the *yamas*. *Niyamas* are personal disciplines in respect to your own self, whereas *yamas* are connected with your relationship to other things and other persons. Your relationship to other people should be straightened, disciplined, polished, and given a spiritual touch, and personally also you must be disciplined. Externally and internally you have to be disciplined in such a manner that you become a fit instrument for the entry of the universal force into this personality. Otherwise, how will it enter? In confused, muddy and shaky water, the sun does not get reflected properly and its reflection is not seen. In placid water, which is still, the brilliant sun is reflected. Likewise, the universal Absolute will be reflected in your own personality if this confusion is removed from your mind externally by *yamas* and internally by *niyamas*. All these things are known to you. I do not want to repeat them: *Ahiṃsā satya asteya brahmacarya aparigrahāḥ yamāḥ* (Y.S. II.30). You will think, “These are all for children. I am an advanced yogi. You are telling me *yamas*, *niyamas*. What is this? I am above pranayama and *pratyahara*. I am now in *dhyana* stage, meditation. These are all children’s disciplines—*yamas* and *niyamas*.” You may think like that, but don’t make this mistake. They are not instructions for children. It is for you and me, and everybody. Every step in yoga is a necessary step. Every step is necessary. Even the first step is as important as the last step.

You should not develop attitudes which are contrary to the universality of God. That is the meaning of *yamas*, without going deep into the details of these things. The opposite of the *yamas*—*himsa*, untruth, etc.—these are

attitudes which are contrary to the universality of God. When you do not follow the principles of *yamas*, you are denying the essential nature of God in your practical life, so how can you say it is an unnecessary instruction and a child's instruction? A very important thing it is—most important, I should say. Hurting other things, *himsa*, whether it is in action or word or thought, untruth by which you try to deceive other people, incontinence of the senses, stealing or taking things which do not belong to you and hoarding things which are not necessary for you—these are all things which do not conform to the accepted truth that God is the Ultimate Reality, which is your aim and for which you are trying in meditation.

I am not going to tell you what are these *yamas* and *niyamas* because you all know them. I am only giving the inner significance of these things, how important they are and why they are important. If you don't follow them, you are denying the existence of God in His essential nature, and contradicting Him. Then what is your spirituality when you contradict God? So by denying these *yamas* you are contradicting God himself, God's law. This is the importance of *yamas*. *Niyamas* are personal self-disciplinary measures physically, verbally and psychologically.

## Chapter 8

### ASANA, OR POSTURE

The individual is a miniature of the universe. This is the foremost point which a seeker on the path of yoga would bear in mind in undergoing its techniques. The difference between the art and techniques of yoga and the trainings that we acquire while we study the technical sciences of the world is that yoga is not an isolated science such as physics or chemistry. For instance, a student of physics need not bother about biology because his field of operation is restricted, but not so is the case with yoga. The field of yoga is not restricted. It is a vast, comprehensive sweep over every branch of learning and every field of knowledge.

The fact that the individual is a miniature cosmos explains the attitude which the individual should develop in the practice of yoga. Whatever is in the universe is also in the individual, so that the laws operating in the cosmos operate in respect of the individual also. It does not mean that we are bound by one law, and another law works in the world outside. There is a single rule operating everywhere, right from the solar system and the Milky Way down to the lowest atom and electron—so much so that we are in a cosmic atmosphere. We are not living in Rishikesh or in a small hall within an enclosure of bricks raised one over the other, as small human individuals independently thinking whatever occurs to one's mind, each for oneself. We are, fortunately or unfortunately, made in a different way from what we think we are.

The atmosphere in which we live is not the social atmosphere of a Hindu or a Christian or a Buddhist. It is not even a human atmosphere in the ordinary sense of the term. I can only call it a universal atmosphere, a cosmic air that we

are breathing. It is not the air of India that we are breathing; it is not the air of Rishikesh or Muni-ki-reti. The air of the cosmos is sweeping over our heads and entering our lungs. The power of the universe is sweeping through our veins, and we are heirs apparent to the treasures of the cosmos. This should give us enough enthusiasm, spirit and a spark to proceed along the right path even in our day-to-day existence.

The great system of yoga propounded by Patanjali is our subject. We have gone sufficiently afar in our study of the scientific and logical aspects of the earlier stages, *yama* and *niyama*. Now we are trying to enter into what may be called yoga proper in its most technical form. The actual practice commences with a discipline that is directly connected with the very individuality, apart from the fact that we are units in a social atmosphere. We have already seen that we are not merely social units; we have a status of our own. This was the subject that we endeavoured to go into earlier.

The fact that we are individuals, miniatures of a cosmic setup, requires of us a discipline of a particular character. You may ask me why we should be disciplined. Are we not free individuals? We are not free, as we imagine. We are bound. Discipline is required of us in order that we may realise the freedom that is our birthright. The discipline which the physician prescribes to a patient for the purpose of regaining health is not an external imposition that is inflicted upon the patient by an outside mandate. It is a health-giving discipline that is necessary for the freedom that we are asking for. Do you like to be a patient in bed? Can you call yourself a free person because you are on the bed as a patient? The freedom increases as the health increases, so the discipline required for the purpose of regaining health cannot be regarded as an unwanted imposition on you by the physician. Likewise is the discipline of yoga. It is not a

harassment that is imputed upon you by anybody else—the scriptures or the Guru or anyone else. It is a necessity arisen on account of the very fact of your relationship with the universe. If you do not belong to the universe, that would have been a different matter, but unfortunately for you, you do belong to the universe; therefore, you are ruled by the law of the universe as a citizen is ruled by the law of the country to which that individual belongs.

There are various levels in which the universe maintains and manifests itself. The lowest level is the physical level. We are told in the scriptures that there are higher levels. For instance, there are various planes of existence. In Sanskrit language we say Bhuloka, Bhuvanloka, Svarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka, Satyaloka. This is the Sanskrit terminology for the planes of existence, or the realms of being, higher than the physical. There may be infinite minute subdivisions of these seven layers, but broadly speaking, these are the seven stages of ascent on account of the seven stages of descent of the universe into the lowermost physical level. These also represent the seven stages of knowledge, about which we shall be speaking later on.

So the lowest level is the physical level, and from there we rise gradually, step by step, through the gradational processes of ascent. The physical level is also the bodily level. Our bodily existence is our physical existence. It is conditioned by the rules of the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, ether. The five elements are the constituents of this physical body. Just as bricks and mortar constitute a building, the five elements constitute this body; whether it is of a child or an adult, of a man or a woman, of a tree or a stone, it makes no difference. Whatever you see anywhere in this world is nothing but, physically speaking, the embodiment of these five elements. So is the body of every one of us.

The difficulty with us is that we are not en rapport with the five elements. We have some difficulties, for various reasons, on account of which we are unable to set ourselves in tune with the five elements. Thus it is that we seem to be troubled by the five elements in various ways. The Yoga System adopts a technique of gradual alignment of the individual layers of personality with the layers of the cosmos, beginning with the physical, and the first item here in this art of practice is what usually goes by the name of asana, the practice of the posture.

The word 'posture' is a very wide term, signifying many things. It is the position that you occupy, the attitude that you develop, the outlook of your entire setup, and also, existence is the asana. So it has a deeper meaning than what appears on the surface from the purely hatha yoga point of view. You have been told that asana is a physical exercise, and you are all practising asana of one type or the other every day. The physical exercise that you are mostly acquainted with is a technique adopted to keep the body flexible in order that it may be tuned up to the required level. For instance, you will find that in the sutras of Patanjali no mention is made of these asanas that you are practising. The *shirshasana*, the *sarvangasana*, and all those asanas to which so much importance is given in yoga schools, are not even mentioned in the sutras of Patanjali. The reason behind it is that Patanjali deals with the higher stages of yoga. The very first verse of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika mentions that hatha yoga is a preparatory stage, which means to say the position or the discipline of the body is a preparatory step for the position or the attitude or the discipline of the higher levels inside us, about which we were speaking last time.

The mind is the thing that has to practice the asana, after all. The mind has to be positioned. The positioning of something is called the asana that is adopted by that thing.

So we have to be stationed or seated in some particular way. It has to begin with the visible form, because the invisible is incapable of grasp in the beginning stages, just as if you want to stop the mechanism of a clock, you simply hold the pendulum, or even the hands. The mechanism stops for the time being because there is a connection between the hands and the mechanism inside. Likewise is the case with the physical postures and the internal structures. When the body is made to assume a particular position, it has a corresponding impact upon the inner structures of the body, and upon the mind itself, ultimately. Your whole attitude changes by continuous practice of certain postures.

So the flexibility that is the aim of the practice of the hatha yoga techniques is required for the final mastery that one has to gain in seating oneself in one fixed posture. Now, Patanjali does not mention the name of any asana. He is curiously silent about giving any nomenclature for the posture. He gives a verse, a small aphorism, a sutra, where he says that asana, or posture, is that which is fixed and comfortable. This is all he says. He does not say it is a topsyturvy pose or a bow pose or a plough pose, etc. Nothing of the kind is mentioned. Anything that is fixed and comfortable, that is asana.

You may be wondering what all this is about, and why we are supposed to be fixed. Of course, it is understandable that we should be comfortable because nobody would like to be in a state of discomfort, but why should we be fixed in a particular physical pose? The reason behind this is scientific and philosophical. As I mentioned in the very beginning, the individual is a miniature of the cosmos. The miniature aspect of the individual requires the individual to keep itself in tune with the laws operating in the physical world—the five elements, for instance. The earth has a law, the water, the fire, the air and the ether have laws, which condition the

physical body. We never feel that we are one with the five elements. Who feels a oneness with the earth or with the water, with the air or with the sky, etc.? Not for a moment can we feel this, notwithstanding the fact we are nothing but edifices constructed out of the building bricks of these five elements.

The reason behind our not being able to feel our union with the five elements is the egoism of our personality. There is a peculiar thing in us called the ego. It is difficult to explain what it is. It is the sense of isolation from that to which one really belongs. That is actually the ego. When there is an instinct within to cut oneself off from that to which one organically belongs, really speaking, that sense is called the ego. Thus, the ego is a very unfortunate thing. It is not a virtue, merely because of the definition that I have given. It is the sense of isolating oneself from that to which one really belongs, so how can we say that ego is a virtue? It is a devil, and if there is a devil at all, it is this, and no other devil exists in the world. It is difficult for anyone to define what ego is, or explain what this sense of isolation is, because any attempt at describing this isolation would proceed from the sense of isolation itself. It is the ego itself that is describing its own self. It is hard for anyone to speak of the nature of this isolation that has taken place. We regard the world as an outside object. The world is outside us. The earth is outside. When we speak of the earth, we think that there is something outside. The water is outside, the air is outside, the fire is outside, the sky is outside. Everything is outside. We never feel that we are made out of the substance of the five elements.

The asana that Patanjali prescribes is a position which diminishes the intensity of the ego. Now, the practical outcome of this assumption is a matter of experience. It is not possible to understand it by mere theoretical exposition.

What impact the practice of a single fixed posture has upon the egoism of an individual is a matter of practical experience, each for oneself. You sit for one hour continuously without even a single motion of your body, and tell me tomorrow what difference it has made to your feelings. It would have made a tremendous difference. Your sense of existence gets cooled off. It is mellowed. You almost feel that you are gradually evaporating into thin air. I am not asking a person to think or meditate; that is not the question now. You merely get seated in one posture, a posture that will not pain you and make you feel the body more and more. If you sit in a cramped position with bent back or slumping, you will feel a discomfort after a few minutes, so you will be made to feel the existence of the body. The idea of comfort that is to attend upon the fixity of the body in this position of asana is that you should not have any necessity to think of the body. The more you are comfortable, the less you think of the body, even as the more you are healthy, the less you think of its existence. The ego is an assertive principal which emphasises that the body alone is reality, and my body is the only reality, and other bodies are not so important as my body. The ego boasts to such an extent as to affirm the supremacy of its own embodiment, to the exclusion of other bodies. That is why when your body is criticised or cowed down or not paid sufficient respect, you get a feeling of agitation within you and there is a resentment against other bodies. You do not like a word to be uttered even about your body itself, let alone about other things. If anybody tells you that you are ugly, you will not be very happy: Why should they call my body as ugly, as a crooked personality, etc.? The ego assumes an importance which is all-in-all. It is the most irrational element in us. If you can conceive of the height of irrationality in the world, it is this ego principle. For no reason whatsoever, it asserts

that it is the only reality. It cannot be justified, because it is contrary to fact. It is not true that your body is isolated from the physical world. It is also not true that you are socially independent. It is not true that you are isolated or a free individual even in the ultimate sense of absoluteness. In no sense can the ego be justified. In every sense it is an unfortunate disease that has crept into your existence.

Yoga is nothing but the art of diminishing the ego until it evaporates into nothingness so that individuality ceases and you experience the non-individual existence which is at the background of the so-called appearance of individuality. Various techniques of yoga—call it karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga or jnana yoga, whatever it is—all these methods are endeavours to diminish the ego to nothingness. It has to begin with the visible atmosphere, as I mentioned. You cannot go to the skies in the beginning itself. The ego is a hard element to encounter. It is not an easy thing to conquer.

There is a Chinese or perhaps a Japanese Zen analogy which is usually given as an example of the way in which the ego, or the mind, is to be controlled. The ego or the mind is compared to a wild bull, which is ferocious. You cannot even look at it; it will simply gore you to death if you go near it. This ferocious bull is to be controlled in such a manner that you have to ride upon it. Can you ride upon such a ferocious bull? Now, the technique is how to control it. The example says to put a fencing around this bull. Don't go very near it. It may be even a half a mile away from the bull, but put a fencing around it. Now you have restrained the bull within that circumference; that is the first step. The bull cannot go outside the circumference of the fencing that you have set up. At least you have succeeded in one thing. The fact that it cannot go outside the conditioned atmosphere or the periphery or the circumference of the fencing that you have put shows that it has come under your subjection, at least to

a minimum extent. Next, you go on decreasing the radius of the circle little by little, little by little, little by little, until you come to the minimum radius of the circle. Then the next stage is, you visit that bull every day, as many times as possible, so that it sees you. In the beginning it will snort at you and come near the fence to try to attack you. But if you go and see it every day, it gets acquainted with you. Then afterwards you go with a little green grass or something that it likes to eat. Throw it inside the fence, as you cannot go near it. The bull eats it. Every day you bring this food, throw it, and it gets familiarised with your personality. It knows the same person is coming, and thinks: "I have seen him again and again. Now he is coming with something which is to my taste." Then the next step is to thrust your hand through the fence and give it the grass or the food with your hand. It will eat. It has come under your subjection. Then you touch it, pat it on the face, still standing outside the fence. Then you hold its horns and shake the horns, still standing outside the fence. Then you go on patting it and rubbing it and touching it again and again until it becomes friendly towards you. Afterwards you thrust your leg, thrust your hand, thrust your head through the fence and see what happens. It will become more friendly, gradually. Then you remove the fence. So goes the analogy, until you will be able to sit on it and ride it. People control even lions and tigers with this kind of method. Otherwise, who can put a hand into the mouth of the lion, as you see in circuses? Can anybody thrust their hand into the mouth of a lion? But it is seen. This is an example that is given for the way we have to adopt in controlling our own selves, the ego which is the ferocious bull, the lion, the tiger, the scorpion, the snake, whatever you call it—unyielding and very terrible, and tempestuous. Like a wild elephant, like a tempestuous wind, uncontrollable is this mind, this ego, this individuality.

So yoga tells you, “Don’t be in a hurry, don’t be in a haste, don’t be too enthusiastic and emotional about it.” Go gradually, slowly. The first step is to be seated, as you put a fence around a wild bull.

There is an advice specifically given by Patanjali in connection with the practice of this one posture. This advice is in one sutra, a simple aphorism: *Prayatna śaithilya ananta samāpattibhyām* (Y.S. 2.47). How do you sit in one posture? You say, “I have got an ache here and there, I cannot bend my knees, I cannot stretch my legs, I cannot sit for two minutes.” This is the complaint from most people. Can you sit in some posture? Is it possible for you to sit in some posture, at least for a few minutes? Is it true that you cannot be in any posture except lying down? In the beginning it may be like that. There are some people who cannot assume any posture except the lying pose and there too, they are fidgety. Even there they cannot be for a few minutes in the same position. Let it be. You start with lying posture, the lowest stage possible. Then you be seated for a few minutes in any posture you like—it may be in a stretched posture, it may be in an easy-chair, it may be in an armchair, whatever it is. Then be seated with a cushion, not on the hard ground where you feel the pain.

The point is, *prayatna śaithilya*, as the sutra puts it. You should not put forth effort in sitting, because effortlessness is the sign of success in the practice of the asana. Why should there be effortlessness and not effort? Because effort is pain. Effort means consciousness of that which you are doing, and consciousness of what you are doing is the same as consciousness that you exist. We want to diminish that consciousness itself. Even the idea that you exist should go, should evaporate gradually, so why should you have effort of that kind which will enhance the feeling that you exist? Assume any position, not necessarily *padmasana* or

*siddhasana*, anything that is convenient with effortless and ease, and later on you will find you can be seated in the posture in which most of you are sitting just now. It is a simple, non-technical pose that you are seated in at present. That is quite all right. There is nothing difficult about it. It must be effortless, *prayatna śaithilya*.

*Ananta samāpattibhyām*. There is another suffix to this definition, and that is, *ananta samāpatti*: The attainment of *ananta*. Many commentators of this sutra have given different opinions about the meaning of the word *ananta*. The *sutradhara*, or the author of the sutra, seems to suggest that you are enabled to sit in a particular posture by contemplation on *ananta*. But what is *ananta*? There, the commentators differ. The dictionary meaning of a prosaic character is the snake or the serpent, the mythical serpent that is said to be supporting this whole Earth, a huge snake mentioned in the mythologies of India on which the great Narayana is said to be reclining in the milky ocean. He is the supporter of the whole Earth, and he concentrates himself in such a manner, it is said, that the Earth does not shake. Otherwise, it will tumble down. This is the mythological definition given, but I feel that there is some other meaning which is significant behind this word *ananta*. *Ananta* means 'endless'. *Anta* is 'end or limit', and *ananta* is 'limitless or infinite'. The *sutradhara*, or the author, seems to suggest that you should be able to concentrate on infinitude in order that you may be able to sit in one posture because position is the character of infinitude, and fidgeting, restlessness and discomfort arise due to the consciousness of a distinction between the subject and the object. The more are you conscious of the distinction between yourself and others, the more are you restless. This you can see by practical experience in day-to-day existence. If you are intensely conscious of the people around you, you are unhappy in that

atmosphere. You would like to get up and go away. Even in an assembly, you cannot sit for a long time if you are constantly aware of people around you and you cannot think anything else; you feel unhappy and go away. Similarly, a person who speaks from a pulpit will not be a success if he is conscious of the audience so much that he cannot say anything at all. The best speaker is he who does not even know that there is an audience. He is thinking only of the ideas in his mind, and not of people in front of him. The subject-object relation is abolished in the highest orator so that he is in an infinite mood, and that is why he speaks so beautifully; otherwise, the man will be thinking of the people in front, and what will he speak? And he will even be thinking something worse: "What is that man thinking about what I am saying?" etc.

What I mean to say is, when the subject-object relationship gets intensified, it creates a sense of restlessness in us, and finitude is nothing but the consciousness of this distinction. The more I become conscious of my distinction or separation from others, the more am I finite, so that when I become intensely conscious of my own body, I am in the lowest state of finitude. The greater is the success you achieve in the consciousness of the infinite, the more are you free, the more are you comfortable, the more is the ease that you feel, and the more is the satisfaction also felt at the same time. You become natural. The more is the approximation of your being to the infinitude of the atmosphere around you, the greater is the ease and the satisfaction that you feel within yourself. Satisfaction is the characteristic of the lessening of individual consciousness. The lesser is the individual sense in you, the greater is the happiness that you feel. A great philosophical point comes in here to be discussed later on. Even the little joy that you feel in life, even the littlest scrap of happiness that you experience in day-to-day existence in

different moments of time is due to a sense of losing your sense of personality. Many of us may not be aware of the secret that is taking place.

So *ananta* is the infinite that is referred to by the author of the sutra, and what is this *ananta*, this infinite? It is not necessarily the Supreme Absolute, though it is also that. For the purpose of the practice of the asana or the single posture which Patanjali is referring to, we may define *ananta*, the infinite, as that particular attitude which you adopt by which you lose the consciousness of your separateness from others around you, from the immediate atmosphere around you. It may be the neighbour, it may be the friend that is sitting near you, it may be the audience in which you are seated; it may be anything, for the matter of that. The more you are tuned in or the more you are communed with the immediate atmosphere around you, whatever be that atmosphere, the more you are capable of easily positioning yourself in one seat. This is a secret given by Patanjali.

You can take up this technique in your daily practice, and see to what extent you succeed. The thing that is around me is not separate from me. It is somehow or other connected with me. Let this feeling be driven into the mind. Here, you will have a double advantage. First of all, you will gradually lessen the distinction that is falsely separating you from the atmosphere around you, and so it brings a kind of satisfaction. Secondly, you also draw strength from the atmosphere. When you get up from the asana, you do not feel nervous, sentimental, moody, emotional, upset at little things, etc., because this strength that is conveyed by the practice of the asana also drives energy into the inner structure of the personality and makes you a whole being, at least in some percentage. It is this step in yoga, the positioning of the body in a scientific manner, that enables us to be positioned in the inner layers also, to which I made

reference last time, until we shall be in a position to be stationed in communion with the highest Reality, which is the aim of yoga.

## Chapter 9

### THE TECHNIQUE OF PRANAYAMA

In our study of the eightfold practice of yoga as propounded by the Yoga System of Patanjali, we noticed that even physical posture, or asana, has a spiritual significance and it is not merely a bodily exercise. So is the case also with what is known as pranayama. As it is true that asana is not merely a physical exercise but a spiritual discipline with a deeper connotation behind it, so is pranayama not merely a technology of breathing in certain ways but it is also a spiritual exercise. Yoga is attunement with the spirit in different levels of its manifestation. There is only spirit ultimately, the Absolute, and any step taken in the direction of its realisation is a spiritual step, though it may be in the form of a social discipline, a physical discipline or any other kind of temporal exercise.

The technique of pranayama in the system of Patanjali differs from the various methods of pranayama described in the hatha yoga texts in the same way as the asana in the system differs from hatha yoga asanas. Patanjali makes his system thoroughly psychological and spiritual. He could observe that the intention behind the physical exercises, so-called, the asana, is the setting in tune of the bodily structure with the constitution of the physical elements: the earth, water, fire, air and ether. Likewise is the intention behind the regulation of the vital energy inside. We have to draw a distinction between breath and vital powers. Just as electricity is not the same as motion and heat, etc., though it can manifest itself in these forms, prana is not breathing, though it also reveals itself as a process of breathing. The internal cumulative system of energy in our personality is the prana, as far as we are concerned, in this particular

context. We are wholes not only psychologically but also vitally. We are organisms. The meaning of an organism is that it is an inseparable completeness of structure, and not a mechanically constructed whole of which the parts do not organically relate one to the other. Even as asana or physical exercise has a wider significance than merely bodily exercise, pranayama has a wider significance than the regulation of the breath. What is the significance implied?

Just as the body is constituted of five elements and it is incumbent on the part of every individual to set this physical system in tune with the five elements outside in the stage of yoga known as asana, it becomes imperative that the vital system within us also is set in tune with the vital system in the universe in the process of creation. Reality seems to have descended into grades of more and more intense density when it comes to lower levels of diversification, and in this process of the diversification known as creation, a twofold activity has taken place. One is cosmic, and the other is individual. The process of creation is not only cosmic, but it is also individual. Our scriptures, especially the Upanishads, speak of these mysterious processes through which the universe appears to have passed until we realise ourselves as what we are today.

The traditional gradation of this descent is in the terminology of what we know today as Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha, and Virat. The potentiality for creation is Ishvara, the subtle concept of the outlines of the future manifestation of the universe is Hiranyagarbha, and the actual materialisation of this subtle concept is Virat. Up to the level of the Virat, creation is universal and the individual has not been isolated from the cosmic. This is what is known as cosmic creation. Right from the beginning of the potential will to create, up to the manifestation of the physical universe in the form of the Virat, it is divine creation,

Ishwar-srishti—which means to say, up to the level of Virat there is no consciousness of the separateness between subject and object.

For ordinary human beings like us, it is difficult to conceive what this Virat or Hiranyagarbha could be. For us these are only some words which cannot convey much of a meaning. How is it possible to descend into a material manifestation without the consciousness of the distinction between the subject and the object? We can only explain it by a kind of analogy, though very inadequately. We are conscious of the distinction between the limbs of the body. The right hand is different from the left hand, one ear is different from another ear, one leg is different from another leg, the head is different from the stomach, etc., but we never feel that there is a real diversity among these limbs. Notwithstanding the fact that they are isolated in one way spatiotemporally, they are really not cut off organically. This analogy is not complete because the perception of the limbs of the body implies the perception of space and time, and we cannot introduce the concept of space and time in the Virat. This is the defect in this analogy. But there is no other possibility of explanation because when we give examples, we cannot stretch them to the breaking point. The partial implication of this analogy is that there is an organic connectedness of the various parts of creation even in the lowest cosmic manifestation, called Virat, and there is no individuality.

Now, while Ishvara is the potentiality for creation, it is the seed of the universe, and the universe is said to be present in this cosmic seed latently, as a huge banyan tree can be conceived to be present in the little speck of a seed. We cannot see the tree there even with a powerful microscope, but it is there impliedly and we can infer its existence. So is the universe said to have existed in Ishvara

potentially as our individuality exists potentially even in the state of deep sleep. We have no individual consciousness, or even the trace of it, when we are fast asleep; but yet, it is there. Had it not been there, it could not crop up the next day in all its colours as it was earlier.

Hiranyagarbha is like a dream state where a hazy notion of the manifestation to come forth is present, but it is not clear enough. In Virat it is blazing forth as if in the midday sun with all its distinct colours and varieties. Hiranyagarbha is comparable to the vital sheath within us in the cosmic sense, and Hiranyagarbha is also known as Mahaprana, Sutratma, Cosmic Prana. As physically, bodily we are part of Virat, subtly, in our vital existence, we are part of Hiranyagarbha; causally we are part of Ishvara, and essentially we are integrally related to the Absolute.

So in the practice of pranayama, the spiritual element comes in when we bear in mind our relationship with Hiranyagarbha, or the Cosmic Prana. We do not merely perform an exercise through the fingers by holding the nostrils, drawing the breath in and out for no purpose. It is a methodology adopted to set the energy within in tune with the cosmic power, the cosmic Shakti, Mahaprana, Hiranyagarbha outside. Gradual attunement is the intention. Just as we are separated physically one from the other, we cannot conceive any kind of organic connection among ourselves. Each one regards the other as a totally distinct individual on account of a very vehement interference of space and time among us. This factor which causes the notion of difference introduces itself even in our subtle body, and it does not leave us even in the causal state. We are not free from the notion of space-time even in dream; it is the mind alone that reveals itself as the object in all the phenomena that we recognise in dream. The space-time notion does not leave us. We see things in space and in time

even in the dream condition. The solid objects, the material things that we perceive in dream, are mentally constructed. They are not physical objects. The brick wall in dream is not a brick wall. It is not a physical object. It is a mentally constructed substance. The so-called brick wall, building, or even a hard rock in dream is a psychologically conceived something projected externally in a space-time which is also mentally constructed.

The idea behind this analogy is that we are wedded to the notion of space-time to such an extent that our very existence seems to be impossible without it. We are spatiotemporal beings. Mrityuloka is this world. This is a world of perishability, transiency, destruction and death because this is a world of space-time, separability and condition. We are conditioned not only in the waking state but also in the dreaming state, and our prana also works in a conditioned manner. Even when we are fast asleep and we are not conscious of anything in the world, we are conditioned in the sense that there is the seed of egoism, individuality, isolation, and subject-object distinction latently present even in the state of deep sleep.

In the wholesale transformation of the total personality of ours which is yoga, it becomes necessary for us to take note of our inner being, internal to the physical body, and tune it to the level of the universal in the status of subtle existence. There is a relationship between the mind and the prana. They are not totally disconnected one from the other. The practice of pranayama would not be successful, and it would not yield the required result, if the mind did not cooperate with the practice. If the mind is distracted, emotions are boiling and there is irritation of the whole system caused by some factor or other, then the regulation of the breath by a forced technique of breathing would be of no avail. In fact, a disturbed mind should not practise

pranayama. It would be deleterious to one's health. Emotionally imbalanced persons should not practice pranayama. In a sense we may say an extreme step taken in the direction of pranayama would be dangerous, more dangerous than the practice of asanas, if the other factors contributory to the success in this practice are absent. Though it is true that the mind is connected even with the body, and not merely with the prana, and even asanas would not be to one's advantage if there is emotional disturbance or mental disharmony, the case is more intense in the case of the prana because the more we go inside, the greater is the subtlety of the thing that we are handling.

Therefore, it is essential to assess one's own self when one enters into the inner techniques of practice. Are there tensions of any kind, nervous or psychological? The motive behind pranayama being the suspension of breathing, ultimately—the retention of it for the purpose of concentration—this would become impossible and impracticable, and even harmful, if the nerves, the muscles, the emotions and the mind as a whole are not collated with the practice. Agitated personalities—people in a state of repressed emotions, suppressed desires or unfulfilled ambitions which work deep sorrow into oneself—such people are not to go into the deeper practices of pranayama, such as the suspension of the breath, because tension, imbalance in mind, emotional tension, etc., are the opposite of the attempts that you are putting forth in the practice of pranayama. You try to bring about a system or harmony in the vital energy inside by the practice of pranayama, but emotional disturbance is contrary to it. You will be blowing hot and cold if you try to do both things at the same time. You have deep-seated desires which clamber for satisfaction in the outer world of space-time and, at the same time, you turn a deaf ear to their calls, close your eyes to their very

being, and then take recourse to the regulation of the breath. That would be most harmful, and one should not take recourse to this practice. The intention behind pranayama is to set the subtle body in union with the subtle body of the universe. The *sukshma sharira* within, the *linga sharira*, the subtle body, is to be en rapport with Hiranyagarbha, the Cosmic Prana.

Very little is mentioned about pranayama in the sutras of Patanjali. He does not go into such details as are found in the hatha yoga texts, the purpose behind it being that Patanjali is concerned only with higher meditation in the end, and he propounds or advises only that much of the technique of the regulation of the breath as would be essential for the concentration of the mind in its higher reaches.

You must have all been well acquainted with the practice of *anuloma-viloma* pranayama, breathing through the nostrils alternately with a little bit of retention in the beginning, and increasing this period of retention later on, for the purpose of cleansing of the nerves. You know, when water flows through a pipe, for instance, sediments can get deposited in the pipe. There can be a little sand or mud, etc., when the water is pumped from the pump-house or the Ganga to the water tank; but if you pump the water both ways—from top to bottom and from bottom to top—and do not allow the water to run in only one direction, the sediments get disturbed, upset, and the pipe gets cleaned immediately. The sediments get thrown out on account of the flow of water both ways; otherwise, if it flows only in one direction, they will settle down and are undisturbed there.

Likewise, the sediments in the nervous system are supposed to be cleaned to allow the free flow of the prana, and even as a double pumping of water from both sides through a pipe will clean up the pipe thoroughly, the double process of breathing through the different nostrils is

intended to clean the whole nervous system. But the final intention is the enabling of the person, the seeker, to lower the rate of breathing, which is an indication of calmness of mind, tranquillity of mood, the diminution of agitation in the system, etc. We breathe very hard, heave the breath with force when we are running fast or are upset in the mind or otherwise disturbed. When we are calm and quiet, when we are poised, when we are tranquil, when we are fast asleep there is slow breathing, which means to say that there is a connection between the psychic condition and the vital state of the breathing.

We have to emphasise again the connection between the mind and the vital energy so that there need not be any kind of misconception about the overemphasis that is usually laid on the techniques of asana and pranayama. Most of the seekers in the path of yoga give scant respect to *yama* and *niyama* and the mental condition behind them, while they go very enthusiastically to asana and pranayama. They forget the preceding stages are the controlling factor behind every stage in practice. The preceding stages are the *yama* and *niyama*, the personal and social disciplines to which we made reference earlier, and the final determining factor in every form of success, namely, the state of mind. But people ignore these aspects. Whatever be the state of mind, they have no concern with it. They practise fifty asanas and sit for pranayama twenty times a day with sorrow in the heart, grief in their emotions, and various types of desires which they could not fulfil for one reason or the other. There is indiscipline of the personality in respect of the body and the mind on one side, and indiscipline of the relationship of oneself with society on the other side. With both these difficulties, one cannot achieve much success in pranayama. Hence, caution is the watch-word; vigilance is to be kept up in taking any step in this practice.

I have to reiterate again that emotionally disturbed people with unfulfilled desires should not hold the breath for long, though you may practise deep inhalation and deep exhalation. There is no harm in that. It is a very good physical exercise for the purpose of maintaining health. We generally breathe shallowly and not very deeply, but it is a good practice to breathe deliberately, to inhale as deeply as possible and exhale slowly, as deeply as possible again. That again cleanses the system.

But *kumbhaka* is not permitted in the earlier stages. Though it is okay to the extent that it is felt comfortable, it should not go to the point of suffocation. The moment you feel discomfort, you should cease the practice of retention. And retention becomes spiritually meaningful only when it is attended with concentration of mind. Some people hold the breath in a mechanical manner, but they do not know why they hold the breath; they chant Gayatri mantra and hold the breath at that time. The idea behind this is that the mind should be concentrating on the meaning of the mantra at the time of holding the breath because concentration of mind gets accelerated at the time when the prana is suspended. Whenever you concentrate deeply, the prana does not function. Suppose you walk on a narrow causeway, or you walk on a wire as in a circus. You will be holding your breath lest you should fall. When you concentrate the mind on a single point, even when you pass a thread through the eye of a needle, you will be holding the breath to know that the thread will not slip out and will not go out of the eye of the needle. Whenever there is a necessity to concentrate the mind, there is an automatic suspension of breath, thus indicating the relationship between the two. This again is a point to remember in order that we may not forget the relationship, or the essential coordination, of the mind with the prana within us.

Now, to come to the point, prana is the total energy within us. It is not merely the breath. The entire force that is within the body is the prana. We cannot define what prana is, just as one cannot say what strength is, what force is, what power is, what energy is. It can only be felt within oneself. I know what strength is, but I cannot describe what strength means. It is the capacity of the individual in the maximum possible manner, in the highest extent. That capacity is the prana within us. It is a gross form of thought, and in this sense we may say that prana is the connecting link between the mind and the body. The body is directed by the mind through the pranas. The prana also ramifies itself into various functions, and on account of the various functions that prana performs, it is designated in various ways as *prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana*, *samana*, etc. When the breath goes in, it is called by one name; when it goes out, it is called by another name. When it is performing the function of digesting food in the stomach, it has a third name. When it enables circulation of blood, it is called by a fourth name, and when it helps the swallowing of food in the gullet it has a fifth name, etc. It does not mean there are five pranas, or more than five in number. They are only functional nomenclatures of a single energy which reaches up to the fingertips and the nails, and there is no spot in our body where the prana is absent. That is why we are vitally awake in every part of the body. We are alive in every cell of the body. When we say we are alive, we mean that prana is functioning there. If prana is withdrawn from any particular part of the body, we say that part is dead. It is not living. So prana is life, prana is energy, and it is the liaison between the mind and the body.

The importance which Patanjali gives to the practice of pranayama is to the extent necessary in the practice of meditation. Thus, the concept that is before one in

meditation, the ideal or the goal that one keeps before oneself, will also condition in a similar manner the function of the breath so that while breathing affects the mind in one way, the mind can affect breathing in another way. Disharmonious breathing can have such an impact upon the thinking faculty that we cannot be poised in our mind when there is disbalanced breathing. The other way around, there cannot be harmonious breathing when there is disbalanced or irritated thinking.

Often it appears that the mind and the prana are like the obverse and the reverse of the same coin. They are not two things at all, and we will realise later on that even the body is not absolutely outside the mind. It is a condensation of thought itself in a peculiar manner. The five *koshas*, the *panchakoshas*, are *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya*, *anandamaya*, which are the various layers of our personality—the physical, the vital, the mental, the intellectual and the causal. These are degrees in the density of a single substance and not five different things like layers of an onion, one quite different from the other. Not so. Our *koshas* are not like peels of onion that can be taken off, one after another. They are, rather, like clothes hanging in various degrees of density—light above and heavy below, etc. The body, the prana, the mind, the intellect, and what we call the unconscious or the subconscious—the *anandamaya kosha*, the causal state—are all one single embodiment which can be called the individuality of the person.

Therefore, the purpose of pranayama is to condition the body and the system as a whole in such a manner as to enable the diminution of the sense of personality or ego, the lessening of self-consciousness, and the clearing up of the cloud of this dense formation called individuality for the purpose of enabling a clear concept of the ultimate *purusha*, which is the object of meditation.

I am mentioning all this to recall to our memories that every item of practice is spiritual, and nothing but spiritual. We do not have an unspiritual element anywhere. It becomes spiritual the moment it is connected to the ultimate purpose of life, the reality behind things. The moment it is disconnected by some factor or other, for some reason or the other, there appears to be a difference between consciousness and matter, *purusha* and *prakriti*, etc. They are not two things. They appear to be different on account of an emphasis that is laid on this side or the other side. It is a total movement from the lower to the higher.

So in pranayama we are actually aiming at a complete harmonious movement of the prana equally distributed throughout the system, and not allowing it to get concentrated in any particular part of the system. The beauty of the body also is said to increase by the practice of pranayama, as yoga texts sometimes tell us. Beauty is nothing but equidistribution of energy in the system. That is why children look beautiful. All children look beautiful; whether children of beggars or children of princes, it makes no difference. Merely because of the fact the prana is equally distributed in their system, the ego is not manifest. It is potential, but not revealed; therefore, it is not drawing the prana in any particular direction, especially towards objects of sense.

The prana usually moves towards objects, and therefore, we feel weak in our system. This is why people with strong sense desires cannot be successful in the practice of pranayama. Where the mind is, there the prana also is. And where is the mind? You can yourself imagine. The mind is always outside somewhere, in some object, in some person, in some thing, some problem, and some business that is to be executed outside in the world. The prana is immediately jetted forth, splashed out by the force of the mind in the

direction of the object that the mind contemplates. This is also the secret of what is called telepathy. Telepathic communication and distant healing, etc., about which you must have heard, are nothing but the processes of the directing of the prana along the line of thought which has something as its motive, purpose or objective. If you deeply think of a person even far away from you—say in London, for instance—your prana will be driven to that person. You will be wondering how your prana can go to London: “I am a very small man sitting here, and my prana is inside my body. How can it travel to London?” Your prana is not inside your body. It is cosmically distributed. Just as any disturbance in any drop in the ocean can be felt by other parts of the ocean, and the impact of the disturbance on any part of the ocean can be felt in other parts also, the impulse of the mind in a given direction so propels the prana that it sets in motion the cosmic ether. As radio waves travel from the broadcasting station to receiving sets, as television waves move from place to place, so the cosmic ether gets the impact of your thought and a message is conveyed by the electric energy that pervades through the ether on account of the propulsion that is given to the prana which is apparently within you, but which is also connected to the prana outside, really speaking.

Therefore, one should bear in mind that in advanced stages of the practice of pranayama, one should be cautious enough to investigate into the motives behind one’s mind, and there should be no indication whatsoever that the mind is contemplating an external object, because contemplation of external objects due to a desire for such objects would be the opposite of the very aim of yoga, which is self-integration. The subject we shall take up further at another time.

## Chapter 10

### THE PRACTICE OF PRATYAHARA

The system of yoga practice passes primarily through four stages, namely, social integration, personal integration, universal integration and the ultimate realisation. The Bhagavadgita may be said to be a concentrated exposition of this fourfold experience or integration as the art of yoga. The system of Patanjali is of a similar nature.

We may safely say that the canons of *yama* in the system of Patanjali are concerned with the various principles of social integration. The *niyama*, *asana* and *pranayama* may be considered to be primarily concerned with personal integration. One must be very clear as to what these integrations mean. The experiences of the human individual are mostly dissipated, and therefore, disintegrated. They are not coherent or brought together into a concentrated focus in any appreciable manner. Often we find ourselves in a chaotic condition both in society and in our own psychological life. We try our best to make ends meet, and with the sweat of our brow we try to make adjustments with prevailing conditions, bringing a sort of fatigue on our personality because these adjustments are made mostly not in a spontaneous manner on account of understanding, but due to a pressure of circumstance.

Integration is not a coming together of various factors like the members in a sitting parliament, appearing to be one single whole. You may say that the parliament is one connected whole, one body, but the members are not organically related to one another. They assume and maintain an independence each by himself. There is no integration of the individuals constituting the parliament, notwithstanding the fact there is a legal coherence assumed

for the purpose of administration in the assembly in a house. The spiritual integration we are speaking of is of a different sort altogether. It is not a mere juxtaposition of factors. It is not bringing together pieces which do not actually get connected one with the other. It is not laying brick over brick to make a high wall, giving it an appearance of completeness or wholeness. The wall is not a complete whole. It is made up of little pieces of earth, known as bricks. Nothing in the world can be regarded as an integrated completeness in the light of this definition of what true integration is.

The only available example before us of a true organic integration is our own body. An organism is an integrated completeness. The parts of the body are not knit together like bricks in a building. They are related to one another in a different way altogether, and therefore, we call the human body as an organism. It is not a machine, for instance. There is a connection of parts in a machine also, but the human body is not a machine of that kind. It is not a bulldozer, it is not a car, it is not an aeroplane where you have got the coming together of parts that constitute the so-called whole. An aeroplane is an appearance of a whole, not a real whole, because the parts can be removed and replaced by other parts, but the human system is a different nature altogether. You cannot remove one limb of the body and replace it with another limb without detriment to the health of the whole system.

Yoga is an integration, and not a mechanised dovetailing or an artificial bringing together of independent parts, whatever be the level in which you work in this field. Whether in society or in our own personal life, the integrations that we are expected to introduce are not to be of a mechanistic nature. Mostly we are friends in a mechanical manner. We are all friends, no doubt. Many of us

are seated here. Each one is a friend of the other in some way. We are not enemies. But this friendship of ours is not organic. It is mechanistic because it can be broken under certain circumstances. You cannot say that you are vitally connected with one another in such a way that your friendship will never cease at any time. It is not so. Friendship has a beginning, and it has also an end because it survives under given conditions.

So we are not living an integrated life even in society. There is no peace in the family, no peace in society, no peace anywhere in the world on account of this artificial unity that we are trying to bring about for the purpose of getting on in life. We live an artificial life even in our own family. The parent's relationship with the children, the children's relationship with parents, the relationship between brothers, sisters, whatever it be, cannot be regarded as a vital union because we see separation following sometime or the other due to various other factors which may not be foreseen in the beginning.

We live together on certain conditions, and if the conditions are not to be fulfilled, we will not live together. This is very clear, and everyone knows this. "I will quit tomorrow if the conditions under which I am to live with you are not fulfilled. I go. I do not want to see your face." People say like this. And where is friendship? We do not live a genuine life of unity, harmony, integration in human society. Unfortunately though, this is the state of affairs. This is what is happening even in our personal life. There is no proper alignment even in the layers of our own personality, so there is no personal integration. This is the cause for social disintegration. When there is no alignment of personality in the various levels of being, how can there be alignment of parts of the whole, which is society? In many respects we should say that individuals constitute society,

and if the individuals are disharmonised internally, how could they constitute an organised outer society? Here is the problem before us, and we are at brass tacks, as we say.

The system of yoga is an endeavour to solve problems ultimately, and not merely tentatively. We are not merely given an aspirin tablet for our headache as a temporary remedy for the subsidence of the ache. It is going to be a cure of the cause thereof. Yoga is the search of the cause behind causes, so the ultimate cause is grasped in one's being and it is set into with our practical life in the world, and vice versa. Reality is in harmony with us, and we are in harmony with reality. Again to reiterate, it is an organic development of personality that the Bhagavadgita, for instance, speaks of in the various chapters, right from the Second to the Sixth, until in the Sixth Chapter we are at the apex of personal integration. Therefore, we have to be cautious and very meticulous in our application of techniques for the purpose of internal integration.

We have noted that we have the various sheaths of the body, known as the *koshas*—*annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya*, *anandamaya*: the physical, the vital, the mental, the intellectual and the causal sheaths. They must be in harmony. If they are not in harmony, we are psychologically ill. Then we are ill in many other ways also, physically as well as socially. The health of the personality is the same as the balance of these forces. The five *koshas*, or sheaths, are really forces which constitute our being. They are not independent involucra, one not touching the other, like five shirts that you put on, one over the other. The five *koshas* or sheaths are not like five coats, because you can remove one coat and another coat may be there still independently. There is a kind of dependence of structure between these *koshas*, as is the case with the five elements, as I have already mentioned. The five layers, the five *koshas*,

are only five degrees of density in the manifestation of the force of externalisation, which is the principle of individuality. The individuality of our own selves is nothing but a concretisation of the power of externalisation of consciousness. This is to be set right. The externalisation of consciousness is not regarded as a healthy state in yoga. To be conscious of an object is not regarded as a healthy condition. At least according to Patanjali, this is an illness. It is a *klesha*, an affliction; it is an unnatural state to be conscious of an object outside, a theme which he dilates upon in an important sutra in the very first chapter: *pramāṇa viparyaya vikalpa nidrā smṛtayaḥ* (Y.S. 1.6).

The natural state would be the reverse of it, an awareness of objects. Here begins the higher realm of yoga, known as *pratyahara*, an effort at introducing into oneself a non-awareness of objects of the world. I have used a negative term, 'non-awareness', for want of a better term to signify the actual connotation of the term *pratyahara*. The literal meaning of the Sanskrit word *pratyahara* is withdrawal towards oneself, an abstraction of the powers of external perception, a retracing of the steps of consciousness towards its own centre, a disconnection of personality from relationship with the external world. All these things are implied in the process of *pratyahara*. *Ahara*, withdrawal – this is a single word which is defined by Patanjali in one sutra, with no great commentary about it. When the senses assume the nature of the mind as if they do not stand independent of the mind, that state is called *pratyahara*, says Patanjali.

We cannot understand what actually this means. When do the senses assume the nature of the mind? Naturally, they are not in that state at present, which is the reason why we are required to practise *pratyahara* in this sense. The senses of knowledge – *jnanendriyas*, as they are called, the senses of

hearing, seeing, etc.—are not in union with the mind. They are like prodigal children running away from their parents in search of the material goods of the world outside. The senses do not care for their parent, the mind itself, the reason and the mind. There is an aberration of personality, a disconnection of the sense powers from their source in their vehemence towards the objects outside. They rush with a force which is incalculable and inconceivable. Impetuous are the senses. No learning will be of any use here when there is a virulent wind blowing in the direction of objects.

The reason behind the movement of senses toward objects outside is to be known clearly before any attempt is made at restraining the senses. Again, we have to be very good psychologists, perhaps educational psychologists, and we have to instruct the senses as a schoolmaster instructs the children in a primary school. They are to be weaned, and not forced back to their source. You are not cutting their limbs or removing their vitals, but educating them in a higher understanding. The senses rush towards the objects outside and deplete the energy of the individual, weakening the whole system, so that the more you are attached to objects outside, the weaker is your system, physical as well as psychological. A person who is attached to objects of sense is not a strong person. There is a depletion of energy moving out of the forces of individuals towards external objects. A pot full of water can be emptied if there are five holes at the bottom. Whatever be the force with which you pour the water in the top, if there are five holes at the bottom, you can know the consequence. These five holes are the five senses, and whatever effort you put forth in filling yourself with strength by diet, by rest, by various other means, will be no avail as long as these avenues are open. You have the five apertures called the senses, through which energy leaks in terms of objects outside, and any amount of

attempt at strengthening oneself would be defeated by the counter-activity of the senses due to the long rope that we have given to them in the direction of their own objects.

Before we go into the practical technique of controlling the senses, *pratyahara*, we have to be educated, first of all, as to the background of this activity of the senses in respect of objects. Rationality is not a bad thing when it is applied for good purposes and in an adequate measure. You cannot simply cut out the reasoning faculty in you and cling to things by mere faith, bereft of understanding, because a faith which is not confirmed by understanding, or not accepted by the reason, may have a setback, and it can be shaken one day or the other. So the faith should be confirmed and ratified by your reason. It should be a faith born of conviction and rational deduction.

Why do the senses go to the objects, and why is it that we are told again and again by all the scriptures and the Masters that the senses should be withdrawn from the objects? What is wrong with the objects? What is the mistake that you discover in seeing things? Why does Patanjali say that even the consciousness of objects is a disease of consciousness? Patanjali is not going to answer this question. He takes you to the Sankhya philosophy which he assumes in his system, so that there is no recounting of the metaphysics of Sankhya in the technology of yoga practice in Patanjali.

The philosophy of the Sankhya is an explanation of the instruction in yoga to withdraw the senses from objects. The senses move towards objects on account of an erroneous opinion about the circumstances of life. There is a mistake at the back of the running of the senses towards objects, and naturally one cannot go on emphasising this mistake again and again and confirming it by continuing the practice again and again, as if it is a virtue. The Sankhya, in agreement with the Vedanta, tells us that the whole universe is *prakriti*. It is

one material structure. It is one completeness. And the Sankhya, with which the Vedanta does not disagree in essentials, tells us that the building bricks of *prakriti* are the *gunas* known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These terms occur several times in the Bhagavadgita, and you are all very well acquainted with these terms *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*.

Many of us may be under the impression that these *gunas* are three things or substances, like the three strands of a rope which constitute one whole, notwithstanding the fact that the strands are independent of each other. Again, to come to our earlier analogy of the five sheaths, where we notice that the sheaths are not independent vestures like coats or shorts but various densities of manifestation of a single power of externalisation of consciousness, here, too, the same analogy applies in the case of the *gunas*. The three *gunas* are three phases of the activity of *prakriti*. They are not three independent strands like the strands of a rope. They are three facets of the single crystal of *prakriti*. The three conditions in which *prakriti* reveals or manifests itself in the process of creation are the *gunas*. They are the constituents of *prakriti*, called *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The nature of *sattva* is equilibrium, harmony, balance, lightness, buoyancy of spirit, clarity of perception, an equilibrated attitude to life, whereas *rajas* is vehemence, impetuosity, division, separation, an objective consciousness. *Tamas* is inactivity, inertia, sloth, sleepiness, lethargy, and so on. These are the ways in which *prakriti* reveals itself individually.

The condition of the essential nature of the *purusha*, to speak in the language of Sankhya, the essential nature of the *purusha* is reflected only when *sattva* is predominant, and not when *rajas* or *tamas* preponderate. Our essential nature is *purusha*, says the Sankhya, says Yoga. In another language, it is the Atman. What you call the Atman is the same as the

*purusha* of the Sankhya. Your essential nature is Atman, your essential nature is *purusha*, an indivisible consciousness recognised as an infinitude of comprehension. This is your essential nature. But this essential nature, the *purusha*, which is infinitude of consciousness, cannot be reflected in practical life except when the *sattva guna* preponderates because infinitude is a kind of equilibrated state where you cannot conceive of any kind of division or cutting off of one part from another.

Now, the very fact that we are conscious of objects outside should be proof enough of the fact that there is a division in our experience. Experience is divided into the subject on one side and the object on the other side. This division is caused by *rajas*; the very activity of *rajas* is dividing one thing from another, dissipating things. Inasmuch as *rajas* falsely divides experience into the two camps of subject and object, and the *sattva* alone can reflect the essential nature of ourselves, it is very clear that in objective perception we are not revealing our essential nature. We are untrue to ourselves in external perceptions, perceptions of objects, in consciousness of objects. In the very consciousness of the presence of an object we are not true to our own selves. We forget ourselves first before we become conscious of the object outside. A loss of self-consciousness is implied in the consciousness of an object externally. So you can imagine how Patanjali is justified in telling us that in the consciousness of an object we are in an unhealthy state because we are not in our true state. We are *asvasta*; we are unhealthy.

It is not only that we are merely aware of the objects of sense outside. Something worse is taking place with us. Patanjali describes this worse condition in another sutra where he dilates upon what he calls the *klisha vrittis*, or the painful afflictions: attachment, love-hatred, etc. Bad enough

is the condition of merely being aware of the object, but far removed from truth is the other state where the consciousness of an object does not merely rest with that activity, but precipitates into attachment to the object. To be aware of the presence of an object is bad enough, but it becomes worse when the awareness of the object becomes a clinging to the object. Hence, you descend further down into samsara. And if there is a hell anywhere, it is this state where you completely forget the selfhood of consciousness and involve yourself in the objecthood of your own self. You transfer yourself into the object and completely ignore your status as an independent subject.

Yoga, therefore, warns us that we are untrue to ourselves in our awareness of things outside in space and time, and nothing can be a greater error than to be untrue to one's own self. "To thine own self be true" is the great adage of the poet: Be true to your own self. And we are every moment untrue to ourselves. We tell a lie to our own selves every moment of time when we become aware of objects outside in space and time, as if they are cut off from ourselves.

But Patanjali tells us that this is not the only mistake we make. We go further into the perdition of attachment, which has the other side of aversion to things which are disconnected, or made to appear as disconnected, from the objects of affection. This is the rational background of the great canon of the practice of *pratyahara*. "Why should we withdraw senses from objects?" is the question, and here is a philosophical, metaphysical, rational answer. You know very well where lies the mistake, and why it is you cry every day, why you are unhappy, why you cannot have a single night of good sleep. The reason is, we find ourselves perpetually in an unnatural state psychologically. We have no moment's rest in our own true selves. We are always wallowing in the mire of the non-Self by clinging to things, and in the process

of *pratyahara*, Patanjali gives us instruction in a twofold technique. You cannot immediately sever relationship with objects, just as you cannot peel your own skin, which is impossible because the skin is vitally connected to you, and to peel it is an awful affair. When the senses are clinging to objects, they are vitally connected with the objects. They become the skin and flesh and blood, as it were, of the object, and to wrench the senses from the objects would be to peel your skin or cut off your flesh from the body. So it is that you grieve in sorrow when you are cut off from the objects of affection. Where there is bereavement, where there is death, where there is separation from kith and kin, it is as if your limb is cut off. You have transferred yourself to the objects of sense in such an intense manner that the object has become a part of your body, and when it is removed, you feel that a part of your body is removed.

Hence, there is sorrow in bereavement. In sorrow we have nothing but a loss of a part of our own selves. When we are severed from relationship with the beloved object, we cry because we have transferred our consciousness to the object by *adhyasa*, as Acharya Sankara would put it. There is a superimposition of our personality on the object. We become the object in every kind of attachment in love, and so when the object suffers, it appears as if we are suffering. When the object prospers, we feel we are prospering. The mother is happy if the son is happy. The mother dies if the son is dying, because the mother has transferred herself to the child. She has become the child by transference of attributes, *adhyasa*. This is the contrary of yoga, the opposite of what we are endeavouring to achieve in the great art of yoga.

This is a very essential introduction that I am trying to place before you as to the essential practical techniques of

*pratyahara*, or withdrawal of senses, about which we have to consider in some more detail another time.

## Chapter 11

### AN OUTLINE OF THE WHOLE COURSE OF YOGA

We have already covered sufficient ground in our study of the practice of yoga according to the system of Patanjali. Before we proceed further along the lines of more advanced practices, it would be advantageous to cast a retrospective look at the essentials that we have observed in our studies up to this time, because the inner processes of this practice are so subtle that it would be good to go slowly rather than to run fast and not be able to retain in memory the details of the process. Subtle is the practice, and difficult it is to understand the implications of the various stages in the ascent.

We have had occasion to observe that the object that is before the yogi is the communion of the self with the reality of the cosmos which, in the end, culminates in the realisation of the Supreme Purusha, the Absolute Consciousness, the experience of which is called *kaivalya moksha*. This is independence in the ultimate sense of the term, liberation attained through absolute independence, or immortal experience. The stages are nothing but the stages of the evolution of what the Sankhya calls *prakriti*, a principle that is also accepted in the system of Patanjali. In this system, the gradational descent or ascent of *prakriti* is the concern of the yogi. The different levels at which one has to set oneself in communion with Reality are the levels of the descent of *prakriti*. Many of you might not be even remembering the various details that we noticed on earlier occasions when we studied this subject.

*Prakriti* descends from its cosmic gamut of universal comprehension wherein it exists as a potential for creation, a *samyā avastha*, or the equilibrated condition of the three

*gunas* known *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. This condition is the latent state of the universe. Here one cannot say what is and what is not. Describing this condition, Manu says in his Smriti that it looked as if the whole universe was asleep. It would appear as if darkness enveloped all places. Indescribable, inscrutable, unintelligible, unthinkable, unarguable was that state. Sankhya calls the condition *mulaprakriti*. At present we are concerned with this subject.

There is a tendency in *prakriti* to modify itself into the various evolutions. The first evolution is called *mahat*. What we call cosmic intelligence may be said to be the same as the *mahat* of the Sankhya and the Yoga. In the Vedanta parlance, it is called Hiranyagarbha. The universal mind, the universal prana, the universal intellect, whatever be the name given to it, means ultimately one and the same thing. It is also a potential of cosmic content in the sense that in the state of *mahat* there is a totality of consciousness comprehending everything at one stroke. The diversity of the universe has not manifested itself as yet. It is a state of cosmic consciousness, with a special distinction. It is not a kind of universal awareness that we may be imagining in our minds. Usually, if we stretch our imagination to understand what cosmic consciousness could be, we would be imagining or conceiving a state where a widespread intelligence or consciousness confronts the various objects of the universe and knows them all at one stroke, simultaneously. Notwithstanding the fact that we can imagine a simultaneous awareness of all the content of the universe by a widespread consciousness, which we may call cosmic consciousness, this is far from *mahat*.

*Mahat* is not a state that we can imagine with our minds. It is not a consciousness becoming aware of a universal object in front. There is no object for the *mahat*. There, the object and the subject get identified with each other so that

there is a self-consciousness of a universal character: I am I, *aham asmi*. The consciousness 'I am I' is different from the consciousness 'I know objects'. So cosmic consciousness in the state of *mahat* is not a consciousness of the objects of the universe, though they may be all the objects put together at one stroke, an instantaneous perception. Not so. It is an identity of the subject with the object so that the universe comprehends itself as a self-existent being. We cannot imagine this state because it is beyond the human grasp; it can only be explained by analogy and comparison. Such a magnificent and transporting state is *mahat* that it is the same as what usually in religious language is called the God of creation. Ishvara, God the Almighty, is inseparable from this state of *mahat* which the Sankhya describes.

The Sankhya has another special feature in the recounting of the evolutes of *prakriti* subsequent to the *mahat*, and that is the introduction of a principle known as *ahamkara*. *Prakriti* evolves itself into the *mahat*, and the *mahat* becomes *ahamkara*. If you look at a Sanskrit dictionary, you will find the word *ahamkara* translated as ego, self-consciousness, pride, etc., but we are not concerned with the dictionary meaning here. This is a metaphysical term which has a significance different from the purely linguistic one. The *ahamkara* of the Sankhya is not the ego of the human being; it is not our self-consciousness as we imagine, and it is not pride. It is a sense of being which, ultimately, is inseparable from *mahat-tattva*, or cosmic consciousness. Usually our intellect is inseparable from the ego. The moment the *buddhi* manifests itself, the individual *ahamkara*, or ego, also comes with it side by side. The sense of being, the feeling 'I am', is inseparable from the consciousness that I am. The self-assertive feature of I-ness is always simultaneous in its manifestation with the consciousness which we call rational or intellectual. The

cosmic counterpart of our *buddhi*, or intellect, is the *mahat-tattva* of the Sankhya. The cosmic counterpart of the ego in us is the *ahamkara* of the Sankhya, but they are far removed from our conception of intellect and the *ahamkara* or the ego of the individual.

The cosmic intellect, which is the *mahat*, is not merely a magnified form of human intellect. We can imagine that all people thinking together is God thinking. Not so. The mathematical total of the intellects of the universe cannot make the *mahat-tattva*. It is qualitatively transcendent to even the totality of all intellects in the universe. It is not merely a quantitative total, but also a qualitative transcendence. That makes the difference even in the case of the *ahamkara*. Therefore, the *ahamkara*, or *mahat-tattva* of the Sankhya, is a cosmic sense of being, a universal self-awareness which is attended with the *mahat-tattva*. The two go together.

Now, the actual, physical universe tends to manifest itself in a threefold manner after the *mahat-tattva* has evolved the *ahamkara*. Up until the manifestation or the evolution of the *ahamkara*, the universality is intact. There is no division between the seer and the seen, the subject and the object, the you and the I. When the *ahamkara* manifests itself, the cosmic manifestation is complete. In Vedanta this is called Ishvara *srishti*, God's creation. In God's creation, multiplicity is unknown. It is unity everywhere, and a total comprehension, a grasp at one stroke, instantaneously, in an eternal awareness.

The further manifestation is threefold, which usually is called the *adhyatmika*, the *adhidaivika*, and the *adhibhautika*. These are Sanskrit terms which have a peculiar meaning of their own. The physical universe is the *adhibhautika*. The physical universe as we see it is constituted of the five gross elements: earth, water, fire, air, ether. But there is a fivefold

principle precedent to the gross elements mentioned already, and these five preceding principles are called the *tanmatras*: *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa*, *rasa*, *gandha*—the principles of hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling. These are universal principles. Through a permutation and combination in certain proportions, they get condensed into the five elements: ether, air, fire, water, earth.

On one side we have this physical universe; on the other side there is a cutting off of the individuals as subjects who perceive the world outside. The world is there in front of us; the five elements are in our presence as objects of our senses. We see the earth, water, fire, air and ether. We are the subjects, we are the perceivers, we are the conscious individuals which confront the five elements as objects. So there is a division or a bifurcation of the seer and the seen subsequent to the manifestation of the five elements which follow the evolution of the *tanmatras*: *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa*, *rasa*, *gandha*.

The individuals are what the Vedanta sometimes calls the *jivas*, and they are of various degrees of evolution, again. We are told there is the lowest of levels, known as the inorganic, or the mineral. There is further up the vegetable or the plant kingdom. There is higher still the animal world. Then there is the human world. We have come to the level of *Homo sapiens*. We are humans. So these are the various kinds of *jivas*, and humans do not exhaust the process of evolution. There are *jivas* higher than the human individual also. The *devas*, the celestials and the angels, and all the supernatural or superhuman levels of manifestation have their own contents which are of a similar character, transcendent to the human level. So there is a series of the manifestation of *jivas* on one side, and on the other side we have the physical cosmos. The subjective side is called the *adhyatmika*, and the objective side is called the

*adhibhautika*. The connecting link between these two is called the *adhidaivika*, the divinities which preside over the organs of sense, including the psychic organ, and the cognition and perception of the world through these instruments.

These deities, or divinities, are invisible. My consciousness or awareness of the fact of there being so many people in front of me sitting here in this hall is due to the presence of divinities working. There are certain things between us. I am here, and you are there. How do I come to know that you are there? I do not jump on your head, and you do not jump on my head also. There is a distance between you and me, and in spite of the fact of this distance, I am aware that you are sitting there.

I can feel the presence of objects. The awareness of an object by the subject is due to the presence of a connecting link between the subject and the object, and that link is a particular form or manifestation of consciousness itself, which is known as the *purusha*, and in the various forms it takes, it is known as a particular divinity. These are the gods of religion. The various deities that you worship, the *devatas*, are nothing but the various gradations of manifestation of consciousness existing as a connecting link between the subject and the object, again, in various levels of manifestation.

Now, the Yoga System has this picture before its mind's eye when it starts the techniques of practice. The purpose of yoga is gradual union with the higher levels of being, moving from one stage to another stage with the ultimate intention of a complete union with *purusha* himself. We observed that we have descended not merely to the individual level, but we have gone further into the social isolation of a kind of psychic extraction, by which we seem to be psychologically involved or entangled in conceptual realities, not physical

realities. If you could remember the various themes in this context that we discussed many days back, you would remember that what we noticed is that society—we are concerned with human society at present—is not a physical object. We noticed that what we call society is not a bundle of human beings. Human beings can be seen with the eyes, but society cannot be seen with the eyes. It is a concept in the mind; it is an idea, it is a notion, it is an attitude that we project forth among ourselves. I am not going deep into this subject as to what it all means because we have already covered this theme. What I mean to say is that the *yamas* of Patanjali are particularly or especially concerned with disentangling or extricating the individual from this mess of a conceptual connection of itself with the so-called external projection known as society by setting itself in harmony with its conceptual atmosphere. Then we came to the *niyamas*, where the physical personality and the whole individuality was taken notice of.

But that is not enough. The Yoga System has to bear in mind at every stage of practice the ultimate goal so that there may not be any chance of getting stuck at a lower level. There are people who go on practising *asana* for a lifetime, and *pranayama* for years together, until they become old. The whole life has been spent only in *asana* and *pranayama*. It is a very good thing, no doubt—*asana* and *pranayama* are very good—but yoga is not that. The whole aim has been missed. The ultimate aim of yoga is union with Reality. It is perfection, it is independence, it is immortality and the complete liberation of the spirit, which has to be attained through the stages. The social adjustments, the ethics and the morality that we follow in society, the physical discipline, the hygiene that we follow, the *asanas* and the *pranayamas* are all good enough, and they are absolutely essential, but only that much, and not further. They are all essential, like

medicines. We do not go on eating medicines throughout our life, though they are necessary under certain conditions. Everything is necessary at a given moment of time, at a given level of experience, but nothing is necessary at all times because we are moving forward and advancing further and further, and each level is something like a rung in a ladder. You do not cling to one rung always and sit there forever. The intention is not to remain on the rung of the ladder, but to make use of the various rungs for the purpose of the ascent, which is the intention behind it. The intention of yoga is, therefore, a universal realisation, *atma sakshatkara*, *purusha anubhava*, *kaivalya moksha*.

The difficult stages of yoga commence much later than *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, etc. We are very much used to discussing *dharana*, *dhyana*, concentration, meditation, etc., as if they are everything. People always talk of meditation, but meditation is only the beginning of yoga. It is not the end of yoga, and the end is something inconceivable. Glibly we talk of this end as *samadhi*, a word we have heard so many times, but a word whose meaning cannot be very clear to many people. According to Patanjali, at least, real yoga starts only when meditation ends and *samadhi* ensues. That means to say, when the gulf between the subject and the object is obviated and we begin to enter into a cosmic setup of things, we begin to enter into the world of Reality. Until that time we are in the world of unreality and transiency. The unreal world is the world of the bifurcation of the subject and the object, and the real world is the world where the two do not stand apart but come together, shaking hands with each other, and work as a single union of being.

But Patanjali is cautious. He tells us that there are the evolutes of *prakriti*—earth, water, fire, air, ether. There is *ahamkara*, there is *mahat-tattva*, there is *prakriti*, there is

*purusha*. These are very difficult things to understand, and the union with these levels is called samadhi. When we identify ourselves with the physical elements, that is one stage of samadhi. When we go to the *tanmatras*, that is another. When we can unite ourselves with cosmic *ahamkara*, that is another stage, and further on we go to the *mahat-tattva*, *prakriti* and *purusha*. This outline gives an idea as to the difficulty that is before us, and the profundity that is involved in the practice of yoga. It is not a mere concentration in the ordinary sense of the term. It is not meditation that is the goal. It is the beginning of the true practice of yoga in its advanced form.

We have covered, therefore, a background of the metaphysical foundation of the Yoga System, moving further into a study of human society in which we live as individuals, units of human society, which is a nightmare to most people in the world. People are harassed by their involvements in society. The talk of God is far off. We cannot get up from even the lowest rung on which we are. It is always wisdom on the part of a seeker to be very dispassionate in the judgment of one's own self, and not to be over-complacent about the achievements that one might have come across in the practice. We cannot abrogate the acceptance of the reality or the value of a particular stage of experience when it has become the content of our consciousness. Anything that is a content of our consciousness is a reality for us, and it ceases to be a reality only when a higher level has become a content of consciousness.

At present, most people are in the social level. People have not become absolutely independent. It is impossible for a human being to say he can stand on his own legs absolutely independently, unconnected with human society. That means to say, the first level is still catching him. The second level has not wholly come to the forefront. And then

comes the real spiritual import of *asana*, *pranayama*, etc. We are jumping into the third and fourth levels while our feet are still planted in the lowest level.

We have always to be cautious and vigilant to notice that we are totally dispassionate and accurate, meticulous, in the evaluation of our own position. We do not practice yoga in order that we may be called yogis. That is not the intention. The purpose is self-illumination and actual achievement of the attainment, and when we ourselves know that we have not attained anything, it would be fallacious and futile on the part of any seeker to imagine that he is on the path of yoga. The vicissitudes of life, the conditions of social existence and the limitations of the human body tell upon us to such an extent that we can hardly believe that we have taken even the initial step in yoga.

Hence, it is essential to be cautious and to take sufficient time in laying the foundation, and not be overenthusiastic about the superstructure, the painting, etc. The grounding has to be firm, and even if we spend the entire life taking only one step in yoga, that would be quite all right provided it is a very firm step and we need not have to retrace it. Otherwise, if we run fast, we may have to retrograde and come back to the lower levels because of not having paid our dues to them. Every level is real. No level can be called unreal as long as it has become a part and parcel of our very blood and veins.

Each one has to be a judge for oneself in this matter. We cannot say anything about another person. We can know from our own conscience where we stand. We have to be true to that state in which we are because we are in the presence of God ultimately, and not merely in the presence of human beings. There is no use merely thinking and speaking to human beings; we are speaking to God ultimately, and it is He who judges us. Our salvation is not in

the hands of people, so any amount of certificates from the whole of mankind is not going to give us salvation. Let us not be misguided. We have to be very honest and sincere to ourselves. The whole destiny of our soul is in the hands of the supernal Reality which is the thing we have to take notice of at each level of practice, and in the light of which alone we have to judge ourselves.

Hence it is that until we reach certain stages of practice, a proper guide is necessary because it is easy to go the wrong way. The instincts, the emotions and the impulses within can drive us in directions which are other than the one we are actually intending to pursue. We should not be under the false impression that the impulses of the individual nature are weak. They are strong, as hard as rock itself. They are so difficult to master. They appear to be not there at all in the earlier stages. No one can believe that there are impulses which are pulling us down to the individual level. They begin to show their heads only when we interfere with them. When we try to control them, restrain them, master them, and overcome them or transcend them, then they show us their teeth, and then they have a voice to speak. They will tell us that their dues have not been paid. Therefore, the condition in which the personality is situated has to be assessed in a most dispassionate manner in the light of the circumstances in which it is placed, and not in the light of something which is above.

This is an outline of the whole course of yoga that I have placed before you so that you may recapitulate the various ideas which we had occasion to contemplate. With this good grounding on the levels we have covered in our study, we can proceed further into the wider dimensions of the practice in such a way that at each step we are advancing, and at no step would we find the necessity to retrace our steps upon what we have already covered.

The goal of yoga is Self-realisation, *sakshatkara*, or moksha, the realisation of Pure Consciousness, which is the infinite Reality. Each one of us is just that. This is the concept of Patanjali, and this is what is known as *kaivalya moksha*.

## Chapter 12

### INVESTING OUR OBJECT OF MEDITATION WITH THE POWER OF THE COSMOS

The central forte in yoga is meditation. Everything gravitates towards this great purpose of yoga. Every other preliminary practice of a religious nature is a preparation for meditation, so that true religion can be said to be the accomplishment of meditation on God. All other processes, rituals, prayers, studies, pilgrimages, and so on, are contributory to this great final achievement. Meditation is yoga proper. Everything else is an auxiliary or an accessory to meditation, *dhyana*.

There are, we may safely say, practically as many kinds or types of meditation as there are philosophies in the world. Meditation is the conducting of the mind in the direction of the goal that is set before us by the philosophy that we follow. Philosophy is the organised concept of the nature of the Ultimate Reality, or the goal of life. Whatever be our notion or concept of the ultimate goal, that would be the determinant of the philosophy that we follow in life. The first philosophical technique is a rational exposition, a logical presentation of the central concept which we entertain in regard to the nature of the ultimate goal. In a sense, every man and every woman has a philosophy of his own or her own, because everyone has an outlook of life. The outlook of life is the philosophy of life, and one naturally conducts the affairs of the mind along the lines of the outlook that one entertains in life. What is mental function, but an activity of the whole personality in the direction of the achievement of the purpose that is set before us in the light of the outlook of the life we entertain?

Hence, it should obviously follow that any organised method of operating the mind as a meditational technique

should be propelled by a consistent philosophy of life. A person who thinks nebulously or chaotically without having any aim or purpose will not be able to consistently direct the mind in any systematic manner. The mind moves in the direction of the aim that it sets before itself.

It is difficult for people, most of us in this world, to be clear as to what is the purpose that we have set before ourselves. We have immediate purposes such as getting up in the morning, having a breakfast, going to the office, going to the shop, and so on. These are all the immediate purposes that we have before us. The mind is thinking of these, no doubt, and if you are repeatedly concentrating your mind on these little daily duties, that would be your empirical concentration. But when people speak of meditation or concentration, they do not generally refer to meditating on shopping, or going to an office, school or college, etc. There is a peculiar indefinable feeling in every one of us when we speak of meditation, or feel that it is one of the duties in life.

Though it is true from the point of view of a mere dictionary meaning that meditation is any kind of concentrated attention of the mind on anything whatsoever, the definition that yoga gives is not just any kind of concentration of mind. The quality of meditation depends upon the nature of the object of meditation. Here again we come to the philosophy that has to be behind the technique of practice. We cannot just practice without some idea behind it. Always a philosophy precedes an ethical conduct or a practical technique. All our activities are nothing but expressions of a notion in our mind, an idea we entertain, a purpose that we have before ourselves, a philosophy which is our determining principle in life. It is, therefore, imperative that the object of meditation has to be clear; else, what is the purpose of straining one's nerves in this endeavour called meditation? You get up in the morning,

close your eyes, and start thinking something. That cannot be meditation, because there is no clear-cut idea in the mind.

There should be a very firm basis for the operation of thought, like a strong foundation that we lay with reinforced mortar or concrete when raising an edifice of a building. You cannot have a huge, powerful structure with a shaky foundation. Meditation is the practical application of the inward relationship that we, as individuals, maintain with the ultimate goal of life. It is the yearning of the spirit within us for that which it seeks.

There are two important things which we have to bear in mind before we embark upon this adventure of meditation. Who is it that meditates, and what is it that is being meditated upon? The object of meditation, as well as the subject of meditation, these two are to be very clear. While it is difficult enough to have a clear idea of the object of meditation, it is not any easier to be clear as to the nature of the subject that meditates.

We have again to remember that we are now discussing a very important aspect of yoga, and not merely a psychological function or mental activity. Meditation is not a mere psychological activity in the ordinary sense of the term. Yoga is not a simple empirical function of the mind. It is a spiritual function, if you can call it a function at all. It is the spirit that is operating in us when we enter into the technique or the practice of meditation. The mind, as merely one of the limbs of mental activity, psychic activity, is not entirely what is concerned in meditation. It is not one faculty that is contemplating. The psyche in us has various operational diversities. The reasoning faculty, the thinking faculty, the emotional faculty, etc., are all there as expressions of the psyche.

Now, who is it that meditates? Is it the thinking faculty or the rational faculty or the emotional faculty or the volitional

faculty? What is it that is predominantly functioning in the process of meditation? It is not easy to answer this question off-hand because we have to be good psychologists to know what is actually operating when there is a concentration of thought.

The concentration that we are speaking of in yoga is of a spiritual character. We are here concerned with spiritual meditation, and not merely the meditation of a technologist, an engineer, a mechanical operator, etc., though all of these are also concentrating, meditating perhaps, while working at their professions. Yoga meditation is a spiritual meditation. We have to go back to the studies that we have already made in regard to the concept of the spirit. Spirituality is the condition of the spirit; therefore, it has a universal character. There is no Hindu spirit or Muslim spirit or European spirit, etc. There is no such thing whatsoever. The basic minimum of reality, the irreducible substance of the core of the individual, is what is known as the spirit, and that is like an incandescent flame in the heart of every human being. Just as the flame of a lamp does not differ from one to the other, the spirit blazes forth in the heart of every human being.

This spirit, again, is something very difficult to understand by ordinary analysis. Credulous minds are wont to imagine that the spirit is like a little limpid lamp that is shining in the centre of the heart, like a candle that may be burning inside a room. Not so is the nature of the spirit. The spirit is sometimes known as the Atman in the Sanskrit language. It is this Atman that is really concerned in the process known as spiritual meditation. This spirit, or the Atman, is not a candle flame that is burning inside the body. It is the whole thing that we are. Whatever you regard yourself to be, that is the spirit. You cannot say what you yourself are. You are not merely the emotion, you are not merely the volition, you are not merely the reason. None of

these faculties can be regarded as the whole of yourself. You are also not merely the body, and not merely the psyche. Everything is included in what we regard as our personality. We are a completeness by ourselves, a totality, a wholeness which speaks for itself in its own language. This wholeness of our personality is the empirical expression of the spirit that we really are.

Our spirit is slumbering; it is sleeping; it has not woken up fully. It peeps through the sense organs and the waking state through the apertures of the senses, but the whole of it is not manifest, and that is why the whole of our personality is not revealed in the waking life. We are submerged beings mostly, like a wholesale dealer of commodities who keeps the larger portion of his goods in his godown and brings out to the open shop or market only that which is to be sold. When you look at the shop you see only certain things he has kept in front, but the inner supply is not visible. The larger stock is kept inside, and only that which is necessary for the day's use is brought out. In a similar manner, our personality acts. We are like wholesale dealers with a tremendous godown inside where we have deeply buried all our commodities, our property, and we bring out to the shop or the waking consciousness only that much which is necessary for the purpose of transaction in waking life. The whole of the personality cannot come into force, or action, in the waking existence, though some of our resources manifest themselves in times of crisis. Our real strength is not always revealed under ordinary circumstances because that strength is not required under normal conditions. Occasionally, when there is a need arising in our lives, the inward resources come to the surface. A part of that which was hidden is brought out for the purpose of action.

All this is only to explain that in our conscious life we are not whole beings; we are only partial, just as the value or the

worth of a dealer cannot be judged merely by what he has exhibited outside, on the surface. Thus, what we are thinking consciously in our waking life is not the entirety of our thoughts. It is only that little bit of it which we have expressed outside for the purpose of our daily routine. The immediate needs of life call for only that much of energy or force from within ourselves.

But in meditation, this method will not do. It is not enough if we merely scratch the outer surface of our personality and engage the attention merely on the conscious mind in meditation. It is the spirit within us that meditates, or rather, I should say, the spirit that we are engages itself wholly, totally, completely, in the great adventure of spiritual meditation. We have to come up entirely to the forefront of this battlefield of confrontation of the individual with the Absolute, which is the real meditation. We have to bring out the best that is within us, the whole of our energy, the total aspiration, and all the desires get commingled and get focused in one direction, like all rivers joining together when they touch the ocean in a fraternal embrace, as it were.

The object of meditation is the consummation of all the desires of the human being. It is not one of the objects that we seek. It is not a banana that we want to eat, or a cup of coffee that we want to drink. It is the finale of everything that we want. Therefore, when the mind engages itself in its confrontation with the object of meditation, it cannot think of anything else, just as, perhaps, when a person is about to die he cannot have a diversity of thought. Nobody can know what a person thinks when he is about to die. Only when you are in that condition will you know it because it is an extreme state of affairs where the energies of the body get mustered in and grouped into a focus of attention in a single direction, and there cannot be a double thought. There can

be only one thought. In extreme conditions of drowning, death and catastrophe, a loss of everything, total bereavement, impending destruction, etc.—in such conditions as these, our personality is said to come to the surface in all its vehemence and power. Then the reason behind this working of our personality in totality is the exigency of the occasion, the need of the hour, the requirement of the time.

In spiritual meditation this bringing up of the totality of our personality should be a conscious endeavour. It should not be an impulsion from outside, as is the condition when we are about to die or a catastrophe is to befall us. By an understanding of the nature of the goal of life, by a philosophical or logical conclusion that we have arrived at through the conviction or the satisfaction of the wholeness of our being in regard to the goal of life, on the basis of this it is that we can start meditation.

Many people complain that the mind waivers; it flits, it moves hither and thither, and it is difficult to bring the mind to a point of concentration. It has various things to think. Why should it think only this particular thing that we have chosen? Here is a very important point for us to ponder. The object of meditation is not to be regarded as one of the objects in this world. If we tell the mind that this is one thing among many, then there is great justification in the mind for choosing something else. If the object of meditation is one empirical content, like the other denizens of this world, why should the mind not go to something else? Why only this? Why should I meditate on a flame of a candle? Why should I concentrate my mind on a dot on the wall? Why should I entreat my mind to concentrate on the concept of a deity or an image or a picture or a portrait? What for? The mind will put this question. What answer are we going to give? Are there not many other better things in this world? The world

is full of richness and variety and beauty and grandeur in magnificence and taste. The mind knows this, and so how can we wean the mind from the delicacies of this world and the beauties and grandeurs of creation, and tell it to concentrate on a dot or a black point on the wall? "What for?" will be the question.

Unless we are able to convince the mind in regard to the necessity for such a concentration as a part of discipline of spiritual life, there would be no success in meditation. We should be a hundred percent honest and sincere when we embark upon this adventure, as I mentioned. We are not just joking with ourselves. The art of meditation is not a humour, or a kind of diversion. We are not merely making ourselves feel that we are doing something worthwhile for ourselves just because we have nothing else to do. It is nothing of the kind. It is a life-and-death matter for us. Spiritual meditation is a matter of life and death. It is not an ordinary joke, because it is that which is going to decide what we are going to be in our future life. Not merely that, it will decide what kind of success we can have in this life itself. The extent of success in any walk of life here in this life, and the nature of our future in another life, will all be decided by the extent of our success in meditation. Meditation is a glorious adventure. It is a magnificent endeavour. The moment the mind thinks of the glory of meditation, it will be in a state of rapture. It will be possessed by a power which is beyond itself because of the completeness which the object of meditation represents.

We may have many doubts as to the choice of the object of meditation and the way in which we can convince ourselves that the object of meditation is the whole of our aspiration. There is nothing else we have to aspire for. We have to be a little bit tutored in the science of life in order to be logically convinced that any object of meditation can be

considered as a focusing point of the total energy of the cosmos. We are not just contemplating on an image. That is not the truth of the matter. The object that we seek in meditation, even if it be an image, for the matter of that, is not just an isolated object, though it may appear to be so. The portrait, the picture, the diagram or the concept of the image, whatever it be, is only a symbol to conceive a focusing point where the energies of the world converge.

We have to stretch our imagination a little bit to understand what all this means. Every atom in creation is a point where the energies of the world are focused. There is no point anywhere, not even in a single atom, which is completely isolated. There is an interconnection, an interblending of powers, energies. The mistake that we usually make is to perceive the object of meditation through the senses as contained in space, located in space and time, naturally cut off from every other object. That which is known as space and time is a peculiar indescribable interference in the interconnectedness of things. Ordinarily, we cannot convince ourselves that one thing has any connection with the other. We do not see that connection, and we cannot believe what we cannot see. It is our empirical logic, but it is not true that what we cannot see may not be true.

The eyes cannot see the truth behind things because of the fact that the eyes are wedded to a limitation of function due to the involvement in space and time. The very purpose of space and time is to sever the subject from the object, the seer from the seen, one thing from another thing, and to make everything appear isolated, cut off and empirical. If the senses are to be wedded to this sort of perception, it is impossible for us to convince ourselves that there is any kind of inner relationship among things. A little reasoned activity of our mind will tell us that there is something

behind the screen. By philosophical inference, logical deduction, we will be able to learn a little more about the truth of the world. Things are not what they seem. What is on the surface is not the truth of things. Even a grain of sand is not an isolated particle, as it is possible to converge the energies of the world in a single grain of sand.

In meditation, what you are required to do is to draw this relationship from every corner of the world in the direction of the point on which you are concentrating. Why this point? Why not some other point? You can take any point. Just as you can pursue the course of any river in the world and reach the same ocean, you can reach the Ultimate Reality of the cosmos by concentrating on any particle in the universe. Any god is as good as any other god. Any object is as good as any other object. The purpose of choosing a particular object is only to satisfy the predilection of the mind, the idiosyncrasy of our makeup, the peculiar pattern of our psyche. That is all. What appeals to me may not appeal to you. It is not that your object is better than mine, or my object is better than yours. That is not the point. Why we differ among ourselves in the appreciation of things is because of the inner variety of structure in the psyche of which we are made.

The reactions that we set up in respect of objects, and vice versa, the reactions which objects set up in respect of our own selves, depend upon our inner psychical makeup. The choice of a mantra, the discovery of a particular pattern of meditation, the choosing of a deity or an object of meditation, the nature of the initiation that the Guru gives to the disciple—all these depend upon the nature of the disciple, the condition of the mind of the disciple, the stage of the evolution of the recipient; and bearing in mind the situation or the circumstance of the psyche of the individual concerned, the technique of meditation is chosen. That is

why it is said that initiation is necessary. It is not just that you can think anything you like and imagine that it is meditation.

The necessity for initiation by a competent teacher arises on account of the fact that it is difficult for people to understand themselves. One cannot fully know what oneself is because, as I mentioned, we are generally wedded to only the conscious level of our life. As the deeper subconscious and unconscious layers are buried, inwardly they may have no access to our personality. Therefore, no one can know oneself wholly. We know only partially something that emanates from the bottom of our being as and when an occasion arises, but we never know ourselves wholly. The teacher is supposed to have some insight into the nature of the disciple. The competent teacher will have an understanding of the requirement of the student, and there comes the need for initiation. Initiation is the introduction of the mind of the disciple to the technique of right thinking in the direction of that particular object which alone is required in that condition of the mind of the disciple. So it does not mean that everyone can meditate on the same object. No one can think in the same way as another. As no one can be in the same stage of evolution as another, meditations vary in detail, though the general principle is the same.

The general principle of meditation is to invest the chosen object with the ultimate power of the cosmos, just as we invest the glory of the power of our whole nation into the flag which we adore on a national holiday. The flag is only a piece of cloth, but it is invested with the sacredness, sanctity and force of the entire nation, the power of the government, which is what we adore in that symbol. Likewise, the object of meditation that we choose is only a symbol, and it is

supposed to be invested with powers of omnipotence, omniscience, etc., which are said to be the characters of God.

These are not merely imaginations; they are facts, because every corner is replete with omniscience, really speaking. Every bit of everything in the world is a vehicle of the Supreme Almighty; therefore, when I say that omniscience and omnipotence can be discovered in even a grain of sand, I am not exaggerating. It is a scientific truth. God is present in everything. They say in every individual He is present. In every grain of sand, every particle, every atom, this supremacy of the Absolute can be discovered if proper techniques are adopted. It is like the breaking of an atom bomb by bombarding it with concentrated energy.

The concentration that you practise in meditation is nothing but the bombarding of a network of forces, which the object represents. Any object, for the matter of that, is a network of forces. There is a tangle of energy, and it has to be bombarded by concentration, just as a particle is bombarded by a physicist in a laboratory. When a particle is bombarded, it splits and releases energy, and then we say the atom has burst; and when it bursts, the energy it releases is tremendous.

Every object in the world is a vehicle of tremendous energy, but the energy is sleeping. It is a coiled-up force. This coiled-up force is what is called kundalini in ordinary language. Every point is a kundalini. Everywhere is a coiled-up energy, but it has to be released. Just as electric energy is used for bombarding atoms, mental energy is used for bombarding objects. So when there is a tremendous force exerted by the mind by continuously thinking of a particular character of the object, the object is bombarded psychically. Psychic energy is more powerful than electric energy. This is something well known, and I need not expatiate upon it. The object releases its energy and then you begin to discover in

that very object the interconnection of things, like a ganglia of nerves in which you can see the interconnection of all the nerves in the body. Every centre of force, every chakra in the body is a centre which connects itself with everything else in the whole body. Similarly, on a careful examination of the objects of the world you will discover that they are all knots of cosmic energy, and therefore any knot is as good as any other. You can take any object as a particular point on which you can meditate. Everything is equally divine. There is no undivine thing in this world. But, as I mentioned, the choice varies on account of the difference in the evolutionary level of the individual concerned. There is no question of superiority or inferiority in the object of meditation. It is a question of choice, according to the need of the time.

This is an introduction that I placed before you in regard to the choice of the object of meditation and the conviction that we have to arrive at before we can actually work upon the process of meditation. The object of meditation is not a physical object. We have to free ourselves from this obsession. We are not thinking of some stone image or metal structure that is in front of us. There are no such things as metals and stones in this world. They are all centres of energy. Everything is nothing but energy in this world, whether it is material or otherwise and, ultimately, we are going to realise that it is not material. It is divinity itself; it is God facing us in these forms: *nama rupa prapancha*. This is what we are going to experience in the long run, but in the beginning it looks like a material object. The materiality of the object is nothing but a face that it has put on because of the involvement of space and time, and the density which it has reached.

Therefore, we have to be fully convinced as to the perfection of the object that we have chosen for our meditation, and we have also to be convinced that success is

ours; it has to come. When the technique is correct and the methodology is okay, success has to be there. It is like mathematics. When the premise is correct, the conclusion has to be correct; but if the premise is wrong, then we may go wrong in the conclusion. Therefore, we should be sure that the foundation is clearly laid. We must have a clear thought as to the nature of the object that we are meditating upon, the purpose of this meditation, and the relationship that this object has with the ultimate goal that we are seeking through this. Meditation is a means to an end. It is a path that we are treading. It is a journey, a process. It is not the goal by itself. So when we know what the goal is, we can know also the path that is leading to the goal.

Hence, again the point comes, which has to be reiterated, that the goal of life has to be clear in the mind first. If the aim is not fully placed before the mental eye, there will be wavering of the mind. If we do not know which way we have to go, what it is that we have to reach, we cannot know how to move. Movement is not possible unless the direction of the object towards which we have to move is clear. Hence, the aim of life has to be fixed first. The aim of life is a remote aim, of course, the last thing that we want to achieve, but there are immediate aims and intermediate aims which are connected with that ultimate aim. These also have to be clear to us. Before we successfully start the meditational technique, it has to be, theoretically at least, clear as to the various gradations of aims that we have placed before ourselves in light of the ultimate aim, which is the goal of existence.

## Chapter 13

### UNDERSTANDING THE MIND AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO MEDITATION

The relationship between mind and matter has some relevance to the subject of meditation. Whatever is an object of consciousness stands in the position of matter, as 'matter' is defined as 'anything external to consciousness'. Thus, the relationship between the meditator and the object that is meditated upon is similar to the relationship between consciousness and matter; or rather, they are just the same. What is the way in which the object is related to matter? How is the seer related to the seen, how am I related to you, or how is a subject concerned with the object? These are various forms of the same question.

An understanding of this principle which determines the relationship between the seer and the seen, or between consciousness and its object, is very necessary to avoid difficulties in the practice of meditation. Every problem, doubt or vacillation that may introduce itself as an obstacle in one's attempt at spiritual meditation—all these are various forms of the inability to grasp the relationship between oneself and another.

We feel that we are in a state of anxiety and tension whenever we have something in front of us. Even when we speak to a person, we are not normal. We assume a type of attitude which has to fit into the nature of the object which is in front of us, whether it is a human being, a tiger, etc. The necessity to fit oneself to the context of the object in front of us tells upon the whole system and brings about a strain of some sort or the other. To be in the presence of another is a strain to the mind because we cannot be perfectly normal when we are in the presence of another person. We have to

put on an appearance, because two persons cannot think identically. If two people think absolutely identical thoughts, then the two will merge into one person. This does not happen, which shows that two persons cannot be a hundred percent equal in their psychological makeup or their way of thinking. Hence, in the presence of another there is a necessity to tune oneself psychically to the structure or the pattern of the psyche of another person. This effort is a strain on the mind. Now, this strain is felt everywhere, wherever there is an object in front of us, whether it is an organic substance like a human being, or an inorganic object of some sort.

The object of meditation is the principle that is encountered in the context of consciousness, and a great philosophy of meditation seems to be at the background, which usually goes by the name of Sankhya or Vedanta. The Sankhya has a philosophy of its own and has an explanation of the relationship between mind and matter, the seer and the seen, *purusha* and *prakriti*. Sankhya tells us that everything is *prakriti*. The whole universe is an evolution of the supreme matrix called *prakriti, mula prakriti*, which is constituted of three *gunas: sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. The way in which the *gunas* are related to *prakriti* is also very interesting. There is no relationship of an extraneous type. It is not the relation of A to B. It is an inherent immanence of the *gunas* in what goes by the name of *prakriti*. The very substance of *prakriti* is the *gunas*. Often analogies are brought forward to explain the relationship between the *gunas* and *prakriti*. One of the analogies is the relation between threads and cloth. There is no external relationship between the threads and the cloth which they constitute. You cannot say that the threads are A and the cloth is B. That sort of explanation would not be complete or perfect because the one is implied in the other. The usual notion of

*prakriti* implies an inherence of the *gunas* in the substance called *prakriti* in such a manner that the one is the same as the other. We are also told that the *gunas* are like strands in a rope. The three strands constituting the rope *are* the rope. The rope is not different from the strands, and vice versa.

This *prakriti*, which is the mysterious substance of all things in the universe in its various strands known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, reveals various properties, which become the objects of the individual's consciousness. I am just giving an outline of the cosmology of the Sankhya. The objective world, constituted of the five elements earth, water, fire, air and ether, is the union of a permutation and combination of the *tamasic* aspect of *prakriti*, and the mind which cognises the external objects constituted of the five elements is also a rarefied form of *prakriti* itself. There is an elaboration of this theme in the Vedanta cosmology. The *tamasic* principle, which is one of the aspects of *prakriti*, becomes the five elements known as earth, water, fire, air and ether: *prithvi*, *jala*, *teja*, *vayu* and *akasha*.

The mind also is *prakriti*, in a different sense. It is not *tamasic*. It has the *sattva* element in it, though it is also mixed with a little *rajas* and *tamas*. The predominance of *sattva* in the mind is responsible for the transparent character of the mind, or perhaps it is translucent, on account of which it is able to reflect a percentage of the consciousness of the *purusha*, known in Vedanta parlance as the Atman. If the Atman or the *purusha* were not to be reflected in the mind in some measure, there would be no intelligence in us. We would not be aware of anything. We would be like stones or bricks. We are able to think, in the sense of being aware of something outside us or inside us. The fact that we are aware distinguishes us from the inorganic material universe. This awareness that is present in us is due to the reflection of the *purusha*, or the Atman, in

the mind. And what is the mind? It is *prakriti* itself, but in its *sattvic* aspect. The Vedanta cosmology tells us that the quintessential essence of the *sattvic tanmatras*—*shabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa, gandha*—go to make up the psychic organ, the *antahkarana*—*mano, buddhi, ahamkara, chitta*—or whatever you call the mind in ordinary language.

When we become conscious of an object outside, we bring about a relationship between the mind and matter. What we call matter in general may be said to be what is known as the fivefold elements: earth, water, fire, air, ether. This is matter, and whatever is formed of these is also matter. The mind is conscious of this world, which is constituted of the five elements, but the mind by itself cannot be conscious because it is *prakriti*. This is a great theory of the Vedanta, and also of the Sankhya. The mind cannot itself be conscious because it is *prakriti*. *Prakriti* is *jada*; it has no awareness of itself. Like the clean glass which can reflect the rays of the sun, the mind is able to reflect the consciousness of the *purusha* to the extent permitted by its own finitude. The whole of the *purusha* is not reflected in the mind, just as the whole of sunlight is not reflected through a small aperture of a screen, for instance. A slit of a window permits the passage of a ray of sunlight, but the whole of it is not there.

Not merely that, there is something else which takes place when this reflection is allowed by the mind. There is a finitude of the reflection of this consciousness on account of the limitation of the mind itself. It is somehow or other tied down to the location of the body it inhabits, and so there is a tremendous limitation set by the way in which the reflection is allowed by the mind. But apart from the fact that there is a limitation, there is also a kind of distortion taking place on account of the various constituents of the mind itself. The mind is made up of *samskaras*, impressions of past

experiences, *vasanas*, unlimited desires and propensities or impulsions towards various types of phenomenal experience. These turbid properties which infect the mind do not permit a clear reflection of consciousness even in a finite manner, so even a little bit of the reflection is not a clear reflection. It is disturbed by the vacillating roots of the mind, the desires that are present as manifest or unmanifest. There is, therefore, an *avaccheda* and *abhāsa*, as they say—a limitation, as well as a reflection in the mind in a type of distortion—so that the kind of perception we have is highly defective. We do not see the world as it is. Even the five elements are not presented in the proper form. They are conditioned very much by the way in which the mind is formed.

Now, when we analyse the way in which the mind becomes aware of the objects outside, we are faced with two factors in front of us: the consciousness element and the mind element. The consciousness element is responsible for awareness, and the mind element is responsible for the limitation involved in perception. The form of perception is conditioned by the nature of the mind. The awareness aspect is due to the *purusha* or the Atman, or the consciousness that is there. The way in which the mind envelops the objects, conditions them, and gives them a particular shape is known as *vritti vyapti* in Vedanta psychology. The consciousness attends upon this psychic operation and makes this function of the psyche a living one, so that we make the mistake of imagining that the mind is conscious of the object. The consciousness of the Atman, or the *purusha*, and the limited form of the mind which is made up of the unfulfilled desires, *vasanas*, impressions, etc., go to form the essence of the individuality of a person. Hence, the world is not seen as it is in itself, just as when we put on coloured glasses we do not see things properly in their own spirit; if the glasses are

broken or distorted or concave or convex, the matter is still worse. Some such thing has taken place, and it is this mind that we are employing in meditation.

When we conceive an object of meditation, we conceive it through the mind. We have no other alternative. There is no apparatus, no other faculty, no other endowment. The mind is the subject, for all practical purposes, which engages itself in the task of meditation, even if it is meditation on God Himself. Meditation of the spiritual type is the concentration of the mind on a concept of the Ultimate Reality that is entertained within itself. The mind has some notion of what it regards as the Ultimate Reality of things. Philosophers have gone into great detail in their analysis of the competency of the mind in forming such a notion itself. Can the mind form an adequate notion or idea of the Ultimate Reality of things? This is a tremendous subject which has engaged the attention of great thinkers of the past, and varied are the conclusions arrived at by various thinkers. Is it possible for the mind to conceive of Reality at all? If so, to what extent can it conceive Reality? If it cannot, if the attempt is a total failure, how does it become possible for the mind to have an aspiration for something beyond itself, or anything transcendent to itself?

We have a double personality in our psychic structure. On one side we are heavily conditioned by factors beyond our control. On the other hand there is an urge within us which speaks in a language overstepping the limits of ordinary thinking. There is a practical impossibility of the mind to conceive the nature of Reality due to the simple fact that it is involved in space, time, and the concept of causality. It cannot go beyond these limitations. Just as a person who looks at things through spectacles can see anything and everything only insofar as this perception is conditioned by the structure of the spectacles, so is the case with any kind of

psychic perception or conception. It is not possible for anyone in the world to have direct contact with Reality by means of thought or reason because thought is involved in the phenomenal processes. There is a screen, an iron curtain, as it were, hanging between the mind and Reality. The spectacles with which we see the world, unfortunately for us, are of a different nature from the ordinary spectacles that we put on when seeing things of the world. We can remove the ordinary spectacles and throw them aside, but these peculiar philosophic spectacles, or psychic spectacles, that we put on are inseparable from our own being. Our very existence is involved in these spectacles, and they are involved in us. To remove these spectacles would be to peel one's own skin, and no one can be prepared to do that, as it is an impossibility.

So to get out of the conditioning factors in which the mind is involved is a practical impossibility for any phenomenal being. There is, therefore, no such thing as thinking Reality or thinking God. It is not possible because the moment you think God, you cast God in the mould of your own perceptions. Our perceptions are conditioned by space, time, causality, and many other things, and when a jaundiced eye sees God, it sees only a yellow God, etc. There is no chance of the mind conceiving Reality. If that is the case, the mind cannot meditate on God.

Then what is it that we are speaking of? We meditate on God. Everybody seems to be thinking of God, but on a careful philosophical analysis we come to the conclusion that the mind cannot think of God because it can think only as much as it is permitted by the very structure in which it is involved, or of which it is made. I cannot jump beyond my own mind, so there is an impasse in front of us. It appears, as it were, that we are landed in utter agnosticism or even scepticism in regard to the concept of God. We are totally

mistaken, perhaps, in our very idea of God. But the other side of it is: How does the idea of God arise in the mind when it is totally impossible for the mind to think of God? The mind seems to be like a double-edged sword. It cuts both ways. It has a tremendous impracticability and impossibility of thinking God when we make this epistemological analysis; but on the other hand, there is something speaking from within us, saying that it is not so bad as that. There is some mystery in us which tells us that it is not an impossibility.

The mind is rooted basically, at its very foundation, in something which is not conditioned by space, time and causality. We have something in us which is transcendent and beyond space, time and cause. We are involved in it, and yet we are above it. Our Puranas tell us that we occupy all the seven worlds at one stroke: Bhuloka, Bhuhariloka, Svarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka, Satyaloka. These seven worlds are not above us. They are inside us, and we are in them. What the tantrics or the hatha yogis call the chakras—*muladhara*, etc.—are only the microcosmic descriptions of these cosmological or cosmic layers, the realms of being mentioned just now. They are all inside us. We are simultaneously both down on the earth, and in the topmost heaven. All layers of Reality are within us. When only one aspect is emphasised we appear to be conditioned by space, time, etc., but there is something in us which is not so conditioned. If the unconditioned were not to be in us, we could not be even aware that we are conditioned. We cannot make this analysis that the mind is limited unless the mind has some power within it by which it can know that there is something beyond the limitation. A totally limited being cannot be aware of unlimitedness. It is, therefore, not illogical to conclude that phenomenality precludes knowing the Ultimate Reality. This is the dilemma in which we are usually placed. We are bound, no doubt, by the conditions of

the world, but the very fact that we are aware of this state of bondage itself is a great virtue, and it is a blessing upon us. How do we become aware that we are bound? A person who is bound and is completely soaked to the very marrow in bondage cannot know that he is bound. So there is something in us which is not bound, and therefore we are not merely phenomenal beings, though in all outward appearances it appears that we are phenomenal.

In the art of meditation, what it is that gets engaged in the attempt at meditation is difficult to understand. It is a great technique which has to be analysed threadbare, to the root, to the bottom. Is it the mind that concentrates on God? If it is the mind, what is your notion of the mind? What do you mean by 'the mind'? If the mind is only an expression of *prakriti*—it is one of the manifestations of *mula prakriti*, constituted of the three *gunas*—then naturally, the laws of *prakriti* will operate upon the mind. Inasmuch as *prakriti* is an object of consciousness, the mind will also stand in the position of an object to the Reality that is within us, and it is the object that confronts the object.

There is some interesting reference in the Bhagavadgita to this phenomenon of an element of objectivity being present in us even when we are aware of the so-called object outside. *Guna guneshu vartante* (B.G. 3.28). The objects of the world are constituted of the *gunas*, and the mind also is constituted of the *gunas*, so the attraction of the mind in respect of objects is due to the feeling of similarity between the mind and the objects, as in 'Birds of the same feather flock together'. The mind is pulled towards the objects, and the objects influence the mind. This mutual attraction and influence between the mind and the objects outside is because of the similarity of the basic structure between the mind and the objects. Both are constituted of *prakriti*;

therefore, from the ultimate standpoint, the mind is an object. It is not a subject.

Thus, when the object that is meditated upon, and the subject that meditates, are both analysed to their basic essence, an altogether new thing is revealed. We are not to employ merely the objective aspect of the mind in meditation. Then the God that we contemplate upon will also stand as an object outside us, and He will be separated from us by space and time. There will be no contact between us and the object. The whole system of Patanjali, especially in its study of the various stages of samadhi, drives home into our minds one important truth, that every stage of samadhi is a transcendence of space and time, though in the beginning the movement is through space and time itself. In the earlier stages of profound meditation bordering upon the lowest kind of samadhi, space and time are not obliterated, and they are there hanging on the mind. You put forth tremendous effort in feeling the presence of the object as inseparable from yourself. If I look at you and think of you, and pressurise the mind to contemplate in such a manner as to identify itself with the form of your personality, it naturally does it through space and time. Therefore, there is effort. Effort is impossible of avoidance as long as we think of objects in space and time. All effort involving strain is due to the interference of space and time in the relationship of subject and object.

## Chapter 14

### THE STAGES OF SAMAPATTI, OR SAMADHI

The all-pervading force, the *tanmatra*, is the inherent substance, we may say, behind the physical forms of things.

Now, things as they are in themselves, the thing in itself, the Reality standing on its own legs independent of any kind of association with perceiving consciousness, Reality unconditioned—not Reality as you think it, but as it is in itself—is not in space and not in time because the pervasive character of Reality, the omnipresence of it, precludes any interference in the form of space-time associations. To be in space and time is to be located somewhere and at some time, but Reality is not somewhere, and some when. It is everywhere and at all times.

We cannot imagine what it is to be everywhere and at all times because our imagination can conceive this everywhere-ness only as a kind of existence inside space, though it is everywhere in space. 'At all times' means to exist for a lengthened period of time, for an indefinite period; and yet, the idea of time does not leave us. Even when you think of an indefinite, endless period of time, you are thinking of time only, but Reality is timeless, not an endless duration. Even if you are to conceive of an infinitude of durational existences of something, you are thinking in terms of space and time only. But the absorption then becomes so intense that the ideas of space and time drop. Anything ceases to be a thing by itself. Neither are you somewhere, nor is the thing somewhere. The idea of 'where' and 'when' does not arise.

This is, again, an unintelligible experience for the beginner. No human being ever born can imagine this state where space and time are not there, because even the idea of there being no space and time is in space and time. It is very

strange because when you abolish the idea of space and time, you have done it in space and time only, so you cannot escape this difficulty. Hence, I repeat that this is not a matter for discussion or even for teaching; it is an experience which each one will pass through and know for one's own self.

This is a stage where you become a super-human force. You become a super-man, as the great Masters used to say. No more is the humanness present there. You are taken possession of by the powers of the universe. You become a part and parcel of the entire nature in its vast expanse. You are not a national of a country; you are not a man or a woman; you are not a human being at all. You are not anything, for the matter of that. Nothing can be adequate to describe your presence there, because you are not there at all. The idea of 'you' and 'I' ceases. This is the penultimate state of the divine merger of the individual in the Supreme Reality. The merger has not taken place, but it is as if you have touched the ocean of Reality and have been enchanted by its very contact, and gotten transformed in it through every fibre of your being; the iron ore that you are has become the gold, the philosopher's stone, of that great Reality.

This stage where the space-time idea drops is called the stage of *nirvichara samapatti*. The earlier stages were *savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, then we came to *savichara*, and now we are in *nirvichara*. The soul reveals itself in its pristine purity, says Patanjali. *Adhyatma prasada*, the peace that passeth understanding, the joy of the soul reveals itself here and you are happy merely because you are, not because you have anything. Your very being becomes a source of inexpressible and immeasurable satisfaction as you then exist not as a person but as a super-person, a super-individual, an immortal existence. This joy itself is an object of experience. There is no object anymore in the sense of objects we speak

of. We have been thinking of objects on which we have to meditate, or do *samyama*, and now there is no longer any object. The gross form of the object has gone, and the subtle form has been transcended. You are in possession of an infinite joy of a cosmic comprehensiveness. This joy is an experience. Inasmuch as consciousness experiences this joy, this joy itself is regarded as an object of consciousness, though for all practical purposes you cannot regard it as an object in the ordinary sense of the term. It does not anymore remain outside consciousness, yet there is a kind of self-consciousness of a universal character, though not the self-consciousness that you have within—the I and the you, etc. It is an indescribable, pure, subtle awareness of being which remains at the time of this experience of a joy which does not come from things or objects, because they are not anymore there; it is a joy that is the very characteristic inherent of the Self, the soul, the consciousness.

This is super-physical in every sense of the term, and can even be called super-psychic. It is not the mind that experiences a pleasure, not the intellect or anything that is psychological. The spiritual root in you effloresces and reveals its own nature to its own self. The revelation is not to somebody else. It is not like sunlight falling on anyone's face. It is like the sun shining on himself, as it were, and becoming aware that he is shining upon himself, and he feels an immense satisfaction borne of his very luminosity, his resplendence.

There is a universal self-awareness at this stage of a satisfaction that arises from Consciousness in its essentiality. This is *sananda samapatti*, which is inseparable from what is regarded as the next higher stage, known by the term *sasmita*. These are all terms of Patanjali, again. A stage where *asmita*, or self-consciousness, remains is called *sasmita samapatti*. Here the efforts of the individual do not

continue any more. You need not have to struggle to meditate. There is no effort on the part of any person because there is no person at all. You are carried by the current of the world, of the universe, of God Himself, if you want to call it so. You are possessed by a power that is super-individual. You are no more yourself, and therefore, you have no responsibility over yourself. Hence, there is nothing that you can do. The question of doing ceases. As you are not there as a person, where is the question of doing anything? How can there be effort? There is no agency in action. There is no doership. There is no individual performer of actions of any kind. There is just a pure sense of being that is sometimes referred to as the condition of 'I am'—'I am what I am' or 'I am that I am'. What can you say? Words fail you. You start saying something which conveys no meaning, because whatever you say is poor, fragile, and your descriptions are poor apologies for that grand and magnificent experience.

This is the ultimate union of the soul with Reality, and this is practically the final stage of *samapatti*, where the river has entered the ocean and does not any more exist as the river. You do not know which is ocean, which is the Ganga, which is the Yamuna, which is the Amazon, which is the Volga. No one knows what is where. Everything is everywhere, and you are in the hearts of everyone. You do not exist here in Rishikesh, or in any place. You become the centre of the being of all things, not merely human beings. You become the imminent principle of the cosmos. This is called God-experience in religious language. This is the realisation of the Absolute, *Brahma sakshatkara*. Here the consciousness reverts to itself and stands in its own status. It does not become aware of something. It is aware only of itself. As the sutra of Patanjali says in this connection, *tadā*

*draṣṭuḥ svarūpe'vasthānam* (Y.S. 1.3): The *drashta*, or the seer, becomes himself.

As you proceed higher and higher through these *samyamas*, or *samapattis*, you become more and more yourself. Now you are not yourself. You are somebody else, because you are that which you are thinking in your mind. You may imagine that you are some person, but you are not that person. You are that which you are contemplating in your mind because you have transferred your personality by way of the movement of your consciousness to that which you are deeply contemplating as your dear object.

But when the *samapattis* grow intense and rise higher and higher, you become less and less the object that you are today and more and more the subject that you have to become, so that in the *sananda* and the *sasmita* stages, you become the pure indeterminate Subject, without even the least trace of the objectivity in it. This pure subjectivity of experience cannot be designated even as subjectivity because the human mind has a prejudice, on account of which it regards subjectivity as something counterpoised to objectivity. But this is not the logical subjectivity that we are speaking of. It is the metaphysical Subject, the spiritual Being in itself. It is a subject, no doubt, because of the fact that it is aware, but of what is it aware? Therefore, it is not a subject of the ordinary type. It is a subject which has no object in front of it, and therefore, it cannot be called a subject at all. In that condition where even universal subjectivity ceases to be a real subject, there is a complete melting away of even this cosmicity of consciousness. You do not have any such idea of the universe or the cosmos. You do not speak of universality or cosmicity. Let alone speaking, you cannot even think it, because to think is to objectify things, and that stage has been transcended.

When all ideas melt into Pure Being, the very seed of self-consciousness ceases to be. It is called a seedless samadhi. What you call the seed here is the potentiality to revert to individuality. The seed of phenomenal experience is burnt up completely. The tree of samsara will not grow anymore from this seed which has been fried up in the fire of wisdom. When there can no longer be any seed of reverting to the phenomenal or the temporal experience, it is called seedless, *nirbija*. There is no longer bondage in the form of entanglement of any kind. This is called moksha, the thing that you have been hearing of in various scriptures, conferences and lectures, and from teachers, saints and sages, etc.

It is not a future attainment because, again, to think of the future is to think of time. You have already decided that the notion of time has to go, so you cannot say that this is something that will come afterwards, because the idea of 'afterwards' is the idea of time. It is eternity, and we cannot think what eternity is. We can only use some word, and it cannot convey any proper sense to us at present. Eternity is not endless duration; it is absence of time itself. It is durationless existence. This is the state of the *purusha*, according to the Sankhya and Patanjali's yoga. It is a state of Brahman, according to the Vedantin metaphysics and philosophy. This is the state of the Absolute the philosophers speak of. This is the liberation of the Spirit, the nirvana that you hear of. This is the goal of life.

And when this stage is reached, it does not remain as a stage anymore. It is not one of the stages of experience, it is all experience melted into one massive being. All that you have seen earlier also will be found there; it is not that you have forgotten all the earlier stages and have gone to some new thing afterwards. You may be wondering where are these physical objects, these trees and mountains, these

friends and relatives, this money and status; all these wonderful, beautiful things in this world, where are they? Have they all been left somewhere down below? No, it is not like that. They have all been transformed into the reality that they are, and you will see them as they are, not as they appeared earlier. This is a great solacing message to all doubting Thomases who imagine that they perhaps lose something when they go to moksha. Friend, you do not lose anything. You gain everything, and even that which you have apparently left will be found there in its true form. As great thinkers like Plato never tired of saying, the ideas are the realities. The archetypes are there; the shadows are not the reality. These things you see here are the shadows cast by the eternal ideas, the archetypes which will be found there in the cosmic realm. You yourself are a shadow. The so-called you or me here are shadows cast by realities which are in a supernal realm, so when you look at yourself, you are not looking at yourself. You are looking at only a shadow of yourself. Your reality is in the heavens. You are there as an angel in your true form. The form that you experience in dream is not your true form, and the things that you see in the dream world are not the true things. The true things are those which you see in waking. The shadow is cast, as it were, in the dream world. So is this world a shadow which you are pursuing unnecessarily, under the impression that something will come out of it. It cannot be pursued with advantage. It will keep you always on tenterhooks because you cannot pursue a shadow. It will run again and again ahead of you, as the horizon moves away when you move towards it. The original is somewhere, and the reflection is somewhere else.

We are under the wrong impression that we are in the reflection seen in the mirror. This is what the great teacher Acharyasankara mentioned as an image, a description, an

analogy. When you see yourself in a mirror, you see your image, of course, but do you really see yourself there? Suppose you want to put a beautiful mark on your forehead by looking at your face in the mirror. Do you put it on the mirror? If you want to dress yourself, do you dress the mirror? You can say, "Well, why not? I am there in the mirror." No, you dress the original. When the original is decorated, the reflection is automatically decorated. You need not worry about the reflection at all. You have to concern yourself with the original, rather than with the reflection. But unfortunately, we are after the reflection, the shadow. We are trying to satisfy, decorate and beautify the reflections that we are, and that things are, and we forget the originals; therefore, we are in the mire of sorrow. The ugliness of your face is not going to be removed merely because you are decorating the reflection in the mirror. So is your condition in this world. Whatever be your effort in this world you are not going to be happy, because you are pursuing a shadow, and the reality is somewhere else. This is a message which all great philosophers, metaphysicians, saints and sages have given us, and Patanjali tells us, and Vedantin philosophy proclaims.

Now, the original, the archetype, is not somewhere far away. This is another misconception that has to be removed from the mind. The original is not even as much removed from the reflection as your face is from the mirror. They are juxtaposed. The reality, the archetype, is spatially and temporally inseparable from the reflection so that God is here, and not merely in the heavens. The Absolute is just here under your very nose, and so this eternity that you are going to experience, the moksha that you are going to realise, is not merely an original archetype that is removed in space. Again the idea of space comes, and again the idea of time persists in our minds: Moksha is somewhere else, and

at some other time. But it is not outside in space, and not tomorrow in the future of time experience.

All this is difficult for the human mind to understand. You become giddy if you think deeply about it, but God loves you more than you love Him, as great adepts have told us. With the grace of the Absolute, you are bound to achieve this goal.

## **Chapter 15**

### **CONCLUDING MESSAGE**

Our goal here is not merely to gain a new way of thinking and feeling, but a new way of being. This is the essence, the sum and substance, of all educational processes in general, and particularly the process of the novel educational training that you have received during this short period of time here.

You have to remember again and again that your knowledge is worthwhile only when it has a connection with your being and living. You are not being instructed to become professors or teachers, but to be exemplars in the eyes of the law that works through this world. It is important to remember that your behaviour is expected to be in harmony not simply with the rules and regulations of human society, which are usually called etiquette or decorum, but it has to be in harmony with the law that operates. There are not many laws. American laws and British laws and Indian laws are only man-made expressions of a central organising law which works unanimously, impartially and perpetually everywhere. Whatever be your confidence in the social laws and etiquettes of human society, that would not help you in the living of a peaceful and happy life if you are not in consonance with the Central Law which is the operating principle in the world as a whole.

Hence, you have not been given merely a theoretical knowledge, some information as to the history of philosophy, or the history of culture, or a survey of the thoughts of thinkers of all ages. Here the emphasis is on a new aspect altogether to make you true human beings and truly happy persons, not sorrowing individuals, grief-stricken and racking your heads for little things of the world.

You have been told the way in which you can maintain your sanity under the worst of circumstances and never lose your balance. You have never to lose your balance of personality under any vicissitude through which you may have to pass. Winds may blow over the tops of mountains, but the mountains cannot shake with all the tempests and tornadoes that may blow over them. Such should be the rootedness of your personality in an internal verity which will take care of you like a mother or father, and you need not have to weep for the bread of tomorrow or the appreciation of man. Remember the beautiful admonition of Jesus Christ: Look at the beautiful lilies in the fields and the birds in the air. Do they weep and cry? They don't think of the morrow. They are taken care of. If such creatures are taken care of by the Father that is in heaven, why not you, who is more dear to Him than other things?

The difficulty is to establish oneself in this true knowledge. It is not learning; it is not any kind of certificate in a social or academic sense. It is a satisfaction that has to come from within you. What is the use of certificates and encomiums and recognitions in society if there is no satisfaction inside? And if a little of that has been injected into your blood, if you go from here with a joy that does not come from outside, then your training has been worthwhile and meaningful. You do not go out like students from colleges. You generally see people turned out from educational institutions with certificates, with flying colours, but suddenly they find themselves at sea. Generally, your education starts when you leave the college, not when you are inside it, because when you are within the campus or university or educational institution, you are protected by an artificial atmosphere of the government of that institution. But the moment you are released out of this atmosphere which has been taking care of you in various ways, you are

face to face with the realities of the world. Then nobody will look at you despite all your education, because the world is made up of a different stuff from what you have been thinking that education is.

The world is made up of a reality which is different from mere theory and understanding, and to face it is a hard job. Whatever be your learning, you cannot utilise that learning to appease your hunger. You will find that a new art is necessary to satisfy yourself even in the context of your physical personality. Satisfactions are of different degrees. They are not merely physical, as we have mentioned earlier.

Thus, you have to learn the art; and you have already learned it, I believe. Remember this technique of perpetually being en rapport with the powers of the world, which are eternally alive, never asleep and never unaware of your presence. The forces of the world are eternally awake. They never forget even the least event or phenomenon that takes place. The world is a living organism. The universe is alive eternally. Everything is known everywhere, and if you are to be awake to this great fact of the eternity of life in spite of the temporal processes which appear to manifest, if this could be practicable, you shall be happy. When I say that you shall be happy or you shall be peaceful, I am not referring to a mere psychological condition of temporary subsidence of the sorrows of life. There are occasions when we forget our difficulties, not because they have gone, but because we have been engaged in something else which is absorbing. But that is not peace, and that is not happiness.

The peace or happiness that we are referring to here is the character of the soul inside you, and not a condition of the mind which appears to reflect this peace of the soul occasionally on account of various factors. Your peace, your happiness, is not to depend on factors, conditions. There is no necessity for some event to take place in order that you

may be happy. You should not say, “Something has happened and upset my mind”; you should also not say, “Something wonderful is there, and I am very happy.” There is nothing wonderful in this world, and also there is nothing to upset your mind. It is all a question of your adjustment with it, your reaction to it, and your grasp of the situation as a whole. The world is neither a friend nor an enemy, and it is not there either to please you or to displease you. It is an impersonal, absolute, eternal, infinite principle of reality. Therefore, you are not to evaluate it as you ordinarily evaluate persons and things.

This is a great message of Yoga and Vedanta—not the Yoga and Vedanta of schools, of institutions, but a vision of the soul. True Yoga and Vedanta is the perception of the soul, the way in which the soul perceives things. It is not what you read in a book. The reaction of the soul within you to the soul of the cosmos, that should be called Yoga, and that is Vedanta. So to live in the soul—and not merely in the mental, or psychological, or physical or even social level—is to be your effort, and it has to be a perpetual effort.

In the earlier stages all this is difficult because we live in a world of the senses. We see objects, and therefore, we are likely to get immersed in the judgment of things in terms of sense objects and people and the various things that we see. To evaluate things from the point of view of the soul is difficult. For instance, when you look at a person, it is hard to look upon that person as a soul. Whatever be your effort, you will not succeed in this attempt, though it is a fact that the person is a soul in essence, and the outward personality is only an expression created by other factors than the eternal principle, which is the soul.

If you can root yourself in the soul and visualise things from the point of view of that soul, you will be able to recognise the soul in others also, so that it will be a

relationship between soul and soul, not between person and person. There will not be a psychological embarrassment or reaction. It will be a communion of powers which are eternal in their nature. This is what ancient masters in India call Ramaraja, or the golden age of things—the millennium, as people generally say. When God rules the world, the soul becomes the point of reference in every matter.

But when your point of reference is the body or wealth or social relationship or any kind of satisfaction to the ego, then that is not God's kingdom. It becomes a temporal hell, which is nothing but a distorted vision of things. Hell is not somewhere far off in the so-called inferno, and paradise is not away from you in a distant place. It is everywhere. Everywhere there is hell, and everywhere there is heaven. They are one and the same thing, which is called hell or heaven from two different angles of vision. When you are completely out of tune with the Ultimate Reality, you are undergoing a hellish experience, and the intensity of torture of the hell is in proportion to the intensity of your separation from Reality. The more you are able to approximate yourself to the conditions and laws of Reality, the more you are moving towards heaven, so that paradise is total attunement with Reality, and hell is total disunion and distortion. Therefore, they are only conditions, not things and objects. Hell and heaven are conditions of consciousness; therefore, they are everywhere, at every time.

Thus, it is possible for us to place ourselves in any condition according to the capacity of our minds or the predilections of our psychological apparatus. Whatever has been taught to you in these few days leads towards this end, to make you into human beings a hundred percent, which means to say, into people who are capable of recognising humanity in others also. A human being usually cannot recognise that someone else is also a human being, on

account of deep-rooted selfishness. This incapacity of one person not being able to recognise the same person in another is called exploitation. For instance, an employer cannot have a hundred-percent human feeling towards an employee. He always treats the employee as a kind of tool, an instrument, an exploiting medium, so that the maximum benefit is derived from this tool that is employed. And it is not merely the employee. Anyone who is utilised for a purpose is under a subjection of exploitation.

Well, cooperation is the law of life, no doubt. I can work for you, and you can work for me, but I need not be your employee, and you need not be my employee. Without using these terms, without being under subjection, we can be cooperative forces for the welfare of one another. If I have need of something, you help me. I don't regard you as an employee merely because you serve me. So also is in the case of everyone. Mutual service is the law of life. Coordination, cooperation is the principle of existence, not exploitation, not subjection and not rule under the mandate of rods, threats and fear. That is not the principle of life.

So, when you become truly human, this necessity to feel superior or to exercise authority in an unpleasant manner leaves you, and you begin to appreciate, rather than merely rule. It is difficult to understand how people can live in mutual affection, mutual regard and mutual service, because the moment the idea of a relationship with another arises, there is the instinct of exploitation. We always exploit. Though we may not be employers in a technical sense, this principle of exploitation is always there, which is a subtle technique adopted by the mind to grab circumstances to its own advantage for its individual physical, psychological or egoistic satisfaction. You cannot make use of anything in this world as a tool for your individual benefit. You have duties and, really speaking, you have no rights over things in the

world. Generally, today it is thought to be the other way around. The cart is put before the horse. People think of only their rights and not their duties, but we have only duties, and no rights at all.

You will be wondering what kind of life this is where we have only duties and no privileges. You will be surprised that all privileges will be heaped upon you automatically by the laws that control the world if you are successful in the performance of your duty. The anxiety in regard to privileges and rights arises on account of an inadequate performance of your duties. Duty is nothing but the obedience that you owe to the law, which includes a law of society and the law of the world as a whole. When you perform your duty as it is expected of you, you evoke the presence of the protecting power of the law of the world; the protecting power automatically satisfies you, and your privileges are granted to you. You need not demand them; there is no necessity to ask. Things automatically come, just as when the humours of the body are set in tune, you feel a sense of health. You need not ask for health: Health please come, health please come, health please come. Why do you ask for health? You do not say, "It is my privilege, it is my right." When the balance is established among the forces that constitute the physical body, you automatically feel the satisfaction consequent upon health. Likewise, duty is only a way in which you set yourself in tune with the reality of things. Cosmic health immediately emerges, and you are granted infinite boons by the God of the universe.

Thus, Yoga and Vedanta are to be taken in their true sense, and not merely in the sense of bookish learning or qualifications for a certificate, or any kind of academic degree. It is a way of living, and it is nothing but that. It is not merely a way of living ordinarily in the simple sense of the term, but living a true life. And what is the meaning of true

life? It is harmony with the righteousness of God, the law of the universe.

This is my message to you on this auspicious day of holy Vijaydasami when we conclude the holy worship of the Universal Mother. God's grace is upon you, and my only request again is that you may not forget what you have learned here, and do not allow these ideas to leave your mind. They become part and parcel of your life, and you learn to live a godly life.