

THE PROBLEMS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE



by

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

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Preface

The following pages constitute a series of questions and answers, being the conversations of a Canadian lawyer, Larry Krauss, and his wife Sarah, with Swami Krishnananda, General Secretary of The Divine Life Society.

These devotees, who are seekers of Truth, have an incisive understanding of the subtleties of the philosophical and spiritual implications of the search involved, and raised a series of queries on the subject for their personal clarification, to all which the Swamiji, with his usual comprehensive approach to everything, furnished apt replies, which will certainly be of immense utility and benefit to everyone on the path of the experience of the ultimate values of life.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
Shivanandanagar, U.P.
21st May, 1992

December 10, 1990

Larry: What is individual consciousness?

Swamiji: Individual consciousness? There is no such thing as individual consciousness; it doesn't exist. There is only one consciousness, which is universally present everywhere, and when it appears to be located in a particular point of spatio-temporal context, you call it individuality. It is like space contained in a little tumbler. The space cannot be contained in a tumbler; it is not possible. But you can imagine that the space is inside the tumbler and it is a little small space, and that smallness that you attribute to the otherwise large consciousness is the individuality thereof. It cannot really become the individual; it is always universal only, but it appears to be individual because you have somehow imagined that there is a location for it and you impose a kind of restriction upon it—like the vessel. It is really not confined, and it cannot be confined.

Larry: So it just appears to be confined.

Swamiji: Yes, it appears to be confined.

Larry: And it appears to be confined in so many things. I wanted to know why that has happened.

Swamiji: You may ask that person who has made it. I am not responsible for it, so you should not ask such questions.

Larry: But you are responsible for it. You are consciousness.

Swamiji: I have not created this difference and I cannot see it, also. So I cannot answer a question on that which is not visible to my eyes. You are seeing something that I cannot see. That is the only difference. It is like a straight stick looking bent when you dip it in a glass of water. You are asking who bent it. Now what can I tell you? Who is responsible for bending it? It is a straight pencil; you dip it in a glass of water and it looks dented. Now, who is responsible for bending it, sir?

Larry: The Universal Consciousness.

Swamiji: Nobody—not the Universal Consciousness. Your eyes are not seeing properly, that's all. The Universal Consciousness is not responsible. It is not bending the pencil. Your eyes are not structured properly while seeing then.

Larry: But the Universal is...

Swamiji: Who is the Universal? You yourself are That, finally. And why are you taking the name of That? You are the Universal, and why are you talking of the Universal as if it is sitting outside? How could you stand outside universality?

Larry: Because, for some reason, my consciousness is limited. It is confined.

Swamiji: No, it is not limited actually; and that idea also you must remove. You have already imposed some unnecessary ideas in your head. I told you it cannot be limited. It cannot be limited because the very consciousness of limitation implies that it is not limited. A limited man cannot know that he is limited. The whole point is that. He has exceeded the limitations; therefore, he is conscious of the limitations. Be a little logical. Unless you have exceeded the limitation, you will not be conscious that you are limited.

Larry: That to me sounds more like a mirror. In other words, by recognising that I am limited, I have exceeded the limitation.

Swamiji: How do you know that you are limited unless you have already got out of the limitation? The person inside the prison organically cannot know that he is caught up like that. He has a consciousness of freedom. He is conscious that there is something outside the jail, and so seeks freedom.

Larry: He is conscious of something outside the jail, but he knows he is limited to the jail.

Swamiji: But he knows that he is not limited, also; otherwise, the idea of going out cannot arise in his mind. There is a possibility of his real nature being outside the jail.

Larry: Yes, there is a possibility, yes.

December 11, 1990 a.m.

Larry: What is good, and what is evil?

Swamiji: Whatever you have understood, you tell me. What do you mean by good and evil, according to your studies? What exactly is it?

Larry: What I understood was that while the world, the way we experience it, cannot be other than a manifestation of God, we still experience ourselves as separate from God. We experience ourselves as individuals and because we experience ourselves as individuals, we have likes and dislikes; we experience likes and dislikes, we experience opposites. In the end, I understood that good and evil are the same—that all of it comes from God.

Swamiji: Good and evil are the same? How do you say they are the same?

Larry: Good and evil are the same in the sense that everything, every experience we have, is from God—is a result of God's world unfolding.

Swamiji: If every experience is from God, how do you make a choice between right and wrong?

Larry: The choices, according to the Jewish perspective, are that you are given guidance through the Torah.

Swamiji: Forget the Torah, now. I am asking you directly. How do you make a choice?

Larry: How do I make a choice? Or, how does one make a choice in the Jewish perspective?

Swamiji: From your perspective, not the Jewish. Yes, from your perspective. If both are coming from God, they will be identical. One will be identical with the other, and then choice cannot arise.

Larry: We have innate responses. If I see something that I think is bad . . .

Swamiji: Why do you call it bad? You see, you have contradicted your earlier statement that it comes from God.

Larry: Yes, but two things come from God. You see, you are asking me what my personal reaction is, but I can't give you .

..

Swamiji: You cannot be outside the perspective of correctness.

Larry: You asked me what the Jewish perspective of good and bad is . . .

Swamiji: Is your perspective different from the Jewish perspective?

Larry: Yes.

Swamiji: Then, why did you study Jewish philosophy? You are studying unnecessary things, which are not connected with you.

Larry: I feel (for one reason or the other) I have been connected to the Jewish religion.

Swamiji: You see, as an academic exercise, you can study anything. There is nothing wrong with it. But for your practical purposes, what is the conclusion? That is what I am asking. Listen to me.

Larry: I haven't drawn my conclusions yet.

Swamiji: I understand. My question was simple: Is it true that both good and evil come from God, or are you making a mistake in your statement?

Larry: Is it true that good and evil come from God? I believe it is true.

Swamiji: Does God create evil?

Larry: God creates the circumstances that appear to me to be evil.

Swamiji: You are a lawyer, and talk like a lawyer. You want to protect God somehow from any imputation of evil to Him.

Larry: To me, there appears to be evil. From God's perspective, if God is perfect . . .

Swamiji: You are arguing on behalf of God as a client. You don't want to give any trouble to Him unnecessarily.

Larry: That's true. That's where you have to tell me who I am being retained to act for.

Swamiji: How much fee have you received from God?

Larry: My daily existence.

Swamiji: You are perfectly right. Both forces which you call as good and evil emanate from a single source—like day and night, for instance. You cannot say day and night are two things. It is one thing only, looking like two things. You cannot keep day somewhere and night in another place; that is not possible. It is one compact phenomenon, which looks partially like day and partially like night. Who creates day and who creates night? Can you say the sun is the cause of night? If the sun is the cause of day, he may be the cause of night also, because due to some phenomenon connected with the sun, night takes place. Nevertheless, you cannot say the sun is sitting there and creating nights. It is an automatic correlative of a particular situation that looks like dark night on the one side and bright day on the other side.

Good and evil do not exist in the kingdom of God; they exist only in a realm that is much below, and the concept itself involves a duality of perception. God sees with one eye, whereas we see with two eyes. God's vision is integral and the ethical mandates, the *do's and don'ts* of religion and morality, arise on account of a perception of one phenomenon as two phenomena.

We always say that there is day and there is night, while I would like to say there is no such thing as day on one side and night on another side. Something is happening, of which

one aspect looks like day and another aspect looks like night. Now, you can say something is good and something is bad. Like children, we make a statement that day is good and night is bad. There is no harm in making this statement, but it is not true that night is bad and day is good. Who can say that night is bad? Let there be no night—we should have only day, eternally. Will it be all right? We will perish if there is only day without night. And suppose there is only night without day; then also we will not survive. So, two aspects blend together to create a phenomenon of an experience which looks dualistic, while it is integral from its own point of view.

Any impact upon consciousness—listen to me, lawyer! Any impact upon consciousness which will sunder it into a dualistic perception of subject and object with emphasis laid on one side more than the other can be regarded as not correct, if you want to use an ethical word here. Any impact upon consciousness which will enable you to see an integral phenomenon operating between both the subjective side and the objective side can be regarded as correct and right.

When I see you and you see me, it looks as if *A* is seeing *B*, and *B* is seeing *A*. This is the dualistic perception, as they call it. But there is another factor that is always bypassed in this process. My perception of you and your perception of me is neither my act nor your act. I am not seeing you and you are not seeing me. There is a consciousness between us which keeps the balance between the perceiver and the perceived, and observes both of us. That is why it is possible for a simultaneous perception of you by me, and of me by you. This vision, the so-called dualistic perception of the subject by the object, or the object by the subject, is a phenomenon created by a transcendental consciousness operating between both. But, anything that emphasises one side only is not right perception.

You need not use the words 'sin', 'evil', 'bad', 'ugly' and all that, because they are not very pleasant to hear. We can only say that there are proper and improper ways of perception.

Anything that is contributory towards the movement of consciousness to an integral perception between the subject and the object is right, and anything that is opposed to it is not.

There is an illusion, and so you are asking a question like that. God does not create evil and, therefore, He also does not create illusion. It is only a mistaken squinted-eye perception. I told you earlier, a straight pencil looks dented when you dip it in a glass of water.

Larry: Yet He created my eyes to see it this way.

Swamiji: He did not create anything. God never creates anything outside Himself.

Larry: All right, but my eyes are there that see it this way.

Swamiji: It is something like a paralytic stroke of consciousness. It is a severing of a part of consciousness from the whole that creates all these problems.

Larry: But why was it necessary to do that?

Swamiji: It was not necessary, and finally you will find that it has not taken place also; it never happened. You will realise that you are under a delusion that it has taken place, and you will answer that question only after it goes out. You are asking in dream, "Why should I wake up?" because there is no such thing as waking for you when you are dreaming. Only when you wake up will you know that something has happened, and you will not ask a question afterwards.

Consciousness that is bound cannot know why it is bound, because the moment it knows it, it is no more bound. It is like seeing darkness with a torchlight. If you want to seek darkness, will you flash a torchlight and see it? You will find that darkness is not there when light is there. The light of knowledge will abolish the very question itself, so you cannot have a question answered. The question is darkness and you are flashing a light of knowledge over it and you will find the question vanishing immediately.

There is a story. They say that night went to God and cried, “The sun is pursuing me wherever I go, and I have no place to stay.”

Brahma (the creator) called the sun and asked, “Why are you pursuing the poor darkness?”

The sun said, “I have never seen it. And how will I pursue it? Unnecessary complaints.” He said, “I have never seen the thing.” So, likewise is this question, why has God created the world. You are assuming that He has created, and is then unnecessarily pursuing it. It is like the sun pursuing darkness; it never existed. He said, “I never committed the mistake of pursuing darkness. I never saw it. Why are you making complaints?”

Like that, knowledge will tell you that these questions do not exist to knowledge and, therefore, you should not bring knowledge in confrontation with ignorance. The moment knowledge confronts ignorance, ignorance ceases. This means to say, your questions cannot be answered through knowledge; they can be answered through ignorance only. Ignorant questions are answered by ignorant answers. Right knowledge cannot give answers to misconceived questions.

Larry: So are you saying to me that there is no world?

Swamiji: There is no world, finally—perfectly correct. Now further don’t talk!

Larry: There’s nobody to talk to.

Swamiji: It requires a plumbing into yourself. You go deep into your own self, because you are the answer to your questions. You, yourself are the answer. You will find that every answer comes from inside, which is a universal, bottomless sea, which is what you are. Deep practice of meditation is necessary. Place yourself in the context of that which is between you and that which you see—between that which you are and that which you think in your mind.

Deep meditation and a going into one's own self—you see, listen. Whenever you think, you always think in a dualistic fashion—you are the thinker and there is a thought that you think; you are the thinker and there is an object that you are thinking of. Neither should you think of yourself, nor should you think of that which appears to be an object of your mind. Let that thing which is between you and the object transfer you to that middle position. Can you transfer your consciousness? Put it here, your consciousness should sit here. Can it sit here? Now it is inside your body. It is operating through the body and you are seeing through the aperture of your eyes and then perceiving a person like me here. You unlock your consciousness which is now tied up within the body, and concentrate in such a way that you are here in the middle, just now.

Larry: Outside my body?

Swamiji: Yes; and you are seeing both—not Mr. So-and-so Krauss seeing, it is some non-Krauss which is between both, seeing Krauss on the other side, Krishnananda this side. Then you will see that you are a different man altogether. You become a superman in one second. Now you are a man because you are looking through the medium of your eyes, through this body, at another thing, which is outside; that is man-thinking. Superman-thinking is a thought that is between both the subject and the object, which is transcendent to both subject and object, and also immanent in another way—both transcendent and immanent. A superman thinks in terms of the transcendent that is between the subject and the object, whereas the human mind thinks only of one side and cuts itself off from that which it perceives. So we should try to think like supermen and not simply like men.

Men cannot answer human questions. No man can answer man's questions. Every man is like any other man; there is no difference. But there is a superhuman element in man that transcends human thought and which is above both

the perceiver and the perceiving consciousness. It is a big circus feat, a feat that you have to perform in your consciousness. It is not the usual way of thinking, but it is a very, very necessary way of thinking, if you want to be impartial in your thoughts and happy in your mind. Otherwise, you will be always one-sided. Your balance will be swinging this side or that side and it will never be equalised.

Larry: But the moment I place myself in that position . . .

Swamiji: You will see neither yourself nor the world at that time. You will see something connecting both. Almost it is like God-vision. It is almost here on the lap of God, if you think like that. God is a balance between the subject and the object. That is God, and God is nothing but consciousness. So if you can think, if you can operate your consciousness as that which subsists between the seer and the seen, you are actually on the lap of God. Almost it is God-thinking, and you cease to be a person afterwards. It will transform you to such an extent (this exercise which I am mentioning to you) that if you can do it for even a few minutes consistently, with deep thought and intensity, in a few minutes you will find some tremendous vibration taking place in your personality and you will not be the same man that you were a little before. It will rejuvenate your personality physically, mentally, even socially. You will be a different individual. People will see 'something' in you. The moment they look at your face they will know there is 'something', some value is coming—because it is not a man that is coming. It is another thing that is coming through this personality of man.

I am telling all this because here a little practice is necessary. You need not read too much and discuss too much. The matter is simple. The proof of the pudding is in its eating. You have to eat it; that is all—otherwise you go on discussing about the pudding and there is no purpose. So, I request you to do some practice every day and try to think only along these lines. Let there be no other way of thinking. This is your habit; in your personal life, in your social life, in

you legal life, whatever life, you think only along these lines. This is your way of thinking; give up the old way of thinking which is a dichotomy between subject and object, where you are obliged to take sides. You either take the subjective side or the objective side; you cannot strike a balance. It is very difficult because the habit of the mind is to get locked up in the body of one's own self and then have some like or dislike, love or aversion to another body. It is a kind of malady. The consciousness locked up in a body is in a state of malady. It is sick actually; it is suffering, and so all our thoughts are a kind of sick thought. It is not natural and normal thought. So, neither are we happy nor can we make another person happy. A kind of total transformation of values is necessary by rethinking in a new model altogether, so that you don't think through the body but through a way which is away from the body.

In the Yoga of Patanjali, there is a beautiful, very much neglected *sutra* (*sutra* means aphorism). People neither read it nor understand it. "The great consciousness is that which is outside the body." That is all the translation of the *sutra*. When he speaks of 'outside', he actually means 'free from the shackles of bodily encasement', which is another way of mentioning just what I told you now. You are not sitting there; when I say 'you' I mean the consciousness. This Mr. consciousness-Krauss, whatever it is, is sitting inside this so-called body. Let it come out of this body and sit here on this carpet and look at it, and you become your own object and your attachment to the body ceases. Now you are thinking that you are a physical subject, so the consciousness clings to the body to such an extent that you think nothing but your own body. Let that thing which you now consider as your physical subject be an object, and you will be as much detached from it as you are detached from any other person sitting here—because you are not this; you are another thing that is looking at you. And you will look at yourself in the same way as you look at other people.

You are not concerned with the fate of these people here; you won't bother; and you will also not be concerned with this body at that time, because you are another than what you appeared to be earlier. You are as much an object as anybody else. But why should you consider yourself a subject? That is the whole point; that is the mistake. That exercise is possible only if you are able to concentrate as this Patanjali *sutra* says: Transfer yourself to a position which is not the body—wider than the body—between the subject and the object, transcending both, and yet immanent in both. You become a God-man. You will not be a man at all. You will be something other than the ordinary human.

Larry: Is there no significance to one's personality?

Swamiji: The personality will be taken care of by that which includes both this personality and the other—like the body taking care of two hands. You need not ask the right hand, "What is your connection with the left hand, sir?" You need not have to put questions like that, because the right hand belongs to that to which the left hand also belongs; so the body will take care of both. The subject belongs to that to which the object also belongs, and that particular thing is what I am emphasising, which is the real you. So, everything will be taken care of automatically. No problem will arise.

Larry: It still begs one question for me. What was the point in the first place of having individual personalities?

Swamiji: You are asking the question, why it took place. It will be known to you when you transcend this body; when you are above this body you will know the answer to this question. Again I told you, you are flashing a torchlight on ignorance. You cannot know ignorance through knowledge; they are contradictories. The question is a part of ignorance and the answer that you expect is a part of knowledge. As they are contradictories, one cannot know the other. You cannot see dream in waking; you cannot know waking in dream. Both cannot be simultaneously existing. So, theoretical questions are of no utility. You will find that in

practice you will get the answer. The whole problem will vanish like mist before the sun, if you can concentrate properly. There is no need of questioning. It will solve itself automatically.

Sarah: All the wisdom that a person gets while in the body, through suffering, through personal growth, through maturity—what is the worth of that? Does it have any worth?

Swamiji: Yes, through that only you are thinking now; otherwise, how will you think? The knowledge has arisen gradually by the process of evolution from the lower stages to the higher stages, and now the stage that you have reached is the human stage. What I am referring to is something beyond the human stage.

Sarah: So you can only get to the human stage when you are always within the body.

Swamiji: Already you have reached the human stage, and you are now thinking through the human mind, but you have to think through the divine mind. That is what I am referring to. There is a stage higher than the human way of thinking, which is the divine way of thinking. But we have not reached that state yet. We think only as human beings, but there is a way of thinking which is not human—superhuman—that is what I was mentioning just now. Of course, it has gradually evolved from the lower stage and it has come through the body. You are perfectly right. From mineral to plant, plant to animal, animal to man, man to God—that is how it will rise gradually.

Sarah: And you only get to the divine way of thinking through meditation and deep thought, right?

Swamiji: Mediation. Yes, certainly. Yes, yes, perfectly right.

December 11, 1990 p.m.

Swamiji: What do you say?

Larry: My mind, my mind and my ego, want to know the relationship they have (or it has) with the 'I' of the Absolute.

Swamiji: The Absolute has no 'I'.

Larry: The 'I' ...

Swamiji: There is no 'I'.

Larry: All right, just the Absolute. What is the relationship between the mind and the Absolute?

Swamiji: The mind is a spatio-temporal projection of the Absolute. A spatio-temporal projection—a refraction, if you want to call it by that name. There is no such thing as 'mind', actually, in the same way as the mirror does not shine. The mirror shines only when lights fall on it. The light that shines through the mirror is the mind, but the light that is independent of the mirror is the Absolute. The relationship is simple. The Absolute Itself is shining as the mind through the mirror of space-time, and so there is no such thing as mind independently, even as there is no such thing as the light of the mirror. The mirror cannot shine; in the same way, the mind cannot think. It appears to think on account of the light reflected upon it by the Absolute through the space-time complex. So space-time is like the mirror, the mind is like the light on the mirror, and the Absolute is the original light that falls on it.

Larry: So my mind is a reflection of the Absolute.

Swamiji: Certainly, yes. You are thinking because of the light reflected in your mind by the Absolute.

Larry: And likewise, everybody else's mind is a reflection of the Absolute.

Swamiji: Everybody's mind also is like that only. Everybody, yes. All, uniformly.

Larry: So why does—I don't know if this can be answered—but why does the Absolute choose to . . .

Swamiji: It never chose anything. And if you ask such a question, I will say It has done nothing, nor are you existing, finally. You are under an illusion that you are existing. That is the final stroke—to cut the Gordian knot. You should never ask the question “Why?”, because questions arise on account of the relationship between ‘cause’ and ‘effect’. You try to find a cause for an effect; that is why questions arise. But who told you that there is a cause for every effect? That is an imagination of your mind; concocted questions cannot be answered in any rational way. Questions are all projected by an erroneous perception of things. You cannot have a right answer to a wrong question. No question arises as to why it happened, because it never happened, finally. But you imagine that it happened; therefore, some sort of answer commensurate with that process has to be given. What is required in a person is psychoanalytical treatment, as they call it. Something is wrong in the thinking itself. Something has happened to you, and you will know it when it is rectified.

Larry: So, if nothing is happening, then really my mind is not here. And I am not here and you are not there.

Swamiji: Nothing is anywhere. If you really believe that you also don't exist, you will have no problems; but you cannot believe that you are not existing. That is why these questions arise. You try to abolish the consciousness of your existence also, and let us see what happens. You will melt into the Absolute at that moment. Then you will never raise questions. But you are insisting that you are existing, so the problem is always there as a hurdle; then you have questions. Insistence that you are existing is another way of saying that you are insisting on independence from the Absolute. The whole problem is here. Let the Absolute think, and not Mr. Krauss. I told you in the morning about this technique of transferring your consciousness to the

Universal Continuum rather than go on thinking through a personality or a body. Every thought of ours is an isolation from the Absolute. That is why no answer comes.

Larry: You have been able to transcend yourself and, therefore, you do not see . . .

Swamiji: I have no questions. I do not have doubts of any kind, and I never go and have darshan of anyone. I do not talk to anybody, and I am a fully satisfied person. I do not go and see people—great men or small men. I want nothing from anyone. By some mystery, I am satisfied. It is the blessing come from Swami Sivananda.

Larry: Do you exist?

Swamiji: I exist as the Absolute, and to exist in any other fashion is a mistake; and if that mistake has been committed, the earlier it is rectified the better. Constantly you must brood on this universality of your being. You do exist. Nobody says you don't exist, but you exist in a different way than what you are thinking. You do exist, but not as you are thinking that you are.

Larry: Do we all exist?

Swamiji: Always.

Larry: All of us here exist?

Swamiji: There is no "all of us". It is like many drops in the one ocean. If you say the entire ocean is nothing but many drops, okay. I have no objection to your saying "all of us", but actually there are no drops in the ocean. It is only a theoretical concept. The ocean itself is a big drop, but you can conceive independent drops for the purpose of argument. So there is no such thing as "all of us". We are like drops in the ocean which is conceptual.

Larry: If there is only one Absolute, then how can there be different consciousness?

Swamiji: I told you it is like waking becoming dream. Something has happened. While there are no mountains that you perceive in a dream (they are inside the head only), they look like external things. The one Universal Consciousness has somehow entered into this body, which is its own spatio-temporal pressure point, as I mentioned to you, and it is dreaming, as it were (everything is 'as it were'—really it is not happening), just as mountains are not created by your brain in the dream state but somehow it looks as if the mountain is outside you. The world appears to be outside in the same way as a mountain looks outside in dream, while it is your mind only looking like a mountain.

Larry: So it is in my mind, or it is in the Absolute?

Swamiji: Your mind and It—you cannot separate them. It is the Universal Mind, you may say. They are not separate.

Larry: So when I speak to you . . .

Swamiji: It is one drop talking to another drop in the ocean itself.

Larry: So it is not just my dream, then?

Swamiji: When you think that you are a drop, and really isolated from the ocean, that is a dream; the dream is nothing but the conviction that the drop is isolated from the ocean. But if the drop knows that there is no such thing as the drop, that it is the ocean itself looking like a drop, you are awake. Many drops make the ocean; it is perfectly correct, yet there are no drops in the ocean. It is one mass. You can conceive it either way.

Sarah: The way you talk about the Absolute and us as an ocean appears to me as correct thinking. But this world as only a dream—there is so much going on in this world! So many experiences and evolutions . . .

Swamiji: All experiences are within the dream only; they are not outside it. You can be hungry, you can be thirsty, you can also die in dream—but nothing happens, really. People can

feel that they are falling from a tree and break their legs, marry and have children, and become poor, and die, also. All these experiences one can have in dream. You wake up and see nothing has happened.

Sarah: But there is no substance?

Swamiji: There is no substance in dream—yes.

Sarah: No substance! Everything that is going on here in the world . . .

Swamiji: Nothing, nothing. It is substanceless, ultimately. It is a modification of consciousness that looks like this.

Larry: Is the Absolute choosing to dream?

Swamiji: Again you are asking the same question. It is like asking whether It is doing something. You should never put such questions. It never chooses anything. It just is. You are asking again and again the same question, why it happens. This question you cannot answer. You have to go deep into it and realise it yourself. The finite cannot answer the question regarding the Infinite. You have to enter into the finite and from the finite you have to enter the Infinite; then you will get the answer.

Larry: Is it possible in one's lifetime to enter into the mind of the Infinite?

Swamiji: Yes, it is possible, if you are really eager to have it. Actually, if you are so eager to have it, you will sink into It, and day in and day out you will be only in It.

Sarah: How does it work that you can use the tools (instruments) of the dream world—you use the mind, you use purification techniques, you use other techniques . . .

Swamiji: They are all part of the mind only. If you use these techniques in the dream world, do you think they are all different things? Even if you use a vessel for carrying water in dream, that vessel is made of your mind only, even as the water in it. It has no substance. And the same thing will

happen in the waking condition—all these vessels and instruments that you are seeing are made of the Cosmic Mind. They look like hard substances, but really they are not. The king and the beggar of the dream world are made of the same stuff.

Sarah: But how can they be used to get to the Absolute Consciousness?

Swamiji: These are methods that you are adopting to strike a harmony between yourself and the environment outside. Environment means the world. An instrument is only a tool that you are employing to assist you in striking a harmony between you and the world. You use various instruments for that purpose. The world is impinging upon you so badly that you feel hungry every day; then you use the instrument of food. And when the winter wind blows on you, you use the instrument of a blanket. You strike a balance between you and nature by using these techniques. Likewise, you will strike a balance between you and everything in the world by various methods that you are adopting—psychologically, physically, socially, or any way you like. Actually, whatever you are doing in this world is only an attempt to have a balance between you and the world outside, because, if for one minute you are out of balance, you will not be happy. You have to be in a state of balance with society, with your body, with your mind, your emotions, with every blessed thing, and with nature itself. The whole effort of life is nothing but a progressive movement towards harmony of personality with the environment outside in various degrees and stages. The whole thing that you are doing is a cosmic work. It is not some person doing, somewhere sitting in one corner. Every activity is a Cosmic Action taking place through every individuality, at all times.

Sarah: What is Cosmic Action?

Swamiji: Cosmic Action is Total Action of the cosmos simultaneously; also the movement of the individual, or the finite, towards the Infinite. The entire universe is moving

towards the Absolute; this is what we call evolution. The universe is restless and it cannot keep quiet until it coalesces into the Absolute.

Sarah: When you say the universe, you mean this dream universe is moving towards the Absolute?

Swamiji: Everything, every atom, is moving towards that Goal.

Larry: And the dream universe is the Absolute?

Swamiji: Yes, you may say the whole process of evolution itself is a kind of dream. A cosmic dream it is, but it is done very systematically; therefore, you call it evolution, systematic and symmetrical.

Sarah: But if it's a dream, nothing really happens.

Swamiji: It does happen! When you are actually dreaming, it does happen; otherwise, you don't call it a dream at all. You are saying that nothing happens because you have woken up, but actually when you are dreaming, it is a very real thing. Similarly, you will not see this world when you enter the Absolute. But before that experience takes place, the world is there as an object of perception.

Sarah: But it seems that when you are in the consciousness of the Absolute, the dream world looks as if it is just spinning its wheels; it is not doing anything.

Swamiji: When you enter the consciousness of the Absolute, you will not see the world, in the same way as when you wake up the dream world vanishes. It has entered your mind. All the phenomena of dream have entered your mind in waking. In the same way, all the phenomena of waking will enter the Absolute. Just as you don't see the world of dream in waking, you will not see the world of waking in the Absolute—not that it vanishes; it has entered into the original source of it. By not seeing people of the dream in waking, you have not lost anybody. You don't bother about bereavement; you have seen a friend in dream and now you

have woken up and the friend is not visible—“Oh I have lost,” you don’t cry, because the person has entered your mind itself. So, you will lose nothing by entering the Absolute. You will absorb the whole thing into It and you will be the all-inclusive completeness.

Sarah: So, with this absorption, I don’t understand . . .

Swamiji: The absorption is just like the dream objects entering your waking mind. In a similar manner it happens.

Sarah: And what is this process of the universe?

Swamiji: The process of the universe is the gross melting into the subtle, the subtle into the causal, the causal into the Absolute. The outer becomes the inner; the inner becomes the Universal. Three or four stages are there. That’s the process.

Larry: Is the Absolute beyond this universe? Is It this universe, or is It beyond this universe?

Swamiji: Is the waking mind beyond the dreaming mind, or is it not beyond it? The waking mind that is now thinking and dreamt yesterday—is it beyond the dreaming mind? One mind dreamt yesterday; one mind is thinking now in waking. Now, is this waking mind beyond that mind which dreamt yesterday, or is it the same mind?

Larry: It is a different condition of the same mind.

Swamiji: Then it is the same answer to your question: a different condition of the same thing. They are not two different things.

Larry: Is that not a limitation, though, on the Infinite, that It can have a different condition?

Swamiji: Is there a limitation between the dreaming mind and the waking mind? There is no limitation because there are no two minds, as one mind only is looking like two. There is no limitation. Are you feeling a kind of loss because you have woken up from dream? Then, where is the limitation?

You are complete and full even now, in spite of having seen things in dream and, apparently, lost them.

Larry: The limitation is that while I was dreaming, I was not awake and doing whatever I could do.

Swamiji: In that sense you are limited now because you are thinking you are Mr. So-and-so, and you are not believing that you are the Universal. In that lack of belief in the universality of yours, you may say that you are limited, though really you are not like that. You are not really limited, but somehow you are affirming the limitation. That has to be overcome by a counterproductive activity of consciousness that is called 'universal meditation'. You must think in the opposite way—not as a subject thinking, but as the Universal thinking.

Larry: So the Absolute has different conditions.

Swamiji: It has no conditions by Itself, but it looks as if It has conditions from your individual point of view. All these questions arise because you have isolated yourself from the Absolute and you are arguing as if the Absolute is in front of you, sitting as an object of inquiry. It is not an object of inquiry before you. You yourself are That. But you, somehow, have isolated yourself from It in a psychological fashion and so you are asking where It is, and so on. There is no 'it'. The observed is not an it. It is you, just this person.

Larry: So I am going through an evolutionary process.

Swamiji: You are going through an evolutionary process in every way. You are trying to become yourself. You are to become yourself in larger and larger dimensions.

Larry: And yet I was myself to begin with.

Swamiji: You were always yourself only. You were like an acorn, you were like a seed, you were like an atom. You became a vegetable, you became a plant, you became an animal, you became a human being. You are becoming wider

in your dimension, and the evolutionary process is going on even now.

Larry: And yet I began as the Absolute.

Swamiji: You began as the Absolute and you will end as the Absolute.

Larry: And I will end as the Absolute, too?

Swamiji: Yes, yes, you have to.

Larry: And yet I am going through an evolutionary process to take me back to where I began.

Swamiji: Yes, in a cycle—a kind of consciousness-cycle.

Larry: Why would that happen?

Swamiji: Again you are asking the same question! I told you, don't ask such questions. You are asking the same question again and again. The effect cannot know the cause as long as it stands outside the cause as an effect thereof.

Larry: If I already am the Absolute . . .

Swamiji: You do not believe it. The whole point is that. You are not the Absolute, as you don't believe it is so. You are not the Absolute to yourself because you don't feel that you are such on account of placing yourself outside It.

Larry: Why is it important that I feel that I am the Absolute? If I am the Absolute, I am the Absolute. What is the difference if I know that I am the Absolute?

Swamiji: No, no. The Absolute doesn't want to know that It has some kind of cocoon around Itself. You are asking why the cocoon is around It. You may ask It when you go there! Now you should not ask. "Why did I dream that there is a mountain?" You will never put such a question because it is a phantasm. You will never put such a question at all. You saw a mountain in a dream and you are asking everybody, you go all over the marketplace and ask people, "Why did I dream of a mountain yesterday?" You will never put such a question,

as it is an utter stupidity to ask such questions, because it never happened. You will think, "It is some kind of phantasmagoria in my brain." You will never put such questions to people. It is like a dreaming man asking, "What is waking?" He can never answer that question. No man who is dreaming can know what waking is unless he wakes up. So, no 'why'. It is a question of direct practice and experience. If you eat the sugar, only then will you know what sweetness is. It is better to put the sugar into your mouth than to ask another man, "What is sweetness?" By mere theoretical argument nobody can know what sweetness is.

Larry: All right. I can't ask the question but I can understand the condition. And the condition is that I began as the Absolute . . .

Swamiji: You neither began, nor did anything like that happen. Again, you are bringing the question of cause and effect.

Larry: All right, I was always the Absolute.

Swamiji: All these questions of yours imply that you are separate from the Absolute. You are insisting again and again on that wrong point of view, and will never get an answer. All your questions are rooted in the belief that you are outside the Absolute. Else, why is there any doubt?

Larry: Right. But, that is because. . .

Swamiji: What then? Where do you stand? You have hypnotised yourself into the belief that you are outside the Absolute. You are under a spell of hypnotism created around yourself, and you are putting questions about the spell of hypnotism itself. The questions are also a part of the hypnotic effect; they are not rational questions. There is no necessity to go on arguing the same point, as it is an erroneous standpoint that the consciousness is taking. And I request you to remember what I told you in the morning. Transfer your consciousness from this body, which is putting the question, and let it sit on the carpet here, outside. Then

you will never raise the question. Let this consciousness that is raising questions sit here, some ten feet away, and let it look at this person who is putting a question. Then you will see what happens. You will melt immediately. Yoga is a practice. It is not a theory. It is not a question; it is a doing something. It is eating the pudding. Yoga is doing, not simply thinking.

Larry: But one step is recognising that there is a cocoon around oneself.

Swamiji: That cocoon is the consciousness of your being a questioner, an individual, and imagining that the Absolute is outside to be questioned about and known. The Absolute is not outside you and you cannot ask questions about It, because who is asking the question about whom, finally? Again you have created a gulf between the questioner and the object being questioned about. The whole point is a psychological gulf between the subject and the object. Wherever you go, however much you may ask, you get into the clutches of this duality between the questioner and the object being questioned about. It is a very difficult technique. Yoga is a difficult technique. However much you may try, you will slip out of it. It will go out, like this. Your mind will not concentrate on that element which is between you and that about which you are questioning. Your consciousness should root itself in that which is between yourself and that about which you are talking. You must be impersonal in your questions. You are not doing the practice, so you are asking questions. I would like you to meditate the whole night. Meditate the whole night and see what happens. You should not be in yourself; you must be outside yourself. Place yourself outside yourself. Be somebody other than you, and see what happens.

Larry: And I can do that just through a meditative process?

Swamiji: In one second you can do that. In one second. This is what they do in ordinary telepathic communication, etc. You can affect a person in London by deeply thinking about that

person. It means that your consciousness travels outside the body; this is telepathic action. But if your consciousness is locked inside the body, no telepathic action can take place. Deep meditation is necessary. You always try to be other than what you are—outside you, beyond you, larger than you, more than you, not just what you are. Why should you be what you are? You have already been there for years together and suffered very much. Now let there be a little different thing. You become an object of your own consciousness (you are outside yourself and you are an object) and you will not worry about yourself as much as you are doing now.

December 12, 1990 a.m.

Larry: I practised some meditation this morning.

Swamiji: And every day, with deep concentration, by plumbing into yourself.

Larry: I tried to remove myself from myself, as you suggested.

Swamiji: You lose yourself in order to gain yourself.

Larry: I tried to project myself a few feet away from myself.

Swamiji: Yes; this is perfectly correct. Project yourself away from yourself and become a larger being than what you appear to be. You are a small person now inside the body. I wish you to become bigger. When you place yourself away from your body, you will become larger than you are. Your dimension has increased, and you can place yourself even in the sun and the moon and the stars, not merely on carpet, so that the dimension becomes so big that you almost look like Universal Existence. You can simply place yourself at the periphery of space itself as far as possible, so that you are so far away from what you appear to be now that you look like an inclusive universality yourself, everything absorbing into yourself, and nothing is outside you. "I am what I am", "I am that I am", whatever you call it—this is the technique of meditation. It has to be done every day for as long a period as possible. This is the primary duty of a person. All other duties are subsidiary, secondary. Otherwise, you will be taking care of the pennies and losing the pounds. All the business of life is only a question of taking care of pennies, while losing pounds. That should not be.

All things you gain when you lose yourself. You can gain the whole world but lose yourself. The entire enterprise of people, everywhere in the world, is an adventure towards gaining the world and losing oneself. We are very much concerned about things in the world outside, but not bothered about ourselves, as if the world can be there even without us. When you are not there, your world also goes with it.

So, take care of yourself, and all things shall be taken care of. When you water the root of a tree, you do not have to water the branches and the leaves separately. The branches may be hundreds in number; nevertheless, hundreds of branches and leaves will be taken care of very effectively by watering and manuring one single thing, which is the root of the tree. The multitudinous variety and the diversity of this world need not worry you provided you know the root, and *that* you take care of. The world will be taken care of automatically, as the root will take care of all the branches and the leaves and fruits.

“God first, the world next, yourself last.” This is what Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to say—the cause first, the effect afterwards. God was first; the world came afterwards and you are the last one, so you cannot place yourself in the position of the first. The first is the largest, inclusive of what is produced, and inclusive of yourself. Meditation is our duty. It is not something that you are doing as an occupation; it is the art of being yourself. Nothing can be more profitable for a person than to be one’s own self. “To thine own self be true.” To be true to everything else except to your own self, is not of any avail.

Larry: Is there a thought that I can concentrate on, or something I can. . .

Swamiji: You can concentrate on God, wherever God be, according to you. God is somewhere, and on that you meditate. Each one has to choose one’s own point of concentration according to one’s understanding and predilection. Some say He is inside, some say He is outside, some say He is everywhere. Let it be whatever it is. Your definition is for your meditation. Did I give you a book on Self-realisation, last time?

Larry: Yes.

Swamiji: Did you read it?

Larry: Yes, at the time, I read it.

Swamiji: You might not remember all things mentioned there, because every question that you are raising to me I have answered there to some extent. If you read it again, you will find the answer to every question of yours.

Larry: I find that it is important to go over it, and go over it.

Swamiji: You have to read it again and again. It is a concentrated stuff.

Larry: Even when I hear an answer, I need to repeat the answer and hear it again and again.

Swamiji: If you read that book again and again, you will find that most of the things will be clear to you. It is an in-depth analysis of consciousness itself.

Larry: I am trying to understand now what Cosmic Will is.

Swamiji: Cosmic Will? It is the function of Cosmic Existence. Consciousness of existence is what you may call 'will', if you like. The Universal Existence is conscious that it is existing, and that consciousness of its existence you may call by any name you like. You may call it 'will'. Will is only an affirmation of consciousness. You may call it 'Cosmic Will', if you like, because it is Cosmic Consciousness.

Larry: Cosmic Consciousness has taken this form of the universe—the form of the world?

Swamiji: Without losing itself it has taken this shape. It has not become, as milk becomes yogurt. It has become, as a solid stone becomes a statue. The stone has not become the statue, but it has all the patterns of the statue inside it. The statues are not there, but yet they are there, because any statue can be carved from a block of stone. Likewise, in the Absolute there is no world, and no form, and yet, you can say everything is there. A potful of ink has all the pictures inside it, though there is no picture in the ink. Both ways can be said in regard to the ink. There are no statues in a stone, and no pictures in ink; and yet they are there.

Larry: Yesterday you said that ultimately we all move towards the Absolute, that this whole life is a process of evolution towards the Absolute. I am trying to understand why the process began in such a way.

Swamiji: Again you are asking the same question, "Why?" Don't use the word 'why' in future. You only ask, "How?" "How can I reach that state?" you ask me. Do not say, "Why, why, why?" I have told you many times, this 'why' cannot arise. You are finding the cause in the effect—impossible.

Larry: I am trying to understand the cause of it.

Swamiji: There is no such thing as a cause unless there is a visible effect. You have got an idea that every effect has a cause, but it is only an empirical way of the thinking of consciousness caught up in space and time. There is no such thing as cause and effect; it is one indivisible mass. You will get the answer automatically, as the answer to the dream when you wake up. When you wake up, you get the answer to the dream. Before waking up, why do you put questions? Wake up first. Then you will not have to bother about asking questions. You will never ask me any question regarding the dream that you had yesterday, because it is clear to you already. Now you are already inside the dream, and you are asking questions. My suggestion is that you wake up first, and then you will find your answer. This waking takes place when you become the very object you are seeking.

Our duty is to move practically in the direction of realisation and not unnecessarily ask, "Why should we move, why have we come?" That question you cannot answer and you need not answer. As you move onward, the questions will be answered gradually, stage by stage. The light will dawn so intensely that at every step you will find an answer coming from within yourself. The question is the actual practice.

Larry: So there was a cause, but not in the sense that we understand it.

Swamiji: Yes, yes, it is a cause only in a theoretical sense. God does not cause anything. He just is what He is. But from our point of view, it looks that all this causation is taking place. Our work is to do something practically, and be at it—and every moment you will find some answer coming to you from within. The horizon will go on becoming brighter and brighter.

Larry: So there is no time and no space in reality, either? It just is.

Swamiji: It is just what it is. The great word “I-am-what-I-am” is the final truth, and nothing more can be said about it.

Sarah: That one is to move towards God, one is to move towards the Absolute, to merge with the Absolute—how do you know that’s not just part of the dream, the illusion in this dream?

Swamiji: It is a part of the dream only—perfectly right. Even your movement towards the Absolute is a part of the dream, but there are dreams that can cut off a dream. One dream can sever another dream, just as when you are dreaming that there is a tiger jumping on you, you will wake up from the dream because of the tiger jumping on you. The tiger is a dream object, and your feeling fear of the tiger also is a dream object, yet that tiger-dream has woken you up by the fright. The false tiger has ended the false dream and created a real waking.

The Guru is like the tiger in a dream; the disciple is the dreamer. Both are within the dream only, and yet one is the tiger and another is the person dreaming. The growling of the tiger, though it is also only a part of the dream, can wake you up by the fright of it. So, there are two kinds of dream: that which will help you in waking from the dream, and that which will make you enter the dream and be there only. You are perfectly right. The entire process is only within the dream, it is not outside; and yet there is a point in it. There are two categories of dream—that which continues the

dream and another which ends the dream. Your practice of *sadhana*, meditation, is like a tiger, though it is also a part of the dream.

Sarah: I see sometimes that the desire for God can't be as strong as desire for a car, or for anything.

Swamiji: That is because you don't understand what God is. Your understanding of God is so poor that you are unable to get attracted to it. If you give a gold necklace to a cow, will it be really happy to put it on its neck? It only wants grass. What do you say? Now which is better, grass or a gold necklace? The appreciation of the value of it is dependent upon your comprehension of what that substance is. Our understanding of the car is more clear than our understanding of God; the car is a solid, tangible substance and you can sit in it, whereas you cannot sit in God, which looks like a mere thought. But the reverse is the case: the car is the thought actually; the reality is God only. To understand that, active effort is necessary on your part to decondition yourself from the conditioned effects under whose weight you are thinking generally. All our thoughts are deeply conditioned, and you have to decondition yourself with sufficient effort. The invisible is the real; the visible is not the real.

Sarah: What is the meaning of prayer? Is it not meaningless?

Swamiji: Prayer? Prayer is an affirmation of consciousness for rousing itself to a dimension higher than its own self. You are mentally asking for something that is more than what you are. You may call it God, or anything you like. An aspiration or an affirmation of a longing, an aspiration for something larger than you, greater than you—that is your prayer, which you may express in words or merely by thought. Either way it is effective.

Sarah: And is it that the higher self is God, or that is still not the level of God?

Swamiji: Yes, you can call it God. Anything that is higher than you is a manifestation of God, in some degree; there are levels of God-experience.

Sarah: But does that higher self not also have prayers, and have a higher self protecting it?

Swamiji: The higher self will pray for a self that is still higher. There are various degrees of this self-manifestation.

Sarah: And does it go ultimately to the Absolute or is there a break—is there something significantly different before there is a break?

Swamiji: No. There is no question of breaking. It gradually rises from the lower whole to the higher whole until it reaches the Absolute Whole. Then there is no further prayer, and all that. It ceases in All-ness.

Sarah: And let us say my higher self—what is the conditioning of my higher self? The higher self that has no body?

Swamiji: There are various higher selves—not one. Your mental self is higher than your physical self, your intellectual self is higher than your mental self, your spiritual self is higher than your intellectual self, and the Absolute Self is still greater than all these lower selves—yet they are all degrees of yourself only. You yourself are rising, rung by rung, on the ladder of evolution, upward. You are climbing on your own shoulders, gradually.

Sarah: And a soul, higher self, ten rungs above me (just to give an example, ten), what is it that stops it from being on the hundredth rung?

Swamiji: Yes; many, many rungs are there. The cessation is the reaching of the infinitude of it, because beyond the Infinite nothing can be. When you reach the endlessness of that dimension, it stops because nothing can be beyond endlessness. That is what you call the Absolute, and there the evolution ceases, as the river stops moving when it reaches

the ocean. What stops the lower from rising to the higher is the feeling of self-sufficiency of the lower.

Sarah: Is it gradual, or is there a point that it is then ocean?

Swamiji: It is gradual—very spontaneous and gradual, not an abrupt movement.

Sarah: And going the other way down? How can the Absolute, which is so infinite, even going down, down, down, down—how can it come down to this physical body?

Swamiji: It does not actually come down—it looks as if it is coming down. As I told you in an analogy, the block of stone does not become a statue, and it does not come down to the level of a statue. There is no statue inside it, but it can be imagined to contain all the statues, and in that sense you may say it has come down to the level of the statue. The stone never becomes a statue; yet, you can imagine all the statues inside it. The Absolute has never become things, but you can imagine that it has become, because all the potentialities of becoming are in it. It never becomes anything, because what 'becomes' is perishable.

Sarah: Then how can we go up?

Swamiji: The going up is also a part of the conceptual process, comparable to dream. Actually the process does not exist at all. It doesn't take place, but your consciousness is involved in such a peculiar form of network that it looks as if there is a gradual movement. As I told you, there is neither a tiger in dream, nor the man who sees the dream, and yet it looks as if there are two things. The whole process is a play of consciousness, appearing solidly real at every stage, because consciousness is also existence.

Larry: If the analogy of the stone containing all the statues is used, then even when one wakes up, by necessity, the dreamer must still be in the stone. The dreamer must always be dreaming.

Swamiji: "When one wakes up" means what? Who wakes up?

Larry: The Absolute wakes up.

Swamiji: It will never dream again, once there is the waking; that is what the scriptures say. The dream will end forever. If you say that It again dreams, then you are bringing in the question of cause and effect, that It is going to cause something to become the effect. That It has caused an effect is a conceptional necessity. In the Absolute, the concept of cause ceases, and it will never take place again.

That there is a possibility of its coming up again is a thought that arises in the bound mind because you have decided that it has already taken place. It is an involvement in the mind due to the feeling that a cause is already there, and that, once again, it can take place, but the point is that it was not there, and so it will not be there. The causal relation is the direct corollary of the very structural pattern of all thinking, the very law of phenomenal perception.

Larry: So, if it is not there, it is not there now, either?

Swamiji: It is not there even now, but you cannot accommodate yourself to that thought; therefore, you have to move through the process of imagining that there is a cause. You have to accept that there is a tiger, as in dream perception. It will cause your waking, though it is not there finally. You can gain assistance from even non-existent things, provided that you believe that they are existing there, as in the case of an x in a mathematical equation.

Larry: But to suggest that one will wake up means a continuance of time—means change.

Swamiji: The waking up is a part of your process in time only, but time negates itself when it reaches infinitude; then the dream vanishes. The process of time will cease when it reaches All-ness. That is why I am saying that your meditation should be on an infinitude of consciousness, so that the time process will cease and a timeless experience ensues.

Larry: Then, there never was a world.

Swamiji: There never was a world, and there can never be one. It is difficult to reach God. It is grand to hear all these things, though it appears to be so difficult. You will find finally that there is nothing so difficult as God-experience, and yet nothing so simple as attainment. In a trice you will understand what it is. It is simple because it is yourself, and it is also difficult because it is yourself. Nobody can be so difficult as yourself. Everybody else is simple; you are the difficult thing. The nearer is a thing to you, the more difficult it becomes to comprehend. You can understand the stars and the moon and all these, astronomically, but you cannot understand yourself because of the absence of distance between that which knows and that which is known. It is a quandary that you yourself are a problem and yet you cannot be a problem to yourself.

Larry: If one person wakes up...

Swamiji: There is no question of one person. When you wake up from a dream, all the friends that you saw in the dream also have woken up. They are not sitting there separately in your erstwhile dream, once you are awake.

Larry: Yesterday, you said that we are all like drops in the ocean.

Swamiji: Yes; all those friends that you saw in dream, you may consider are in the ocean of your dream.

Larry: But then that is my question: Is the ocean only in my mind? Or is it there by itself?

Swamiji: There is no question of *my* mind. Who was it that was dreaming that there are many people? Was it the friend's mind dreaming or you are dreaming?

Larry: I am dreaming.

Swamiji: What about that friend's mind, who also saw a friend in the dream? Do you think he has no mind? Or he may be dreaming that you are dreaming him!

Larry: No, I imagined him to have a mind.

Swamiji: Why don't you think that he is imagining you? He is as real as you are.

Larry: Because it is my dream.

Swamiji: It may be his dream! You may be in his dream.

Larry: That is what I mean. So, if he is a separate drop in the ocean. . .

Swamiji: Actually, the dreamer is neither *your* mind nor *his* mind. It is something collective—a total mind, which includes both you and others. It is not your mind that is dreaming, nor the mind of the person who you are seeing. It is something connecting all things put together, including the mountains, etc. There is a total mind, an all-mind working, whether in dream or waking. All thought is a gestalt, a total.

Larry: Then, it is not a question of *me* waking up; it's a question of the Absolute waking up.

Swamiji: It is not 'me' in the sense of 'one' person. It is a total mind waking up continuously, and all that you see there is within the total framework, including the dreamer. It is a holistic rising, not one single individual separately waking.

Larry: Then, the effort that I make to wake up is...

Swamiji: This 'I' is a tricky word that you are using, for it can mean many things.

Larry: All right, the effort that my ego...

Swamiji: No; even when you say 'ego', carefully you have to use that word. Your ego is not sitting inside your body. It has already touched that about which you are talking, and it is connected with that which you are seeing with your eyes, and it is inseparable from that which you are knowing when

you are speaking, so that you cannot say that your ego is inside the body. If it were inside the body, it could not even know that there is something outside it. So, even in ordinary language, in common parlance, there seems to be a mistake that one is making in thinking that the ego is within oneself. If it is totally inside, how will you know that there is something outside? It is not just inside; it is outside also to the extent of the location of that which it is thinking or knowing. Even now you are outside yourself, without which phenomenon you would not know that there is a thing outside you.

Larry: Am I not, is my ego not, aware that there is something outside of myself because of the senses?

Swamiji: The ego is unconsciously connected to all things that it knows, but consciously it feels that it is only inside the body. There are levels of mind, conscious and unconscious, both. If it is totally inside, you will be locked up within the prison of your body, and you will not know that you have even your skin.

Larry: So if one drop in the ocean has...

Swamiji: Actually (unfortunately!) the drop is connected to all other drops in the ocean. So, anything happening to one drop will be like happening to all the drops together. They are not isolated drops. Again, it is a holistic totality.

Larry: So if one person achieves God-awareness...

Swamiji: The idea—one person, many persons—will not arise. The Cosmic Mind wakes up when you reach God. There is only one mind operating in the whole universe. There are not many minds. It is not you that reaches God; it is the Cosmic Being that attains God-universality. The idea of 'you' and 'I' is to be transcended.

Larry: But some saints and sages have achieved this knowledge, this realisation.

Swamiji: This is because you are still thinking from the point of view of an isolated human being, and not from the point of view of that which they have reached. They will not see the world afterwards. It is again the same question of your friends in dream imagining that one man has gone up to waking and others are still in dream only. You have woken up from dream, but the friends that you saw in dream, are they still there having lunch? Is it like that? They have also gone with you. A very complicated involvement of the mind is all this, hard to think in a casual manner.

Larry: Very entertaining!

Swamiji: I think now we shall not talk much on this subject, because these people seated here may go crazy afterwards, not being able to swallow these bitter pills. Let them all have peace of mind. What do you say? Better to maintain peace a little bit. Anyway, you have taken down all this in this recorder. You can hear it again, and that will be good enough.

Larry: Just one point of clarification: If the friends are in my imagination, and so if I imagine a Swami or a saint reaching, achieving, this knowledge, this is only...

Swamiji: That Swami is one of the persons whom you have seen in dream, including yourself as the so-called dreamer. Forget not to think *totally*.

Larry: He is just a dream object.

Swamiji: Yes, that is all. But you, too, though looking like the dreamer, are a dream object to that which is the 'Total Dreamer'. Beware!

Larry: So, are there other drops in the ocean or are there no drops in the ocean?

Swamiji: There are no drops in the ocean. They look like drops. It is a total whole that is acting, the whole ocean thinking itself as all the drops of which it is organically constituted.

Larry: So, there are no friends, there are no dream objects.

Swamiji: Only you yourself are there, inclusive of all things. The Alone goes to the Alone. You are there as the Total Whole of conceptual universality.

Larry: So when I die, when one dies...

Swamiji: When one dies, nothing happens except a push towards self-materialisation. Only when you attain Self-realisation something happens, seriously.

Sarah: What happens?

Swamiji: Dying is an ordinary causal process of effectuation of karma potencies. You will maintain your individuality even after death, but in Self-realisation, individuality will not be maintained. We are now not discussing death, but Self-realisation—the merging of individuality in the Universal Whole. But that merging does not take place in death; the ego continues, the attachment continues, and the rebirth takes place. There is no virtue in dying. It is no good—like waking up from sleep and being the same person every day. There is no purpose served by that, except experience of one's own thoughts and deeds.

Larry: So, the dream does not end when one dies.

Swamiji: Dying has no such meaning. It should be death of the ego-personality, not death of the body merely. The dream ceases in God-realisation, not merely by physical death.

December 12, 1990 p.m.

Larry: Is it possible for you to visit Toronto?

Swamiji: There is nothing impossible in this world, but everything has its own time. It may be now, it may be tomorrow, it may be in far-off eternity; anything is possible. Or, I may come to Toronto in my universal sweep of consciousness. That is also one way of going to Toronto, in a different way. I will have an archetypal travel. Do you know what 'archetypal' is? The archetype is the original of a thing. The original is called the archetype and the shadow of it—the reflection, or image of it—is sometimes called the prototype. Often people consider the prototype as the original, but inasmuch as the archetype is to be considered as the original, you may regard the reflection of it as the prototype.

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

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

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

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

Larry: So, maybe we will bring Toronto here, then.

Swamiji: What you have said just now is not a joke. Even heaven can come inside this hall, just now. It is not impossible. Anything can be materialised at any place, since everything is everywhere. So, what you have said is a correct statement. You can have infinitude on your palm, in one second, if only you are convinced about it. A Zen master said, "You may enter the whole universe without opening your door." You can enter into the cosmos without opening the shutters of your room. No need of travelling anywhere.

December 13, 1990 a.m.

Larry: I am confused about one thing.

Swamiji: Every day you are confused!

Larry: Yes.

Swamiji: Then how will I rectify it?

Larry: Because, today, I am only a little bit confused—less than yesterday.

Swamiji: You are not listening to me carefully. This is what I understood; otherwise, you will not put the same question the next day after having talked to me one day. Full attention you are not paying. Some little bit you are hearing; somewhere a little is in the background. Anyway, you can talk to me. Yes, please speak.

Larry: Thank you. It is just like I am a stone, and you chisel away a little bit at a time, but it doesn't complete.

Swamiji: All right. Yes. Tell me.

Larry: I understand that there is only one consciousness and the ultimate consciousness is the Absolute; and that everything that has come, this multiplicity, is only that consciousness; and that nothing exists and everything exists—nothing but Him exists, and everything is He; It exists. But only one of the following two statements can be true. One, the illusion or the appearance of the multiplicity is not in my mind alone (my individual mind alone), but is shared with billions of other limited conscious minds; or, that the multiplicity is in my mind alone, and my mind alone exists.

Swamiji: Your mind alone, singly, cannot exist. As I told you in an analogy of dream, the minds of the people whom you see in dream and the mind of the person who is supposed to be seeing the dream—they are all interconnected. It is the total action taking place in dream, and it is not just somebody's mind. It is universal kind of operation.

Larry: It's the Absolute Mind...

Swamiji: You may call it the Absolute. I am just giving the example of dream, that the phenomenon of dream perception is not the action of some individual dreamer there. It is a total dream, including the object that is perceived—because somebody sees the dream and there is a person who is seen in dream. That person who is seen in the dream also sees the other person who sees the dream, so that you cannot know who is seeing the dream; likewise, this is the case of the world. Who created the world? Nobody can say, because it is a total action—neither you, nor somebody else. It is an inclusive action of everything. Nobody is responsible for it independently.

Larry: Then within the dream, all that appears, appears within the mind of the dreamer?

Swamiji: The mind of the *total* dreamer. All action is ‘total’.

Larry: If that is the case, how do you draw practical conclusions about what to do here?

Swamiji: Tell me what is the practical thing. Give me an example.

Larry: I am a dream object, and also a dream subject. And everything and everybody else here is also a dream subject and a dream object.

Swamiji: Yes. What is your problem now?

Larry: Drawing conclusions. Do I spend the rest of my life just sitting and meditating?

Swamiji: Why? Who asked you to sit quiet? Do whatever you like. You may do anything in dream; it matters little to the dream. The dream will continue whether you are a king in the dream or a beggar in the dream, starving in the dream or eating in the dream, or arguing in a court in the dream. It is one substance finally, in spite of the differences of professions, etc. Whether you are a lawyer or a beggar, it makes no difference to the dream, because both are equally harmonised as the basic substance. You can pursue any

occupation in your life, provided that you know that all are interconnected with all things, and each one is as valid as the other or each one is as nonsensical as the other.

Larry: So, whether I am a thief or a saint, it makes no difference?

Swamiji: It makes no difference, if your consciousness is thinking in a 'total fashion'. But if you think as Mr. Krauss, and steal, you will be caught by the police as a thief. You will never become a thief if you think in a total fashion. The idea itself is wrong. You will neither do good nor bad at that time. Relations of every kind get sublimated in what transcends them, even as there are no saints and sinners among the limbs of an organism.

Larry: Well, what does it mean to think in a total fashion?

Swamiji: Total thinking is to think the object of thought also as inseparably involved in the process of thinking. The object is not external to the process. You are thinking something outside, you are seeing something outside you; that you should not do. Neither you should see anything, nor anything should see you. The seer must be that which is between the two. Then there is no question of doing right and wrong. Such dualities get absorbed into a higher whole.

Larry: What difference does it make if I allow myself. . .

Swamiji: It does make a difference. It makes a difference, because you have love and hatred when you see something outside. But when you are in the middle, between the two, you will neither like nor dislike anything. Stand between yourself and the other; you would then be not a human being any more.

Larry: I understand that; but if I am a dream object of the Absolute dreamer and I have no. . .

Swamiji: You must be very careful in making statements. You said that you are an object of the Absolute dreamer. You should not use the words 'object', 'subject', and all that.

Those words should not be used, because you are neither a subject nor an object; you are an integral part of that which is operating as a total function. As you are an integral part, you are not an object; nor are you a subject.

Larry: Yes; but as an integral part of that 'total dream', or reality, or appearance, I have been given free choice, or what appears to be free choice.

Swamiji: By freedom do you mean that you can do whatever you like? Is that what you mean by freedom?

Larry: Yes, within certain limits, I can do whatever I like.

Swamiji: Freedom does not mean doing whatever one likes. Freedom is that state of consciousness that does things in the light of the harmony that it has to maintain between the subject and the object. Otherwise, it could not be freedom. You are free only when moving in right directions. Your consciousness should operate properly. Only then does the question of freedom arise. When you think in terms of one side only, as a subject or an object, the consciousness is not operating integrally. It is weighing heavily on one side of the balance.

Nobody, can think like this. Therefore, it takes infinite time to accommodate oneself to think in this manner—that you are thinking something without actually thinking anything. Thought functions without thinking an object outside it. The thought thinks itself, almost in a total fashion, like the body thinking of both the right hand and the left hand at once. It has no prejudices, no partiality; it is immaterial to the body whether the right hand does one thing or the left hand does something, because *it* is doing it. When the hand lifts something, it is the body that is lifting it, not the hand. So, when you do something, it is the total universe that is working and not Mr. So-and-so. But this consciousness will not be maintained by anybody. It is a very hard job. In one second you will slip into the personality-

consciousness. This is why I said we should meditate regularly.

Larry: There is a universal law, then?

Swamiji: The universal law is the only law operating anywhere.

Larry: If I think like a subject and allow myself to treat others as objects, that will correct itself, I suppose.

Swamiji: It will rectify itself by a reaction set up. The total universe will set up a reaction in respect of that which is thinking in an objective fashion. That is what they call kama (desire), karma (action), and all that. What you call karma and nemesis of action is nothing but the reaction of the total whole in respect of that which is not cooperating with it.

Sarah: So if one has the right consciousness, one creates no karma?

Swamiji: Karma is only a reaction generated by the whole in respect of the part that is not organically related to it. Else, there would be no karma.

Larry: My purpose in this world, then, is to live within the universal law.

Swamiji: Certainly. Absolutely so. You will be perfectly safe and happy. No problem will arise.

Larry: Does it matter which religion I practise?

Swamiji: What you are talking to me just now is the religion. What name you give to it is up to you. We are talking only religion; we speak nothing else, and yet we are not talking of any one religion. What we have been talking just now is nothing but the highest religion, and yet it has no connection with any particular religion which people are practising outwardly. This transcends all the so-called denominational religions.

Larry: How can an individual, then, know what keeps things in balance? If I eat a carrot, for example, I have pulled that carrot from the ground. . .

Swamiji: You must know that *you yourself* are the carrot. You have not eaten the carrot. That idea must go. It is not that the carrot is eaten by somebody. That somebody and the carrot are both eaten by something between the two. Again we are coming to the same point. The eater is that which is between the so-called eater and the eaten.

Larry: So, then, how can I know if there is a balance in my action?

Swamiji: You can know to what extent you are personality-conscious, and to what extent you are carrot-conscious. To the extent you are personality-conscious or carrot-conscious, to that extent you are not in balance.

Larry: In other words, if I am either in the subject or the object, I am not in balance.

Swamiji: Yes, right. The eater and the eaten are clubbed together by another thing altogether, which is the real eater, if at all you can call it so. The eater and the eaten are both present in another thing, which is the real eater, or consumer.

Larry: The real eater! And we can only know that once we have reached a certain level of meditation.

Swamiji: Yes.

Larry: So, when there is evil in the world, and pain and suffering, that is the...

Swamiji: You are raising a question that is not relevant to the point. The balance state spoken of rises above the notions of good and evil, naturally.

Larry: But it is the imbalance that causes such perception.

Swamiji: Perception is a wrong way of looking at things. You are again jumping into the subjective side and objective side while saying this. You are not in the middle—you are on one side of the balance.

Larry: I am trying to understand. Evil, then, is somebody thinking like a subject and an object.

Swamiji: Evil or good, or whatever it is, is a value that we attach to something by segregating ourselves from it. You dread a snake, but the snake does not dread itself. If the snake is a dreadful thing, it will be dreadful to itself, also. It cannot live for one second because of the fear of itself. You have objectified it and, therefore, it looks evil, isolated from your subjectively structured organism of personality.

Larry: So, there is no evil; there is only imbalance.

Swamiji: The imbalance itself is the evil.

Larry: The imbalance is the evil. So Hitler, for example, was not the evil; the imbalance he created was the evil.

Swamiji: That imbalance is the evil, which opposed what is other than itself.

Larry: And when the armies came in and fought...

Swamiji: Whatever it is, even if the army comes, it has acted for creating a balance which has been lost between two terms of a relation.

Larry: So, is it a positive thing to restore a balance?

Swamiji: Every moment you have to restore a balance, in some way, appropriately. You have no other duty in this world except maintaining balance, internally as well as externally.

Larry: So, if I see something out of balance and I take action to restore it...

Swamiji: You can take action only in the sense of maintaining the balance, but your action should not create another

imbalance. That you must be very careful about. Do not act by taking one side of the issue.

Larry: The dreamer, the Absolute dreamer, does not do any action, does not interfere in the dream itself, when it is out of balance?

Swamiji: The Absolute is not out of balance, because It is the 'Total' above both the percipient and the perceived.

Larry: In other words, when there is a world war like World War II...

Swamiji: A world war can take place in dream also, and it is taking place within the total action of the mind that dreams. A person has a high temperature, he has got stomach trouble, and he has a headache. These three different things are taking place in a person, and yet it is one thing that is taking place in the whole organism in three different phases. Whether war takes place or anything takes place, it is one action in the total perception.

Larry: You are saying that there is only one action taking place in the dream, not two or three actions.

Swamiji: One action takes place not only in dream but even in waking. There is only one action taking place in the whole universe, even just now. Only 'one person' is doing all things. There is only One Person in the universe.

Larry: When it appears that I do an action to restore a balance...

Swamiji: Then you are making a mistake, by isolating yourself as a 'doer'.

Larry: It is not me that is doing the action?

Swamiji: No.

Larry: So, I do not have any free will.

Swamiji: Your free will is only to the extent you are united with the Total—not independently as a person. You cannot be wholly free as an individual person.

Larry: Do I choose to be united with the Total or not to be united with the Total? Is there a choice in that?

Swamiji: You have no such choice, individually. Your duty is to be conscious that you are a part of It. There is no other choice for you except to be sure that you are involved in the Total.

Larry: Do I have a choice in choosing to be conscious?

Swamiji: Tomorrow the leg will start thinking, “I am independent of the body.” Do you think it has a freedom of choice like that?

Larry: No.

Swamiji: Will the leg say, “I will go to that side”? It cannot have a choice like that. It is a part of the body. It has to obey the law of the organism.

Larry: Do I have a choice in choosing to meditate or not to meditate?

Swamiji: Meditation also is a total action of the total mind, and not of Mr. So-and-so meditating. It is not some subject meditating on an object. It is the total mind trying to become conscious of itself. That is meditation, where the ‘middle one’ is the real meditator.

Larry: If I as an individual choose to meditate, I really have not chosen to meditate? It is the total mind that has chosen to cause me to meditate?

Swamiji: The total mind; yes.

Larry: When you are telling me to meditate...

Swamiji: I am not telling in the sense you are perhaps seeing.

Larry: It is the total mind influencing...

Swamiji: It is the total mind talking to itself, in a way.

Larry: And when I have an independent thought, it is not independent. In other words, if I decide not to meditate, it is the total mind . . .

Swamiji: Even if you do that, it is the total mind deciding it for some reason.

Larry: And is there any purpose to the Total Mind trying to maintain its balance?

Swamiji: No purpose standing outside. Existence has no purpose; it just is. One does not exist for some other purpose. The purpose is to exist only. Existence is not having another purpose behind it, or beyond it. Everything has a purpose towards existence. Existence is final, and that itself cannot have another purpose beyond it. Everything is; and that is all.

Larry: So, when Hitler began a war, it was not his action.

Swamiji: It was not his action, no doubt; but he was still thinking that it was his action. His feeling undid the whole thing. Actually a whole world-process was taking place in the organism of history.

Larry: It was his action, but it was really not his action.

Swamiji: Ultimately it was not his, but yet he felt it was his, and so he paid for it. It is your feeling that binds you or frees you. It is not the action that you do that is important. Your feeling connected with that action is important—your feeling that you are doing it. When you feel that *you* are doing it, you are responsible for it. Your consciousness is your bondage. Your action is not the point.

Larry: Even my feeling that I am responsible for something or that I did something—is that my feeling, or is it the Total feeling?

Swamiji: The Total feeling has gone completely even as your conscious awareness of your being So-and-so stultifies it.

Though it is there, it is temporarily suspended. You can become a butterfly in a dream, though you have not *become* a butterfly. The Mr. Krauss consciousness has been submerged by the butterfly consciousness in spite of the fact that it has really not taken place. This is what is happening to us. Really you may be anything; that is a different matter altogether. But your affirmation at present is what is important.

Larry: But is it *my* affirmation, or is it...

Swamiji: That also is the Total only, in fact.

Larry: Any feeling is the Total feeling, is the feeling of the Absolute?

Swamiji: Yes, in fact, and finally.

Larry: Hitler suffered for his actions.

Swamiji: He never was conscious of the Total. That is why he was struggling, which was a battle against truth.

Larry: He struggled and he suffered for his action.

Swamiji: If he had the consciousness of the Total, he would have kept quiet without doing anything. There was no need to do anything, actually, except as a world-spirit operating towards an evolution of a higher order.

Larry: When he suffered, was it not the Total also suffering?

Swamiji: The Total does not suffer. It is the individual that feels, experiences joy or sorrow.

Larry: Was his suffering outside?

Swamiji: If the finger is cut off by a surgeon, do you say that the body is suffering, or it is happy? If it is a suffering, one will not go to the surgeon at all. It is a happy thing even if the limb is severed.

Larry: If the finger was sick, you mean.

Swamiji: Yes. Even surgery is a happy thing, though you are losing a part of your body. Otherwise, who will go to the

doctor? Even if you lose two legs, it is only a joy to you. You cannot call it suffering, because it was a necessary surgery.

Larry: If you have gangrene.

Swamiji: Whatever it be. Otherwise, who will go to the surgeon? You cannot call it a suffering. Just because some loss has taken place from your point of view, it cannot be called pain. You may lose something and yet you can be happy for other reasons.

Larry: When we talk about the Total, nothing can be lost.

Swamiji: The Total does not suffer. It has no pain, and no joy. It has not done anything; therefore, the question of suffering does not arise in Its case.

Larry: How is it possible for the individual to suffer?

Swamiji: That is exactly like the moth-consciousness of a dreamer. How did a Mr. So-and-so become a moth in dream? And you may call it a suffering if you like. The man has become a moth or a butterfly in dream. How did it happen? Do you call it a suffering or a joy? You cannot use such ethical mandates with regard to a scientific phenomenon. Nothing is good, nothing is bad, nothing is a pleasure, nothing is a pain to the All. Such things do not exist for the world. You are giving names to certain phenomena that are taking place almost in a mathematical fashion.

There is no such thing as joy and sorrow except as reactions to circumstance. It is only your assessment from your particular point of view. When you change the point of view, pain can look like joy or joy can look like pain. There is no such thing as absolute pain, no such thing as pure joy, also. It is only a point of view that you are emphasising at certain times. Things do not exist by themselves.

Larry: So, people in a gas chamber in World War II—they did not suffer?

Swamiji: Gas chamber, or whatever it is. They suffered because their consciousness was tied to the body. Suppose they were in some other consciousness which was outside the body; they would not feel the pain—for example, a corpse does not feel pain.

Larry: But the Absolute dreamer tied their consciousnesses to their body.

Swamiji: He did not do anything. Again, you are imputing something to the Total, which has no adjective or adjunct.

Larry: How is it that the consciousness is tied to the body?

Swamiji: You should not put questions like 'how', and all that. You are again putting the same question, why it has taken place. Until the effect returns to the cause, it can have no answer.

Larry: Nonetheless, those people whose consciousnesses were tied to their bodies, they suffered.

Swamiji: Naturally, they will suffer because the body is limited. When the consciousness is absolved from the body, they will not feel pain. People throw corpses to the Ganga, which do not feel the pain of drowning. The consciousness is the cause of pain, not the action itself, or the temporal event.

Larry: Then, does not the Total consciousness. . .

Swamiji: The Total consciousness does not suffer or enjoy. It just is Itself.

Larry: It does not experience the suffering of the individual consciousness?

Swamiji: No, it cannot suffer, because in the Total the tree that is cut and also the axe that is cutting are both of the same force. There is no question of somebody feeling something. It is like the right hand hitting the left hand and you cannot know who is hitting whom.

Larry: A child that is seven or eight years old that has not had the opportunity to. . .

Swamiji: There is no such thing as child and all that for the Total. Such a thing does not exist to It.

Larry: But in terms of the individual?

Swamiji: Why are you talking of 'individual' now? You should brush aside these ideas from the mind. We are here trying to rectify our thoughts, not affirming the old thought again and again.

Larry: That is me as an adult.

Swamiji: No adult! You are not an adult even. You are one pressure point in the cosmic force which is intense sometimes and less intense at other times. When it is intense, you call it an adult; when it is less intense, you call it a child. Really, there is no such thing as child or adult. They are only two pressure points of electric energy, or whatever you call it. We think only in human terms, but now we must try to think in cosmic terms.

December 13, 1990 p.m.

Sarah: In this life, in this world as I see it, in a limited consciousness (I recognise that), it is so hard just to tell the truth, and to earn a living, and to know how to be a good wife or husband, and how to act with love. It seems to me like that is the work that God has put in front of me. That is the work. It is right on my plate, it is right in front of me. But to always be in meditation—how do I know that is not...

Swamiji: What is your question? You have told so many things together.

Sarah: It seems to me that the work God gives you is right in front of you.

Swamiji: Whether God gives you or you have chosen—whatever it is, what is the trouble with the work?

Sarah: Because it seems here that it is suggested to remove yourself from that reality—to see that it is just a dream—earning a living included.

Swamiji: Just because it is a dream in its structural pattern, it does not mean that it is unreal. Dream also is a reality, because you can see it. Dream is not an unreal phenomenon; it is a real thing. Only it differs from waking in the degree of consciousness. You cannot ignore it as if it is not there; it is there. Even an illusion is a reality as long as you see it and trust it. If it is totally meaningless, why are you worried about it? A dream is unreal only when you wake up; when you are actually dreaming, it is not unreal. It is real—you can feel hungry, you can feel thirsty in dream. Why do you call it unreal? Anything that is experienced in consciousness is real to that extent and at that time.

You should not mix up two issues. You are contrasting two situations, but you should not compare and contrast anything. Each thing should be taken by itself. Why do you compare dream with waking? When it is experienced, it is there. Anything that you perceive is a reality; if it were not real, you would not perceive it. Why do you call it dream? You compare it with waking and then make a statement like

that. You are not supposed to compare anything. Your experience is valid for you, though it is unreal from another point of view. Your problem is a very real problem, though for me it may look like a silly thing. So, you should not compare. The word 'dream' does not imply unreality; it only implies that it is a condition that is transcended by another condition. The word 'dream' is used only to explain that this subject is transcended by another experience. It does not imply that it is not existing. It does exist; and as long as it is existing in your consciousness, it is a reality for you and it will have its impact upon you. So, don't call it dream and all that and then imagine that it has no substance. If you think that it has no substance, then your existence also has no substance, because you are also a part of the universal inter-relatedness of everything.

You have made a little mistake in the judgement. You are considering yourself as a reality and the perceived world as a dream. But you forget that you are also gone with it. If you are gone with the dream, then where is the problem for you? You have made a mistake in thinking that you are the real person and the world is unreal. But, it is not so. If the world is unreal, you in it are also unreal equally. Then whose problem are you discussing? The problem also becomes unreal. There is a mix-up of thought. Don't say 'dream'. It is a reality for you when you are in it, and its laws apply to you fully.

Sarah: And what about the goal?

Swamiji: Now, let it be. You are asking theoretical questions. You must be having some practical problem. Are you asking an academic question or you have got some real problem in your life?

Sarah: I spend a lot of time meditating...

Swamiji: Forget the meditation business. In your daily life of your work, have you any problem, or are you a happy person? I thought you are asking a question regarding your daily involvement.

Sarah: It is so much my daily life! This is the biggest question of my life.

Swamiji: Have you any problem, or are you happy always?

Sarah: I have been a happy person a lot, but now I am so troubled by the inability of myself to gain any wisdom.

Swamiji: Speak slowly. The inability to?

Sarah: To gain any wisdom.

Swamiji: Why are you worrying about wisdom? Just let the wisdom go. In what way are you affected by that in your daily life? You have enough wisdom to get on in life. In what way are you lacking it? I am asking, what problem you have. What suffering are you undergoing in your daily life, in your occupation, in your work, in your getting on, in your dealings, etc.? Or, you are quite all right—no problem?

Sarah: Well, thank God, in general things are good. I have enough to eat...

Swamiji: Then what is your question?

Sarah: Why is it there is something so dense, so ignorant? I feel so ignorant.

Swamiji: In what way are you ignorant?

Sarah: I do not see God as everything.

Swamiji: You will see it by gradual education. Why do people go to school? In order that they may get educated. And after ten years of study, their knowledge increases; then they understand things better. You have to undergo that education. You are on the way to it and when your understanding is complete by a training process, you will see things as you ought to see. How will you see it in the first step itself—in the beginning? You are in kindergarten, primary school, and suddenly you say, "I want to know everything." You have to take enough time to undergo the necessary training. In due course, everything will come.

Sarah: And just living life as it presents itself to me is the training?

Swamiji: Training does not mean simply existing. Training is the process of undergoing a curriculum of studies which implies an adjustment of consciousness. Education is an adjustment of consciousness which is assisted by a curriculum of studies under a competent guide; otherwise, you will not be able to think correctly. If you can think in an educational fashion correctly at your home, you need not go to the school at all. At school the atmosphere is disciplined and streamlined in a particular manner; you are forced to think in a given way whereas in the house you can think as you like. So, you are asking me, "Is it all right if I just live as I am living?" No, it is not all right. Now you are living in a home atmosphere where you are free to think whatever you like, but you have to live in an educational atmosphere where you are supposed to think only in the manner you are expected to think. That is called training, which requires guidance. We require guidance, a superior.

Sarah: And that guidance is only in a place like an ashram?

Swamiji: Ashram or no ashram—some person is necessary to guide you, unless you do not require a guide and things are clear to you already.

Sarah: And you do not think the mistakes and the consequences that we are seeing in our life are enough to be a guide? One makes a mistake, and it becomes obvious.

Swamiji: No, that is called the trial and error method. That is not the educational way. You fall into a pit and then realise that you should not fall into a pit; but why should you fall into the pit if you can avoid it? Trial and error is not the educational system. Otherwise, everybody may learn by falling down and breaking their legs and then suffering. Education is the art of seeing that you do not unnecessarily get into trouble, instead of getting into the trouble and then

learning a lesson thereby. To be healthy, it is not necessary to have an illness first.

However much trouble you undergo in life, you will never understand the wisdom of life, because the troubles are so many in the world that you cannot exhaust them in one life. Learning is not done by merely trial and error; it is by an internal discipline that is called education. It requires a guide; by oneself one cannot. So much we have been discussing here in the last one or two days. You have never heard such a thing in your life anywhere; and if you go to a marketplace will anybody talk like this? That is the difference between a disciplined atmosphere and a free atmosphere. This way in which we have been thinking in the last few days, you will never find people thinking anywhere in the world. No problem is there for them—everything is fine.

Constant company in *satsanga* (*satsanga* is company of the wise and the good) is very important. As much as possible, you must be in the company of the wise and the good, and if every day it is not possible to be in such company, occasionally at least you must resort to places where such training is possible. If nothing is possible, then you sit quiet and pray to God Almighty. He will illumine you and bring some light from inside. God knows your problems and He will remove them by your sincerely asking for it.

Sarah: And that is not just an egotistical desire, to want that?

Swamiji: Wanting God is not an egotistical desire. God is not an ego and, therefore, wanting a non-ego cannot be called an egotistical desire. The ego cannot want a non-ego. It is not possible. The ego wants an ego only, but God is not an ego, and so wanting God is not an egoistic desire; it is a non-egoistic asking. It is not desire; it is aspiration, as we call it. It is a desire to melt the ego, and so the opposite is the case. Asking for God is the desire to melt the ego. It is like a ball of ice standing before the sunlight. It cannot stand there and live. The ego cannot stand before God, or God-men.

Sarah: I want to ask you some questions.

Swamiji: Yes, you may ask.

Sarah: In Judaism, there is an idea that God makes contracts and pacts. What does that mean?

Swamiji: Covenants. In the Old Testament there are plenty of covenants mentioned. Covenant means an agreement with God.

Sarah: But, if He is Absolute, how can there be a covenant?

Swamiji: The Jews do not believe in God as the Absolute. He is, to them, a Transcendent Being. He is above the world, and, therefore, you can contact Him as you contact anybody in the world. The extra-cosmic transcendence of God is the concept of God in all Semitic religions. It is so in Judaism, in Christianity, in Islam, in Zoroastrianism, which are the four Semitic religions. Each one considers God as extra-cosmic, which means to say, above the universe; therefore, you can have your agreement, contract, prayer or covenant, whatever you call it. You can approach a big boss and have some kind of understanding with him. God looks like a boss because of this transcendence beyond the universe. You pray to God, looking up to the skies. Why do you look up to the skies when you pray to God? You have a feeling that he is not in this world. He is above and is not here.

But there is nothing wrong with it; it is one stage of religion. In this stage of religion, God is envisaged as a transcendent extra-cosmic power to which you can look for help by surrender, devotion and submission. But that is not the only meaning of religion. There other stages where the distance between man and God diminishes. In this concept of the transcendence of the God as an extra-cosmic reality, there are a lot of distances. You do not know how far God is—there is an endless distance in space and time. Afterwards, the distance becomes less and less in the acceptance of God, not merely as a Transcendent Being but also as immanent in all creation, right here and now.

God is not so far as you imagined Him to be earlier. He is also near; He is present in every atom. That is the second stage of religion. The third stage is where you yourself cannot be standing there outside Him, because of the all-pervadingness of God. These are the three stages of religion: transcendence, immanence and universality. All the three stages are valid; they are good in their own way. These are developmental stages of an ascent gradually from inadequate concepts to more adequate ones. So, all religions are good. There is nothing wrong with them; they are all different degrees of approach in an ascending order.

Sarah: And the Jews have an idea that they are chosen people, that they are a separate people from the rest of the world. What is the meaning? Why do they even come to that concept?

Swamiji: It is also one stage of thinking. You are a devotee of God, and so you consider non-devotees as not so equal to you. Suppose you are honestly a devotee of God and find others are atheists; don't you think that they are a little inferior to you? Though you are not supposed to think like that, you have somehow a predilection to think that these non-devotee atheists are inferior and you are a superior person. Whether you are justified in thinking like that or not, it is left to you to judge. A holy man thinks that unholy people are damned. Now, is he justified in thinking so? He may be or may not be; it is a point of view. There may be some truth and validity in their feeling that they are chosen people because they are really devoted to God; but whether they are justified in thinking that others are inferior, that is a different matter.

Sarah: But there is no idea that certain people are chosen for certain roles; they are all equal with different roles? Is there any idea of that as truthful?

Swamiji: Everybody has a role to play. It does not mean that one is superior or inferior to the other.

Sarah: But there are different roles?

Swamiji: Different laws and different positions—each one is placed in different positions and stations in life, and from the point of view of the particular station in which you are placed, your work is decided. It does not mean that you are superior or inferior. You are fit for that, and others are fit for another thing. You cannot say that a shopkeeper is superior to the farmer, or a farmer is superior to shopkeeper. They are doing different kinds of occupation in society, meant for the stability of humanity. Nobody is superior, nobody is inferior. So, each one has to play a role according to the circumstances in which one is placed, and there is no question of comparison. Nobody is chosen, actually speaking; everybody is chosen. If all are children of God, who is not chosen—unless you believe that some are not the creation of God?

Sarah: And rituals in religion?

Swamiji: Rituals are very necessary; they are external gestures that you perform to express your inner feelings. Don't you say, "Thank you very much. I shall see you again"? Why do you do this? You can mentally think it, and go away. What is the harm? The gesture helps you in expressing your feelings. Ritual is necessary. Anything that you 'perform' is a ritual, an expression of what you think. What you are is the spirit; what you do is the act, or the ritual.

Sarah: And what about rituals? You know, there is a Jewish rite when you eat special bread, there is circumcision—all different things that are not expressing my feelings.

Swamiji: That is one kind of ritual that must be having its own meaning. It is a feeling they are expressing—a feeling of love for God and worship of God. You can express your devotion and your worshipful feeling towards God by various gestures. It may be bread, it may be banana, it may be anything; it does not matter. All depends on your social circumstance, cultural background, etc. There is nothing wrong in these. Religion has ritual as a part of it. You can't be

totally free from it. Only, if you feel it is not an expression of yourself, it ceases to have relevance to you; you have, then, another ritual.

Sarah: And why is it so hard to love God—to really love God in this world?

Swamiji: Because it is not easy to know what God is. How can you love a thing which you have never seen or thought? You can love that which you see; unseen things, how can you love? That is the problem. We have difficulty in conceiving what God is. That is why the emotions are not going there. That which has a meaning is also an object of love. Meaningless things cannot attract. Know God, first of all.

Sarah: And what is it that is pulling the world away from God? You said that the universe is moving towards the Absolute. But there seems to be a force also in the universe that keeps it from the Absolute. What is it called—entropy—things going down rather than things going up?

Swamiji: That is what we have been discussing all along—what keeps you away from It is the affirmation of the part as an independent whole, though segregated from the whole.

Sarah: By affirming that one is an independent whole is making it stop?

Swamiji: That's right, yes.

Sarah: And that's also stopping loving and moving towards God?

Swamiji: Yes, true. But it will also be reclaimed, and once again, even that which is affirming independence will be defeated by the force of the higher whole. This is what they call the war between the gods and the demons in histories of religions. Have you heard of gods and demons fighting in theological epics?

Sarah: Yes.

Swamiji: These gods and demons are here before us. The demon is the ego, the god is the universal force, and one day it will demolish the demons and the part will be received back like the prodigal son going back, in the story. We are all the prodigal sons, and God will be very kind to us. He is not against us. Even if you are a renegade, God loves you, because, after all, the whole cannot but love the part. The father has to love the prodigal son also because he is a part of the father. Here is one analogy showing that the whole always integrally includes the part and however much you may try to wrench yourself from it, it will take you back, somehow, some day.

Sarah: But it is so hard; it seems so hard!

Swamiji: Because the ego is so hard. It wants to be independent. This is the Lucifer they are talking of in Biblical parlance. He has cut himself off from God, and that is the fall of Satan, and whatever story you have of that kind. We have fallen from that universal whole, and yet there is a hope. There is no eternal damnation, as the part is integrally connected with the whole. Ultimately, there is no damnation. It is going back only, gradually.

Sarah: And to work around the ego? How does one work without it? It seems so strong! It seems to me almost stronger than God, sometimes!

Swamiji: Yes, sometimes it looks stronger than God, but only 'looks', even as the darkness of night may appear to overpower the brightness of the sun.

Sarah: Anything that you can do?

Swamiji: You have already done something by coming to this place. Like that, slowly, it will scrub your ego. Your ego is already scrubbed to a large extent by your being here these few days. Already you are a better person now, don't you think? So, like that, slowly it will be reclaimed. Reaching God takes time. And your honesty of purpose is also a very important factor. You must be sincere in asking for it and

wanting it. You should not take it merely as a theory or an academic question: If it comes, very good; if it doesn't come, that is also good. It should not be like that. "It has to come—and I shall have it!" You are determined for it, and it must come. The only thing that is required is your asking for it: "Ask and it shall be given." It has to be given when you ask, but the asking has to arise from the soul. Your soul has to ask, and it shall be given to you, and it must be given—no doubt about it.

It is easier to receive the grace of God than anything from the marketplace. If you want to get something from the shop, you have to walk some distance. But to reach God, you do not have to travel any distance. Only your heart should well up and want to reach Him. There is no condition and no prescription, no other qualification necessary except that you should want it. And when you want it, it has to come. That's all. No other qualification is necessary for you.

Sarah: But sometimes one feels there is a block. I almost don't even want to reach God.

Swamiji: No block. No one can know what God is and afford not to want it.

Sarah: But I feel sometimes I don't want it. I'd rather eat or do something easier.

Swamiji: Nobody objects to your eating. "Love God, and do whatever you like"—that is an old saying. You can eat jam and biscuit. Nobody objects to that, but under the condition that you love God.

Sarah: But Swamiji, I feel as if there is something that stops me from even wanting God.

Swamiji: The consciousness that some obstacle is there is itself an indication that you cannot be identical with the obstacle. The personality is a hard nut to crack.

Sarah: Then it is not true that there is really an obstacle!

Swamiji: Otherwise, you would not be conscious that it is an obstacle. It is going, slowly. Be happy—no problem. Thick is the darkness of night two hours before sunrise. Even then it vanishes as if it was never there. You cannot imagine that there would be light at all, a few hours before sunrise. So dense is the mass of darkness, but it goes. How it goes, nobody knows, but it is gone. Like that, all these blunders will vanish. The whole thing will go away. You will be surprised that it has gone. Like a nightmare, it will disappear. But you must want it!

Sarah: What I do is I raise money for charities...

Swamiji: You may do whatever you like. Nobody objects to it, provided that your heart is centred in God. And from that point of view, you do whatever work you do in this world.

Sarah: Sometimes, how do I know I am not just wishing that it was in God and making up that this is God, or that it is just ego, an illusion?

Swamiji: Even if you wish that you are wanting God, it is good enough, because God is the reality behind even the ego and the illusions you are referring to. To deny God is to deny oneself.

Sarah: Even if it is just an imaginary idea of what God is, an imaginary idea of what it is to love God?

Swamiji: A sincere affirmation has to materialise itself, certainly. When you want only one thing and nothing else, it is perfectly right. Wanting God means wanting only one thing; you, then, cannot want two things. You can be sure whether it is God that you want or somebody else by whether you really want only that and nothing else. But if you want something else also, it is not God that you are loving. From that, you can find out the genuineness of the asking. Also, God is an all-pervading thing. Are you asking about an all-pervading thing or only a located thing? If you ask for a localised thing, it is not God; if you ask for a universally existing thing, it is God. You please see whether

your asking is for a universally existing being or only some other thing. Thus, you can distinguish between what is, and what is not.

Sarah: And what if I see that it is just a localised thing?

Swamiji: Then it is a mistake. You must not ask for it. You would, then, be asking for a limb of the body and not the whole body.

Sarah: Thank you very much.

Swamiji: There are about eleven religions in this world, what you may call the major religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism, Confucianism and Shintoism. There are minor sects that you need not regard as actual religions. There are subdivisions like Sufism and mystical Christianity. All these have to be studied to understand the multiple patterns of the religious approach of mankind in its struggle to know the Ultimate Reality. All religions are good, but they look very funny when they compare and contrast themselves with others.

The whole point about the religions is that they are like many roads leading to one peak of a mountaintop, where they will all merge into one single spot. If this is accepted, there will be fraternity and brotherly feeling among the religions in the world. But there is an isolated tendency to assert each religion as a complete presentation of reality in itself, which has also the tendency to reject other approaches. Then comes clash and communal skirmish leading to social and political catastrophe. Like many rays of the sun are the many religions in the world. If one ray of the sun were competing with another ray, what would it be like? You have not only to tolerate the validity of another person's approach, but also accept the justifiability of that effort. Merely tolerating in a condescending manner is no good. You are not reluctantly tolerating the viewpoint of some person. That would make you place yourself in a position of superiority.

There is validity in the approach of all. You cannot say that a child is just blabbering nonsense. Rather, it is asking for something that is absolutely necessary for it in the condition in which it is placed at that time. It does not mean that a child is inferior to a genius. Comparison is always odious. Never compare anything and contrast anything. Take everything for what it is.

Larry: Swamiji, what I find so perplexing is that I meet such wise and intelligent people in my own religion and other religions, but I don't...

Swamiji: You are one of them.

Larry: Thank you, Swamiji. But I do not understand why, for example, within my own religion, which I know best, so many of these people feel that only this approach is the correct approach.

Swamiji: That is the whole problem. It is absence of the requisite broadmindedness. Why do you call people 'children of God' if one cannot have any consideration for another?

Larry: They have consideration for others, but they feel that because Moses received the word directly from God, this word is absolutely immutable and is the only expression, for a Jew, of God's will. And my question is, how did that come to be?

Swamiji: This attitude is present in all the religions of the West—namely, the Semitic religions. The transcendence of God, which is their concept of God, cuts off the world from God and converts the world into an evil den of Satan, and the earlier you are rid of it, the better for you. That is why extreme asceticism, monasticism, and things of that kind, and a condemnation of oneself arise. Asceticism often goes to such an extent of self-condemnation that the very existence of oneself is considered as an evil, a fall into the realm of demoniac activities. It is an unfortunate thing to imagine that some people are permanently meant for damnation. Even in India, we have certain theological doctrines of this kind.

There are some concepts, even in India, among certain circles of theology, which very funnily have held that there are certain people who are intended for eternal salvation, and others for eternal purgatory, and a third for eternal damnation. It looks very repugnant to hold views of this kind. Their God creates somebody only for hell, somebody only for heaven, somebody only for a cycle of up and down. God does not create three sections like that. It is a travesty of religious approach to think that God created a world of sin and evil and He stands above it uncontaminated—and, then, the way of getting rid of this involvement in evil in the world becomes a great problem. If the soul is really a sinner, it can never be redeemed, and if it is capable of being redeemed, it is not really a sinner. Such theology has an internal discrepancy. They are inadequate religions.

You cannot love God by hating someone else. The whole point in religion is misconstrued. Love God and hate the world. Then, why not love the world and hate God? Even that is good enough for some. There are people who feel that way. There are stages of approach in religion: the transcendental approach, the mystical approach and the universal approach, to which everything has to tend one day or the other. The study of comparative religions is very good and necessary.

Sarah: You say each one is a separate path to the same goal. It is important to follow all the details of each path?

Swamiji: All the details necessary for assisting you in your onward movement should be followed.

Sarah: How do you make that determination?

Swamiji: Your soul will tell you which is the guide, the seeker and the goal. When you take lunch, you know what are the things you must eat and what you need not eat; don't you understand? Twenty things are served on the plate. Do you eat all the twenty? You know which of these are necessary for you. Your feelings, your requirements at that moment,

will tell you what it is that is essential for you. You are the judge, yourself.

Sarah: Will it not be the ego that is just judging them, choosing what would be easier for it to follow?

Swamiji: When you love God as the Universal Being, the ego does not arise. There is no ego there. You must see things in the light of the universality that you are approaching. The ego will not stand before that non-ego. Mentally, you have to place yourself in the context of being in the presence of God Himself, as if the Almighty is looking at you. And, at that time, what will you do? Suppose the Almighty is seeing you just now, and you are sure that He is looking. At that moment, what will you do? Will you commit any mistake, any wrong? Everything will be chosen rightly at that time. So, feel yourself as being in the proximity of God. You are in the presence of God even now. The only thing is that you are not accepting it. With millions of eyes is the Almighty looking at you always; what will you do at that time? Whatever you do at that time is your religion. Religion is that which you do in the presence of God.

December 14, 1990 a.m.

Larry: It has been a good thing to be here. It has been a very good thing, and I only have one question today.

Swamiji: That is, slowly, your questions are dwindling. Very good.

Larry: I am not sure. It is either because I am running out of questions because I am giving up, or because I am getting answers. But this is a 'how' question. I know you do not like 'how' questions so much. But after seeing everything and listening to everything I have listened to this week, how did it happen that I became what I am?

Swamiji: You never *became*. You have not become anything. You are just what you are. If you had actually become something else, you would never have become another thing afterwards. The very fact that you can become something shows that the meaning of 'becoming' has to be modified. If *A* has become *B*, then *B* cannot become *A* afterwards. *A* can never become *B*, and *A* is *A* only. There is no question of realising God if you have already become a human being. The question does not arise. You cannot contradict what has happened to you. In God-realisation, you are only asserting what is there, and not what is not there. If you have already transformed yourself into a mortal, you will never become an immortal subsequently.

You are already affirming that it has happened. I am telling you that it has not happened and, therefore, affirm that it has not happened. Your destiny is in your hands. But if you say, "I am already a fool," you cannot become a wise man by asserting a contrary of what you really believe you are. You cannot go against yourself.

Larry: But the question is: How. . .

Swamiji: What is 'how'? You know it well.

Larry: But how is it that I thought I was a fool? How is it that I thought I was so small? It is such a shock to me.

Swamiji: You ask only yourself You are asking me why you committed a mistake. Ask yourself. No one asked you to commit a mistake. The question itself is redundant because you are imagining what is not true to your own basic aspiration and nature.

Larry: But that is the question: How did I come to imagine this?

Swamiji: In the same way as you saw another thing in dream.

Larry: The answer I have to my question is that it appeared that I was born as a baby, and it appeared that there were people outside of me who were taking care of me and who educated me.

Swamiji: Even if it appears, it does not matter. In what way are you affected by that? Let it appear. Does this not happen in dream? How do you assess the value of dream experience? Real? Unreal?

Larry: I grew gradually from a baby to a child.

Swamiji: Let all this happen. In what way are you bothered about these matters?

Larry: Because this supported the notion that I am a limited mortal.

Swamiji: But it also supports the notion that you are not limited—else, how do you come to know that you are limited?

Larry: How does it support that?

Swamiji: Because you cannot be conscious of limitation unless there is an unlimited consciousness behind it. Limited consciousness cannot know that it is limited. The very consciousness of finitude implies the consciousness of that which is above the finite. The implication is the other way round than what you are thinking. It is not possible to be conscious of finitude unless the very consciousness of

finitude implies the existence of something that is infinite; otherwise, who is thinking of the finite? The finite cannot know the finite.

Larry: I appreciate that.

Swamiji: There is nothing else to speak. Why are you making comments on that?

Larry: Because I am looking at the past.

Swamiji: There is no past for that. The Infinite has no past.

Larry: Where did my notions come from, then?

Swamiji: From the Infinite.

Larry: My notions of limitation?

Swamiji: Yes, the finite is the delimitation of the Infinite. The notion also is a part of the infinitude only. It is not outside somewhere. So, let the notions be there. In what way are you concerned? It is the Infinite thinking that It is finite. Let a genius think that he is a little child and crawl on all fours; he is not losing anything. The Infinite will look like the finite, but It knows that It is not the finite. A wise man can act the part of a buffoon in a drama, but he has not really become one. If you 'act' like a fool, no harm. But are you really a fool? That is the whole point. And that cannot be.

Larry: But I think even the wise man who was once a fool would want to know why he was once a fool.

Swamiji: He will never raise such a question, because wisdom transcends all crotchets. Why don't you do something, sir, for your illness, instead of asking questions?

Larry: I'm trying. You don't have a pill, or something, I can take?

Swamiji: If you are sick, and I give medicine, and you are asking me who manufactured it, what is the point? I am not asking you to pay any price; let anybody manufacture it. I have given the pill; you swallow it.

Larry: But it takes time for it to have an effect.

Swamiji: It will take immediate effect when you know it is the medicine. What is the good of going to a doctor? Actual practice—all Yoga is practice, not theory, not discussion. Once you have understood it, you sink into it. That is all. Already you have understood it, but the thing is, you are not meditating on it. The meditation has not started.

Savana, manana, nididhyasana—these are the three stages of absorption. First you must listen, then you must deeply contemplate it, and then merge into it, and *be* that. The knowledge that you have gained has to be your existence itself. You are not *having* the knowledge; you yourself *are* the knowledge. You are a moving embodiment of that knowledge. You must be perpetually in the state of this affirmation of the consciousness of your true nature, and after that you may do whatever you like. Meditation is not meant for a few minutes only. Day in and day out you are in that condition, and it is not an activity. Meditation is not an activity but a consciousness of what truth is. You don't have to go on meditating that it is daytime now. It is part and parcel of normal thinking.

Larry: So, reflecting on it is a form of mediation—deep reflection on it.

Swamiji: Certainly.

Larry: Are there questions worth asking?

Swamiji: No question should be raised once the aspiration for the Infinite has been confirmed. Otherwise the aspiration itself is not warm enough. Whatever you have understood now is quite sufficient for you. You don't require to know more. It is a waste of time to go on thinking too many things.

Larry: If I know why it happens. . .

Swamiji: You cannot know it. It is impossible to know it. No human being in the world can answer that question, because a human being cannot know superhuman things. The effect

cannot know the cause; else, it is putting the cart before the horse. The very question is redundant. It is upside down. The effect is trying to know the cause, which is not possible until it enters the cause. The whole point is that the effect must enter the cause—and do all things that are necessary to enable it to so enter. Immediately you will know what the cause has been doing, and all your questions are then answered. You will know the answer only in the cause, not in the effect. The effect cannot know the answer, because the effect is outside the cause. So, what answer can come?

Larry: For example, there are western religions, the Jewish religion, where they say what the purpose is of the creation.

Swamiji: Then I can also say what the purpose is. When you assign a purpose to God, you are saying that God has desire—and then He becomes like us, like anybody else. That is not a great advantage to us, to impute a purpose to God. We are gaining nothing by adding our own predilections to God's kingdom. Then you can say that God has family also. What is the harm? He has children, He has a palace. There are religions that think like that. That is only for our ego's satisfaction, but that will bring you nothing, finally. You can play with the toys of religious consciousness, but toys will not satisfy you finally. What we are thinking of is not playing with ideas, but a cure to the disease of suffering, which cannot go by any amount of slipshod handling of the matter. You have to be very serious about it. The very idea of purpose keeps God away from the world, and also keeps God away from His Being.

Larry: What about the record of prophecies?

Swamiji: They come within the empirical realm of space and time.

Larry: When there is a prophet such as Moses or Jesus. . .

Swamiji: Let anybody be there. They are all within the universal action. They have a value in the same way as

everything that you see in dream has a value. All experience is real; else, it would not be experience.

I told you that dream is not an unreal thing. The only thing is that it is a lesser reality. All things that you see are perfectly true but they are relatively okay, not absolutely. Even the wealth that you gain in dream will give you satisfaction, in that condition. The satisfaction is not false; it is a real satisfaction, and so you cannot say that dream is unreal. So also anything that happens in the world is also real. But—there is a ‘but’ that there is another waking above that particular condition, where you will find the whole world vanishes in a second, and that reality is subsumed by another higher reality. The lesser real is not unreal—and yet, you must underline the word ‘lesser’.

The baby is not an unreal existence, and yet it is redundant to the genius who has already grown up from that state. Nothing is unreal in this world. Everything is real, but only there are gradations of reality. The higher includes the lower; so we should not go on clinging only to the lower forever, when the higher already includes it and transcends it. Every viewpoint is correct in itself. Everything that you have said also is okay—but only at one level, not at all levels, and also not finally.

Larry: So, universality transcends all things?

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

There is no such thing as renunciation, if it is to be properly understood. You are renouncing only an inadequacy

and not a reality. You can ‘renounce’ for the sake of God—become a monk and anchorite, and all that. Sometimes the idea is not clear—what are they renouncing? When you say “I have renounced”, what have you renounced? You cannot renounce a building or a wall or a brick; it is not your property. What are you renouncing when nothing can be regarded as your belonging?

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

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

But, nobody can swallow this hard truth. People will not understand what you mean by saying that the universe is an idea. A little education along these lines is not enough. People will think that you are talking nonsense, though it is the fact. One thought is there; that’s all. There is nothing else anywhere; and ‘That Is’. This is what they call Consciousness-Existence. Thought is *chit-sat*. That is all. And all these hard things like brick and mortar and the entire stellar region, the universe of solidity, melt into “such stuff as dreams are made

of”, as Shakespeare would tell us. All the solidity of the Rocky Mountains in dream will melt into airy nothing when you wake up. That will happen to you in regard to this world also. All these things will melt into one, single thought—call it God, if you so like. This is what the Veda says; this is what the Upanishads say; this is what the Gita says; this is what prophets have said; this is what any religion will finally proclaim. “God created the heaven and the earth,” says Genesis. But what was God before He created them? He was Thought, Idea, Consciousness, Being.

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

December 14, 1990 p.m.

Swamiji: The idea is the very way of thinking. There is always an empirical emphasis in Western thought. I hope you understand what I mean. Objective, sensory-oriented, externally conditioned, socially implied—all these notions are included in the word ‘empirical’. The emphasis is on the external, the individual, the sensorily perceived. In the East, the emphasis is on the universal, inclusive, transcendent, unitary. Nowadays, I suppose, this gulf is being bridged slowly.

Even then, the difficulty is there. I once had a discussion with a learned professor of Cornell University. Finally, his plight was: “What is the good of entering the Absolute if I am myself not going to be there? You see the point? If I myself am not going to be there, who is going to experience the Absolute?” A question of that kind arose from a master of philosophy, head of the department. You cannot say that it is a silly notion. It is a poignant question, but a meaningless fear if you think over it deeply.

Nobody says you are not going to be ‘there’; you are very much there, but it looks as if you are not going to be. Ask any seeker of Truth, any *sadhaka*, *sanyasin*, *brahmacharin* or anyone. All people will have some difficulty in swallowing this final pill. You do not like to be drowned; it is suffocating. Even if I say you are going to be drowned in an ocean of nectar, you would not like to hear the word ‘drowned’. That would strike terror.

There are people who cannot suddenly accommodate themselves to the possibility of their body being consigned to the cold waters of the Ganga after death, which is horrible—cold, cold! One old Swami said, “It is winter. I don’t want to die in winter. It’s cold. How could I go into the Ganga in winter? Summer is better.”

Now, you may be laughing at this way of talking. The attachment of consciousness to the body is so intense that these silly feelings also assume a meaning. How will you throw this body into the Ganga? It is suffocating and biting.

You may say, "How is he raising such a foolish question? There will be no such problem at that time." But it looks as if there is the problem.

The consciousness which is connected to this body at this moment transfers itself to a future condition in which it may find itself, though the consciousness may be wrested out of it and the body is only a corpse. The same thing happens to us when we feel a difficulty as to what will happen to us after God-realisation. After you realise God, what happens to you? Put a question to yourself. Finally, this bombshell will come on the head. So much suffering, mediation, and all that, for realising God! All right, take it for granted. But, after realising God, what happens? This shows how clear our minds are in regard to crucial matters.

There is a dark curtain in front of us. Nothing is clear beyond that. And in that darkness we are groping and doing all our *sadhana*, meditation, etc. Our meditation should not be a groping in the darkness. It should not be. It should be a walking in the light.

December 15, 1990

Larry: Sankaracharya—he speaks about universality?

Swamiji: Yes, he talks about everything; there is nothing left out. Whatever you can think in your mind, he already thought. You cannot say one word more than what he has said in the field of philosophy.

Larry: King Solomon said, “There’s nothing new under the sun.”

Swamiji: Whatever one may say, Whitehead opines, is only a footnote to Plato. There is nothing that he has not written. Likewise, here we can say all is a footnote to Acharya Sankara.

Larry: Swamiji, do you have any advice for me?

Swamiji: I have already given you advice during these days, and whatever I have told you is the advice for you. That advice covers every circumstance, every event and every person. It is an omnibus, a panacea for all things.

Sarah: There is a part of myself that stops myself from even really wanting God. There is a side that I see doesn’t want God at all, and it is laziness. Do you know how to overcome it?

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

The mind, which is involved in the physical body and social relations, requires a diet that is physical and social. Unfortunately for us, God is neither physical, nor social. Our needs are physical and social at present—and to some extent, psychological. God is none of these. How can God attract us? If you are not merely a physical entity, not a social

unit or merely a mind that thinks, but an ontological existence, then you will not have such a problem, doubt, or fear.

Larry: 'Ontological' means just to 'be'?

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

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

Sarah: So I have to look within myself to find it.

Swamiji: Go deep, deeper than what you seem to be. What is inside the body? You will find the mind. What is inside the mind? Intellect. What is inside the intellect? In deep sleep, the body is not there, the mind is not there, and the intellect is not there. But are you there? In deep sleep, are you there, or are you not there?

Sarah: It is both.

Swamiji: You are there. Have you a doubt? Are you existing in the state of deep sleep, or are you not existing?

Sarah: I do not know. It seems like it is both—that one is all existence, ultimate existence...

Swamiji: Are you alive or dead in deep sleep?

Sarah: Very alive.

Swamiji: How do you know that you are alive? Who told you? When you had no consciousness of your existence in sleep, how do you make a statement that you are alive there? Is it a hearsay or a real fact? Now you are stumbling on something that is the mystery of your being. That which you were in the state of deep sleep is your real personality—not intellect, not mind, not the senses, not the body, not relations, not friends, not enemies, not gold, not silver. Without anything you existed, and let us know what it was that existed at that time. That is your ontological status, the answer to your question. I gave a little book to Mr. Krauss—an analysis of consciousness. The name of the book is *Self-Realisation, Its Meaning and Method*. Read it thoroughly.

Sarah: Why do you use the word ‘personality’ when you say “it is the tip of the...”

Swamiji: ‘Personality’ is what I am seeing with the physical eyes. This five-and-a-half-foot tall—this is the personality; but your real nature is not that, it is universal and all-inclusive. What you are projecting before a camera, that is your personality, but your real nature cannot be seen like that. No one can photograph what you were in deep sleep. Personality is a name for the body-mind complex, the psycho-physical formation.

Larry: There is no such thing as time?

Swamiji: It is there as the measure of experience.

Larry: Everything that is for us, in our present state, and the future, has already occurred. Everything that would be tomorrow, for example, has also already occurred, time being relative.

Swamiji: Even that which is going to take place after some centuries has already taken place somewhere else—though for you it has not taken place. The Trojan war is taking place even today, in some other realm, though for you it is some centuries-old story. In some place, it is taking place just now; in some other place, it is yet to take place. The relativity of the cosmos is a mystery to the human mind. If you study even our modern physical Theory of Relativity, you will be stunned. The mind will be boggled to such an extent that you will not be able to think any more afterwards, if you understand what this relatively implies.

There is no fixed time; a linear motion of time does not exist. It is entirely relative to circumstance, condition and position of the observer and, therefore, you cannot say what is taking place at what time. Everything is taking place at all times. The Mahabharata war has taken place, but it is just now taking place in some other realm; and in certain other realms, it has not yet taken place.

For us who are bound to a fixed idea of time that is like a block, the fluid motion of time in this relativity fashion is unintelligible. We can never understand anything that is relatively determined in a mutual relationship of components, because we are unable to think like that. You can never think, even for a moment, that you are related to everything in the universe. If that thought enters your mind, you would not know how to live in the world.

And so we try to brush aside such thoughts and imagine that we are localised in one place only, as little entities moving from one place to another place, in a solid space and a solid time, in a solid objective world. This is what we are thinking, which is totally contrary to fact. The fact is something else. One can summon anything at any time, since even dead things are alive in some other place.

I was told that some mechanism has been manufactured somewhere, whereby you can materialise just now, today, the vibrations which were created by the ancient historical

events, though they may be centuries in the past. And you can see today, as you see in a television, the events that took place in ancient history by materialisation of these vibrations which are never dead; vibrations never die. Every event is eternal, in a sense.

Larry: You mean the vibrations that were set up by the event when it took place are captured?

Swamiji: Yes. All the television pictures that you see are a materialisation of vibrations. There are no pictures there. They are vibrations materialised through a mechanism. And, likewise, they say, vibrations of the ancient past can be condensed into a particular mechanism and you can see now ancient history; Roman history or Homer's Iliad you may see dramatised just now.

Larry: Yes, it makes sense.

Swamiji: So, everything is in eternity. All things are everywhere at all times. You can summon anything and be with it, if your vibrations can rise to the requisite frequency.

Larry: So for each of us, our futures have already occurred.

Swamiji: Our future has already occurred—past, present and future are a compact whole. There is no past, present and future, separately by themselves.

Larry: So I am right now living the first day of my life and the last day of my life.

Swamiji: Right! Everything. You can call it first or last or middle—whatever you like. It is a long chain, beginningless and endless. Where you began, where you end, where you are in the middle, nobody can say. It is an entire cosmic movement where you cannot say which is the beginning, which is the end.

Larry: So absolutely no change is possible.

Swamiji: You can call it a change if you like, from the point of view of your concept of time. It looks like change, but finally it is a timeless occurrence.

Larry: So all the events in my life have already been determined—every moment of every day, every thought, every feeling.

Swamiji: Everything—every moment, and even every thought, every feeling. Eternity—the word ‘eternity’ explains everything. It has no past, present and future and, therefore, anything that you say in terms of the time process is invalid to it. It is just there, and all things are there. Here and now, in a compact integrality—all things can be seen just here. That is the meaning of eternity. But we cannot think eternity; we think in time only. We think in terms of process. So, we are unable to make out what sense it is to have all things in one spot. It is a centre which is not a geometrical point, but a centre which is everywhere, as they call it, with circumference nowhere.

Larry: So the consciousness, my own self-consciousness, right at this moment, is a self-consciousness that feels as though it is in December 15, 1990.

Swamiji: Your consciousness is now thinking in terms of body and time process.

Larry: Yes, but the consciousness that was thinking yesterday, December 14, is it still conscious in the same way as I am feeling consciousness right now, December 15?

Swamiji: It is the same consciousness, the same thing. It has not changed, but it appears to be changing as it is tied to the body that is under process. It is attached to the process of the body and, therefore, it looks as if it is also moving, while, actually, it is not moving anywhere.

Larry: But at this very moment, the interaction I had with you yesterday is occurring.

Swamiji: As a memory.

Larry: As a memory, or as a real experience?

Swamiji: If you call memory also as an experience, then you may call it experience.

Larry: I would call memory a record.

Swamiji: That is all. You don't have an experience? You have a memory only.

Larry: Today I have a memory of yesterday.

Swamiji: Yesterday you had a lunch and you enjoyed it and today you are not having an experience of it. You have a memory only.

Larry: Today I only have a memory. But relative to me today, are the events of yesterday now occurring in some other realm, in some other place?

Swamiji: Yes, perfectly right.

Larry: So they are occurring at this very moment.

Swamiji: Yes. They are occurring somewhere else, but this 'else' is an illusion of the so-called time-process. Rather, it is eternally present. Read the Yoga Vasishtha.

Larry: That is Supreme Yoga?

Swamiji: Yes, yes. You will find all these interesting things. Everything is occurring everywhere, and what you had experienced yesterday is being experienced somewhere else by somebody else.

Larry: By somebody else, or by me yesterday?

Swamiji: By you also, and by another also; it can be either way. And the same thing can be experienced in the future by somebody else. Actually, this 'somebody' is yourself in another time form; there is, really, no 'somebody' outside the complicated 'you'.

Larry: I understand by somebody else, but...

Swamiji: But, what? You can have the same experience.

Larry: The experiences that I experienced yesterday—am I experiencing them at this moment, right now, again? In other words, is it December 14 for me in some other point in consciousness? Today is for me December 15. And I am conscious right now that at this moment I am speaking to you. Yesterday was December 14, and at that moment, at roughly the same time (24 hours earlier) I was conscious of speaking to you on December 14. Today I have a memory—here now, it is a memory of yesterday. But are the events of December 14, yesterday's events, taking place somewhere else in consciousness?

Swamiji: Yes, perfectly so. They are taking place somewhere else. Correct. And they will be a present; they will not be a past. Though for you it is a past, it is a present for some other condition of yours. There is no such thing as past and there is no such thing as present, no such thing as future also. They are totally relative. What is past can be present; what can be present can be future also. And future can be present—either way, you will find yourself everywhere.

Larry: So, every moment in time continues to exist for infinity.

Swamiji: Yes, right. Certainly so.

Larry: So one's success—whether one succeeds in this evolution or fails in this evolution, has also already happened.

Swamiji: It is perfectly so.

Larry: So, perhaps my next question is irrelevant. I was going to ask you, as we are now leaving the ashram in another day or so, what guiding principles should I bring to my life in Canada?

Swamiji: What is the difficulty that you will face?

Larry: I don't know what difficulties I will face in terms of job.

Swamiji: You can imagine at least.

Larry: I can imagine that I will have choices to make as to how much work, how many hours a day I should work, whether I should continue as a lawyer, whether I should have one child or more children.

Swamiji: Every question has to be decided in the light of what you want to achieve tomorrow or in the near future or in this life. Unnecessarily you do not do anything. You may be a lawyer, you may be anything, but what for are you doing all this work? For, true achievement is supposed to be the culmination of your life—a progressive advance towards your objective. And if you concentrate your mind a little bit on what this final objective is that you are aiming at, every little step that you take on different days will either be a constructive move, participation in this advance towards the goal that you want to achieve, or it may be some irrelevant thing obstructing. Your common sense, your understanding of the worthwhileness of the step that you take today in the light of this achievement will tell you what is proper and what is not.

What is it that you want to do finally? You are a lawyer, you are this man, you are that man, let it be anything. But, what for is this effort and work and activity, and this and that? There is a purpose behind it, and you want to achieve something. What is it that you want finally? You have some idea in your mind that this is the thing that you need. For that purpose, these appurtenances, these accessories are important, and anything that is going to contribute to the achievement of this objective may be considered as necessary and valid—and do it. But if you lose sight of the goal itself, you will not be able to take even one step forward.

Larry: What is the best way of determining one's goals? I'm not sure I'm clear on what my goals are.

Swamiji: First of all, you want to live. You don't want to die, number one. Anything that is necessary to enable you to live without any hindrance must be done. You cannot have an offhand academic answer to this question. What are the factors that will help you in living securely? You use your common sense.

The next question: It is not that you want to live like a tree or a stone. You must live a life which has a meaning according to your concept of value. Maybe you want to increase your knowledge. You must be aspiring for wisdom and you must work for the achievement of that, the acquiring of that knowledge, or wisdom, in whatever way possible.

Then, thirdly, you should have good health. You should not do anything which will impair your health—physical health, mental health and social health. You should not be at loggerheads with the society outside. You should not be at variance with your body. You should not be in conflict with your mind. Physical health, psychological health, social health, even political health are essential. You should not be always quarrelling with your government. That also is a part of your aspiration to exist in this world in a sensible manner.

All this granted, what happens finally? You grow in consciousness and experience towards a dimension of your personality—now I am coming to the main point—a dimension of your personality that will tend towards its largest expanse, which is God-experience. This is why you are living in this world. You don't live here merely because everybody is living and you also have to live—to eat, drink, sleep. That is not the purpose of existence. In a constructive, positive, secure, integrated, holistic manner we have to live for the purpose of an advance towards larger dimensions of our own existence, culminating in absolute universality. This is the purpose of life. You exist for this purpose.

All the legal work you are doing—including court cases, going to the market and purchasing things, having a marriage and children and so on, whatever it be—they are all part and parcel of this advance that you are going to make towards universal existence, and every inch of your activity should be contributory to this great purpose. You have to use your common sense, your understanding and your education to find out how these little, little things of your daily life will build up the edifice of your total existence. This is how you have to guide yourself in your daily life.

You are not one isolated individual living in Canada. You are connected to all things, to the whole world, and all space and time. Space and time and the solar system are touching your skin even now. You are not living in any particular place. You are living in this solar system, in this galaxy, in this space-time complex, in this vast universe, which is not merely touching you but has entered the very fibre of your existence. The very cells of your body are made up of cosmic stuff and so you are not a Mr. So-and-so, one individual; you are something more than what you think you are. May this be in your mind always, and then direct your daily routine in this manner.

Larry: It is such a big message; I do not know on a practical level how my being is connected to the entire cosmos.

Swamiji: Every minute you have to be conscious of this truth if you want real protection from the creation of God; otherwise, you will feel insecure every moment. No one can protect you except the cosmic forces. You cannot think this is a kind of theoretical discussion. This is a very important medical prescription that has to be taken now. It is not a message, but a medicine.

This is not the way in which ordinary people think, but we are not here to think as ordinary people. We are in this ashram for a different purpose, to enhance the dimension of our thought. If we were just ordinary, there would be no such aspiration. We are in the ashram here for a different purpose,

to think differently altogether and envisage the world in a new light. It is not a difficult thing; it is the proper thing and has to be done just now, not tomorrow, because there is no tomorrow for us. It is question of here and now.

You cannot be secure in this world even for a second but for the cooperation that you receive from the cosmic powers. Otherwise, you will be let down. It is difficult to live. No man can protect you in this world. It is only the cosmic powers who are the very building bricks of your personality that can protect you. The building is protected by the bricks of which it is made. And if the building is different from the bricks, how will it survive? And the bricks of your personality are the very stuff of the cosmos. You cannot even exist for a moment without this appreciation.

Larry: The level of protection that I do receive in the universe—has it not been already determined?

Swamiji: It is determined, and your consciousness should not be severed from that conviction. The whole point is that your consciousness should appreciate it. You must be conscious that this is the fact. Unconscious occurrences are not going to benefit you consciously.

Larry: And, yet, is it also that the level of my consciousness, all my thoughts and feelings, have also been predetermined?

Swamiji: Let it be so, but you must accept it in your consciousness. You must live it. What you are just now saying must be a part of your living itself. What do you lose by being a big man? I am asking you to be a big man rather than a small person. You will be a large man walking on the road, a giant, a superman walking, as a little representation of the cosmos itself moving. Isn't it a joy to feel it? So very thrilled you will be even to think that. Everything will look fine. Strength you will gain, joy you will feel, protection you will receive. You will experience a sense of enough with all things. You may even dance with joy if this enters your heart.

December 16, 1990

Larry: Why was the universe created?

Swamiji: The answer is inside the cause; it is not in the effect. If the effect has entered the cause, immediately the answer comes. The effect cannot carry the answer. The effect can only carry a question. The answer is hidden inside the cave of the cause, from where the effect has come. It is like trying to climb on one's own shoulders. The effect has to enter the cause and then you will find "by knowing which, all things are known", as the Upanishad says. What is that by knowing which, all things are known? Know It. That is the cause. Now you are the effect. The effect must enter the cause and you will then find everything is clear like daylight. For that purpose, you have to practise Yoga. Do something in right earnest.

Larry: And is it true that the effect, when it enters the cause, can understand the cause? Does it not give up its mind?

Swamiji: There is no question of understanding the cause. It has to become the cause, and it becomes omniscient then. It becomes God-conscious.

Larry: And that is possible on the part of a human being?

Swamiji: There is no human being in that stage. There are only two things: the cause and the effect. You can call yourself human, if you like. Every effect has to enter the cause—it must go. There is no question of possibility. It has to; there is no other alternative. Every effect has to enter the cause and be it.

Larry: And then it understands why the effect took place?

Swamiji: There is no understanding. It becomes *being* itself. It is much more than understanding.

Larry: And that is the natural evolution.

Swamiji: Yes, perfectly right.

Larry: I don't have any more questions.

Swamiji: It is a great achievement that you have exhausted your questions. Nothing can be greater. It is a wonderful achievement.

Larry: Yes. And I guess I have to figure out what to do now that I have exhausted my questions.

Swamiji: You feel empty because all the questions have gone out? When you empty yourself, you will find that you are also filled automatically. "Empty thyself, and I shall fill thee," is a great proclamation. The world will enter you like a cyclonic flood when you have emptied yourself of the ego-personality. The whole sea will enter you. Now you have blocked its entry. The whole universe will enter you in one second; like a whirlwind it will come and dash upon you and invade you and take possession of you and melt you down into its bosom. Be prepared for that day.

Sarah: In Western religions, when people purify themselves and reach to a high level, they still see God as a king or maybe as Jesus, but still as a figure. Even though they'll say God is one, they don't go to the point to say that He is a Universal Absolute Being in the same expressions that people use here. What has stopped them?

Swamiji: Their mind can go only to that level; it has not gone further. The mind stops at certain levels. There are stages of evolution of the mind. It can accept certain things, and beyond that it cannot go. It does not mean that the mind will be thinking only like that forever. For some time it will think like that; afterwards, it will evolve further. You cannot expect everybody in the world to think alike. Do you want all people in the world to think the same thought? How is it possible? They are born at different times and so they will also think differently, but everybody will think everything at the proper time. It is a question of time and evolutionary process.

Evolution is an ascent. It is a rising, as you have come from mineral to plant and plant to animal and animal to man; and even in the stage of human thought, there are varieties of

levels, and everyone is not in the same level. It is not possible for everyone to be in the same psychological level. Otherwise, everybody would be the same—all people in the world would be thinking the same thought. That is not possible because of differing stages of psychological evolution.

Sarah: So, does that mean that things began at different stages? It did not all begin at the same time?

Swamiji: It began with matter, and then became vegetable. Vegetables do not think of God, and you cannot find fault with them merely because trees are not meditating on God Almighty. What do you say? They are also existing in one level, and it is perfectly all right. Just because you have some idea of God, you don't expect a cow to also think like that. Why should you so expect? It has got its own way of thinking. It has one level, one stage, and you should not compare. The mind can think only up to one level; it cannot go beyond. But, afterwards, it will change its vision by a further advance of perspective.

Sarah: How come there are still rocks? Is evolution connected with chronological time?

Swamiji: It is not chronological; rather, it is an all-round, universal movement. It is not beginning somewhere and ending somewhere else. It is a wholesome cosmological self-adjustment.

Sarah: And why are some minds allowed to develop?

Swamiji: Nobody is so allowing. It takes place automatically. No one is allowing a child to grow into an adult. It is a spontaneous movement of the universe into higher levels. It is automatic; nobody is 'allowing' it. There is nobody there to do that work. There is none outside the world. The world itself is doing it within itself.

Sarah: When one gets to a high level, let's say of God as king or Jesus, what. . .

Swamiji: That is one stage of thinking. You are thinking in terms of time. When you think of anything in terms of time and space, it looks very far and distant. That is why God looks distant. You are thinking in terms of space and time—because space is very wide and it has distance; therefore, when the mind thinks in terms of that, naturally, you foist the distance on God also, and He seems to be far away. God, however, is not a temporal level. It is eternity.

Sarah: Why doesn't the Truth, or Brahman, break through those misconceptions? If people have gotten so high at that point, why wouldn't their misconceptions break? If they were real seekers of Truth, why didn't it?

Swamiji: That misconception also will go away in due course. It cannot always be there; it has to pass. Everything has its own time and course. It will break through; it is a question of time.

Larry: Swamiji, this morning you said that the effect cannot know the cause—unless through meditation or through Self-realisation, there the effect can know the cause. In Western religions, I think the concept is a little different in the sense that, for example, in the Jewish religion, the cause has come and spoken to the effect.

Swamiji: It cannot speak to the effect. How can it speak, as if they are two different things? The speaking is possible only when the effect has surrendered itself to the cause.

Larry: The cause can speak to itself.

Swamiji: Then why do you call it an effect, if that is the case? Why do you bring an unnecessary word when the cause is speaking to itself? You have already created duality by using the word 'effect'.

Larry: Nonetheless, the appearance is that we have a limited consciousness.

Swamiji: 'We' means that effect only. 'You' are the effect.

Larry: I am the effect, so I live in a state of ignorance.

Swamiji: Forget all these words, 'ignorance' and all that. You have placed yourself outside the context of the cause. That is what you mean by ignorance. Ignorance is only that much, the effect standing outside the cause and looking at it as an 'object'.

Larry: I have placed myself outside. . .

Swamiji: Yes, outside the context of the cause. And you are looking at it as if it is outside you, and then calling it the world. All the things that you are talking about are this much. You have projected the cause as an external object and are placing yourself outside it, as a subject looking at it, while the truth is the other way round. You cannot consider the cause as an object of yours. It came first; you came afterwards. That is why you consider God Himself as an object and are thinking of Him as something sitting somewhere else. This is what has happened to us.

Larry: The different states of consciousness—deep sleep, dream, waking—are not differences in consciousness?

Swamiji: No, they are not differences in consciousness. If they are differences in consciousness you will not know that you have had three states. In that case, each state will be different from the other, and there would be no link of one with the other. But consciousness is continuous. It does not change in the three states; otherwise, the person who wakes would be different from the one who dreams, and the one who dreams different from the one who sleeps. A connecting link has to be there, and you are aware that you are the same person who had the experiences.

Larry: As I begin my practice, what kind of obstacles should I be conscious of?

Swamiji: Your own desires not fulfilled—they are the obstacles. If you have any desire that you have not fulfilled, that will come and stand before you as a creditor.

Larry: So, I should fulfil my desires and move through them?

Swamiji: You have to face them by fulfilling, or not fulfilling, as the case may be. How you will handle them depends on the circumstances of the case. But, they should not be there.

Larry: Will it not be that my desires have no end?

Swamiji: They can be ended in one minute if you only know why they arise. It does not take a lot of time to end them, provided you know why they have arisen. You must diagnose the case. If you know why they are there, then you will know also how to tackle them. They arise due to some misconception. It is not that you really want anything. Anyway, they can be handled with some caution. Small desires can be fulfilled. Big desires also can be fulfilled, provided they are not going to be harmful or deleterious to your spiritual health.

And there can be desires which you cannot fulfil in this birth. For instance, if you want to be the king of the world, this idea may not be feasible. If you want to be a huge business magnate, though it is not an impossible thing, the possibility is so remote that it may be an obstacle even to think like that. Such ideas should not arise at all. All the desires should be within a reasonable limit. If it is within reason, you may fulfil it. But what happens to these desires is that once you fulfil them, they want to repeat themselves. Desires do not get exhausted by fulfilment. They sometimes become more intense after fulfilment due to the habit that is formed by the mind. Certain desires may thereby extinguish themselves also; others may repeat themselves on account of the pleasure that one feels in the fulfilment.

There are varieties of desires. They are not of the same kind or category. And you must know what are your desires. Apart from the desire for creature comforts, what other desires are there? Creature comforts are no trouble. Food, clothing, shelter—these are the minimal needs. But there are other things that rise out of egoism.

At present, why do you worry about all these things? You have no obstacles now. Just now, you do not have any difficulty. When they come, then only you think. Why are you imagining them?

Larry: Because I know when I am in Rishikesh I have no obstacles. When I am in Toronto, it is a very different world.

Swamiji: One of the obstacles may be your career itself. You may be occupied with your profession, may have to give a lot of time for that work, and very little time may be left for you to be alone to yourself. All these are the common difficulties one may face in life. You may get tired, exhausted, and may not like to sit for meditation. These may be the little difficulties. That may not be a major problem. These are minor things. You can adjust yourself.

But the greatest obstacle is another thing. It is the inability of the mind to accommodate itself to the very thought of God. That is the real obstacle. The mind cannot accept the thought of God—that is all. The trouble doesn't come from outside; it doesn't come from people. It comes from your mind. Finally, it will say, "This is not for me."

Therefore, every day you must find time to ponder over this, and do meditation. If you miss it for a few days, the habit will break. If you cannot think abstractly, at least have a little scripture to read which will enable you to raise your thoughts to the levels required. Every day, continuously, you cannot go on thinking like this. It is a question of years of practice. Not even a saint can maintain such a consciousness all the twenty-four hours. It is not possible. So one has to be very cautious.

Doubts will arise in the mind. The greatest tragedy is doubt: "Oh, it may not be like this! I may be on the wrong path. Perhaps it is different." Or, "I may not be fit for it." Or, "What is the good of it, finally?" These are the questions that can come up. These questions can arise after ten years even. You will be wondering how they arise. The mind can keep

quiet, in ambush. "I will teach this man a lesson. He is pressing me. I shall keep quiet for some time." And after years, it can come up and catch you unawares and make you go somewhere else. That is why you have to keep good company, read good books, have good habits, and all that is prescribed.

The inability to contain the thought of God correctly is the only obstacle finally. All other obstacles are minor and they will run away if this difficulty does not arise. Other obstacles are nothing before this; they are practically insignificant. That we are discussing so much about this matter is itself a proof of doubt still persisting in the mind. It is not cleared completely. Some cloud is there hanging. It may be a thin cloud, but afterwards it can become thick. After all, "Why?"; this question will persist in the mind. "After all, what will happen to me? What am I pursuing? Am I in a phantasm?" Therefore, keep the good company of a person who is saintly, or at least a scripture; something must be with you. Nobody maintains God-consciousness throughout one's life.

Larry: Is that not part of the process if it does slip from the mind?

Swamiji: If it is a part of the process, how does it benefit you? You are not any way better by knowing that it is a part of the process. You will be once again the same old man that you were years back. You will not know that it is a part of the process at that time, because to know that it is a part of the process also is a kind of understanding. You will not say so, at that time. You will get caught up in a whirl, and the whole thing will dwindle down.

Even those who start with noble thoughts of God-realisation being the only aim in life, often, towards the end of their life, start world-uplifting organisations and think that they are meant for saving mankind, as prophets. "The world is in great trouble. I have to raise humanity." These ideas may

arise towards the end of life, and all God-realisation enthusiasm may wither away.

The Devil can come in any form. It will tell you, "Why are you going to God when others are here suffering? You are a fool!" The voice will come and whisper in your ear, and you will suddenly accept that. "Oh yes, yes, there is a point in it," you will think. "Why should I go to God alone? I can take my family also with me. Why should I leave the world here and go to God? How selfish I am! Oh, you are right, you are right. Let me work for the welfare of humanity. I will take all people in a big boat."

What is wrong with this thought? It looks very sensible and reasonable. Though it is most idiotic to think like that, it seems very rational. "So many are suffering, and you are going to God alone? What do you mean? Are you so selfish, sir?" The consciousness of God-Being has been swept away by the whirlwind of psycho-social agitation.

This world-uplifting idea may not come to you because that comes only in the case of very advanced people. You are just beginning to be engaged and so these ideas will not come to you. You are not likely to think that you are a prophet come to save humanity and all that, but it is also a possibility. The world will look so real, people around will be so meaningful, the events of history will be so very significant to you that you will come back to the lowest level from where you rose, under the impression that you have risen to the highest level. So, these are the obstacles, to give you some general idea of such things.

Sarah: I thought when the pot smashes, it doesn't get rebuilt. Once you have God-realisation, how can you slip back?

Swamiji: Such a person has not attained God-realisation. He is only conceptually thinking like that; actually he has not got it. It is a notion of the realisation, not an actual experience. The mind has its own tricks. It is very intelligent and knows how to handle you. A guide is necessary here.

Every now and then you must refer yourself to that guide. When you pass through some experience you must immediately refer: "I am passing through these experiences; what do you say about this?" You should not stand on your own two feet completely for all times. Now and then a check-up of experience is necessary. Without a guide it is difficult. Also, sometimes you may meditate wrongly, as this friend [another student present at darshan] is meditating on the point between the eyebrows, and he cannot sleep in the night. There are errors galore, and at each step one has to be aware of their chameleon-like shapes and colours.

December 17, 1990

Larry: All is well.

Swamiji: You are going?

Larry: I have one quick question—a point of clarification. You said that, in terms of pain and suffering, the Universal, the Absolute, does not feel the pain and suffering, that the Absolute feels Its own indivisible unity.

Swamiji: There is no such thing as pain and suffering unless the Infinite becomes finite. It is only the finite that can feel the impact of circumstances prevailing outside. The Infinite has no outside and, so, no such thing as pain and pleasure. They do not exist at all. Pain and pleasure are only an impact upon you of external conditions, and there are no external conditions for the Infinite, so the question does not arise.

Larry: So it is just an appearance that is not there?

Swamiji: It is only for the finite. The Infinite has no such 'feelings'. There is no feeling at all. It is only existence—just existence.

PRACTICAL HINTS ON SADHANA

1. First of all, there should be a clear conception of the Aim of one's life.
2. The Aim should be such that it should not be subject to subsequent change of opinion or transcendence by some other thought, feeling or experience. It means, the Aim should be ultimate, and there should be nothing beyond that.
3. It will be clear that, since the ultimate Aim is single, and set clearly before one's mind, everything else in the world becomes an instrument, an auxiliary or an accessory to the fulfilment of this Aim.
4. It is possible to make the mistake that only certain things in the world are aids in the realisation of one's Aim of life, and that others are obstacles. But this is not true, because everything in the world is interconnected and it is not possible to divide the necessary from the unnecessary, the good from the bad, etc., except in a purely relative sense. The so-called unnecessary items or the useless ones are those whose subtle connection with our central purpose in life is not clear to our minds. This happens when our minds are carried away by sudden emotions or spurts of enthusiasm.
5. All this would mean that it is not advisable or practicable to ignore any aspect of life totally, as if it is completely irrelevant to the purpose of one's life. But here begins the difficulty in the practice of *sadhana*, because it is not humanly possible to consider every aspect of a situation when one tries to understand it.
6. The solution is the training which one has to receive under a competent Teacher, who alone can suggest methods of entertaining such a comprehensive vision of things, which is the precondition of a true spiritual life, or a life of higher meditation.
7. There are economic and material needs as well as vital longings of the human nature which have to be paid their

due, at the proper time and in the proper proportions, not with the intention of acquiring comfort and satisfaction to one's self, but with a view to the sublimation of all personal desires or urges, whether physical, vital or psychological. An utter ignorance of this fact may prove to be a sort of hindrance to one's further practice on the path of *sadhana*.

8. It is, of course, necessary that one should live a life of reasonable seclusion under the guidance of a master until such time when one can stand on one's own legs and think independently, without help from anyone.
9. But, one should, now and then, test one's ability to counteract one's reactions to the atmosphere even when one is in the midst of intractable and irreconcilable surroundings. Seclusion should not mean a kind of self-hypnotism or hibernation and an incapacity to face the atmosphere around.
10. It should also not mean that one should be incapable of living in seclusion alone to oneself, when the occasion for it comes. In short, the ideal should be achievement of an equanimous attitude to circumstances, whether one is alone to oneself or one is in the midst of an irreconcilable social atmosphere.
11. While in seclusion, the mind should not be allowed to go back to the circumstances of one's family life, official career or to problems which are likely to disturb the concentration of the mind on God, because the pressure of these earlier experiences may sometimes prove itself to be greater in intensity than one's love of God.
12. It is impossible to concentrate on God unless one has a firm conviction and faith that whatever one expects in this world can also be had from God; nay, much more than all these things which the world has as its treasures and values.

13. It is difficult to have the vision of one's Aim of Life when the mind goes out of meditation to whatever it longs for in the world. Hence, a deep study of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, the Srimad-Bhagavata and such other scriptures is necessary to drive into the mind the conviction about the Supremacy of God.
14. Study or *svadhyaya*, *japa* of *mantras* and meditation are the three main aspects of spiritual practice.
15. *Svadhyaya* does not mean study of any book that one may find anywhere at any time. It means a continued and regular study, daily, of selected holy texts, or even a single text, from among those that have been suggested above. A study in this manner, done at a fixed time, every day, for a fixed duration, will bring the expected result.
16. The *japa* of the *mantra* should, in the beginning, be done with a little sound in the mouth so that the mind may not go here and there towards different things. The loud chant of the *mantra* will bring the mind back to the point of concentration. Later on, the *japa* can be only with movement of lips, but without making any sound. In the end, the *japa* can be only mental, provided that the mind does not wander during the mental *japa*.
17. A convenient duration, say, half an hour or one hour, should be set up at different times, so that the daily *sadhana* should be at least for three hours a day. It can be increased according to one's capacity, as days pass.
18. During *japa*, the mind should think of the meaning of the *mantra*, the surrender of oneself to the Deity of the *mantra*, and finally, the communion of oneself with that Great Deity. Effort should be put forth to entertain this deep feeling during *japa*, every day.
19. Meditation can be either combined with *japa*, or it can be independent of *japa*. Meditation with *japa* means the mental repetition of the *mantra* and, also, at the same

time, meditating deeply on the meaning of the *mantra*, as mentioned above.

20. Meditation without *japa* is a higher stage where the mind gets so much absorbed in the thought of God, surrender to God and union with God, that in this meditation *japa* automatically stops. This is the highest state of meditation.
21. Throughout one's *sadhana*, it is necessary to feel the oneness of oneself and the universe with God.

A CONSPECTUS OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

1. The First Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita describes the state of an all-round conflict of circumstance in which Arjuna was involved, so that he was incapable of coming to any right decision as to his duty and obligation. Incidentally, this is a picturing of the human situation in general, where an incapacity to judge impartially leads to diffidence and doubt as to the purpose and significance of human action.
2. The Second Chapter points out that the problems of life arise due to a lack of proper understanding, known as *samkhya*. Here, right understanding means the knowledge of the proper relationship of man in respect of the world and reality in general.
3. The Third Chapter details the error of placing oneself outside the totality of creation, which defeats the purpose of every form of effort. Man within and the world without, and the Supreme Divine Principle above, are to be taken in their togetherness, which is the principle of right understanding. The application in life of this right knowledge is Karma Yoga, or the Yoga of Action.
4. The Fourth Chapter brings a special solace to the striving individual by its message of the presence of the hands of God at every juncture and crisis in life, hands that secretly operate in different forms of super-normal incarnations, or *avatars*. Here are also described certain methods of self-control and self-sacrifice.
5. The Fifth Chapter recounts the state of renunciation that naturally evolves out of this great insight suggested in the earlier chapters, and the detached life which an illumined soul lives in the spirit of true *sannyasa*, which is understood as the renunciation of the erroneous outlook of life, a reference to which has been made in the Third Chapter.

6. The Sixth Chapter concerns itself especially with the art and technique of self-integration by means of *dhyana*, or meditation. Here is also given the comforting message, again, that no right effort can ever be a loss, and even those who by chance leave their physical body before reaching their final goal will be reborn in suitable circumstances to continue their earlier practice as a matter of course.
7. The Seventh Chapter takes a leap into the Universal directly from all individual techniques and disciplines described in the earlier six chapters. A brief statement on cosmology, with which the chapter begins, brings into the picture the element of God as the Creator of the Universe. From the Seventh Chapter onwards the principle of God becomes pre-eminently conspicuous.
8. The Eighth Chapter is a direct enunciation on the cosmical setup in a larger detail, highlighting the relationship obtaining among the principles of God, the world and the individual. Here also is described the course of the soul beyond the realm of the earth.
9. The Ninth Chapter is practically a stimulating statement on true religious awareness, a description of universal religion which considers God as the Unitary Principle above all things, which can be approached by anyone through any means of honest and sincere devotion and feeling of communion. Here is the eternal promise of God being with man at every moment of time if only man were to be honest enough to accept the supremacy of the Almighty.
10. The Tenth Chapter goes deeper still into the various ways in which the One appears as the many in its pre-eminent manifestations, particularly in exalted forms of power and glory, in revelations of knowledge and action beyond human reach. In such manifestations the presence of God is to be discovered.

11. The Eleventh Chapter is the reaching of a climax of spiritual experience, wherein a Total Vision of the Infinite Superintending Principle, as the Supreme Being, is majestically described. This is the Divine Song of spiritual ecstasy and God-vision, a masterpiece of epic grandeur and poetry.
12. The Twelfth Chapter goes into the practical issues involved in the ways that take man to God, such as unselfish service and performance of duty, an ardent feeling of devotion to God, an ever-intense concentration on the Supreme Creator, and a perpetual recognition of the Omnipresence of the Almighty, as some of the possible ways of the human approach to God. Herein are also described the touching characteristics of a real devotee, passing through the four stages or aspects of Yoga as action, devotion, concentration and knowledge.
13. The Thirteenth Chapter takes into consideration the duality of *purusha* and *prakriti*, or consciousness and matter, as is envisaged in ordinary human experience and rational thinking. But the message here goes above their two principles and bridges the gulf between this apparent duality by the introduction of a Transcendent Divinity above both the subjective and the objective sides of life.
14. The Fourteenth Chapter enunciates in a philosophical manner the constituents of Nature as a whole, as made up of the properties of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, viz., the power of balance of forces, the power of action, and the power of inertia, wherein, again, the Presence of God above all things is stated once again in a different emphasis.
15. The Fifteenth Chapter is a description of the whole of creation as a sort of an inverted tree whose roots are above in the Transcendent Absolute, and manifestations as the diversity of creation are down below as its branches, leaves, fruits, and the like. Here the intention of

the gospel is to make out that, as the sap or the vitality of the tree permeates every cell of it from the top to the bottom, the Divine Creative Principle is ubiquitously present as the supreme immanent controlling force. Thus, the manifold cannot be understood except in terms of the ultimate Unity.

16. The Sixteenth Chapter brings into relief the action of the dual forces of the Divine and the undivine, energies that tend themselves towards the Centre and those that gravitate towards the periphery of the objective universe. The clash of these forces is the theme of all the epics of the world, including the Mahabharata, which is indeed the conflict of action between the universal and the temporal impulses.
17. The Seventeenth Chapter, again, is a practical enunciation of certain methods useful in practical daily life, relating to the disciplines of the body, speech and mind, in various formations and deviations.
18. The Eighteenth Chapter is a summing up of the entirety of the divine message of the Bhagavad Gita, where the principles of right action, divine devotion, concentration in Yoga, and a perpetual maintenance of a consciousness of God's universality are beautifully portrayed, concluding with the masterstroke that where Krishna and Arjuna act in unison, seated in a single chariot—meaning thereby that where God and man are in a perpetual state of union of and action there would be prosperity, victory, and a firmly established principle of righteousness in all the fields of life.