



THE
UNIVERSALITY
OF BEING

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

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Swami Krishnananda



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This is a series of discourses that Swamiji gave to students in the Ashram's Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy during March and April 1996. In this course Swamiji discusses the true nature of reality—that everything, including ourselves, exists at all times and at all places; that the past, present and future are an appearance and are interchangeable; and that even the smallest particle is in all levels of existence simultaneously—and guides the student through a profound meditation technique of becoming established in that awareness, culminating in the highest state of being, the Absolute.

The reader is taken stage by stage through the levels of samadhi, and is given a practical explanation of the highest truth behind the appearance of creation, and of how understanding these facts and applying them to one's own perception results in Self-realisation, liberation, moksha.

This is an important book for all sincere spiritual seekers, who will be benefitted greatly by it.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

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INAUGURAL MESSAGE

Welcome to you, all students who have come to participate in these courses of teaching in the Academy. Perhaps you have not attended courses of teaching of this kind up to this time, though you must have had a vague feeling of the benefits that would accrue to you by attending these classes. Possibly you have a feeling that you will become healthier, more peaceful, and also more successful in your workaday world. These are common ideas that may be present in all of you. They are all valid feelings, of course, and it should be like that.

After participating in the teachings you must certainly feel better in every way—not only in some way, but in all ways. In order to have an inkling of what is meant by ‘all ways’, you must also have an idea of what you are yourself in regard to everything that you need, require and aspire for in your life. What is it that you are looking for? Anything and everything—there is nothing that you would not like to have.

If you would like to have every kind of blessedness, it should be possible for you to prepare yourself as a proper recipient of this blessedness. The all-sided blessedness can be received only by an all-sided instrument. If you are a fraction of a person, you will have only a fraction of blessedness. The amount of sunlight that will enter your room depends upon the opening through which the sunlight can pass. If there is only a little hole or slit, only that much light

will come to your room. If you are a tiny individual personality, capable of imbibing into your life only little things, only that much blessedness will be your fortune. You cannot be small and then ask for so many things. The world is very big, and it has all resources within itself. The unhappiness that is usually characteristic of human nature may be attributed to the limited quantum of the resources of the universe that are available to you. You would like to have all the blessings of the world, but you do not have such a large vessel to contain that abundance of blessing that the world can grant you. Suffice it to say that you must be a large person in order that the large gift of this world may become your blessing. A little man will get only little things.

Now, I mentioned that you should be a large person. People use words such as 'large-heartedness', whose meaning is clear to you all. It is not that your physical heart has become very big, but your feelings have enlarged you so much as to accommodate within you almost everything. You can feel everything in the world. Your feelings are capable of being friendly with all the processes of the world. You are a friend of the world; you are a relative of the whole world process.

Take a little time to think whether you belong to this world or you are a totally independent person with the freedom to do whatever you like. Have you any obligation to this world so that you may expect an obligation from the world in respect of you? Why should you expect any gifts from the world if you cannot give anything to the world? The process of life is a phenomenon of interrelationship, cooperative living—a give-and-take policy, we may say—so that everyone is related to everything in this world. Philosophers tell us that our physical body is made up of the substance

of nature. You think that nature is outside you, and you are totally outside it. This is not so. The very building bricks of your personality are the substance of the world outside. The physicality of your body is the earth principle. The air that you breathe is the very same air that is in the world outside. The liquid content in your personality and in your body is the very same as the water principle outside. The heat in your body is the same as the fire principle outside. There is also space inside your body; you are not a compact indivisible rock. That space is the same as the space that is outside. The space that is outside, the air that is outside, the heat that is outside, the water that is outside, the earth that is outside, are the substances out of which you are made.

If you analyse this situation, you will wonder how you are really different from the world. The very stuff of the world is the stuff of your personality. The world is not merely touching you, it is you. When I utter this sentence, I have introduced you into the methodology of yoga practice. I have spoken simple sentences without any kind of technicality about them, but if you have appreciated the meaning and implication of what I spoke, you are certainly in a position to appreciate that you are a world individual. What a joy to feel like that! "How happy I am to be a world individual, and not a tiny tot helplessly walking on the road. Is it so that the whole world is structured in my being? What a wonder! If that is the case, the world will give to me everything that it has!" There is no distance between you and the world. This consequence will automatically follow from the acceptance of the fact that the stuff of the world is your stuff. If you deeply ponder over the result that follows from this kind of contemplation, you will immediately receive a pleasant shock. It is like the world

entering into you. For a few seconds, hold your breath and imagine what it would be like if the whole substance of the world dashes against you, enters your veins and arteries, and possesses you completely so that you are not there, the whole world is there.

This is simply yoga. Do not go to big textbooks. I shall refer to something deeper in the coming days, but this little thing—this homely sermon I have given to you in a few minutes—is enough to awaken you from the so-called turmoils of life in the world to the possibility of an awakening to a great blessedness before you. ‘Before you’ does not mean tomorrow or after some time, because the world is not tomorrow, it is here just now.

The world does not come to you tomorrow. There is no time gap or even space gap between yourself and the world that you wrongly imagine as something being external to you. You will worship the whole world as a divinity, if you can properly appreciate the meaning of what I have told you. The world is a divinity. Traditionally, we consider the whole earth as the Divine Mother. According to traditional religious practice, when we wake up in the morning and keep our foot on the surface of the earth, we offer a prayer, “Mother Earth, please excuse me for keeping my foot on your body. Please excuse me, O great Divinity who sustains life, who has been sustaining my ancestors and myself. O great Goddess, I have no alternative than to be on your surface, on your very breast itself. Please excuse me.”

Divinity pervades everywhere. What is called divinity is the principle of inclusiveness and abolition of exclusiveness. There is nothing that the earth excludes. Nothing is outside the world. Here is an obvious example of inclusiveness

before you. And if you are inseparable from the structure of the world, you cannot exclude any reality of life. You are an inclusive individual, a friendly person, cooperative, loving, charitable. You belong to everybody, and then everybody will belong to you. You will be a social stalwart, and a principle of divine blessedness.

This is an inaugural session, and we are not actually commencing the curriculum of teaching now. This is a session for prayer, worship, and dedicating ourselves to the great cause initiated by the founder of this Ashram, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. You are in a blessed place. You will be here for some time receiving the graciousness of the great Master of this institution, and I am sure that you will go back home as a large vessel carrying blessings to other people. You will be happy, you will be treated in a friendly way, you will not lack anything, and people will love you. You will not be discarded. You will feel a wonderful sensation within yourselves that all is well with you.

Discourse 1

THE TRUE NATURE OF LIFE

What I spoke to you during the inaugural session is basically an introduction to the foundational philosophy of the practical side of yoga—namely, the reason why you should practice yoga at all. The mind is a rational principle. It argues, it questions, and it will not take what you give it unless you make it feel that it is necessary for you. You cannot thrust some dogma into the mind. The mind resents any kind of dogmatic approach. It requires a rational foundation and a convincing explanation about what you are going to give it. Therefore, engaging in yoga practice without the mind accepting the rationality behind it may not give the required result.

I mentioned during the inaugural session that your structure is basically inseparable from the world of nature. This is very important to remember. You have a prejudice in your mind, due to which you imagine that the world may do whatever it likes and you are totally unconcerned with it. This is not so. The world has something great to tell you, and you have no right to disregard it, because you are inextricably related to the world structure. You will learn that you are involved in the world in many layers of your personality—so much so, that it would look like you yourself are the world.

You will be thrilled, actually, to hear all these things. “Am I myself the world? What is it that I want, afterwards? Yoga is telling me that I am the whole world. It is seeping into my vitals, it is passing through my veins, and it is the building brick of my whole physical body. I exist because the world exists.” Would you like to hear these statements? Your health will immediately improve even by hearing these things. A sick person will feel a sensation of rejoicing. “Is this so? Am I so perfectly guarded by the stuff of the world?” This is briefly what I told you during the inaugural session.

Now continuing, we have to see in what other ways we are involved in the structure of creation as a whole. When I use the word ‘world,’ I do not mean only this physical earth. It is a general way of referring to the entire phenomena of creation. You are vitally connected with it. Before you came into the form of a human being, the universe existed. You have not created the universe; it has created you. It is your parent, and you are its child. It is the cause, and you are the effect. You are totally dependent upon it—dependent not as an external accretion totally outside it, but as a vital limb of this wondrous creative force.

What are the ways in which you are involved? Physically, it appears to be very sound that you cannot exist outside the material of this cosmic structure. Have you anything other than the physical body? As a physical entity, as an individual, you live in a society of similar individuals. On the one hand, it is to be noted that you are a physical entity, but you are also a social entity. You cannot exist without a body, and you cannot exist without social relations. You cannot live like a stone, unconnected with people outside. As the physical substance of the world makes up your physical body, so

also your social consciousness is made up of the contribution made by the arrangement of individuals called human society. You are largely influenced by the setup of people around you, including international regions. The whole world of humanity is influencing you. What happens to the man next door will have an effect on you. What happens to the whole district will affect you. What happens to the whole state will affect you. What happens to the whole country will affect you. What happens to the whole of humanity will also affect you. So you can imagine to what extent you are integrally related to an atmosphere beyond and transcending yourself. Physically you are identical with and inseparable from the cosmic material substance, and socially you are inseparable from the large mass of humanity.

Inasmuch as you are inseparable from something, you have an obligation towards it. There is an obligation, socially speaking, to the members of your family, to your village, to your community, to the district, state, country, and the whole world. You have a duty to pay tax. You cannot say, "I am not concerned with what happens in some other place in the world." If even one very serious event takes place in some part of the world, it can affect everybody else in the world.

You are not living unconnected; intensely connected is the very pattern of your living. Physically, as well as socially, you are larger than what you appear to be. You are not what you appear to your physical eye. Keep it in your mind always. You are not an isolated individual, neither materially, physically, nor socially. Now, what is the situation in your mind? Can you think whatever you like and let others go to the dogs, or is it not possible? There is a superintending principle inside the body called the mind, or the mind-stuff,

about which yoga is very much concerned. You say you have a mind, and another person also has a mind. Is there any connection between one mind and another mind?

From what has been said in relation to your social relationship with people, it appears that you have a mental connection with other people. Because social consciousness is nothing but mental awareness of the connection of one way of thinking with another way of thinking, you cannot be totally detached in your way of thinking from the need felt by other people to also think in some way. You have to be charitable in your material life, in your social life, and even in your mental life. Total independence of the mind is not possible.

Oftentimes, the mind appears to be the personal property of the individual. "It is my mind. It is none of your business." It is not so. The mind is not your prerogative. It is not a commodity that you have purchased that entirely belongs to you. Your mind is not your property, as you wrongly consider it to be. Your body is not your property; it belongs to the whole world. And your social existence is not your property; you belong to the entire society of humanity.

There is a contributory, cooperative activity going on in the mental structure of every living being. Minds act and react. Biological researchers have demonstrated that if you think something about the tree in front of you, it will know what you are thinking. If you say, "Tomorrow we will cut this tree," it will immediately vibrate at your nearness. It will shake because you said you are going to cut it. The leaves will tremble; they will shrivel, agitate, and will resent your very presence. On the other hand, you could say, "How beautiful is this tree! How beautifully the foliage is spreading around!

How beautiful are the flowers! What nice fruit! Beautiful thou art, this magnificent banyan tree in front of me. I love you. You give shade to all people. You give fruit. You give oxygen to me during the daytime. I am grateful.” If you tell this to a tree, it will bless you. There is nothing in this world which cannot bless you. Even an ant can bless you.

Incidentally, there is a passage in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad which says: “Those whom you take care of, they will take care of you.” You may wonder how an ant will take care of you. Remember, there are no ants in this world; they are integral parts of the cosmical setup. Even an atom will take care of you. You will laugh at this idea. Your body is made up of the very same atomic core which makes up the ant, the tree, the protoplasm, the bloodstream, everything. There is a vital connection with the core of all things in the world. They act and react.

There was an Englishman who walked in the sunlight and got sunstroke. He thought about it. “Why is the sun so cruel to me? He is a god, giving light and life and energy to all people. God of the universe, bless me!” From the next day onwards, he collected beautiful flowers, brought some holy water, stood before the rising sun and said, “Great Lord, bless me. I offer thee these humble flowers and this holy water. You are the life of all life. You are the most beautiful thing I can imagine. Representative of God, I beseech you, bless me.” From the core of his heart he developed a religious feeling towards the sun, and then he could stand in it the whole day without getting sunstroke.

In a similar manner, we must develop a knowledge of the psychology of all living beings. There is a kind of mind in every living creature. There may be a difference in the degree

of the mind's capacity in different living creatures, but potentially, incipiently, in some form or the other, the mind exists everywhere. Even the atom has a mind. It has an intention in its vibrations, and that intention is the mind. Why would a tree yield fruit unless it had an intention or a purposiveness within it? That purposiveness is what is called the mind.

Thus, deeply feel within yourself: "I am inseparable from the physical aspect of the world, inseparable from society, and inseparable from the mental units constituting all the psychological vibratory units of life. I cannot think irrelevant thoughts, thoughts that are not in consonance with the welfare of other minds." Remember this point well. You cannot even think something aggressive, violent, abhorrent, as a criminal would think. It is not possible for a person to entertain criminal thoughts without being subject to the punishment which nature itself will mete out one day or the other. You can escape man, but you cannot escape nature. Nature sees more than man can see. If walls have ears, they also have eyes.

You have a body and a mind. You have prana inside, which is called the vital principle. You breathe in and out constantly. There is a very, very important activity going on in you: the breathing process. You breathe even if you are not conscious that you are breathing—as, for instance, when you are asleep. Somebody is guarding you even if you are unconscious of your own safety. Are you contributing anything to the breathing that is taking place while you are sleeping? Have you done any service to the breath? The beating of the heart and the working of the prana in the form of breathing go together. If you stop the breath, the heartbeat will be seriously affected. But the heart and the breathing process

work perpetually from birth to death, without resting even for a minute. Everybody wants to rest. You are tired, but the heart is not tired, and the breathing is not tired. Suppose they are tired and would like to rest for one day; would you like it? Why should everybody rest, and not they?

It is because you are guarded by a great parent who loves you more than you love that parent. That parent is not a human being; it is the whole world. The world structure has manifested your personality in a specific form for a purpose to be fulfilled which is cosmic as well as individual. Life has a cosmic purpose as well as an individualised purpose, into which secret and nature we shall slowly enter in the coming days. The breath that you are breathing is not just air that is nearby. It is pumped by the whole world of visible vibration which is called air. Remember wherefrom this little air enters the nose. It is not from within this room only. The air in the room cannot move unless it is pulled and pushed by some activity taking place outside, until it reaches the top of the creative centre. The centre of the cosmos pumps this energy into the heart and lungs of every human being, and it pumps this energy to every leaf of every tree. It acts as a life principle of everything that lives. Life does not come from any particular locality; it comes from the entire creative setup. All life is the world, this universe. Everything is life; nothing is dead.

There is something more about you. You are the body, you are the prana, and you are the mind. Are you something more? You may say this is a great philosophical question. Do you exist when you are deeply asleep? You do not exist as the body, and do not exist even as the breath because you are not aware that you are breathing. Unaware of the breathing process, you exist in sleep. Unaware of the fact that the heart

is pumping blood, you are asleep. When you wake up from sleep, you are conscious of the memory that you did exist in sleep. In what form did you exist? Not as the body, and not as the breath, and also not as the mind because in sleep the mind was inoperative. What was there in you?

When you wake up in the morning, you say, "I had a good sleep." Who makes this statement? Have you thought over this interesting question? The body cannot say this because it was not even conscious, nor was the mind operating. You are speaking. It is you who remembers that you existed even when you were not conscious. How could you know that you existed in sleep when you were not aware that you existed at that time? How does the consciousness of existence in sleep arise in your mind now, when this consciousness of your existence was not there when you were asleep? How could unconscious existence be remembered by a subsequent consciousness? From where did it arise? Something cannot arise from nothing. If deep sleep was nothing, the waking state cannot be something. It will also be nothing. Life in the waking condition is not nothing; it is something. That which existed in deep sleep, and which has woken up, also was not a nil, a zero, or a negation. It had some meaning. It did exist. You did exist.

You cannot imagine a state of existence minus the consciousness of it, though it apparently seems that in the state of deep sleep there is existence minus consciousness. If that were so, you could not remember on waking that there was existence in deep sleep. By inference we conclude that the consciousness that mysteriously remembers that you existed in sleep also existed in sleep in some other way than how it operates in the waking condition. Without going into

the depth of this problem, we may conclude that somehow you existed minus association with the body, mind, intellect, breathing, etc. That is to say, anything that limits you to a particular place did not exist as you existed in sleep. You seem to have existed unlimitedly. The 'I' that slept is some mysterious 'I' which did not have any association with that which limits you to a physical body or a physical individuality.

By deep logical inference, we come to the conclusion that you existed without any limitation. How could you have such a happy, blissful experience in sleep, more pleasant than any other happiness that you can expect from finite objects in this world? If I give you all the finite things in the world but prevent you from sleeping, you will say, "I do not want anything. Let me sleep first." Why is it that you want the happiness of sleep much more than the happiness of an emperor with all the finite glories? It is because, without knowing it, you are existing as an unlimited potentiality of comprehensiveness that surpasses even the happiness of a mortal emperor.

Do you remember the importance of your so-called personality, this little person sitting here? Even though you are walking on the earth, you reach up to the heavens through all the levels of being of which you are made—the levels of the physical, the vital, the sensory, the mental, and the intellectual. You have gone to the depths of all these levels, and found out your own Being.

You are the most beautiful thing—not something else, outside you. You love yourself more than anybody else loves you. Do you love anything more than you love your own self? "If everything goes, I must be alive." This is a subtle potential longing on account of your unlimited existence secretly

operating behind your apparent individual, limited existence. The whole world is throbbing inside you. God himself is speaking to you every moment through the language of the aspirations that emanate from your daily life. You have to achieve it. The process of achieving it is yoga practice. This is a broad foundational vision that I have presented before you about the true nature of life. This has to become a conscious experience.

Towards this end, you have to take different steps of practice. Every day this practice has to be undergone because if you miss it due to lethargy, indifference or carelessness, the trend of your practice may break. Suppose you eat your meal today, and for ten days you do not eat, then eat for two days, and again stop eating; this kind of eating will not replenish you. The intake of food should be daily, in whatever measure. Everything should be a continuity, and not bits of dissected process. Yoga practice should be an inward continuous attempt on your part, without any kind of cessation of this inward effort.

How could you not pay sufficient attention to the welfare of your own being, knowing well that you, this particular being of yours, is not a little so-called Mr., Mrs., son, daughter, father, mother? "It is some mysterious enigma that has cropped up now before my eyes. It is something strange, and nothing can be so strange as what I am. Wonderful! I am wonderful! Now I am going to actualise this experience in my daily life, so that my action becomes meditation, my life becomes contemplation, and my existence becomes practically God's existence." Towards this end you have to try your best, stage by stage, which are the levels, or the limbs, or the gradations of yoga practice.

Discourse 2

SEEING AS THE COSMIC MIND

By virtue of what you must have gathered from our earlier discussions, you may have understood the reason why it is necessary to practice yoga. It is necessary because it includes every other meaning, significance, and value in life. Yoga is not one kind of activity among other things in which you may be engaged. It is the art of total living, not some kind of living. Yoga is not a kind of spirituality which is to be adopted in old age. It is the science of all life—the science of every kind of life.

From the considerations through which we have already passed, one thing that must have been very obvious to everyone is that our thoughts do not correspond to reality. Our perceptions are topsy-turvy. There is no connection at all between what we consider as reality and reality as it is in itself. From a little consideration of the way we have been born as human beings, we would realise that the world came first and we came afterwards. All the elements were created first, so that the world creation as a whole is the cause and we are the effect. The cause cannot be said to be something outside the effect. The cause is not an object which the effect can behold with its eyes. How could we behold the cause of our existence? So, from the point of view of correct perception

of reality, is there any validity in the way in which we look at the world? We do not feel that we are effects of a cause which is the whole world. We feel we are totally independent; the world means nothing to us. It may be there or it may not be there, but we are very safe in every way. This is a notion ingrained in the mind of every person, though it is incorrect.

The breath of life, the structure of our body, and the manner in which we think through the mind are determined by the operational processes of the world as a whole. The world operation determines our manner of beholding, evaluating, and understanding anything in the world. Since the world principle is inclusive of all the effects thereof, in which every one of us is included, it is easy to understand that our existence as individual human beings is entirely determined by the structural pattern and the operative way of the world as a whole.

As is the cause, so is the effect. But we cannot turn our heads back and look at the cause, just as an earthen pot, which is the effect of clay, cannot see the clay as an object of its own perception. Suppose, for instance, we imagine that the earthen pot has consciousness and knows that it is the effect of the clay out of which it is made. Can that pot see the clay, if we accept that the pot has eyes to see? How could the clay then become an object of the perception of the pot, which cannot exist without the clay? This is a little example of how we are caught in a vastly spread-out network of erroneous considerations and wrong knowledge. Everything that we think and do is a mistake. We never do anything right because that which is called 'right' is proper coordination of our mind with things as they really are, and not things as they appear to our mind.

Now, what is the difference between a thing as it is in itself, and as it appears to us? There is a great difference. People make a distinction between reality and appearance. Perhaps another analogy may be more clarifying. At dusk you see something coiled up, and because there is not enough light to see what it actually is, you may mistake it for a snake and jump over it in fear. Even if you shine a torch on it and find it is only a rope, it will still look like a coiled-up serpent. What is the relationship between the rope and the snake? Or is there no relationship? You will agree that the rope is the reality, and the snake is the appearance. Did the appearance come from reality? If you accept that position, it would mean that the snake has come from the rope. But how can a snake come from a rope? If the snake has not come from the rope, will you agree that the snake is itself the rope? Then accepting that it is the rope, there is no necessity for you to jump over it in a state of fear. The rope has not produced the snake; the snake is not a modification of the rope. There is no creator-created relationship between the rope and the snake, yet there is some relationship from the point of view of common sense because they seem to be two different things. The snake is not the rope and the rope is not the snake, and yet the rope is the snake and the snake is the rope. This is a transcendental enigma before us which is involved in every kind of perception in the world.

This also answers the question whether God has created the world. It is like the question whether the rope has created the snake. We may say the rope has created the snake because the snake is seen in it, just as we see the world and, therefore, there must be a creator of it. We are afraid of the world just as we are afraid of the snake. Who created this thing, this

world? An indescribable situation is before us. This situation arises on account of our adopting the system of looking at things through the sense organs. There are eyes which see, ears which hear, and so on. The way of perception—of beholding anything through the sense organs—involves a peculiar charging of the sense organs with consciousness, as an iron rod may be charged with fire when it is red hot. And the impelling character of the sense organs, motivated by the externality of perception, compels the consciousness to get dragged outwardly, as it were, external to its own self. Consciousness cannot become outside itself, because it has no externality or internality.

Yesterday we came to the conclusion that consciousness is everywhere. Yet, why does the object appear to be outside? That happens because there is a power in the structure of the sense organs which pulls everything externally, draws sustenance from its own source, or cause, and throws that power of sustenance externally on that thing which appears to be an object in front of it. That is the reason why everything looks as if it is outside us. It is an erroneous activity of the sense organs, which are perpetually involved in a centrifugal activity, we may say, which urges a thing to run away from the centre to the periphery or the circumference. The impulsion of anything that urges itself to rush outward from the centre to the external periphery of its existence is called centrifugal, and a force that rushes from outside towards the centre is called centripetal. Instead of being our own selves through the centripetal action of consciousness trying to maintain its self-identity, the sense organs condemn consciousness to subject itself to a centrifugal action of running away from its own centre to the outer space-time periphery of life. Thus,

in every act of perception we cease to be ourselves, and we become another thing. What can be a greater tragedy for a person than not to be one's own self? What can be a greater difficulty and problem?

This is the reason why there is sorrow hidden behind every act of perception. By running after the objects of our sensory perception, we lose our energy, the consciousness force, in proportion to the intensity of our longing for the object. We become weaker and weaker, mentally and physically, the more we long to contact that which seems to be outside us. A sensuous person is a weak person, morally, intellectually, and physically. He will fall sick socially, physically, and mentally. The reason is, the Self loses itself in the act of perception.

According to the psychology of yoga, perception is of two types: ordinary perception and emotional perception. We see so many things around us. There is the sun, the moon and the stars, trees in the forest, mountains, rivers, etc. This is general perception. By beholding the sun or mountains and rivers, we are not emotionally disturbed in any way. Yet even in this undisturbed perception, consciousness moves outside to the object. Even in that general perception which is not emotionally conditioned, our energy moves out and we see ourselves outside, as we see ourselves outside in the mirror which reflects our face. We sometimes feel enamoured of our own face when we see it reflected in a mirror. Certainly we would like to see it! We love ourselves so much that we like to look at our reflection in a mirror, and we think we look beautiful. We dress ourselves in fine clothes and groom ourselves, and do all sorts of things to see that we are more beautiful—at least in our reflection in the mirror. Similarly,

perception of the world is like the perception of ourselves through our reflection in a mirror. Some activity of the externalising of consciousness takes place; otherwise, we will not see anything outside.

But there is a more dangerous activity of the sense organs, which is emotional perception. When we behold a thing, we are disturbed by intense longing or intense hatred for it. This is another result altogether of perception. "Oh, how nice, how beautiful! I want it." "Oh, how stupid, how idiotic! I don't want it." These two kinds of mental modifications are called psychoses: one which in a normal way opens a passage of consciousness to its own externality, and the other which is irritating in its nature. It disturbs us, and we cannot have rest. A desire for wealth disturbs the mind, and a tiger in front of us will disturb our mind in a different way. If you see a few nuggets of gold in front of you on the road, observe what transformation takes place in your mind. "Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful! Come, come, come." When you feel a sensation of this kind in your mind, you are in a state of turmoil which is of one kind; and if you see a lion in front of you, you are also in a state of turmoil, but of a different kind. This is a little bit of psychology of the mind. Whether it is a generally perceived externality of consciousness or a disturbed process of the externality of consciousness, one thing is common to both processes of perception, namely, we go out of ourselves.

Would you like to go out of yourself and become something else, and temporarily cease to be yourself? Immediately a shock is injected into your personality while seeing something which you want and seeing another thing which you do not want. You are pulled outside towards that

thing which you want or do not want. For the time being you are elsewhere; you are not in yourself. This is mental sickness. It is not raving madness, but is a preparation for perpetual agony in the mind, and can lead to complete erratic behaviour if it becomes very intense. Lovers can go mad, and criminals can also go mad because of the intensity of the externalising activity of the consciousness operating through the sense organs. You know now in what kind of world you are living. Is it a blissful world? Are you in heaven, or are you in a concentration camp where you are brainwashed to believe something which is totally erroneous, out of context? This is the work of the sense organs that you love so much.

What is yoga, then? It is the process of an active withdrawal of consciousness from its externalising process, and allowing it to rest in itself so that it sees things as they are, and not as they appear through the media of the sense organs. Keep all this in your mind before you take to actual practice. "Why should I control the mind? I am perfectly all right." This feeling may sometimes arise. A person who is totally confounded and lives in a state of confusion cannot know that such a mistake has taken place at all. A person who is perpetually sick for years together may not even know that he is sick because it becomes a natural condition.

There are two types of withdrawal of consciousness from this process of its externalisation. The first step to be taken is to free oneself from the emotional turmoil involved in the perception of things, positively or negatively. The second step is to free oneself from even being conscious that there is anything outside at all.

In yoga psychology, technical terms are used to characterise these two types of psychoses. The painful, emotional

modification of the mind is called *klishta vritti*. *Klishta* means painful, agonising, sorrow-giving. *Vritti* is a mental modification. There is another modification which is known as *aklishta vritti*. *Aklishta* means non-painful, but it is still a modification of the mind, such as the modification taking place in the mind when we look at a tree in front of us. It does not matter to us whether the tree is there or not, but yet the consciousness of the fact of its being there is immediately an indication that our mind has moved outside. Though it is not causing any agony, still it has moved. That kind of movement should also cease because the Self is not an external object. God is not outside somewhere. The Absolute is everywhere, and that which is everywhere cannot be seen as something outside. Here is the whole secret behind the foundation of yoga psychology. Now you know why it is necessary to be a yogi.

The yogi is not an eccentric person. He is not necessarily a Sannyasin. He is a wise, scientific observer of everything. He is a sage. You need not call him a monk, an ascetic, and so on. These words have no meaning before this great scientific approach to things. Yoga is a science, and not a religion in the ordinary sense. It is as scientific as mathematics itself. It is the way you have to live. Yoga is all life; all life is yoga. Knowing this, you have to learn the art of what you may ordinarily call self-restraint.

Self-restraint is the way by which you restrain consciousness from moving outside itself, and station it in itself. If consciousness is an all-pervading principle, the restraint of consciousness in yoga would mean allowing it to settle down in its own universality and not allowing it to have a wrong impression of itself, as if it is outside its own self—as

it happens in the dream experience, for instance. When you behold things in a dream, you are apparently outside your own self. You see a mountain in a dream, but the mountain is inside you only. You see the large spatiotemporal complex of the world outside in a dream, but it is inside your own mind. The impulses that are present in the waking consciousness get projected outside in a made-up space-time complex, and the whole thing appears to be outside. You present yourself as an external world in the dream state.

This is exactly what is happening in the waking condition also. Just as an individual mind in the waking state projects itself outwardly in a manufactured space-time process as the world before it, the universal mind projects itself as all the individuals, such as us here, and here is space-time and the world before us. As we see people in dream, the cosmic mind sees people such as ourselves. Just as the individuals, the people we see in dream, are within the waking mind, so all of us are within the cosmic mind. We are not sitting in Rishikesh, on the surface of the earth, even as in the created world of dream the people we see are not really there. We are seeing our own self. So also in the waking condition, when we see a manifested world outside, we see it as the original cosmic mind is operating through us. We behold only ourselves everywhere. This art is yoga.

Hard is this effort because the compulsive activity of the sense organs, which is determined to pull the consciousness outside into space and time, is as vehement as the power of a flooding river in its onward rush in one direction; and no one can go against the current. It is not possible for ordinary people to curb the intensive onrush of the spate of the flood

of the mind moving in an external fashion through the sense organs, because of the power of the sense organs.

It is not easy to practice yoga. The sense organs are veritable dacoits. They have great strength to dupe you, mesmerise you, confound you, and throw you out of gear. You have to first of all understand that this has happened to you. Unless you know that you have this kind of illness, treatment is not possible. You cannot, by yourself, analyse the mind in this manner because when you try to sit quietly and think over these issues, the senses will revolt. "Come on!" they will say. It is like the terror of the activity of dacoits. If you tell them you will call the police just now, you know what they will do to you. Fright will be the first experience in yoga. You will shudder in great agony at what is going to happen to you, and drop yoga in one second. "No, I don't want this. Good riddance," you will say, and go on your way as before.

The power of the centrifugal activity of the world is so intense that no one can stand it. It is like the power of the surging waves of the ocean; they push you and drag you inside if you go near them. To withstand the onrush of this oceanic wave of sensory activity, you have to be made of steel, not of mortal flesh. Unless you are made of steel, you cannot practice yoga; else, there will be a complete confounding and a fear that the ocean is going to drown you in one act of its ferocity.

This is the reason why you have to be always guarded by a guide or a Guru, even as you cannot initially fly an airplane by yourself and need a guide to sit beside you so that you may not crash down. You cannot even ride a bicycle unless you are trained properly; otherwise, you will fall and break

your legs. So is the case with any activity. Here is a tremendous, overwhelming activity called yoga which promises you all blessedness, but is terrifying in the beginning. The terror arises on account of an unpreparedness of the mind to enter into this practice. You must go only to that extent to which your mind is prepared to accept what you are saying, just as it is in the educational process. One cannot thrust mountains of information on a little child in kindergarten. A teacher in a school should know how the child's mind works. The teacher has to come down to the level of the child's thinking process, and should not stand on a high pedestal of knowledge and pour his wisdom.

I repeat once again, do not start this process without proper guidance. You must perpetually have a teacher, a mentor, who will guide you along this arduous path. Sometimes it looks like walking in darkness. Sometimes it looks like moving along a zigzag, narrow passage. Sometimes it looks as if you are in a state of confused perception of things. And sometimes doubt comes. "What is it that I am finally aiming at?" You can retrace your steps at that time. Perpetual guidance, constant observation, and non-stop vigilance by a trained expert are necessary before you wholeheartedly embark upon this wondrous practice called yoga.

Discourse 3

SUMMONING CONSCIOUSNESS INTO ITSELF

Yoga philosophy, with its psychology, takes its stand on our common experience that we see something in front of us. All problems arise from this unavoidable phenomenon called perception of an object. Generally, we usually consider the object as totally different in its nature from our faculty of perception. In order that the existence of an object be known, there must be a knowing principle. If everything is an object, and there is nothing other than the object anywhere, there would be nobody to know that the object exists at all.

Materialist doctrines, behaviourist psychologists, etc., which contend that matter alone is, commit a mistake by not bestowing sufficient thought on the problem of perception itself. The knowledge that there is an object in front of us does not arise from the object. It is not the object that knows itself as an object. Suffice it to say, matter cannot know itself because matter is bereft of consciousness. The behaviourist supposition that consciousness is an exudation of material forces cannot stand scrutiny because, if that were the case, matter would be the cause and consciousness would be its effect. Knowing well that the effect always comes from its cause, and it cannot contain anything which is not in the cause, it would follow that the consciousness which is

supposed to be an exudation or a product of matter must be incipiently present in matter itself.

Where is matter actually situated? Everywhere. The whole world is material substance. Whatever is visible, tangible, observable, is material. That is to say, there is an omnipresent character of matter. There is no place where matter is not. Now, carrying on the argument that consciousness, supposed to be a product of matter, should be inherent in matter, the conclusion would be that consciousness is wherever matter is. If matter is ubiquitous and there is no segregation of the parts of matter, that which is hiddenly present in matter cannot but also be ubiquitous. Matter is everywhere, and the result is that consciousness must also be everywhere. Since two everywheres is not conceivable because two infinities would overlap each other, and such a thing is inconceivable and not possible, this assumption also falls flat. It is not true that there are two infinities—consciousness on the one side and matter on the other side—because the very assumption is logically untenable.

Can we say that matter, which is the cause of the supposed emanation of consciousness, is all-in-all, and the perception of an object, which is material, is a self-knowledge of matter itself? Is matter knowing itself in the form of consciousness when there is perception or knowledge of an object? Strange would be this conclusion that matter has to know itself by means of that which is supposed to be its product. Nothing can be more absurd than this proposition.

We also cannot avoid the well-known circumstance that minus knowing, there is no meaning in the knowable, or the object. Nobody can say that anything exists—matter or whatever it is—unless there is somebody who knows that it

is so. This knower cannot be identified with that which is known. If we attempt to identify the knower with the known object, either the knower would become the object or the object would become the knower. Either way, there would be a very fantastic conclusion, beyond what we actually expected at the beginning of our inquiry. Yoga takes its stand on this great problem before us—the perceptual problem. The insistence of the sense organs and the mind, which always works in terms of the sense organs, that everything is outside has created the difficulty, which usually looks insurmountable.

The psychology behind the process of perception assumes that a mental psychosis or operation, called a *vritti* in Sanskrit, envelopes the form which is called the object, and the mental crucible into which the form is cast assumes the form of that thing which is called the object. The form gets impressed upon the crucible of the mind-stuff, and hereby a foundation is laid for the knowledge of there being such a thing called the object.

But crucibles are not conscious of themselves. The form cannot be said to be a conscious substance. This form that is impressed upon the crucible of the mind-stuff should be illuminated by a consciousness which knows: “I know an object.” Not only should there be a semblance between the form of the mind and the form of the object, but in addition to it there should also be a consciousness that this form is known.

I do not propose to use Sanskrit technological terms. However, for your information, the mode of enveloping the mental operation in respect of the form of the object is known as *vritti vyapti*, the psychosis modification in terms

of an object. But mere modification cannot become self-conscious, so there must be an attending positive activity taking place together with the form that has been impressed upon the mind. That is consciousness. Consciousness becomes aware of an object, which is nothing but a form.

Here the whole process becomes a mistaken one. It was already assumed in our earlier analysis that consciousness cannot be in one place and an object also cannot be in one place. Since matter is everywhere, objectivity is also everywhere. Everywhere is the perceiving consciousness, and everywhere is the perceived material which is the basis of the objectivity of anything. But the sense organs deny this fact by saying that the object is only in one place. We cannot see an object everywhere; it is only in one place, and it has only one form. This insistence of the mode of sensory operation that the object is only in one place, and it has only one form, is a total contradiction of the fact as such—namely, the form cannot be in one place since the basis, or the very base of the form, is matter, which is everywhere, and the consciousness that knows it is not attached only to the one single form.

Here is the necessity for the practice of self-restraint, mental control. The entire activity of the mind is erroneous. All that the sense organs tell us is a blunder. This is the reason why we are perpetually anxious, as if the very ground under our feet is being cut off, though an illusionary satisfaction is presented before the sensory consciousness, making it appear that there is a real contact of the object with consciousness. What we want is contact. This is a prejudice of consciousness. Two dissimilar things cannot come into contact with each other, and similar things also do not come into contact with each other. Similar things converge and become one,

as the waters of two tanks on an equal level flow into each other. If the two are totally dissimilar, there is no question of their coming in contact with each other. Either way, we are in a very bad position. We are not actually seeing the form in one place, though the limitations of sensory activity tell us that it is so. The senses are not all-pervading; they have some limited apertures through which consciousness moves outside in a fivefold form—seeing, hearing, etc. Hence, common perception contradicts the facts as such.

The purpose of yoga practice is, therefore, to enable the mind to stand abreast of the true nature of things and restrain the senses from the irregular activity of externalising a thing which is really not external. That which is all-pervading—matter or consciousness, whatever it is—cannot be perceived as something outside. Hence, all perception is contrary to the true nature of things because things are not outside the process of knowledge. This difficulty is to be overcome by regular practice of a process called restraint of the movement of consciousness in terms of a so-called outward object.

We think we are happy by looking at an object, but it is not so. This so-called happiness which apparently arises when the assumed consciousness comes in contact with an object is a tremendous illusion presented before the whole process in this manner which I am describing to you. Consciousness is agitated always because while it is truly universal, it looks as if it is limited within the body. It is like a prisoner in a jail which resents its location within the ramparts of the jail. It wants to break the walls of the prison and go outside. It is trying to do this adventure by moving out of itself into a world of space and time, which is considered to be totally outside, and by a psychosis, a modification of the mind, it

touches the form which it has assumed to be totally outside it.

When that limited consciousness which is within us eagerly awaits a means of expanding its limited location within the body, it creates an illusion before itself. When a so-called object is sensorially observed through the internal consciousness, the limited consciousness rises up in joy at the possibility of coming in contact with that object by which means it can expand its dimension beyond the limitations of bodily encumbrance. When the object comes near, it has greater satisfaction because it feels that now its joy is not very far off. When it actually comes in contact, as it were, it rises into a mad ecstasy of imagining that its widened dimension has already been achieved by the introduction of the form of the object into its own self. We have already seen that this introduction is not possible; the object cannot touch the consciousness. Therefore, the so-called happiness of the imagined contact of consciousness with the object is totally unconvincing and absurd, and so we may say that all joys of the world are the result of a tremendous illusion that is cast before the sense organs.

Great saints have said that the world is like a madhouse where there is a crazy continuous effort of the individual to break its boundaries by the erroneous effort of contacting something else, by which means it imagines that it can expand its boundaries. Contact is not the way that the dimension of consciousness expands because contact of two things is not possible; they always remain apart. Since all the efforts of life in imagining that some joy will come from earthly existence become futile, and will go to dust one day or the other, all happiness in this world eventually becomes the dust of the

earth. As we do not want to die in that miserable condition we are trying to see that our mind is set in tune with the facts of nature, which is possible only if the senses do not insist on externalising the object, making the mind believe that the world is outside.

The world is not outside. What you want is not external in space and time. What you want, the so-called thing or object, is everywhere. Anything that you want is everywhere. All things are everywhere, and they are at all times. That which is everywhere is also at all times and, therefore, you can realise your aspiration to fulfil the longing for all-pervasiveness at any time, and at any place. There is no space, time and condition that limits this process. Here we are actually at the gates of spiritual practice.

To give an analogy of what is happening to us in this regard, look at the dream process. Don't you see an object in front of you? You are a dreamer. Your dream consciousness sees people outside, sees things externally, the whole world of space and time. You would like to come in contact with them. Now, who comes in contact with whom in the dream world? The whole structure of dream objectivity is a manifestation of the mind which was earlier in the waking condition, as we call it. The whole externality is within the internality of the waking consciousness. You need not use the word 'internality' because that creates a difference between the internal and the external, so you may say the universality of your mind. The mind that is working in a waking condition is a comprehensive mode of operation. It is called a gestalt, a total. The mind is not made up of little pieces. The total waking mind manifests a total world—only it is externalised. The total world, which is contained within the total mind

of waking consciousness, wrongly becomes an externalised total, and meanders here and there in that world which it has erroneously manufactured.

Just as we can pursue objects in dream—enjoy them, detest them, want them, not want them, and die for them—a similar thing takes place in the waking condition. There is a mind larger than our own mind, which is usually called the cosmic mind. We may compare this cosmic mind to our waking mind in the process of dream perception. All that happens in this world is actually a cosmic dream, and whatever we experience in this world, in any manner whatsoever, is exactly comparable to the process of perception in the individual's dream perception. The difference is that one is cosmic and the other is individual, but the process of perception is the same. In order that we may not be entangled in this wrong perception of externality in our daily life, we must enter into the bosom of the cosmic mind. Just as the waking mind is pervading everything in the dream world, the cosmic mind is pervading everything in our waking life. So who is seeing the world? The answer comes from the dream perception itself. Who is seeing the dream world? The comprehensive waking consciousness erroneously projects itself as an external world, and sees itself as an outward total.

This is also the case with the cosmic mind. It is a universally operative total whole manifesting itself, as it were, comparable to the dream experience, in the form of this world which appears outside. Just as the dream world is not outside the waking consciousness, the whole universe is not outside the cosmic mind. As we are included in the operations of this cosmic consciousness, the universal mind, the world that we behold before us is not actually beheld by Mr. so-and-so,

Mrs. so-and-so, this person, that person; it is beheld by the all-pervading mind. Suffice it to say, God sees the world—not you, not me. But the ego, the affirming principle in each individual, refutes this possibility of a universal mind seeing everything everywhere, and like a crazy, isolated, cut-off individual, hangs in a very precarious manner in its individual cocoon of existence, and obtains nothing—because whatever there is, that something is not capable of contact by perception. All things being involved in the cosmic mind, contact is not possible, and even perception is not possible. There is no such thing as perception of an object; it is an experience of a total involvement of self-awareness in an all-pervading manner. This attitude of the establishment of consciousness in itself is the goal of yoga.

A sutra of Patanjali, in the very beginning of the Yoga Sutras, defines the whole of yoga in a few words: *tada drastuh svarupe avasthanam* (1.3): The seer establishes itself with itself, never wanting to go outside, as it were, imagining that it is somewhere far off. The mental activity, the psychosis of sensory perception, prevents this all-pervading consciousness from settling itself in its own all-pervading nature, so there is a clash between the transcendent and the empirical, the real and the unreal, the Absolute and the relative, God and the world, you and somebody else.

This conflict is perpetual. We may say it is actually the great war of the Mahabharata or the Ramayana—the war of consciousness against the object that it sees and wants to absorb into itself. The victory of consciousness here is the abolition not of the object, but of the objectivity of the object. The renunciation we speak of in spiritual life is not the abandoning of the object, but the wrong notion that it is

outside. You cannot abandon the object. It is there. Even if you say you have renounced the objects of the world, the objects are there, and they cannot go away from your consciousness. Even if that which you clung to is thousands of miles away from you, you cannot say that you have renounced it, because it is there. That which is really there cannot be renounced. The only thing that is possible, and it is necessary, is the renunciation of the mode of perceiving the object. The externality of the object is renounced, not the object as such. When the externality of the object is renounced, the object becomes the subject. The world becomes yourself.

Towards this end, self-restraint is to be attempted in all its methods. It is not a single effort. The senses are very violent; they refuse to subjugate themselves to your efforts. Like a gust of wind or a tornado that blows in one direction or a blast which cannot be resisted by the efforts of your hands and feet, so is the outward rushing of consciousness through the sense organs like a river in flood that refuses to be retarded by a bund or by any other means.

Months and months, and years of effort are necessary. You should not take yoga practice as a kind of temporary exercise, like a schoolboy education which stops after some time and then you call yourself educated. This education will not stop at any time. It is eternity operating through eternity. The finite that everyone and everything is wishes to maintain its finitude. Even an ant does not want to perish as a finite ant. Even a sick man does not want to die. A poor man would like to continue, and even in his poverty he does not wish to perish. The desire for an imperishable continuance of oneself is the action of an infinite operating behind all finite actions and experiences. In this sense it is that we say we belong to

two worlds together: the empirical world of space and time, and the eternal world of the transcendent Absolute.

We belong to two worlds, and so we are pulled simultaneously from two different directions. The world of empirical perception, motivated by the power of the sense organs, drags us out of ourselves, and we always want to see that which is outside us. But, at the same time, the perishable nature of this perception reminds us that this is not going to be a worthwhile exercise because even if we obtain the whole world of contact it will perish, and nothing will remain. Nobody wants to perish. The imperishable aspiration collides with the perishable nature of things, so we are partially lovers of an eternal life and partially involved in sense activity and conflict of every kind.

This conflict has to be eradicated by introducing an element of infinity into every thought that arises in our mind, every work that we do, and every word that we speak. This is what is called karma yoga. Action charged with the character of infinity becomes karma yoga, whereas action which is purely material and finite, arising from the motivations of the sense organs, is finite. The whole of the Bhagavadgita is simply this much. All action is wonderful; it is a cosmic action, provided that which looks like a movement in the form of activity is the activity of consciousness itself. In all activity, consciousness acts within itself; it is not somebody doing something else. If karma, or action, is considered to be the process of somebody doing something, it will react in the form of the bondage of karma. But if it is the all-knowing cosmic mind working in the form of the so-called individualities of activity, there will be no reaction because there is no object before this action.

Cosmic action has no object outside itself. Therefore, one who works like a cosmic person in the form of the true karma yoga of the Gita will never suffer reaction and rebirth, whereas if it is you that are doing something outside you, totally unconnected with your mode of action, it will react. Actually, what is called the reaction of karma is nothing but the Infinite kicking you back for the wrong attitude that you developed towards it. Here is a philosophy, a psychology, and a mode of practice, all which is yoga. Yoga is a practice, a psychology, a metaphysics, and the highest philosophy.

From these words that I have spoken, you would have understood the tremendous necessity to embark on this practice. It is not a question of doing it tomorrow, as you may not exist tomorrow. Why speak of tomorrow? Who guarantees that you will be here in this world tomorrow? It is now. The summoning of consciousness into itself is a question of now, and in the very spot where you are living. It is a question of here and now. "Oh, it is a very difficult thing. Let me do it later on. It is very hot. It is very cold." This problem should not arise when it is actually a question of life and death. When you are drowning in the blunderous activities of the sense organs, will you say, "Let me drown now, and tomorrow I will do something about it"? Nobody wants to be drowned. You should come out of it just now, before you are drowned.

All yoga is eternity operating through every one of us. It is going to be perfectly successful, and you need not have even the least doubt that you will be benefitted by it because the whole of eternity—that is what is called God or the Absolute—is behind you, propelling you. "I am here; therefore, you need not fear." This is the Supreme Absolute

speaking to you. “When I am here, you need not fear. But be with me.” “Come unto me all those that are weary and heavy laden, and I shall see that you are perpetually guarded.” The Absolute perpetually guards you—not tomorrow, but always. It is not like a boss who says, “Let me see after two days.” An immediate action takes place. Because the Absolute is timeless and spaceless, it is just now and here.

As the sensory organs prevent you from thinking like this, first of all you must find a place to sit comfortably where the tantrums of sensory objects will not irritate your mind. You cannot find a cosy place anywhere in this world; everywhere there is noise, irritation, and distraction of mind. Considering the facts as they are in today’s world, you have to do your practice in your own room. You cannot find a beautiful place somewhere outside; there is no such thing as a beautiful place anywhere in the world. Everywhere there are people. Therefore, confine yourself to your room.

Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Chant Om. How do you chant Om? I am giving you the first, preliminary exercise of starting concentration. Very deeply, chant Om. Everybody can chant Om, but not beautifully, sonorously and happily. Just saying Om Om Om is not the way of chanting it, and it cannot satisfy you. The chanting should engulf you completely, inside and outside. Inhale deeply, and start chanting Om beautifully. Aaaaauuummmmmmm. Aaaaauuummmmmmm. Now, increase the volume. Aaaaauuummmmmmmmm. Aaaaauuummmmmmmmm. Aaaaauuummmmmmmmm. Aaaaauuummmmmmmmm. Take a deep breath, and then chant. Aaaaauuummmmmmm. Aaaaauuummmmmmm. Aaaaauuummmmmmm. Aaaaauuummmmmmm. If you sit together and chant, the volume increases, and you feel a

greater satisfaction than when you do it singly. You can also do it alone, but if you have common meditation, all can chant together and create a wonderful, powerful vibration. You will drive out every kind of negative trait in the atmosphere, as well as in your mind.

Go on chanting like this for fifteen minutes, until the mind feels deeply engrossed in this beautiful music of your recitation. It is music. It attracts, and fills your heart. You will rejoice over it, and would like to listen to it again and again. Let the chant of Om be a musical performance on your part. It is not merely music in the ordinary audible sense; it is a vibration that you are creating.

The whole world is nothing but vibration. The so-called solidity of things is a condensation of impersonal vibrations in space and time. This body of yours that looks so hard and rigid is actually a condensed rock-like form, as it were, of a ubiquitous all-pervading liquid universal force, so that you are a centre of force in an internal communion with all things in the world. Nothing is outside you, and this vibratory chant of Om enables you to reduce your so-called solidity of personal existence into a point of vibratory centre which, when liquefied, as it were, comes in contact with all other things, which are also of the same nature. You enter into a sea of power, an ocean of force, a cosmic vibration which, perhaps, is the beginning of the universe.

In the beginning, there was a tremendous Om. We do not know what kind of Om it was, but it broke the barriers of limitation, spread itself continuously through all space and time, and manifested itself in every nook and corner, in every form that you can conceive in your mind. The whole universe is a concretised form of spatiotemporal objects.

It has to be melted down, back to its own source. Do not imagine that you are far away from this centre. The centre is here, within you—here just now. There is no distance between the universal centre and your existence here. There is no such thing as distance at all. It does not exist. Everything touches everything else. This possibility should be introduced into your mind by a deep chanting of Om in the manner I mentioned.

Do it every day. Close your doors, sit alone for one hour, chant Om in this manner, and feel that you are melting into the all-pervading force of nature—which is not only your friend, your parent, but your own very, very beloved substance of which you are made. You will feel you are everywhere at that time, and nothing can give you a greater joy than this kind of feeling by merely chanting Om properly, once, twice or three times daily. All your activities and performances will become galvanised into a golden form. This recitation, this concentration, this satisfaction will act like a philosopher's stone that converts all iron into gold, so that you live in joy, perceive joy, contact joy, and you are in a deep bliss of self-complete perfection. Even in this first stage you will feel this. Start this practice today itself. There are many more things to know about it, and we will continue in another session.

Discourse 4

THE SEVEN GATEKEEPERS TO THE ABSOLUTE

There are seven gatekeepers to the palace of the Absolute, and they will prevent your entry. These gatekeepers are actually taxation officers. There are seven kinds of tax you have to pay before you are allowed entry into that great magnificence. The moment you take a step in the direction of this great attainment, you will be stopped at the first gate and told to pay your dues. What are the dues?

The first dues—the types of obligation which you have to discharge—are the impulses arising from within yourself in connection with your social relations. There is nothing wrong with society and there is nothing wrong with people, but, generally speaking, something is not all right with your attitude to people. I am not going to speak here on sociology, but you can bestow some deep thought on this matter and find out for yourself what attitude you have towards people outside. Put a question to yourself: Are you justified? Any attitude you have within yourself has to be accepted by the law of the Absolute, so you cannot just go ahead with your whims and fantasies. Whoever has a clear idea as to what it is that one is aspiring for—the great, wonderful attainment—will also know what laws operate in regard to that attainment.

Any contradictory attitude or behaviour from your side in respect of the social atmosphere either by attachment or by hatred should be reconciled, and then you become a general witness of things. When you go above this realm, you cannot carry with you any kind of social prejudice. That has to be shed. Everyone is involved in society. There is a give-and-take arrangement between one person and another person. Whatever you are obliged to give to society for the extent of service it has rendered to you, that obligation has to be discharged. If you have taken nothing, you need not give anything. There should not be a feeling pinching you that some obligation has not been discharged. As I mentioned, the mistake is not in people; it is in your attitude. What you think about people—your thoughts about other people in society, either this way or that way—is the social determining factor in your personal life. You cannot say that you are unconnected with society because every minute you can see how you are connected to other people in the world. This has to be carefully taken care of, and a harmonious relationship between yourself and the atmosphere of society has to be carefully attempted—slowly, not abruptly by taking a sudden step.

In the practice of yoga, there is no sudden step; nothing can be done abruptly. The process of yoga practice is a gradual, wholesome growth from lesser maturity to higher maturity, as a baby grows into an adult. The baby does not suddenly jump into adulthood; it is a systematic, organic, wholesome, complete, mature developmental process into the adult condition. In a similar manner is the whole practice of the limbs of yoga. There is no jump. Some say that there

is a ladder of ascent in yoga, which gives the impression that there are rungs, one different from the other—or rather, one unconnected to the others. But here, each rung is organically related to the others. It is not like a ladder that is used to climb to the top of a building, where one rung is not organically connected with another. Here the rungs are vitally connected, and any error at the base will affect the further rungs.

So tell the gatekeeper, “I have no misgivings about human relations, and people have no misgivings about me.” In the Bhagavadgita there is a brief statement about it: “You should not behave in such a way that people shrink away from you, nor should you shrink away from them.” This is a harmonious relationship of the so-called external atmosphere—so-called, because it is really not external. As humanity is an organic integrality, to say that society is outside is also not a correct statement. In this concept of the social integration of values, you stand above society. You do not any more remain as a single social unit, but are a representative of humanity as a whole. This is a psychological exercise which is not difficult to understand, and not difficult to practice, because you are growing from less healthy conditions to a more healthy condition. If that taxation is paid, you are allowed inside.

Then the second gatekeeper stops you. All your material entanglements should also be dealt with properly. You cling to money, you cling to property, you cling to your house, and to all the economic values connected with your existence. These are part and parcel of your very bloodstream; you cannot even exist without them. They have to be properly attended to. Will you lose all your property and then go to the Absolute? It will be a shock. “I have a large estate,

millions and millions. I have earned it with great difficulty. Do I leave it?" The heart will rebel against this proposal. It is more difficult than the earlier one. As you advance further, the difficulty goes on increasing because you go within yourself more and more. The things outside are not a difficulty. When you go inside yourself, it is a terror. You do not require any instruction on this matter. When you leave this body, what happens to your property? Will you get a shock to hear this, or will you feel, "Nothing is happening to me, I am perfectly all right. The property concept is what has been annoying me." Property is not a problem. People are not problems. Money and land are also not problems. But you have a particular clinging to them either this way or that way, making it appear as if they totally belong to you as your property. The wealth that is given to you, the property that is bestowed upon you, have to be managed as if you are a trustee—a caretaker, and not a possessor. It is the possession that creates the problem within you because if you are a possessor, you cannot leave it. But if you are a trustee, you have a great responsibility over it but you are not the possessor of it, so if you get transferred to another place you will lose nothing.

Nobody can own anything in this world because things are external. What is called property is external. It is not inside your body and, therefore, it cannot be held in the grip of your hand. Even if gold is held tightly in the grip of your hand, it has not become yours because it is still outside and it can drop out of your hand. Anything outside is not your property; and as all property is outside, nothing belongs to you.

These taxation officers do not expect anything from you materially. They expect a transformation of your evaluation of things. Your problem is an evaluation—a mental operation—and not the thing as such. No thing can trouble you; it is your evaluation of things that troubles you.

Here is a person. This person can be considered as many things: your father, your boss, or you can consider the very same person as your servant. You may consider that person as a friend or as an opponent. Now, has the person become so many things in one minute? He is the same person, but your relationship has interpreted him in various ways. It is this interpretation that will cling to you and bite you like a scorpion if you try to move forward without making amends for these attitudes.

All problems are inside you. Your thoughts, your feelings, your emotions are the problems. Do not make complaints against the trees and the mountains, the sun and the stars, and so on. This adjustment to the concept of position, property, belonging, house, relation, etc.—this transvaluation of the values of this kind of relationship that you have with property should be modified into an integral concept, as you did earlier in your social relations. When you are given a clean chit, you enter through that gate.

Then the third gatekeeper stops you. These are the vital longings of your personality. Your pranas urge you in the direction of a kind of satisfaction. The vital longings are well known to people. What are the vital longings? They are the intense desire to live only in this body and not bother about any other body. You would not like to be transferred to someone else's body; that would be horrible. If permission is granted for you to transfer yourself from your body

to another person's body, would you like it? You cling to your body only, and to none other. "I am only this, and nothing more." This is one kind of vital attachment.

The second vital longing is for sex. It is a terrible boogie that is before everyone's eyes, mind or feelings because no one has understood its meaning. Sex is not merely a relationship between a man and a woman. That is only an outer manifestation of an internal longing. You are bound by the time processes, and you know that you are going to die one day. But nobody would like to die. You would like to continue in the process of time, even if this physical body is to pass away. That is the longing for the perpetuation of the species. You want a child to be born to you. The child is a reproduction of your own self, so you feel that you are physically immortalised because you have produced a child. People marry, but they do not know why they marry. It is a hobgoblin in front of them, a great nightmare. Nobody knows that it is a yawning demon wanting to swallow them. You think you must marry, but what is the purpose? Why are you pushed in that direction so vehemently? The species tells you: "You fellows are going to perish. I shall see that your species continues." The voice of the species is like a terrifying rod telling you that you cannot go without transforming yourself into another form of your own self.

The species cannot perish. It is the rod of time that is punishing you in the form of the longing for the production of children. This urge is called sex. It is not man wanting woman or woman wanting man. That is a misconception. It is something else inside—a devilish urge to perpetuate the physical personality in the form of progeny. Nobody understands this because if it is clear to your mind, you will

never go for it. So an illusion is cast by nature for its own purposes: "It is for your good. Go for it! You will be blessed." This demonic voice that you are hearing from inside is like Satan speaking to Adam and Eve: "Eat the forbidden fruit. How beautiful, how tasty!" When the tasty fruit was eaten, hell descended the next moment. It is said that God kept a flaming sword at the gates of heaven. "Come not here. Go!" You fall down headlong into the perdition of human sorrow. The power of illusion connected with this impulse is so strong that nobody can pierce through it; and while it is a devastation of one's welfare, it looks like a great blessing.

You must be able to understand this matter. Overcoming the urge of the species is as difficult, or even more difficult, than the urge for possession of material property and social relations. The urge cannot be resisted by the power of will or by any kind of foolish austerity, starvation or by running away. You cannot run away from the devil; it will pursue you wherever you go. Understand the significance of what I have said: You are misguided by the voice of the species, which wants to perpetuate the sorrow of existence.

Schopenhauer was one of the persons who thought about this matter. Why do you hide that part of your body? You can expose your mouth, you can expose your chest, legs and hands, but you always cover that part of the body. This is the demon that is sitting inside, and if you treat it with a callous attitude, the demon's work will not go on properly. So it is a shame before you, and you do not want to expose your shame. Why is it a shame? You are going to do something devastating to the soul and, therefore, it is a shame. You are guarding your pugnacious attitude which appears to be the beautiful voice of a friend, but it is actually from a satanic

manifestation in the form of a snake. Psychologists and psychoanalysts say that the snake represents sexual desire, and those who have intense sexual longing have dreams of snakes. If you are able to visualise the cosmical significance of this urge which is pushing you exteriorly—not internally or universally—by understanding this situation, you will be able to overcome this impulse. A divine universality will take possession of you, and this externalised urge will stop in one second, if you want.

If this is overcome and you pass through, the next gatekeeper is your emotional turmoil. This is very difficult to explain. “Why do I enter the bosom of the Absolute? What will I get from that? I have so many things in this world. The whole world will vanish for me if I have the temerity to think that the Absolute can give me everything. So much is there before me. All the beautiful, grand, wonderful manifestation of this world is there, and it will vanish completely. I, too, will vanish.” Do you hear this statement? You will not be existing there when you enter the Absolute. “Oh, goodbye. Thank you very much! If I am not going to enjoy the bliss of the Absolute because I will not exist there, what is the purpose of this exercise? There is something wrong.” The emotion says, “Be careful. What do you gain by entering the Absolute?” Let anyone answer this question. Nothing that the world can give you can be found there, but the grandfather of all these things, the one who has manufactured all the grandest things in the world, will be there.

These wonderful things that you see in the world are shadows cast by the realities which are the ramifications of the Absolute. Therefore, fear not. Do you want shadows, or do you want the substances which cast the shadows? You

go on saying, "I want this, I want that," but you are running after the shadow of a reality, which is not here. So do not be afraid that you are losing everything, because you yourself are a shadow of another thing which is your original reality, the archetype of your own existence. You are a reflection of your own Self which is somewhere else; and if you can enter that, do you think you are losing anything? You are gaining yourself. Now you have lost all things by looking at your own shadow existence here and the shadow existence of the world. Do not make the mistake of thinking that the world is a paradise. It is a shadow show, and you must be very cautious about it. So, do not be afraid of what you will find when you enter the Absolute. What you will find cannot be explained. It is wonderful. Your father, grandfather, mother—everybody will be there, and all the wonderful things, beautiful things, ecstasies of this world. They are in the original there; these are shadows dancing here. The ecstasies of earthly life are shadows of a wonderful majestic ecstasy in Reality, and you will see them in the Absolute. You will find yourself in Reality. Are you not happy to hear all these things? Tell the emotions, "I am cleared of all these doubts." Then the gatekeeper allows you to go through.

Then you have another problem, which is your intellectual convictions. You think you are a Hindu, a Christian or a fundamentalist, and you are the owner of property and are a big man. Name and fame catch hold of you. Who would like to be insignificant? People work hard day in and day out to become important, to gain high positions. Even if they die they do not want their name to be forgotten, so it is engraved on a marble slab to let people know they existed. What a desire to perpetuate their name! Even after the death

of the body, they cling to the name that was attached to their personality. The desire for name, fame and respect is so strong that people can commit suicide if this is denied. You can leave everything, discard all things, but if your name is affected, nothing can be worse than that. This is a prejudice that you have, and here your ego is speaking. Previously your emotions and attachment were speaking, and now the ego is speaking. "I am. My name cannot be removed." This I-am-ness will come and say, "You cannot throw me out like that."

Here you find yourself in a very difficult situation. Would you like to be a stupid man, unwanted, spat at, a good-for-nothing? "No, this kind of life is no good. I am a wonderful man. I have achieved so much. I have received so much encomium and recognition, and should I throw everything away and go like a pauper to the Absolute?" This is the ego speaking. Tell the gatekeeper that you understand that you have to pay your dues to this erroneous clinging to name and fame. What is there in a name? It is only a sound, a word that people utter, and that word is attached to you. You are thrilled merely because a word is uttered in front of you. Clear these doubts.

When you go through that gate, there is another gatekeeper—the power of causation, the intense action of the notion of the relationship of cause and effect, which is insisting that something has come from something else: God has created the world; there was a time when God sat in heaven and thought, "Let me create the world." The world is an effect, God is the cause. What is the relationship between the cause and the effect? You do not want to answer this question. Is the effect the same as the cause? Is the pot identical with the clay

out of which it is made? Yes. No. Yes. No. Yes. No. You cannot say anything. The clay is not the pot, but there is nothing in the pot minus the clay. The clay is the pot, but the clay is not the pot. Now, what is this situation between God and the world? Is the world made up of the substance of God, or has God created it not out of His substance, but from a material external to Him? There is no 'external' to God. It is said that God created the world out of nothing. If that is the case, the world is nothing; it is not created at all.

This is philosophical jugglery and a quandary of a metaphysical nature. Philosophers both in the West and the East have struggled to know what this thing called causation is. Modern physics, in its highest reaches, has denied causation. Nothing is produced by something else; everything is producing everything. The cause is the effect; the effect is the cause. It is like a circular movement of one thing in connection with another. Nothing is produced by anything; things are as they are. But what is it that is actually there? Is it God that is there, or is it matter that is there? These are intellectual quandaries and philosophical doubts that arise in the mind, finally landing upon the difficulty of knowing your relationship with God Himself. Are you a part of God, are you totally different from God, or do you not exist at all in light of the omnipresence of God? These doubts are rational, intellectual, and arise from some deep convictions on account of the logic that you adopt in understanding things. The intellectual and rational attachments also have to go.

If that is cleared and you go further in, the next obstacle is: "God is sitting in heaven. The Absolute is very far from me. There is a great distance between me and the Absolute." Do you say the Absolute is inside this room? Will anybody

say that? You cannot say that; you will be afraid to utter such words. Is the Great Supreme Being inside this room, sitting here looking at you? You think It is something far away, in high heaven. "God is in heaven and all is well in the world," said the poet.

The concept of distance and the futurity of achievement are also a problem. "Tomorrow I shall have Self-realisation." You must know that Self-realisation is not in the process of time and, therefore, there is no tomorrow for it. It is eternity. Eternity is not yesterday, today or tomorrow. "I shall attain God." The word 'shall' means a futurity. These are muddles created in the intellectual process of thinking which goes by the name of rational philosophy, metaphysical argument, etc. They must go.

Finally, the concept of space and time comes. Everything is in space and time. The scriptures tell us that heaven is so vast. Whether it is a Hindu paradise, a Muslim paradise or a Christian paradise, it is said that greenery is everywhere, rivers flow, and there are ponds of nectar and other delights. Delights rain from all sides. This is the scriptural description of heaven that is ruled by God Almighty in His wonderful Garden of Eden. You cannot get out of this idea. You are a religious person, so you respect God as the Ruler of the great heavens above the seven levels of being.

If this is cleared, the Great Light opens, and the Master comes out. In the Katha Upanishad we are told that the great aspirant was debarred from having the vision of the great Teacher for three days and three nights. He starved, and stood without eating and drinking.

When Suka, the great seer, was sent by his father, Vyasa, to have an interview with Janaka, the great yogi, the king

sent information that he was not available. Suka, the earnest seeker, stood there.

After three days, the king sent messengers, “Let him see the beautiful palace. Show him around, and let me see him afterwards. Take him around the palace. Ask the boy whether he is thirsty, and give him a cup of milk.”

They brought a glass of milk which was filled to the brim, and even the slightest shaking would spill it. Janaka wanted to see how far the boy was in control of his mind, so not only did he give him a cup of milk filled to the brim, he also arranged for wonderful music and dance all around the palace. Grand attractions were presented so that if Suka looked at them, the milk would spill. But the concentration of the boy was so much that he thought only of the milk, as he was told that it was a test of his concentration. He moved around the great palace three times amidst the wonderful music and dance that were going on.

After these tests, Janaka opened the gates and took him inside. “My dear boy, what did you see? For the three days that you were there, I could not see you. Sorry.”

“I saw nothing,” said Suka.

“Did you go around my palace?” asked the king.

“Yes.”

“Did you see anything?”

“No, I didn’t see anything. I saw only the milk that was in the cup,” replied Suka.

“Come on, sit,” said the king.

Then a conversation took place on high values that are totally spiritual.

Similar was the case of Nachiketas and Yama. Yama said, “I am very sorry that I was not available for three days and

nights. For this mistake that I have inadvertently committed, I ask you to choose three boons.”

Nachiketas chose one boon connected with earthly existence, and another with cosmic existence. For the third boon Nachiketas asked, “What is the fate of the soul after the departure from the body?”

Yama said, “Do not ask this question!”

These tests come gradually, one after the other. If you very intensely aspire for Realisation in this very birth—your longing is flaming like a fire from inside—you will attain it in this birth itself, even before shedding the physical body. But if your aspiration is shallow—you want it, but in a very moderate manner because you want to have this world and the other world also at the same time—then when the body is shed, the mortal coil is cast off, as you have not reached that state, you will take another birth.

The nature of the birth that you take after leaving this body will depend upon the last thought that you entertained at the time of passing—what you were thinking at that moment. Ordinarily, people cannot think at that time; they are confounded. But the intensity of the practice, the momentum of your earlier meditation, etc., will be carried forward like a credit on a balance sheet, and that will push you forward.

Some people are born who, even in early life, are fired with a great consciousness of values. There are precocious children, geniuses even at a young age, all because of their efforts in their previous life. You will be born in a very congenial atmosphere of family relations, yogis, teachers, Gurus, Masters, etc. But if your understanding is perfectly clear, you feel: “I do not want to have another birth. I do not

want to be born somewhere and continue my practice. I do not want this tedious exercise. It should end now!” In yoga scriptures, that intensity of longing is called *tivra samvega*, which is flaming aspiration which burns up all desires, and wants nothing except that. If this longing is persisting, and is burning in your body and soul, melting down your personality, you will realise it in this very birth.

Discourse 5

CONTACT WITH REALITY

Contact with reality, which is the aim of yoga, involves a divesting of ourselves from erroneous notions of what reality actually is. Broadly speaking, we may distinguish between two kinds of erroneous notions. One is commonly experienced, which is, we mistake one thing for another. For instance, at dusk, when the light is not sufficient, a telephone pole may look like a man, and a coiled rope may look like a snake; and in deserts, the refraction of sunlight on dry sand may produce the illusion of there being water. These are types of illusion about which we are familiar.

But there are more serious errors, such that we cannot even know that the error is taking place at all. When we stand apart from the object and see it erroneously, as in the case of the illustrations I mentioned, that is one kind of error. But when we are ourselves involved in the error, we will not know that the error is taking place. For instance, when you see a movie on a screen, you are outside it, so you can visualise what is actually taking place on the screen. Imagine for a moment that you are inside the screen. You will never see that you are involved in the very process of the perception of the movement because you are moving at the same speed as the film. This is a very interesting feature, which may be

called a transcendental error. It is transcendental because it surpasses human understanding—because the understanding itself is part of this error.

What is this transcendental error? We have certain types of prejudiced confirmation that everything is only in some place, and not everywhere. Everything has length, breadth and height. Everything was yesterday, or it is today, or it will be tomorrow. The dimension that we see in objects—length, breadth, height—is the work of a spatial expanse, about which we know practically nothing. We simply say there is space, as if the matter is very clear to us. The most tremendous conditioning factor in our life is the character of a power that creates the imagination or the notion of distance. Everything is distant; it is different from the other. One object does not touch another object because of their individuality, characterised by the spatial qualification—or the mode, so to say.

Apart from this, there is also the time factor, which makes us feel that everything is only at some time, and not always. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, particularly, are very cautious in telling us that we cannot contact the reality of a thing unless it is divested of characters which do not really belong to it. Because of the location of an object in space, it looks like an isolated something; and it is dressed up by the notion of size, weight and features which distinguish one object from the other. All the things in the world do not have the same features. That is the reason why we are able to distinguish one object from another.

Firstly, we have to be careful in analysing our process of perception, and try to detach ourselves from the perceptual process—which has involved us to such an extent that we are involved in the very process of perception. Independent, free

judgment of a thing is not possible because every judgment, so to say, of the nature of an object is determined by the structure of the perceiving faculty itself. Totally isolated apprehension of an object, independent of this involvement, is practically impossible. Because of the almost impossible task that we have before us in this regard, it looks like a transcendental mystery and a transcendental enigma before us.

Is an object by itself exactly as it appears to our perception? This is the main question that has to be raised even before we try to know how we can contact an object. No contact with anything is possible under the prevailing circumstances because everything stands apart from everything else; spatial distance operates between everything in the world—yourself, myself, and so on.

If spatial distance is an inveterate characteristic of an object, nothing can contact another thing. The spatial description of an object will vitiate even the very attempt to contact it. Thus, we cannot contact anything, really speaking. Even if it is in our grip and we imagine that our hand has contacted it, really there is no such contact because the object is quite different from the grip of our hand. It is totally different. Even if we hold something tightly in our hand and imagine we are contacting it, it is not really contact because it is still outside us and it will drop from our hand. If that is the case, reality cannot be contacted if we are to view it with descriptive qualities such as isolation of one thing from the other, and location at one particular place.

If you can remember what I told you earlier, these discussions must have revealed that there is an interconnection of all things. Thinking that there is no such interconnection is a transcendental error that we commit in the perception of an

object. I am I, you are you, that is that; this is not the truth. The undercurrent of interrelation of the very substance of all things is withheld from our ordinary perception. Because all perception is externalised, that which is internally, organically related to another thing cannot be externally perceived. There is a difference between interconnection and externality of perception. The doctrine of the Sankhya that *prakriti* is the matrix of all things in the world in the form of its potential properties, called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, indicates that nothing can be isolated from another thing. They are, as it were, waves in a vast sea of material presentation. Though all the waves in the ocean are many in number, they are vitally connected to the bosom of the whole ocean, which does not permit a substantial and real distinction of one wave from another.

The sense organs, about which we were discussing last time, prevent us from thinking along these lines. Just as when a river is in flood and we are caught up in that flood—there is only one direction of movement permissible to us, and we have no choice over what direction we will move because we are carried away by the force of the waters—so is the case with the power that is exerted by the sense organs that compel us to see with blinkers, in one direction only, and in one manner only.

We were discussing the necessity for self-control, which means the restraint of everything of which our personality is made. Self-control is not closing the eyes or shutting the ears. The very consciousness of externality is contrary to the necessity for self-control. The descriptive characteristics of things and persons are not actually the essence of persons and things. Contact with reality is actually the contact with

the essence or substantiality of things which, unfortunately for us, eludes our grasp because of the fact that it underlies both our own selves as perceivers and the objects that are perceived. We are caught as the objects are caught, and one cannot be seen or judged independently, freely.

The reaction that is set up between the perception of the object and the nature of the object creates the illusion of there being real perception and that we have really contacted something. What we call physical contact is only a phenomenon created by electrical impulses. You will be surprised to hear that such a thing is possible. When we touch a physical object we may be under the impression that it is an object that we are touching, but actually the object is a mass of electrical impulses that rush outward in one way, and our fingers are also nothing but sensations of electrical impulses. When one impulse touches another, it looks as though there is a hard substance, and we believe that there is a solid object in front of us. If we get an electric shock by touching a high-voltage current, we may feel that a huge mountain is hanging on our hand. A very heavy weight seems to be tied to our hand, while no object is actually there. Sensations are electrical impulses, really speaking, the prana vibrating in a particular given direction. In this way, we may say the world is an illusion. It does not exist as it appears to our eyes. There are only the forces of objective substance we call *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, about which we know practically nothing.

We have heard these words *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* a hundred times, yet their meaning may not be clear. They are three forms of the action of force which constitutes matter. Matter—*prakriti*, as it is called—is itself not a hard substance. In modern terms, we may say it is a potential for

manifestation in the form of electrical activity. And we are completely befuddled in this sort of appreciation of objects on account of the consciousness, which we ourselves are, moving together with the mental activity of perception.

When we see an object, two things take place. The mind takes the shape of the object, the form of the object. But merely the mind taking the form of the object will not result in the consciousness of the object. Consciousness has to pervade the mental modification, by which we are able to contact the object in a psychological manner. Consciousness is pulled, dragged by the power of the sense organs in the direction of their movement. And the perceiving consciousness, like a slave of the impetus of the sense organs, takes it for granted that it is moving in the direction of an object. Because of its all-pervading nature, consciousness does not really move anywhere, but it is made to believe that it is an accomplice or a participant in the mental activity which forces the senses to move externally.

The externality, so-called, is also a great mystery. Everything is outside. But what is the meaning of this 'being outside'? We can have some idea of how this outside-ness creeps into our mind in a most dangerous manner when we compare our waking experience with our dream experience. We know very well that when we are conscious of objects in dream there is space, there is externality, there is individuality of objects, and one thing is different from the other. But is there really individuality of things, one cut off from the other? Is there really distinction created among objects by the so-called space that we observe in our perception? The externality, which is the cause of the perception of dream objects, is also an operation of the mind. It is a trick that is

played by the gyrating activity of the mind involving itself in a dance of which it is itself not conscious, and compels anything connected with this dance to imagine that it is also involved. We daily pour ourselves on objects in order that we may be aware that they are existing at all.

How do we pour ourselves? The whole being of ours, which is psycho-conscious, wells up like a wave of the ocean and dashes against the form we considered as an object. The so-called object is only a form, it is not the substance, so we cannot think that we are able to possess any substance in the world. The so-called externality is the real object which looks like a substantially-existing something. Yoga tells us a very intense analysis of the process of perception has to take place, and then we unite ourselves with the substance of things. This union of our true nature with the true nature of things is called samadhi in yoga language. Samadhi is not an unconscious trance, as we may imagine. It is the real union of one thing with another in their essence, minus the forms or the temporal characteristics that may be invested upon them.

We define an object in a particular manner. This is the object; it has these qualities. The qualities that we see in a so-called object are nothing but the projections of the structural pattern of the mind itself. The mind thinks in four ways: everything is a quantity; everything that is a quantity also has a quality; everything is externally connected in some way to another thing; everything is in a particular condition. These are the four ways in which we think. Everything is in a particular condition or mode, as they say. Everything, including ourselves, exists in a mode, a circumstance, and everything is definable in terms of certain qualities which distinguish the object from other qualities.

Then there is the concept of the quantum of an object. It is of this size, this weight, and is only in this location. This peculiar intrinsic, vehement character of the mental structure also imposes itself upon what it wrongly perceives as other things. In this involvement of *prakriti*, which is all-pervading, there are no things called other things. Everything is everywhere. But this otherness of a thing, which compels the senses to come in contact with what they regard as outside, is an imposition inflicted upon the spatial form of an object by the mind, which itself is the source of the nature of the perception of an object. We see what we ourselves are in our mind. Whatever we are, that is our perception.

The Yoga Sutra tells us this descriptive affirmation in respect of an object, which is called the idea of an object, should be withdrawn. That is, we should not look at anything with a prejudgment. Without any kind of previous notion of a thing, is it possible to associate ourselves with the thing? The idea we have of an object—or our idea about anything, for that matter—cannot be regarded as a completely justifiable idea. The idea that we have about anything arises on account of the very nature of the structure of our psychophysical personality. When we change in the process of evolution, our ideas of things also change. There is a total change taking place, and the whole world evolves higher and higher into the further levels of the evolutionary process. Therefore, with intense analytical power it should be possible for us to adjust ourselves to the true nature of an object without any kind of description or ideational quality about it.

We also give the object a name. This is Rama, this is Krishna, this is Govinda, this is John, this is Joseph, this is a tree, and this is a mountain. Things have no name, really

speaking. Name is a necessity that has arisen in the process of determining the nature of an object as distinguished from another object. When an object emerges, it does not come with a name attached to it. You yourself have no name, really speaking. You are Govinda, Rama, Krishna or Joseph, but who told you that you are that? The basic characterisation of ourselves as somebody, and not somebody else, gets infused into our existence right from the beginning, at the time of birth. This naming quality introduces itself to us so intensely and vehemently that we cannot think that we are someone else. Joseph is only Joseph; he will not think that he is John, though there is no great philosophical justification that he should be only Joseph and not John. This applies to the nature of every object in this world. It need not be called by that name. Its name is a convenience that we have created in order to distinguish one thing from the other, but that convenience itself becomes the nature of the object. Hence, we have to divest ourselves not only from the idea of the object, but also from the name or definition that we attach to it.

But the object itself is different from both these things. The thing in itself, the object as such, is the true essence of whatever we call the object—which we cannot perceive, cognise or contact because of our total erroneous involvement in the externalisation of activity since, as I mentioned, we are organically, vitally and totally involved in this perceptual process. There is the humorous example of a witness of a drama or cinema projection entering into the screen and creating a chaotic perception.

The whole point in yoga psychology is that the things or persons are not as they appear to our eyes. But nobody

will believe this fact because the belief is contradicted by our psychophysical personality getting organically involved in the mistake. If the thief and the policeman are identical, we can imagine the consequence. Great power of will is necessary here. Can you stand together with an object without actually observing it with open eyes? Can you be parallel with an object, and not externalise it? Can you stand side by side with an object, and not look at it with your eyes? Difficult is this idea. Can you imagine that your object of meditation is parallel to your existence because, in perception, the subject and the object stand on a par? One thing is not superior to the other; they both stand on equal footing in the same level of reality. If that is the case, it is very, very unjust on our part to externalise the object, which is our dear friend and inseparable from our own selves.

The true nature of the object cannot be known when you put it outside, far away from you, and allow space to interfere between yourself and others. With the power of concentration, you can deeply imagine that what you are concentrating upon or seeing is just beside you. There is nothing difficult about it. It is not merely beside you, it is so parallel to your existence that you cannot regard it as outside you—somewhat like your hand hanging on your body, existing and operating parallel to the structure of the body, and you cannot consider the hand as an object of the body. This requires a very intense power of will. Can you consider me as parallel to you, and not as something that you can look at with your eyes? Can you consider me as inseparable from you in the consciousness of my being here?

Such a thing is unimaginable in ordinary perception. Freedom from extraneous desires and emotional

disturbances is absolutely necessary before attempting to practice yoga. You must be friendly in your basic spirit with the spirit of objects. But you cannot be so friendly because you always have an interpretation of things—this is this, and that is that—not knowing that this interpretation applies to one's own self also. You cannot judge others without judging your own self.

Yoga is a difficult practice. Total dispassion is necessary. In that state of yoga, you do not want anything because that thing which you seem to want is inseparable from you in the very nature of things. Would you want a thing which is really inseparable from you? Would you hug your own nose or hand as an object of affection? The philosophical foundation of Sankhya and Vedanta is the way in which we have to adjust our consciousness in knowing things.

The nature of knowing is a subject by itself. How do we know anything? Philosophically it is called the theory of knowledge, and in metaphysical language it goes by the name of epistemology. Before you say anything about a thing, you must know how you know that thing at all. In the epistemological scheme there are five or six varieties of the mode of perception, into which detail we need not go at this time.

Being in empathy with the object of perception is the primary step. The *Ishta Devata* in meditation—the god that you worship, or the object that you are concentrating upon—does not stand outside you because if you have already decided that it is outside you, you are not going to get it. You are attempting the impossible by trying to obtain a thing which you have already considered as unconnected with you. Here is a contradiction in the way of thinking about objects. When you want a thing, you have decided it is outside you;

otherwise, there is no question of wanting it. But if you have decided that it is outside you, how will you get it? So all desire is a contradiction, a self-defeating process, and nobody who desires gets anything because of this psychological contradiction of placing the object outside and imagining that it is not outside. Intense effort in this direction is necessary, and everyone should go on doing this practice without any kind of remission of effort.

Actually speaking, yoga meditation is not some kind of activity which you can take up at some hour of the day and then ignore at other hours. Since the meaning of your existence lies in this way of direct yoga perception, you should consider the yogic way of thinking as your primary duty. It is not something that you do at the end of your life, in old age, after Sannyasa; it is an organic science of existence itself. Hence, it is not meant only for Brahmacharins, Sannyasins, yogis and old men; it is meant for every little atom in the world, which struggles to unite itself with everybody else.

The longings in our nature, which are basically emotional, stultify our intellectual effort in properly understanding these things, which is why the disciplines that are prescribed prior to the attempt at achieving this end in meditation should not be considered as irrelevant. Are you really prepared to receive a thing? Are you constituted in a harmonious manner with the thing that you are trying to contact or attain, or are you completely dissonant? Are you repelling the thing while wanting it? What is called contact with a desirable object is a repulsion that is taking place, and is not a contact—of which you have no knowledge at all. The object repels you because you consider it to be outside you; and this repulsion is like an electric shock which makes you feel that you got the object.

Deep is this subject. When, in your perception of an object, you are free from the idea or the description of it, the concept of it and, at the same time, the name of it, you at once become a friend of all people, all things.

One person cannot really be a friend of another person—because it is another person. That is the whole point. You cannot be a friend of another because you have used the word ‘another’, which defeats the purpose. Hence, another thing cannot come to you. You can get only yourself, really speaking, in the largest dimension of inclusion of all things in your pure subjectivity. Yoga experience is universal subjectivity; it is not externalised perception.

When this is achieved, you are in a state of samadhi. According to Patanjali’s description, it is called *savitarka* samadhi. The first stage is a universal experience, which will shake up your personality completely and rebuild the very cells of your body. You stand in at-one-ment with the things that you sensorially or mentally experience. The first stage of samadhi is very difficult, but if you can cross this barrier of the very first stage, you will be automatically taken along the power of the ascent of consciousness towards higher and higher stages. The most difficult is the first stage; then the second comes of its own accord.

Whatever I have told you now may look very mystical, mysterious, out of the way, difficult to comprehend, and something beyond this world itself. In yoga, you are trying to contact that which is beyond this world. All the things in the world are beyond this world, really speaking—we ourselves included. We are not originally involved in the forms of perception which constitute this world. We have an original form, which is beyond the world of perception. Everything

and everyone is of this nature. We do not belong to this world, really speaking, and nothing so belongs because the world of perception is a spatiotemporal complex, and we cannot say that we are really basically involved in it. We have a higher self, and that higher self is our real self. It is not in this world; it is above. Above what? It is above space and time. That is why we are restless in this world. Nothing satisfies us. Wherever we look, we see trouble, resentment, unhappiness. There is something very erroneous, a malady prevailing everywhere, and nothing can please us in this world. No one can be happy, finally, because that which we consider as our source of pleasure or happiness is involved in this error of spatiotemporal operation which externalises everything, one from the other. Since everything is externalised, one thing from the other, nobody can get anything in this world. There is no such thing as property. We can get nothing, and will have only dust and ashes, finally.

The illusion in the very act of perception involves our consciousness itself, and is so intense that a hectic effort of meditational process is called for. In a sense, you have to be a yogi throughout the day. Do not say you are very busy, because your business is a part of the process by which you achieve this great end. If you think that your activities in the world are different from yoga concentration, you will be cutting the ground from under your own feet and you will have no place to stand. As I mentioned, yoga is not a mental activity. It is an adjustment of our whole personality with the truth of things.

Is yoga not necessary in business performance, for instance? Do you not want to be united with the fact as such in business management, in industrial occupations, or do

you want to be outside completely? If you stand outside the business, outside every performance, you will find there is no benefit from your action. There will be a kind of reaction unnecessarily set up. Every activity in the world can be called a yoga because you are in union with that which you are doing. Can you do something while standing outside the act of your doing? Then your action has no meaning. It is a meaningless, absurd occupation. Action which is worthwhile is actually the emanation of your own self. You are in the world and, therefore, your action becomes successful. Suppose you are not in the world; you are outside. Then the work is ash and dust. There is nothing in it.

This is the great karma yoga philosophy of the Bhagavadgita, where action becomes yoga when we are identical with the action itself. We have a peculiar notion of action. It is an ulterior occupation of ours, unconnected with our true personality. We are totally different from what we are doing. In that case, the doing has no meaning, and will bring no fruit. If the doing is a process of the manifestation of our own existence, it is union with the fact of the process of action, and the so-called fruit of such an action does not produce reaction. Karma yoga does not produce reaction—it does not bind—but all other actions bind because they are outside us.

A professor in the college may be an ordinary person in his own home, so there is no advantage to his being educated. His professorial knowledge is his existence itself, and even in the bathroom he is a professor and full of knowledge, and not merely in the classroom. The foolishness of being different people under different circumstances is the cause of our sorrow here. You cannot be something here and something

else somewhere else. When you know that you are the same thing everywhere, you will find everything becomes friendly with you. Everything embraces you, and even the leaves on the trees start smiling at you in friendship.

Honesty is necessary here. You must know what you actually expect and want. Do not dabble in a thing which you cannot understand. Again I repeat, you require a guide. This is such a difficult subject that the mind refuses to think along these lines. It revolts, and kicks you back, saying, "No, not for me." At that time, you require a power which will guide you. That power is your spiritual teacher, without whom you cannot stand on this path. Cyclones will blow from all sides; tornadoes will push you in a direction which is quite different from the direction that you are trying to take. The world forces which are wrongly considered as external will attack you and make you feel that you are helpless in this matter. Many people fail even in the act of meditation because the mind is like a fool, imagining it is something when it is really something else.

Every day you must check yourself. Every day you have to verify your own feelings and actions: "What have I done today from morning onwards, up to this time? What have I done, and if I have done anything, has it benefitted me in any way? Or have I foolishly been running about here and there?" A self-check is essential every day. But we may check ourselves wrongly due to a kind of complacency that we may erroneously attribute to ourselves. That is why we require a guide to whom we can tell our experiences and ask if we are on the right path. Since the teacher's experience is much greater than your experience, he will tell you where your mistake is. Self-estimation may be right or wrong, and it

cannot be corrected unless there is another rectifying factor, which is the guide.

Go slowly, therefore, on the path of yoga. But be sure that you will achieve something, and do not have doubts about it. Do not say it is too hard. All great achievements in the world are the result of hard effort. You cannot dilly-dally; nothing will come of it. You must be sure that it is going to be achieved. You must be sure that you are on the right path. You must also be sure why you are doing it.

Do not have any notions which are totally disassociated from the nature of things. Why do you meditate? Many people do not know. They say they want peace of mind, or that they want to be alone. These are all childish answers to the great question of why you should be Reality. It is like asking why you should be real at all. Such is the question that you put when you ask why you should do yoga meditation.

Yoga is nothing but the conscious adjustment of your personality with your originality—which, as I said, is above this world. Every one of you is a transcendental individual. You are eternity parading in this world of temporality, looking like ordinary persons and things. This conviction should be driven into your heart with great force, and this conviction itself will be a great blessing to you.

Discourse 6

THE SEVEN STAGES OF SAMADHI

There are supposed to be seven stages of the attainment of samadhi, and what I described yesterday is the lowest type, though even that initial stage might have appeared to you as very hard indeed. However, to the extent you have understood what was said, you have taken a very bold step in the right direction. These stages mentioned are just the processes of the disentanglement of consciousness from involvement in the various levels of the manifestation of the universe. In deep meditation, bordering upon samadhi, you are contemplating the whole universe in front of you.

The accepted categories of the descent of consciousness in the process of evolution and involution are elaborately described both in the Sankhya and the Vedanta doctrines. The lowest manifestation in the process of creation, or evolution, is earthly existence. We are now in the lowest category of life, involved in material associations. Not merely that, but things are utterly differentiated from one another. Diversification goes to the utmost extent when we reach the earth plane. Nothing has any connection with anything else; everything stands by itself. You can see for yourself that in this world, nothing seems to have any connection with anything else. “Each one for oneself and let the devil take the hindmost”

is the kind of doctrine that prevails in the lowest category of manifestation. We call it worldly existence, earthly existence.

There are cosmic levels corresponding to the levels in our own psychophysical personality because the individual and the universe are co-relatives of each other, and act and react in a comprehensive manner. We may say an individual is a cross section of the whole universe. We will find in each individual entity a miniature universe. In traditional language, these stages, or levels of manifestation, are called Bhuloka, the earthly level, and beyond that is Bhuvārloka, the astral world, which is somewhat comparable to our vital layer of individual personality. These levels cannot be seen with the eyes, just as we cannot see our own subtle body. They are higher levels, one above the other. There is another level, which is more subtle, called Svarloka. In the Puranas it is regarded as the heaven of the gods, the abode of resplendent beings with shining bodies of fire who are not materially encumbered in any way. The gods are supposed to be capable of penetrating even hard rock because their bodies are the fine substance of the fire principle. These are the heavens of the religious scriptures.

Higher than that is Maharloka, a level where even the fire-like individuality gradually tends to evaporate into a larger and wider comprehensiveness. In the Puranas there are fantastic descriptions of the residents, or the denizens, of this realm. They tend to touch each other just as flames of fire can touch each other, wherein we cannot know whether there are two flames or they are actually commingling into a single flame. A complete merger does not take place, but the flame of the rarefied personality has a tendency to move towards immersing itself in another flame that is also like itself.

Inconceivable are all these to our minds. Beyond Maharloka is Janaloka, another subtle realm where only Masters live, and not ordinary mortals. Great potentials of cosmic power are imbedded in every denizen of that wonderful, magnificent realm which is unthinkable, inexpressible, and totally transcendent to our understanding.

These names may be difficult to comprehend, and only indicate the subtlety of the manifestation of being—so subtle that the winds of individual existence blow into the location, as it were, of individuals of a similar type. Winds blow over winds, we may say. When winds blow, we do not know what is blowing. Winds blow from all sides and collide from one side to another. A gale can rush from one direction and come in contact with a similar gale from another direction. Wonderful! That is the only word we can use to describe this state.

Beyond Janaloka is Tapoloka, where the austerity of individuality reaches such a pinnacle that the consciousness of individual selfhood tends towards evaporating, like burnt camphor. When camphor is inflamed with heat, it melts into a vaporous ubiquitous substance, and it is said that such is the experience of these Masters, these austere individuals. We need not call them individuals at all. They are super-individuals; we cannot use a better word. They are the meeting point of the cosmic and the subtle individual substance, one shaking hands with the other.

An illustration of this kind of experience is mentioned in the Chhandogya Upanishad. When the seeking consciousness rises gradually in the process of the samadhis mentioned, it reaches a particular stage where it has no individual or personal motive. In the lower levels, there is motivation. The

seeker feels that something has to be done; meditation is to be carried on, and concentration is to be directed in this fashion. But that is only up to a level where there is self-consciousness of the seeking spirit. A stage is reached where it is about to reach the sea of existence. When the river moves towards the waves of the ocean, we cannot say whether the river exists or does not exist. It is both there and not there.

How will the spirit move further, higher up, when there is no individual motivation? Self-effort is not possible there because the very idea of self has gone. A magnificent statement is made in the Upanishads that a divine representative of the Absolute manifests itself: Amanava Purusha—which is not human, but something quite different. A radiant force manifests from the Supreme Being and directs the seeking spirit towards the higher level. We cannot know how it takes place. Illustrations are like symbologies; they can suggest something, indicate something, but cannot actually articulate the nature of this existence. We have heard of austerity, self-restraint, but our idea of self-restraint is a kind of personal exercise that we would like to undergo. Here, in Tapoloka, it is not a personal exercise; it is a natural state of affairs. The senses melt completely, and no longer exist. At that time, these so-called sense forces, which work havoc in this world, look like streaming rivers of consciousness itself. Actually, what is called sensation operating through the sense organs is a stream of consciousness moving through them, but we cannot detect that this stream is taking place on account of the total involvement in the physicality of the sense organs. In Tapoloka, the physicality is shed completely, and the senses become divinities. They turn inward toward their source instead of moving outwardly. This is the great manifested form of one level of consciousness, Tapoloka.

The highest is Satyaloka, which is sometimes called Brahmaloaka. This state can be described as Truth-consciousness. It is the universal concentration of the Absolute in the form of a creative potentiality towards the manifestation of the cosmos. Words fail here. We cannot say anything about this. Beyond that is the Absolute proper.

We have to pass through these levels in our exercise of meditation, which no more remains an act of individual concentration but takes the shape of a union at every level. The words 'concentration' and 'meditation' cannot be used in these levels because it is a commingling of consciousness with its counterpart. The miraculous, blissful liberation of individuality takes place. People in the world are unfit even to hear this. Such marvels exist above us.

Yesterday I mentioned one stage of samadhi, known as *savitarka*, where intellectual activity rarefies itself into the process of a tendency to commingle with the object. In the beginning, the concentration is on a chosen ideal because at the very outset it is not possible for the mind to comprehend a totality of things. We cannot think all things at a time. We can only think one thing at a time. That one thing which is the chosen ideal for the purpose of meditation is called the Ishta Devata, the most beloved of things that we can think of. Whatever we are concentrating upon should be the most beloved thing in the world. If it is not so, the mind will not go near it.

A total absorption of the mind takes place in the visualisation of what consciousness feels is its utter beloved, and nothing can compare with it. That is why it is called Ishta, or the most desirable, lovable divinity. Why is it called a divinity? Because it is a promise of fulfilment of whatever

you are seeking and asking for. Unless the ideal of meditation is capable of fulfilling all your requirements, the mind cannot go for it. You cannot concentrate on anything continuously because there is a doubt whether that particular thing is capable of blessing you with all the things that you need. So, with effort of will you have to conceive an ideal which is capable of giving you whatever you want. Actually, this conceived ideal is a pressure point of the forces of the universe which centralise themselves in this conceived ideal and act as a kind of doorway opening to a wider force that is behind this particular point. In this sense, you may take anything in the world as a point for concentration. Just as when you touch any part of the body you are actually touching the whole body, so is the case with soul-filled concentration on the chosen ideal. But care has to be taken to see that you do not dabble with this idea of the chosen ideal. It is not an experiment that you are doing in meditation; it is a positive exercise.

As I mentioned yesterday, the characteristics involved in this particular chosen ideal are the idea of the object, the name or the nomenclature that is associated with it, and the thing as such. The thing as such is uncontactable by sensory operations or even by ordinary mental activity because it is actually behind the meditating consciousness as an undercurrent, just as at the base of two waves in the ocean is the ocean itself. The reason why a wave cannot know the ocean is because it believes that it is one crest of individuality, differentiated from other crests which are the waves. Though one wave can contact another wave, it cannot contact it at the base because if the wave subsides to the root of its origin it will touch the root of the other wave also, so that the duality

between the subject and the object will coalesce and become a total of both features, widening the comprehension of consciousness.

You can imagine what it would be like if what you see is non-differentiate from the process of thinking. What you think in your mind is in one place, and you yourself are in another place; but if these two places or locations join together hand in hand, as it were, then the experience becomes widened into a collision, a coming together of both sides, the subjective and the objective, and there is a transcendent consciousness at that time. This is *savitarka* samadhi.

The next higher stage mentioned in the system of Patanjali's Yoga is known as *nirvitarka* samadhi. These technical words merely indicate the liberation of the concept from its involvement in space and time. When we concentrate, meditate, and enter into samadhi at the *savitarka* level, even if the whole earth and creation were to be the object of our meditation, there will be a subtle persistence of the feeling that this entire thing is in space. The world of matter, which we think is this creation, is within space. Even Newton, the great mathematician and scientist, thought that the world is inside space. It took years and years to free scientists' minds from this concept. Everybody feels that everything is inside space. The liberation of this concept of space being involved in that great widened ideal in *savitarka* samadhi is called *nirvitarka*, where the concept of space as a carrier of the object ceases and, in some way, the association of the ideal of meditation with so-called space gets diminished into a coming together of spatiality and individuality of the object. We ourselves become one with it.

The idea of space arises because of the location of things outside us. Space is nothing but outsideness—externality. The identification of the meditating consciousness with the very substance of this ideal of *savitarka* samadhi is said to liberate the consciousness from the concept of space and time. The whole thing becomes oneself. This is difficult to conceive. How can all things become oneself? As such a thing is considered impracticable due to the intervention of the separating medium of space, our function here is to obviate the problem of the meditating ideal with space. This is very difficult because however much we may think, our mind thinks in space only, and it cannot think anything else. Explanations or descriptions cannot make us understand what it actually means. If we want to know what sugar tastes like, we have to eat it, because nobody can explain to us what sweetness is. The proof of the pudding is in its eating. These stages of practice are actual experiences. They are not interpretations, they are not investigations, and they cannot even be called mental activity. It is a superb surging of the soul in one of its aspirations towards its own widened existence: the lower self moving towards the higher Self.

There are levels of self. One kind of self is the foisted self, which we see in an object that we like very much. The love that we pour upon something outside draws the consciousness in respect of that particular thing, and for the time being the person who has such a liking for the thing finds himself in that object. The person who has intense liking or longing for something is, for the time being, not in his own self. The self has been transferred to the location of that which is considered as a desirable object. This kind of self that is foisted, artificially created, is called the secondary self, not the primary self.

There is another kind of self, which is our bodily existence, our physical self. We feel that this body is the self. "I am here" means the body is here. There is no distinction between you and the body. This is a false association because, by analysis, you must have come to the conclusion that you cannot say that the material body is the Self.

The third self is the primary Self. It is the ocean of consciousness that is at the back of the secondary self and the physical self. This Self is only one and not many, but it can manifest itself in different levels, which are designated as the lower self and the higher Self. "Raise the self by the Self," says the Bhagavadgita: *uddharet atmana atmanam* (Gita 6.5). Which self is raising which self here? The self that is contented with its location in a body and its social relations is to be raised by a larger Self which comprehends not only the individual self but also its relations outside. With great intensity of concentration, the relations of individual selfhood with the outer atmosphere should be brought together into a wider comprehension of larger selfhood. Thus, we may say these levels of manifestation of Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Svargaloka, etc., are levels of selfhood only. It is the lower wholeness of selfhood rising to the higher level of wholeness. All advance is from wholeness to wholeness. There are no movements from finitude to infinitude; it is the lesser infinite that is moving to the higher infinite.

Every cell in the body is a little human being, and contains all our characteristics in its DNA. The whole history of a human being is in one cell, but these cells are joined together in a comprehensiveness of cohesion so that they look like one individual, this particular person. Though millions of cells join together to constitute this so-called individual

personality, we never feel that we are made up of several bricks heaped one over the other because the cohesive force of consciousness at the back of these cells permits not this division of consciousness, but one integrality. Every little thing is a whole. An atom is a complete being by itself; it is not a part. Anything we can conceive in this world is a self-sustaining completeness. No individual of any category feels that it is only a part, that it is not a whole. Even an insect is a whole; it moves as a complete being by itself. Thus, there are levels of wholeness. We move from perfection to perfection; rather, we move from joy to greater joy. *Anandadd hy eva khalv imani bhutani jayante* (Tait. Up. 3.6.1): Bliss is the source of creation. It moves towards that great Bliss, and operates through the activity of the Self.

The levels of Self mentioned are identical with the consciousness of the levels of these various planes—Bhuloka, Bhuhvarloka, Svargaloka, etc. These are actually the objects of meditation. The various stages of samadhi are actually attempts at commingling oneself with different levels of experience, all which are wholes by themselves.

A child is a whole, an adolescent is a whole, an adult is a whole, and an elderly person is a whole. Nobody can say that a baby is a partial human being; it is an entire human being. Even a little embryo in the womb is an entire being, not a part. There are no fractions anywhere. The idea of fraction is a misconception because nothing that is finite, so-called, will imagine that it is finite. Do you think you are a finite little nothing? You are complete in yourself. You are full, you are a total, and you are filled with perfection. That is the feeling of every individual, whether it is a man, a superman or even a subhuman being.

Thus, meditation in this line of samadhis is a movement of a whole consciousness from its lower level to the whole consciousness of its higher level. That is to say, when we think, when we meditate, when we are conscious of anything, there must be a wholeness attached to this concept of the object of meditation. It is not that the meditating principle is somewhere and the object is somewhere else. The meditation is not concentrating itself on something outside the process of meditation; it is the lower concentrating itself on the higher. It is not the internal that is concentrating itself on the external. This idea should go. It is the lower whole concentrating itself on its own higher level. Here you have to exercise your mind a little bit in a very subtle manner, so that the usual, ordinary, prosaic thinking about things in the world seems to be totally in disparity with the new vision that we are trying to entertain in our own selves.

Suffice it to say that the next stage of samadhi, called *nirvitarka*, is a non-spatial, non-temporal concept of the whole physical universe, while *savitarka*, the earlier stage, is a spatiotemporal involvement of the whole of creation. The next higher stage is called *savichara samapatti*, which is characterised by the unification of consciousness with forces rather than things. The union that is attempted here is not with any particular object or thing, but with a force that is manifested through the so-called located something.

Energy is the substance of the universe. It is a fluid movement, as it were, of a wave of indistinguishable content which, in different points of stress and pressure, appears as localised individualities. Here, the concept is of force rather than of an object or a thing. We are all centres of force, not physical entities made of flesh and blood. There is a

centralisation of all-pervading force in everything, whether human or otherwise—a concretisation of this all-pervading force in a particular manner by action and reaction within itself. To cite the illustration of the waves in the ocean, it is like one wave dashing against another wave in order that it may become the ocean itself.

In *savichara samapatti* you are not a person; you are a centre of fluid force, and that which you are aiming at is also a counterpart of this fluid force. Energy contemplates on energy, force concentrates on force, so that it is something like the dance of particulars around a cosmic centre. In the language of the Puranas, it is called the Rasa Lila of Bhagavan Sri Krishna. This can be compared to how electrons in an atom roam, dance and move with great velocity around a nucleus which determines their movements, from which they are not different and yet are not identical. Such an experience takes place here, where everything moves around yourself not as something totally outside, but as a part of your own ubiquitous existence, as if your higher dimension dashes against your own self and calls you, summons you. The Infinite that is everywhere summons the Infinite that is inside you. *Purnamadah purnamidam* is the illustration here that the whole comes from the whole; and the whole that comes from the whole is also whole; and if you deduct the whole from the whole, there is no fraction; the whole alone remains.

Towards this end the mind moves in a highly rarefied form. Here the mind is not an ordinary, sensory mind. It is not the mind that simply okays the reports of the sense organs. It is a super reason—or, we may say, supra reason, which acts as an ambassador of the Supreme Absolute. We

have a lower reason and a higher reason. The lower reason is what we are accustomed to—namely, just interpreting the complex sensations coming from outside. The lower reason is mere psychological activity. But there is a super reason in us which makes us restless always, and which points to the existence of a super being, and makes us aspire for that which is beyond the understanding itself.

Emanuel Kant, a German philosopher, prohibited the very idea of contacting reality because reason as we know it, the intellect, is within the phenomena of perception. Space-time are controlling even the operations of mental activity, reason, and there is no such thing as contact with reality. It is impossible. That was his dictum. This is a preliminary view of a great man's thought, which is potential with a great solution behind it, and the conclusion drawn is capable of directing the very same reason to a higher potential, though it looks as if it is impossible to achieve anything by itself.

Our higher reason, which is called the great *buddhi*, operates on two levels. On the lower level it has only one work to do, namely, judging the validity of sense perception. There is a higher reason about which Kant does not seem to be clearly aware, which points to the fact of there being something beyond the phenomena. His idea of there being such a thing called the 'thing in itself' is a contradiction of his own doctrine of nothing being possible in the realm of phenomena to contact a thing in itself. How does a thing in itself, which is not contactable, arise? Who is the person, and what is the faculty that provides us with the knowledge of there being something transcendent?

Actually, what we call the 'thing in itself' is the transcendent, but if we surmise that nothing that is available to us in the

phenomenal world is capable of contacting it, the very idea of it cannot arise. This is why I said that the higher reason acts as an ambassador of the possibility of a transcendence of its own self. Therefore, yoga is the answer to the criticism of Emanuel Kant. Otherwise, nobody can reach God with this kind of premise.

However, now I am coming to the point that in this *savichara* samadhi, forces are considered as objects of meditation. They are forces, and not objects at all. They are all little pressures of one large ocean of moving power. *Savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara*. There is something more which will frighten you, about which I shall speak another time.

Discourse 7

THE HIGHEST STAGES OF SAMADHI

The most difficult thing that a seeker will face during the effort to ascend from one state of consciousness to another state is the inveterate habit of imagining that everything is a solid form or object, one differentiated from the other, implying thereby that one thing may not have any real, vital connection with the other. This vision, this idea, this presupposition in our perception of anything goes contrary to the effort at yoga union. You cannot unite yourself with anything, as it is standing outside you. The location which is associated with the solidity and particularity of things is trying to be obviated in *savichara* samadhi, to which I made reference last time, where an intense attempt is made to visualise the so-called things of this world as centres of moving force, eddies of a large sea of energy.

Every little thing in the world is an energy potential. There is an immense magazine of power imbedded at the core of everything in the world, even in a particle of sand. This energy can be liberated by intense concentration, either physically by bombardment or mentally by concentration. This nuclear energy is present in everything. You cannot bombard the atoms of the whole cosmos except by intense concentration of the mind, relating everything to everything else, and melting down objectivity into a liquefied form, as it

were, of ubiquitous energy—force billowing like the waves of a large ocean—including your own self who is contemplating or meditating.

It does not mean that when you practice meditation on the universal sea of fluidity of power or force, you sit cosily apart from it as a solid individual observing the movement of these tempestuous forces of energy. Samadhi is not a perception. It is a melting down of yourself together with that on which you are meditating. The subject and the object, yourself and the other thing, are on a par always, and they both stand on an equal footing. Both have equal validity. Hence, the object is considered as a force, and you do not remain as a solid object independent of that force because the wave of this sea of force will sweep you also with it and take you inside it, transforming you into the same stuff out of which the sea is made. A difficult concept it is! Unless the mind is sufficiently purified, you will not be able to understand what it is that is being said.

How is it possible for a person to abolish the concept of one's own existence as a person, and then go with that thing which is universally pervading as a force? At that time, where are you, actually speaking? Where are you at that time? The fear that you are not there is the worst of fears. The adamant attachment of the individuality of a person is so hard that whatever instruction is given and whatever effort is made, it will persist. They call it ego consciousness, or the affirmative principle, which asserts itself in one particular form and refuses to collaborate with the conditions prevailing outside, much less unite itself with them.

If you have any desire in your mind which is unnecessary, disturbing, and pulling you inwardly or outwardly to a

target which you consider as desirable, this object of meditation ceases to be so desirable. The condition of meditation is whole-souled attention, entire absorption, and a conviction that it is all and everything. It is not something; it is everything. Therefore, the somethings of this world go with this everything. Persistent educational instruction is to be given to the mind in order that it may not again and again move in the subconscious mind, the subconscious level, towards the old notion of the isolation of the world from the object of meditation. The object of meditation is not standing above the world; it includes the world. As nobody can think the whole world at one stroke, it is difficult to imagine the transmutation of the world substance into the universal power or force on which you are trying to meditate.

The whole sea is before you. It is not before you; it is before that which beholds both yourself and that at the same time. There is a transcendent perception, we may say, which ceases to accept your existence as the seer of this wonderful phenomenon. The seer is not you, not that which is beheld, but another thing which beholds both this side and that side. Strength of imagination is necessary to posit oneself in this condition. This is explained as *savichara* samadhi, which is not an introverted condition, as people wrongly imagine, but a universalised condition. In samadhi you are not going inside, nor are you going outside, but you become universalised. Rarely can one imagine that this is so. People say, "I sit in samadhi." They go to a corner and brood over something, and think that they are in samadhi because they are going inside.

There is no inside in samadhi. It is also not outside. It is a blending together, as I mentioned, in a sea of commingling

of forces which were originally considered as subjective and objective. The highest purity of mind, great dispassion, and tremendous love for this achievement are necessary to have success in this meditation. Suffice it to say that this is the state of experience known as *savichara samapatti*, also known as *savichara samadhi*.

The higher state is *nirvichara*, wherein the idea that forces are moving in space is again obviated. This universal force is not moving in space. It is not like the ocean that you see with your eyes, which is a body of water with space above it. Can you imagine anything without locating it in space? Here a greater effort is necessary. The space that you are forcefully compelled to imagine, even in this condition, has also to get melted into this force of which the space is not merely a part, but from which it is totally inseparable.

Space is a barrier to the thinking of the totality of things. It always sees to it that one thing is cut off from another thing and distance is created. The abolition of even the concept of distance between two things is possible only if the notion of space also enters into the notion of the all-pervading energy, which is not to be confused with electrical energy but is something deeper.

When you study these things, they provide information, but they cannot become part of your experience. Years of practice are necessary to achieve any success. The space complex is the worst of all things. As the mind which is thinking is itself conditioned by the complex called space and time, it is difficult to imagine how it is possible to arrange the consciousness in a situation where space and time are not conditioning it. Philosophers have argued that there is no way out of being conditioned or restricted by the space-time

complex. As the mind is also a part of the phenomena, how would that phenomenon enter into the noumenon—which is the samadhi process? It is by Self-identification. When the self enters into the Self, the space between is absorbed into this unity. This is a super-philosophical experience, and it is not meant to be argued logically. Logic is a poor substitute for this kind of affirmation, which is not thinking in terms of syllogism, but an experience which is a tremendous unification of being and becoming, process and reality, we may say.

In no book will you find an elaborate description of these kinds of experiences. There are commentaries on the Sutras of Patanjali which describe these experiences in one paragraph, and only a literal annotation is given. The substance of it, which is actually a devastating experience, cannot be written in a book, and cannot be known except by a direct communion and communication from a competent, experienced person to one who is eager to have it.

In *nirvichara* samadhi a great, incomprehensible joy bursts forth which is not comparable to any kind of joy that you can imagine in this world. It is a joy not because you have obtained something, but because you have become the thing. Do you know the difference? When you obtain something that you want, you feel happiness and joy, but here you have entered into the very existence of the thing that you want. Can you imagine what kind of joy it is? In all experiences of happiness there is a contact of the object with the subject that needs the object. Contact is different from union. You can contact anything, but you cannot unite yourself with anything because union means becoming the very thing which you want to contact.

Can anyone think of this state? This is the power of thought, which can rise beyond itself. Mind is not a poor thing, as it appears on the surface. It is a direct representation of Absolute existence. As you can conceive levels of reality, degrees of experience, you can also conceive the levels of mental operation. The mind is a kind of ocean; it has a tremendous potential for comprehensiveness. It can touch anything, obtain anything, and become united with anything. It can instantly touch even the heavens without moving through distance.

The mind, so-called, is employed as a means to practice this meditation. It rises gradually, stage by stage, from the lower stage to the higher stage, corresponding to the stage in which the object of meditation is. The lower mind cannot meditate on a higher substance, just as lower frequency operations cannot touch higher frequency activity. But, in this connection, we need not have any fear about it because the notion of a higher universality automatically charges itself upon the meditating consciousness, and pulls it along with it, so that the mind goes with that object which is the Universal Being. The joy mentioned is called *ananda*, bliss Absolute. Not bliss particularised, not bliss externalised, not bliss extroverted or objectivised—it is bliss experienced in itself.

It is not someone experiencing bliss as something coming from somewhere else. Pure Being itself is bliss. If pure Being is consciousness, it is also bliss. This indescribable blend of existence, consciousness and bliss is what is commonly known as *sat-chit-ananda*. *Sat-chit-ananda*, which means existence, consciousness and bliss, are not three ingredients of a super substance; they are three designations of one and

the same experience. Existence which is itself consciousness is blissful. It is not that there are three different qualities. Existence, consciousness, bliss are not qualities or attributes of anything; they are themselves substances. We can never imagine that bliss is a substance. We always think bliss is a kind of accretion growing by contact of one thing with another thing, but it is Being itself. *Sananda* samadhi, bliss experience, is superior to all the samadhis mentioned earlier.

Has anyone in the world experienced inexpressible bliss at any time? Were you so happy at any time that your whole personality was bursting? Can it be even imagined? Are you liquefying yourself, melting down into the joy that you are experiencing? Or is it a fleeting phenomenon, like scratching the skin? Such a super experience is *sananda samapatti*, divinity dancing on itself. In the Puranas and the epics we hear of Lord Siva dancing his cosmic performance. When Lord Siva dances his Tandava, as it is called, everything melts into liquid. The sun and moon fall down, the stars liquefy, the earth melts into water, as it were, and nothing is there except one all-pervading, indescribable That Which Is. This Tandava, this dance of Lord Siva, is nothing but your own dance in the ecstasy of your melting down into the unity of the cosmos in its true essence. This is not a visible dance, with the movement of limbs to music. It is all this combined. The entire cosmos dances. Every atom starts rising up from its own self. When you rise from your own self, what do you experience at that time? You are always yourself. Suppose you become more than yourself. What do you call it? As nobody can become more than oneself, this explanation cannot enter the mind. There is a larger you than what you are here at the present moment. That largeness goes on expanding

its dimension more and more, until it becomes the largest inconceivable inclusiveness.

There are levels of joy, which are described in the Upanishad. The lowest kind of joy is what would be associated with an emperor of the whole world, though there was never an emperor of the whole world. This emperor is young and healthy, and has everything. Can you imagine such a king who is youthful, healthy, vigorous, and the whole world is under his control? This is one kind of happiness. Though it is unimaginable, the Upanishad considers this as the lowest category, like a drop in the ocean.

There are higher levels of happiness described in the Taittiriya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads. The next stage, which is associated with astral existence, is supposed to be one hundred times more intense than the imagined joy of the emperor of the whole world. Beyond that there are celestial vibratory movements called Gandharvas, whose joy is a hundred times more than the lower one. This hundred times happiness multiplies itself eight times—a hundred multiplied by a hundred eight times—and that is meagrely conceived as the bliss of the Absolute. We are happy with a cup of tea, what to say of being emperor of the whole world. Compare your pithy longing and the joy that you have by scratching your nervous centre with this mystery which is before you. This is *sananda samapatti*.

Beyond that there is something more. Yoga is not going to leave you so easily. It pulls you, pulls you, pulls you, until you reach the centre of the universe. There is no experience of bliss at that time; it is only 'I am I'. There is no 'I' experience in the bliss of universality. The universal bliss is conscious of itself only as 'I am what I am'; 'I am I'. Your head will reel

with giddiness if you think of these things. The brain cannot conceive of these things. The universal I has no you, he, she, it, etc.; it is just the one I which is self-identical universal existence. This is *sasmita* samadhi—attended with universal affirmation of I. It is not the I that is used in grammar and language. It is the potential of universal affirmation as one thing only: That Which Is. Generally, great thinkers call it ‘That’; that’s all. ‘That’, ‘Suchness’, ‘Whichness’, ‘Thatness’ are the words used to describe this condition.

When that ‘I am I’ is also transcended in something else which is pure Absoluteness, we have attained moksha. We have attained *kaivalya*.

Discourse 8

WAKING INTO THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE ABSOLUTE

From what you have heard up to this time, you would have gathered that yoga is basically a perceptual change, and not merely an act of doing something with your body. You may do anything, stand on your head for hours, but the perception of things has not changed. The erroneous perception will condition even the practice of your asanas, pranayama, etc. because the whole problem is perception, and not something that is being done. People say, "I do yoga." What kind of yoga are they doing? The same persons that they were years back, they are today also. The same operational method of perceiving things continues, and no attempt is made to change the way of perceiving things. This basic requirement is forgotten, and it is not known that every step in yoga is a corresponding change in one's own perceptual procedure. If you have not changed even one whit and you are still the same person, all your doings are outside you, not connected with you.

For instance, whatever I have told you earlier would have made you have the confirmation that things are not just standing in front of you. No thing is just sitting in front of you as the eyes report to you. But we always look outward. The basic relationship of things in general will require you to know that the very thing that you are seeing in front of you

is also behind you, in another form altogether. As things are not in one place, they are not just in front of you. Not only are they also behind you, they are to your right, to your left, above and below. Things are everywhere. Now, how would you look at a thing if this is the case? A practice, a kind of exercise is to be undertaken in order to change the perception of things.

Never look at an object as you generally look at it, because it is not in front of you. The pervasiveness of the location of every object necessitates the acceptance of its presence everywhere. So you are actually looking, so-called, at an object which is pervading you from all sides. A good manager or executive considers every aspect of an issue before taking a step. He looks ahead, looks behind, looks to the right and to the left, and to the top and the bottom. Every side of an issue is taken into consideration. This is not only in business management, but even in legal arguments in court. You cannot give stereotyped arguments and not take into consideration the consequences and repercussions of the statement that you are making in regard to the implications of the case. So is the case of a general in an army. He does not just go ahead foolishly. He takes into consideration all aspects of the situation before acting.

In a way, yoga is a kind of military operation. As cautious as a general is in the field, so is the yoga student. A general of an army faces a widespread situation that is everywhere around him; and in yoga we are also facing a widespread situation. Our problems are not sitting in one place; they are everywhere. They arise from top to bottom, from right to left—from everywhere. Anything is everywhere, not just in one place.

Therefore, before starting actual meditational practice, the yoga student should clarify the intention. You must know very well that yoga is not a change in the way of doing things, but a change in the way of your being itself because all doing proceeds from being. Whatever you are, that comes out of you. The doing cannot be great if you yourself are not a great person. A puny, stupid individual cannot perform great things, because the thing that is done is an emanation of one's own self. A finite individual cannot produce an infinite result. It is necessary to know there is a parallel action taking place between oneself and everything that one thinks or sees. Action is not taking place outside; it is taking place everywhere, so wherever you start doing something, the reaction will come from every side.

The reason is, we are personally involved in the very process of acting; and the end result, as well as the process, are directly connected with ourselves. The whole thing is moving in action, including our own selves, but we think that we are apart from the action and something is being done outside with our hands. The idea that an action is outside is wrong. It is everywhere. The outside thing cannot produce any result.

Whatever you have learned up to this time is a great fundamental scientific solution to the perceptual process that I have presented before you, and it is very important to remember. It is a change in the way of seeing things, primarily in how you see and evaluate a thing. You can initially sit for meditation without going very deep into this technique. This is an exercise. Just cast your eyes around you, and think, "What am I seeing? I am seeing something, a vast phenomenon of nature in front of me. What is there behind me? The same nature that is in front of me is behind me. What

is there to the right? The same nature, spreading itself like a sea. What is there to the left? The same nature. What is there above me? The same thing. What is below me? The same thing. What is there, finally?"

The thing that you are seeing is not in one place. Can you adjust your mind to the acceptance of this position that when you behold a thing, you are beholding that which is in all places? This means your dealing with a thing is actually a dealing with that which is surrounding you from all sides. A thing is an atmosphere rather than a substance. This requires tremendous power of will because for years and years you have been thinking in one way: that you are the son or daughter of some parents, you live in a city or a village, you have these relations, you have this and that. This is not the way of looking in yoga because there is a pervasiveness involved in the yoga exercise. Even if it is a simple exercise like yoga asana, it is not an activity of one individual body taking place. It is a pervasive relationship that the body has with the atmosphere in which it is involved and the substance out of which it is made.

You do yoga asana, bend the body in different ways, but you have also to bend the relationship of this body with the nature of which the body is made. The whole of nature is doing yoga asana. If nature is opposed to you, and you cannot accommodate yourself with what is happening outside, then the exercise remains an isolated effort, not bringing any particular result. When you sit for meditation, remember that the whole of nature is sitting here. This is a fact. You are physically connected to everything in the universe, all nature. The entire nature is sitting here, erect, straight, poised, adjusted, and complete on all sides.

In the Upanishad it is said that even the earth is meditating, as it were. All nature is meditating, maintaining a balance. Anything that is maintaining a balance is actually doing yoga. When you sit for meditation, look around. Cast your eyes in all ten directions, and think, "What am I seeing? I am seeing my own father and mother who have produced me, and the great nature which is not only around me but in me—and it is me, actually speaking." The distractions of the mind will slowly cease because of there being no necessity to think anything extraneous. That the world is outside, things are in one position, anything is somewhere and not in other places, is a prejudiced habit of thinking. Yoga thinking is not the same as ordinary human thinking. It is an internal modification of the very structural pattern of the operation of the mind. The whole thing rises into the occasion of an inner, complete transformation.

When you see a thing, you are seeing everything. Immediately the mind will come to a halt. "Am I seeing something? No, I am seeing everything because this thing that I am seeing in front of me is everything. So what I am seeing in front of me? I am seeing everything. Where is that everything? It is in all directions." When you think of the mind adjusting itself to all directions equally in a balanced condition, you immediately attain stability in asana. You will not have jerking movements, pain, and other difficulties. Your maladjustment with things outside causes the discomfort in the mind and the body even when you are seated in meditation. Yoga is a balance in the body, in social relations, in thinking, in emotion, in understanding, and in your very being itself.

But when you actually start this exercise, you will find that you are tired. An unwilling horse is easily tired, and it will never pull the carriage. It will simply stand. The mind that is unwilling is not going to be accessible to your instruction for meditation. The mind cannot be made to undergo any exercise if it is unwilling to do it. The unwillingness arises in the mind on account of its feeling that you are interfering with its old habits, which it feels are correct habits. "My old habits of thinking and doing are correct, and I am confirming that it is okay. But you are saying something quite different. I am not willing to yield like that." Here it is not enough if you merely have understanding; the strength of will is necessary. You may even have to speak loudly to yourself. "What am I seeing? I am seeing that which is around me in all directions." Your attitude towards any particular thing should be virtually an attitude towards everything. This is a preliminary exercise to which you can resort.

To assist you in this exercise of perceptual inclusiveness, you can chant the mantra Om continuously for fifteen minutes. All sessions of meditation are benefitted by chanting Om at the commencement. The chanting of Om is not a sound that is produced in your mouth; it is a total vibration arising in a harmonious manner from the whole of your personality. When you know how to chant it, a beautiful intonation goes with it. This vibration that is produced by the recitation of Om is not inside your mind or inside your body; it is everywhere. Just as the ripples of water in a lake move in all directions, the ripples of this wave of chanting Om will be felt as pervading the entire outside surroundings also, together with the feeling that you are getting adjusted to this vibration.

After fifteen minutes of this exercise, try the other exercise of seeing and thinking at the same time that thing which is not only in one place. First of all, with open eyes you can think, "The thing that I am seeing is also behind me, and everywhere." Then close your eyes and feel this situation in your mind. You will find that those things are with you. Can you understand the result of this feeling that the things are with you? It is so because of the fact that you yourself are a thing like any other thing. You are not a subjective operational centre segregated from other things which you regard as objects, because the standpoint of a so-called object permits the same attitude towards you. It recognises you as an object.

The so-called subject and object are a misnomer, really speaking. Such words should not be used because, as I mentioned yesterday, the things which are this side and that side, which are called subject and object, are parallel to each other and are on an equal footing. Hence, you are not looking at an object, but are looking at a situation that includes yourself as well as the object. The one who has this awareness of a different situation altogether is neither located on this side as a subject nor is operating outside as an object. It is an inclusiveness.

Every act of perception is an inclusiveness in the operation of the mind. Unless a blend of awareness is brought about between that which is seen and that which sees, perception will not take place. If there is a complete disparity between yourself and the situation that is outside you, you cannot behold anything, appreciate anything, or benefit from anything. Every meaningful perception is an operation of equality of status between the seer and the seen. You are not

superior to the things that you see. They are as important as those who see them because everything can see just as you see.

In this manner, adjust yourself to an equanimity of position in your asana as well as in your thought and feeling. And also have a surety in your mind that since these exercises are going to touch the very reality of things, you are going to benefit from them immensely. In yoga, every step in the right direction is a great achievement which cannot be destroyed. *Svalpam apy asya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat* (Gita 2.40), says the Bhagavadgita: Even a modicum of your movement in the right direction is a great credit that you are adding to yourself, and this credit is never destroyed.

Hurry, haste, quickness should be avoided in meditation. "Let me do some meditation quickly, and go." This idea should not be there. You should think, "I am not seeing a person or a thing. I am seeing the whole of nature, which has manufactured these persons and things. I am seeing the mother of all things, the parent of everything."

Some kind of psychological discipline is necessary for every person. Usually we do anything at any time. We eat at any time, sleep at any time, and no systematic arrangement of a daily program is maintained. We must have some kind of plan within ourselves, in a general and also in a specific manner, as to what work is to be done on a particular day. Usually people do the same thing every day, with minor differences. It should not be a burden on the mind to go on thinking of what is to be done. It is a routine habit that is taking place. The work that you do should become spontaneous rather than a pressure that is exerted from outside. The need for work does not arise from outside; it arises

from a total situation. Nobody is compelling you to work. The whole situation around you is compelling you to do something, which is nothing but an adjustment of yourself in a particular manner, either by doing something or by thinking something. This is a psychophysical adjustment that is called for. Yoga is a psychophysical adjustment.

That the things we need in this world are included in that which we are aspiring for is also a conviction which has to be driven into our minds: "The thing that I want in this world is not removed from my realm of aspiration." We do not lose the world when we go to God. We lose nothing, actually. That which is our so-called external need or requirement is included in that which is totally pervasive. Both the external thing and the internal thing are included in the total. So when you seek the total, it is futile to go on thinking of another thing which is outside. That which is the total operational conviction in the mind includes that which you are considering as internal or external. The thing that you need is neither inside nor outside. To repeat, it is everywhere. Therefore, you are told to restrain the greed for grabbing things and running after that which the senses want. But there is no need to restrain anything. You are not putting pressure on the sense organs to not do what they want; you are only enlightening them to the fact that what they see is not only in that place in which they are looking, that it is in a larger situation. When even the seeing of a thing is included in the larger situation in which you are also included, the obtaining of it, for the matter of that, is also a total situation. The whole thing is a total. No particularity is allowed here.

This exercise is deeply psychological. The subliminal, subconscious mind does not permit such things, generally

speaking. We have done very good deeds in the previous birth. All of you have done great meritorious deeds in the previous birth; otherwise, you would not have the chance to come here and listen to these balming messages of your glorious ideal. The *prarabdha* karma that comes with us when we take a physical birth has various phases of operation. In the previous birth we have committed some errors, we have done very good deeds, and we have also done deeds that are partially virtuous and partially not. All these constitute the mode of our operation in this life. Where it is a very good, virtuous, pure act, there we will find an occasion to live a comfortable, happy life, and to listen to messages of glory and high achievements.

But there are, at the same time, impediments. There are *sattvic* or pure karmas which allow us to think like this and sit here and listen. There are also *rajasic* karmas, distracting actions, and *tamasic* karmas. Many a time we feel stupid and lethargic, and are unable to think; that is due to the *tamasic* aspect of *prarabdha* working in us. At other times we are very much excited, and want to run here and there, and do this or that. That is the *rajasic* karma operating. Now you are here in a *sattvic* mood; you are not disturbed, and you are not sleeping. In this *sattvic* mood you are awake, and you are able to understand and absorb into your mind that which is actually beyond the ordinary capacity of the mind. Such means of performance by which the *rajasic* and *tamasic* potentials of *prarabdha* are effectively mitigated have to be adopted.

It is said that the *prarabdha* karma cannot be destroyed. What you have done in the previous birth will have to be experienced in this birth, whether you want it or not. You cannot destroy the result of an action that you have

performed earlier. The result of an action lasts forever, until it is experienced. You will get what you have given. But the *sattvic* meditational effort has a very imposing effect on the *rajasic* and *tamasic* karmas, and puts them down for the time being. You have so many desires in your mind, but just now you have put down all of them while listening to me. That is how the *sattvic* karma acts in subjugating the impulses of that which is contrary to the actual spiritual practice. That you are not agitated here and do not want to run away immediately means that you have subjugated even the *rajasic* karma. That is the power of *sattva*. You are poised, and the state of being in poise puts down the effects of *rajasic* and *tamasic* karmas for the time being. But inwardly, the other karmas will also act little by little, causing some physical and mental inconvenience, though the power of the pressure exerted upon them by the *sattva* activity will make them as harmless as a toothless snake. The snake will be there, but without teeth. Its teeth have been pulled out by the *sattvic* karma. Though the distracting *tamasic* karmas are still there, moving about like cobras, they cannot harm you because you have pulled out their teeth.

Sitting for meditation should be a daily practice. If you miss a meal one day and have it the next day, it will disturb your stomach and your appetite. Like the intake of medication which is continuous, your intake of diet should also be continuous. The intake of the exercise of meditation should be continuous, though it need not be for a long time. That you have no time to sit is an irrelevant matter. You can sit for five minutes at least. The quantity or the duration of sitting is not what is important; the quality of your thinking is important. One minute of intense thinking is superior to

an hour of dull thinking. As *sattva* predominates, the capacity to think becomes more and more intense. The love for contact with reality is such a flaming passion in the minds of spiritual seekers that it will burn up all obstacles. If the practice continues every day, the strength of *sattvic* forces will become accentuated and increased more and more, so that the potential for distraction and lethargy will be substantially mitigated. This is one thing that you have to keep in mind.

There are many other aspects of your life that you also have to look into. The food that you eat and drink, the company that you keep, the books that you read, and your general activity have to be streamlined in such a manner that they do not harm your basic purpose. It is up to each person to keep a diary of this kind. Assess yourself: "What have I done since morning? What is the first thought that occurred in my mind when I woke up?" It is very important to take note of what is the first thought that arose in your mind when you woke up. Similar is the case with the thought with which you are going to sleep at night. Keep a note of this. "Now I am going to sleep. What am I thinking at this moment?" That thought will influence the condition into which you are entering sleep; and the first thought that arises in the morning when you wake up will influence the whole day. It is commonly said, in a humorous way, "Start the day with God, end the day with God, and live with God."

A diary of self check-up about one's own personality—which is hidden inside and is mostly unknown even to oneself, waiting in ambush to pounce upon us one day or the other—is to be kept so that the submerged potentials of difficulty are taken note of. What we are thinking now is practically an operation of the conscious mind, and what is inside,

in the subconscious mind, is not coming up at this moment. Psychologists tell us that there are layers of psyche—deeply buried unconscious potentials which carry us forward to repeated births and deaths in the future—which lie sleeping as if they do not exist at all. They seek an atmosphere of operation in order that they may rise to the subconscious level and finally to the conscious level. Our experiences are not only outside in the conscious mind. The conscious experiences are actually conditioned by the instincts of the subconscious and the potentials of the unconscious. We are not exactly as we appear to be in the conscious mind.

There is a determining faculty within our own selves which conditions even our decisions and our performances. Some psychoanalysts say there is no free will, and what is called free will is only an illusion created by the potential of the unconscious and subconscious which presses us to work in a particular direction, and because of the connection of this pressure with the conscious mind, it looks as if we are deliberately doing something. Like a hypnotised person who thinks he is acting deliberately but is actually being controlled by the mind of the hypnotist, our operations are not entirely free in a literal sense. We should not be foolhardy and imagine that we are masters of everything. To the extent we are deeper than the three layers of the mind, to that extent we may say we are masters. But we are working on a particular level which is an illusion projecting itself as an independent medium, not knowing that it is a puppet being pulled by the strings of the submerged instincts of the subconscious and the unconscious. In a puppet show, the operator is not seen; only the dancing puppets are seen. It may look

wonderful, but why is it wonderful? There is something else inside which we cannot see, and we are not supposed to see.

Yoga is not merely *chitta vritti nirodha* in the sense of restraint of the conscious mind. The word *chitta* that is used in yoga does not mean only conscious operation; it is the total psychical energy that is called *chitta*. The entire psychical power, in all its levels, is *chitta*. Restraint of the total operation of all the three layers of the psyche is what is referred to as *chitta vritti nirodha*. When we are thinking something and we stop thinking it, it does not mean that *chitta vritti nirodha* has been attained, because we may stop the process of thinking a particular thing due to a pressure from another side which is also calling our attention.

The necessity to be subject to impulses which are beyond our control is what is handled in yoga. Are we free in ourselves, or are we forced to do things and think in a particular manner? A cow that is tied with a sufficiently long rope may not know that it is tied. It will move freely, grazing in the field. It will not know that it has been limited to the distance of the rope with which it is tied unless it tries to go further; only then will it see that it is conditioned. Similarly, we have a kind of freedom which is granted by the distance of the rope with which we have been tied to our personality, and we may not know that we are tied at all.

What is the rope? It is the impulse to be present only in one particular body, to concern ourselves only with one particular object, and the incapacity to think that we are ubiquitously connected with things in the world, which are also ubiquitous. No operation is localised. It is wisely said that everything is everywhere at all times. That object of achievement which brings about the right-about-turn of

our operations that situations are total, that they arise from everywhere, is the fundamental psychological approach which should form the practice of yoga.

Many people have an inner fear that yoga is something they are doing which is not connected to the daily duties of life. Here is the snag in the very way of thinking. “My basic operational duty is something; yoga is another thing, at the tail end of something.” Yoga is a pervasive controlling influence on even the duty that you are performing in life. Yoga is the dharma, or the cohesive force operating behind everything that you think and do. Yoga is nothing but a cohesive power that you are exercising in a total fashion, which includes your activity. Do not say, “Yoga is outside my duties in life. I have my family, I have my office, I have many things, and yoga is somewhere else.” Yoga is a pervasive attitude of consciousness, without which you cannot do anything, even in your office. A yogi can be a good executive, a good manager, a good office worker, a good sweeper, a good carpenter. Anything a yogi does will be done expertly. A yogi will wash vessels better than an ordinary servant because of his comprehensiveness and total approach to everything. Nothing is insignificant for him.

There is a basic psychological total transformation that you are attempting in your mind. Unless you have changed a little bit, the yoga that you do will be outside your purview and will not touch you. To repeat, yoga is not ‘doing’ something; it is a change of ‘being’ inside—not only your personal physical being, but the total being in which you are involved in every circumstance. This is a refurbishing of psychological thinking, washing your brain completely—cleaning it thoroughly from dirt accumulated in the form of erroneous thinking,

whose impressions are imbedded in the brain, in the setup of the mind, in the unconscious and subconscious levels, and even in your social life.

These are some of the preparatory steps that you can take before jumping into the heights of the topmost meditation on the Absolute. All these problems become naught in one second if the consciousness becomes concentrated on the greatness of the Absolute. These psychological and social difficulties will be set at naught in one second, just as all the troubles of your dream world are set at naught by waking because in waking you are in a different state of consciousness. Your meditation on the Absolute is an enhancement of the type of consciousness which is required, and it abolishes all problems in one second. All the evils of dream have gone. You have paid all your debts, and nobody troubles you any more because you have woken up.

All troubles are operations of consciousness. Waking into the consciousness of the Absolute is an awakening which is beyond the ordinary way of thinking, such as thinking in terms of checks and balances, profits and losses, statistics, etc. There are no statistics before the Absolute. It is a total inclusiveness which merges, absorbs into Itself all your problems. When you reach the Absolute, your problems also go with you. They do not exist any more. They become nectar. If that concentration—the power of affiliation to Absolute consciousness—is deep in you, that one act of intense love for this Great Being is sufficient to save you forever and ever. And every other thing that you have to do is included in that one act because it is a supreme total act which removes the necessity to have any kind of individualised action.

When God comes, everything comes. When the Absolute is with you, the whole universe is with you. Your problems are gone in one moment when you awake to this consciousness. *Mumukshutva*, longing for liberation, is the final solution for your psychological problems, etc. The desire for the Absolute is the one thing that is necessary. You do not want anything else, and you need not do anything else. Love God, love the Absolute, and be free. All sadhana is concentrated in this deep longing within us for entry into this great, wonderful, immortal, magnificent, glorious Being, which is our own higher Self. Love for God, love for the Absolute, is the panacea for every kind of suffering. All suffering goes away. You are blessed.

Discourse 9

THE STORY OF LIBERATION

The relativity of space and time is the reason why it is possible for everyone to transcend space and time, and attain realisation of the Ultimate Reality. If space and time were a hard screen of steel or iron, impregnable and impossible to cross over, they would permanently obstruct our attempt to go beyond them. Inasmuch as the whole world, including our body, is a product of the space-time operation, there is only space-time and there is nothing else anywhere. It is a dance of the activity of the space-time complex that appears as this whole world and even as individuals like us. Some philosophers say that we are totally caught within the phenomena and there is no possibility of contacting the Ultimate Reality. If that is the case, we are doomed forever.

But it is also said that space and time are relative. You must understand the meaning of the word 'relative'. In the sense of relativity, one thing hanging on the other is called relation. If one thing exists because of another thing, neither of them exists independently. As there is a borrowed existence on both sides, no side can exist entirely independently. Time is necessary for space; space is necessary for time. In order to understand this mystery of the relation between space and time, modern thinkers have abandoned the use of the word

‘and’ between space and time; they call it space-time. There are no words to say anything beyond this peculiar combination. What can we call the combination of space-time? We always see space and time, but we never see space-time. It is a necessary logical deduction that is arrived at by the observation of action through the interaction of space and time.

As we are also the product of this relative interaction between space and time, the whole world-stuff being that, there is nothing permanently existing anywhere—neither our body, nor the world of nature, nor the sun, moon and stars. The whole thing is a mysterious performance, something like a magical performance, projected by an indescribable phenomenon we poorly call space-time. It is a poor description because we have no way of saying anything more than that.

But Self-realisation is a great possibility. If we are mere puppets, products of this indescribable phenomenon of the space-time complex, then there is nothing more to say. It is like living in a concentration camp without knowing where we are staying, why we have come, and what we are supposed to think. It is a complete blockage of even the process of thinking because of space-time intervening even in the process of thinking. Philosophers who are very acute in this matter conclude that even the mind cannot act without space and time. So who is going to think that which is above space and time?

This subject, which is so intriguing to any mind, has been discussed in detail in the ancient philosophical text called the Yoga Vasishtha. The intention of the writer of the Yoga Vasishtha is that scientific arguments will lead us nowhere. We have already seen the consequence of philosophical

arguments which conclude that we can do nothing as we are slaves under the pressure of the operation of space and time. But this is not so. How is it not so?

There is a story beautifully narrated in the Yoga Vasishtha, which is a long Sanskrit poem comprised of thirty-two thousand verses. It contains many stories illustrating the nature of the relativity of all things and that nothing really exists by itself.

What is this story? There was, in ancient times, a king called Padma. He had a queen called Lila, and ruled a large kingdom extending thousands of miles. The queen was so attached to her husband that she did not want him ever to die. With grief in her mind as to how the death of her husband could be averted, she consulted the courtiers, ministers and learned pundits of the king's assembly.

"Is there any way to prevent the death of my husband?" the queen asked.

They all said, "There is nobody who can prevent the death of your husband. There is no remedy for that. Everybody who is born must die."

Shocked to the core, weeping, striking her breast with grief, the queen went inside her room and burst forth in agony, deeply praying to the goddess of learning, Saraswati. Many days passed in the queen's great austere prayer to have a blessing from the goddess of knowledge.

The goddess appeared and asked Lila, "What do you want?"

"I do not want my husband to die. Please bless me," Lila cried. "Bless me with this boon."

The goddess did not answer the question. She simply said, "When he dies, cover his body with a cloth, and remember me."

After many years, the king died in a room of the palace. The queen was at her wits' end. She again wept and cried, and called Saraswati, "Please come and bless me. I have lost everything."

Again Saraswati, the great goddess, appeared. "What are you asking for?"

"I want to see my husband, wherever he is," the queen replied.

"Oh, I see," Saraswati said. "I shall take you to the place where your husband is living."

Saraswati touched the queen's head, and they were transported to another order of space and time where her husband had reincarnated and was ruling another empire.

The queen looked around. "Where am I?"

Saraswati, who was beside her, said, "This is the empire of your own husband who has reincarnated into another space-time."

"Where is my husband? He was an old man, seventy-two years old," the queen said. "And this husband is seventy-two years old though he died only yesterday."

"Don't ask questions. Just listen to whatever I say," said Saraswati.

"No, it is not possible," Lila cried. "What are you saying? A person who died yesterday has been reborn and is now seventy-two years old? Are you saying that he was born in this world seventy-two years ago, having died only yesterday?"

I cannot believe this. Don't confuse my mind. Oh, Goddess, bless me. What are you saying?"

Saraswati said, "I will confuse you further. Somewhere in another space-time there was a Brahmin couple who were very poor, living in a little room. Poverty was their only property, misery was their fate. One day they saw a large procession in which the king of the country was being carried on a palanquin. 'Oh,' they said, 'What a glory! If only we too could have that experience of being king and queen.' With this deep thought, they died."

Continuing her story, the goddess Saraswati said, "Listen to me carefully. This Brahmin couple who died eight days ago were reborn as yourself and your husband in another space-time, where your king ruled for fifty years, and died."

"What are you saying?" the queen said. "People who died eight days ago have been reborn in a kingdom where the husband ruled for fifty years? What is the connection between eight days and the fifty years of our lives?"

"Keep quiet and listen to me further. This old man is your own husband, born again in another space-time. He is seventy-two years old."

Again Lila was shocked. "How is it possible?"

Saraswati continued. "Don't utter these words, 'How is it possible?' Yesterday can become tomorrow; tomorrow can become the present. There is no systematic arrangement of the order of space and time existing permanently everywhere in the cosmos. This idea of past, present and future is connected with the way in which the consciousness perceives the operation of space-time outside; and in the operational process of any individual observer being conditioned by space-time there is an interaction of relativity between

seeing and the nature of the object, so that you cannot know what is actually happening. But if this relationship of the observer and the observed phenomena of space and time changes during the process of evolution, then immediately today becomes tomorrow, and a person can come tomorrow and leave yesterday. In this circumstance of there being an infinite number of space-time relations on the basis of infinite types of connection between the seer and the seen, there are infinite universes, and infinite gods are ruling these infinite universes.”

“Where is my husband now?” asked Lila.

Saraswati replied, “Here he is, a seventy-two-year-old man.”

As they were speaking, the empire of this seventy-two-year-old man was invaded by inimical forces. Suddenly war broke out, and the old king rushed with this military force and entered the barrage of military operations. In the Yoga Vasishtha this war is described in very great detail. Every little thing that happened in the war is described. Sometimes the invader appeared to win; sometimes the king appeared to win. Finally, the old king died.

Lila cried, “You tell me this is my husband, and now he has died a second time. Oh, I am going crazy. I don’t want to hear anything more.”

Saraswati said, “No, you cannot be crazy because of my grace. I am only enlightening you. Now, what do you want?”

“I want to see my husband,” the queen said.

When Lila said she wanted to see her husband, she did not mean that she wanted to see the old man. She wanted to see that form which was dead in a room in a different place.

It so happened that the old king who had just died in battle also had a queen, and by chance her name was also Lila. This is a mystery which the Yoga Vasishtha does not explain.

Then Saraswati, the goddess, said, "Here is your husband. He has a queen like you, and she resembles you. Her name is Lila."

"Oh! I did not expect that my husband would have another queen. I am the queen," Lila said.

Saraswati replied, "In the relative cosmos, you cannot say 'mine'. There is no 'mine', and neither you nor anybody else has any interconnection. This interconnection is a false operation of a dancing process of space and time, and you are confused because you are attached to a particular relationship of space and time."

"Now, where am I finally?" said the queen. "I want my husband."

Immediately Saraswati's grace operated. She allowed the soul of the old king to enter the corpse which Lila had covered with a cloth. The king got up, as if from a long dream. He could not understand that he was ruling an empire in a different space-time, and that he had waged a war and had died there. Nothing was known to him. He simply shook himself and woke up.

Saraswati, for whatever reason, also brought the second Lila back to the very room where the king had died and re-entered his corpse, so now he had two queens.

Lila could not understand this. "I don't understand anything. Don't make me mad!"

"No, you will not be mad, by my grace. I am only trying to enlighten you," Saraswati said.

Then King Padma ruled the kingdom once again, with two queens.

“I will tell you something more,” said the goddess.

“Don’t tell me anything more,” Lila said. “It is enough for me!”

“No, I want to illumine you properly. The entire kingdom of thousands of miles that your husband was ruling was actually inside the room of that Brahmin couple who died.”

Lila said, “The room was so small, approximately ten feet by twelve feet in that kingdom, whereas my husband’s kingdom was thousands of miles.”

“Space-time operations are mysterious. They can delude you into the belief of anything whatsoever, and you will not know what is really happening. The large kingdom of Padma was actually inside the room of the Brahmin couple, which was so small.”

Saraswati continued. “Now I shall go further. The large kingdom of the old king is inside this room where your husband died.”

“Sufficient,” Lila said. “I don’t want to hear anything more!”

The goddess said, “I am telling you all this so that you can understand that nothing whatsoever is existing independently. Neither are you existing, nor your husband, nor the world. Nothing is there. You cannot say what is there. Anything can be anywhere at any time, and in any form. Yesterday, today, tomorrow—there is no meaning in these things. A great chaos of perception has been presented before you by space-time. Because of this mysterious, unexpected, shocking operation of space-time, you are unable to know that you are also involved in it. If you are involved in the

world of space and time, you cannot make any reference to the world of space and time because that reference will apply to you also. No one can say, 'I am here' or 'that is there' because this 'I' is vitally connected to the existence of 'that', and 'that' is vitally connected to the existence of 'this'. What do you understand from this? Everything is interrelated in such a way that nothing can exist independently. Everything exists by the operation of all the things that are taking place in the universe, so that every individual, so-called, is a universal unit."

I will tell you something very interesting. This philosophy is the subject of the doctrine propounded by the great American philosopher Alfred North Whitehead. I am not going to say anything about Alfred North Whitehead except that he is as intricate and as surprising as this story of Lila. Nothing is in one place. That idea of space is again due to the involvement of the operation of space-time, of which you are also made.

What is the conclusion? The conclusion is that nothing is going to obstruct you in your Self-realisation. There is nobody so daring that they can put a stop to your attempt, because there is no 'you', and also there is no separate effort. The whole universe in its totality is aspiring for itself in its highest possibilities. Sadhana is done by the universe, not by you, me or anybody. Neither you nor I exist there. It is like everything being everywhere, as the story indicates. You do not know what is where. Who is dying? Who is being born? And how much land do you have? Where is your land? "Well," you say, "I have so many acres of land." This is what the king said, but it was all inside somebody else's room.

Your entire property is inside the room of somebody else, but you do not know this. You are unnecessarily, madly, clinging to this and that. Either you cling to individuals, or you cling to circumstances such as your property. Neither of them exist. Can it be? It is sufficient for you to illumine yourself and awaken from the dream of this world perception.

“Are you satisfied? I have shown you your husband,” Saraswati said.

“You have shown me my husband,” Lila reluctantly replied. She was very upset. She didn’t want to say anything because everything might suddenly change and her husband may be anywhere else.

King Padma, who was rejuvenated by the entry of his departed soul, along with his two Lilas, ruled the kingdom once again. The Yoga Vasishtha says that due to the wisdom imparted to the queen by the goddess Saraswati, both the king and queen attained liberation instantaneously.

This is the story of liberation, which is stunning, shocking, and impossible to understand because the world phenomena are not supposed to be understood. Who is going to understand, when the person who is trying to understand is a product of the very thing that he is trying to understand? This is why every action is a total action. Nobody does anything anywhere, and anybody who thinks that he or she is doing something is a fool because somebody else is operating in a total fashion at the back of this so-called individuality.

“Everything has been done by Me,” Lord Krishna told Arjuna in the Bhagavadgita. “I have already done what you are trying to do now.”

Here again is the question of relativity. Even before the Mahabharata war took place, Lord Krishna said, "I have already destroyed these people."

"How is it possible, when they are still here?" asked Arjuna.

"The war has yet to take place, but I have already destroyed them. The very root of these warriors' existence in another space-time was plucked out by the universal power, and they exist only as phantoms, pantomimes. Your attacking them in war is only an instrument of action. They do not exist, really speaking. I have already withdrawn their souls. The whole Mahabharata war is only a pantomime show. Actually, nothing is happening. I have done everything," Lord Krishna replied.

This is the Ultimate Reality speaking to everyone involved in space and time. Here is the Bhagavadgita. Nobody reads the Bhagavadgita with this kind of insight. They go on chanting it again and again, but why has the Lord said that? He says that something that has not taken place as yet has already been done.

This is the foundation through which you have to operate your mind. After hearing this, you cannot get attached to anything. The very word 'attached' will look like a foolish description because that to which you are attached exists only because of your relation to yourself, and the meaning that you see in the object to which you are attached is due to your existing in one particular form. Unless both are there, parallelly acting, one action cannot take place in respect of another. Neither can you love a thing nor hate a thing unless there is an action and reaction between both on a common level.

The perception of this or that in any manner whatsoever is an interaction taking place, and actually it is not your work. Therefore, you can possess nothing in this world. There is bereavement everywhere. You lose everything. Whoever has possessed anything will lose it one day or the other. Whoever was born will also die. The whole misery of life is due to the wrong belief that there are permanent things, solidly existing like a stone wall. There are no stone walls here. They are all like mist appearing as a pillar, which will melt into nothing by the rise of the sun of knowledge.

This is a great subject for meditation, and cannot be forgotten by anyone. If you miss the import of what I have told you, you have missed the entire meaning of life. You may be busy in your own way, but do not be so busy that you do not know the reason why you are busy. Highly penetrating understanding coupled with true dispassion must be behind it. You do japa any number of times, but nothing will come out of it because the foundation itself is wrong. You think you are doing japa or achieving something else, but neither are you doing anything nor are you achieving something else. It is a total action taking place by the operation of space and time, of which you have no knowledge because, as I mentioned, you are in a concentration camp and are completely controlled by forces which you cannot know because you yourself are subject to these operations. You are brainwashed totally, which is why you cannot understand anything, and if you do all this activity, all this work, service and meditation with a confused mind, it will bring a confused result.

That is why it is insisted that before you start anything, you must have a clear understanding, *viveka*. *Viveka* means

clear understanding of the nature of things—the capacity to discriminate between what is really there and what is not there. If this is known, if this story has enlightened you, you will know that you cannot have any kind of inward longing for anything in this world. *Vairagya* automatically follows, as sunlight is automatically followed by the departure of the darkness of night. Detachment and desirelessness need not be exercised with effort; they automatically go when the structure of the whole universe is understood. Therefore, *viveka* and *vairagya* are considered to be primary qualifications. They are not two things, just as space and time are not two things. They are one only. This is rational conviction, which consists of the illumined perception of things through *viveka* and an automatic detachment from all conditions which cause attachment.

But there is also a need for emotional training. There are tumults, cyclones and gales, tempestuous movements taking place in the feelings of a person. They have to be subdued. Generally, the intellect and the emotion do not act together. Often the intellect defeats the purpose of the emotion, and the emotion defeats the purpose of the understanding. People live a torn life, and have a dual personality. On one side they are very intelligent, and on the other side they are very foolish. It should not be this way.

Your feelings, longings, and the operation of your emotions should be harmonised with what you have concluded by your reasoning and understanding. Then this combination of reason and feeling, like a chemical action of two substances, bursts forth into what is called intuition. Intuition is nothing but the blend of understanding and emotion. When they are two different operations, you

can neither know what you are doing through emotion, nor can you know what you are thinking. On both sides you are making mistakes. When they are blended together into a coherent totality, there is a bursting of the intuition directly into the nature of things. This is the second qualification. The last qualification is intense longing for liberation. Who likes to be in bondage? If you have a longing for liberation, you have done your duty. That longing itself will take you to moksha.

CONCLUDING MESSAGE

Whatever is necessary for your welfare has been told to you, right from the very foundation to the pinnacle of this new knowledge that you have gained through a different curriculum of education which involves the whole personality entirely, integrally, and is not just training a particular faculty. A human being cannot be confined to one faculty. It is a total operation of understanding, feeling and willing, and the three aspects have to be put together simultaneously—not only hand in hand, but as three components of one single aspiration.

Every aspiration, every longing is a comprehensive movement of our whole individual personality, and not some part of us moving in one direction. Mostly we are divided personalities. Very few people are inwardly aligned properly. You are intellectually convinced about something, but your feeling is somewhere else, and it has no connection with your conviction. People have political associations, social commitments, and family problems. There seems to be a huge mass of problems, each different from and unconnected to one another.

People generally say they have problems from every side, but actually the problem does not come from all sides. It comes from one side only, which is the entire environment of your personality. Whether it is a political operation, a social

involvement, connected with family, or anything related to your individuality, they are not different types of obligation and commitment. It is the whole structure of your being reacting and acting upon your entire surrounding—whether naturally, or socially, politically, economically, or in any way.

This kind of envisagement of the values of life is a total impossibility to an ordinary individual. Such kind of requirement is never taught anywhere, and nobody will talk to you on this subject because everybody everywhere is made of the same stuff of inward chaotic difficulty; and very little time has been bestowed to gather up the harvest of experience into a central focus of the One that you are, moving in the direction of the One that really is.

Philosophers call this achievement as the flight of the alone to the Alone. The aloneness of your personal individual associations gathers itself up in the direction of the attainment of Supreme Aloneness, which is designated as God Almighty, or the Absolute, or Brahman.

Repeating once again what I have been telling you over and over, every effort, every thought is a total operation. It is not a fraction. Your involvement in anything is a total involvement. It is not that part of you is involved in something and part of you is free. When you are involved in something, the whole of you is caught in it because you cannot segment your personality into parts.

In the light of this awakening, your duty seems to be to encounter the whole cosmos as your origin, your sustenance, and your goal. In a way, you have emanated from the total structure of the entire universe; therefore, the whole universe is in every individual microcosmically, even to the minute atom. The little universe that is the individual is the

representative of the Absolute individual which is the whole universe.

It is the whole that is aspiring for the whole. In modern times this is called a holistic approach, not fragmentary. If anyone asks you what your duty is, you have a fragmentary answer. You say, "I have a duty to my parents, my brothers and sisters, my office, my social relations, my community, my country." And if you are more charitable in your nature, you will say, "I am committed to the whole of humanity." This is insufficient.

You are committed to something more than what appears to you on the surface of the earth because the surface of the earth and all that it contains is a partial manifestation of the operational process of the entire nature, which has no country, which has no ethnic differences, which knows no boundaries. It does not know language, one differing from the other. All this that we consider as great values in life does not exist for nature and, therefore, it may not exist for God also.

Yoga practice is to collect ourselves into the acceptance of this great vision of life. Yoga is not pranayama, it is not sitting in one posture, and it is not going inwardly in contemplation of self-analysis. It is nothing of the kind. Yoga is the acceptance of your commitment to the entire creation before you.

You are obliged to anything and everything in the world. In the ancient traditional system, the duties of a man are divided into five obligations, known in Sanskrit as the Pancha Mahayajnas because the performance of a duty is the performance of a sacrifice. The culture of India is centred in the notion of sacrifice. This word 'sacrifice' has many meanings. It may mean performing a *havan* and offering oblations in

the holy fire, or it may also mean alienating a part of your happiness for the sake of others by charitable activities. When you offer something which not merely belongs to you but is a vital part of your being, you have done a great sacrifice. The whole of life is a sacrifice of the lower reality to the higher reality, of individual reality to universal reality, of the lesser whole to the larger whole.

This obligation in the form of the Pancha Mahayajnas, the fivefold sacrifice, is very distinctly described as your duty to the gods in heaven—which means to say, the divinities operating behind your sense organs. You say you have to protect your eyes, your ears, your limbs, your organs, but no one has any control over their organs, really speaking. You cannot control even the winking of your eyes by your own effort. It is laid down that it should be like that. The forces that are transcendent to the operation of the physical limbs of the body and act invisibly are Devatas—gods or divinities—and without their action and collaboration you will never be able to combine the perception of the eyes, the hearing of the ears, the smelling of the nose, the feeling of the skin, and the tasting of the tongue into a single knowledge. They are all independent actions. What the eye does the tongue cannot do, etc. But when all of them act, you know that you are experiencing the whole. This wholeness of experience that is possible to you in spite of the variety in the organic sensory operation is due to the divinity operating behind it. These are the gods, so-called. You have to offer your submission to these gods, and ask for their blessing.

The Bhagavadgita says: *sahayajnah prajah srishtva purovacha prajapatih, anena prasavishyadhvam esha vo'st-vishta kamadhuk* (Gita 3.10). You are born with the obligation

for sacrifice. The Creator ordained that every individual that is created is born inseparably from an obligation for sacrifice. That is to say, every individual has an obligation to transcend his individuality. The process of sacrifice is a process of self-transcendence. When you bow before your deity, you are not just thinking of something that is standing in front of you; you are surrendering your lower consciousness to an operative consciousness which surrounds you and transcends you. Therefore, the Deva-yajna, as it is called, the sacrifice due from you to the divinity superintending over every operation of your sense organs, is an obligation.

Then you have a duty to your forefathers who have begotten you and made you what you are. Your genes, your DNA, have a vital connection with your ancestors. It is said that sixteen generations of influence act upon a particular individual. When the *shraddha* ceremony is performed, the spirits of seven generations of forefathers are invited. Their blessing, their very existence, is invisibly operating through the cells in the bloodstream and in the very thought, so to say, of the particular individuals.

You are obliged to the source from where you have come, and you should be grateful to that person who has made you what you are. You are obliged to your teachers and professors who have educated you, as you would not be thinking in this way without the help of these people. You have an obligation to human beings because they are human beings like yourself. Entertaining a guest and lovingly offering your greetings to those who come to you for help, whether by way of food or in any other way, is also an obligation. Those who come to you for help, who need your compassion and goodwill, are veritable gods, says this tradition. Uninvited people do not

come by accident. It is a compulsive operation taking place somewhere else which pushes this individual in the direction of some other person who is able to assist him.

There is compassion to human beings, and compassion to animals. We may think that animals are idiots and we are not concerned with their welfare. When we think of the welfare of the world, we do not think it includes the welfare of animals. They do not exist at all for us. The vibrations around animals also have an impact upon everybody else. It is said the vibration of a cow is highly salubrious, and the smell that emanates from its body is supposed to be very purifying. That is why in India the cow is considered as a divinity and should not be killed, much less eaten.

Likewise, there are vital associations of every animal with the whole atmosphere, to which reference is made by Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the Tenth Chapter of the Bhagavadgita. "I am the lion among animals. I am the crocodile among watery animals. I am the sacred peepal among all the trees. I am the Ganga among all the rivers. I am the Himalayas among all the mountains. I am Omkara among the Vedas. I am Indra among the gods. I am Brihaspati among the wise ones. I am even the force that directs a person to commit the mistake of playing dice."

Playing dice is not a good thing, but the idea of doing it cannot arise without something operating behind you because a dead mind cannot think of it, though this operative force is not responsible for your action. If someone commits burglary with the help of the light of the full moon, and without that light he could not have done it, you may say the full moon is responsible for the burglary. This is not so. The moonlight is a universal impersonal performance, and

any action that is performed with the assistance of this light cannot be imputed to it.

Likewise, you should not condemn animals, even an ant. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, a touching message is given on this matter. Do not disturb an ant. It is not an insignificant creature; it is a whole being, and it requires as much assistance and compassion as an elephant. The hunger of an ant is not less than the hunger of an elephant because hunger is an impulse that is commonly present everywhere. Therefore, you should calmly, cooperatively, compassionately, interfere not with the movements of these animals. People kill snakes. This should not be done. Snakes are not there to kill you; they have no such intention. You frighten them, and they react.

If you look compassionately upon other species, even ants, you should not say that you are wasting your time in activities of no consequence. Wonderful is the Upanishad that says these little ants and the birds, in their originality in the higher regions, will receive you with great love and affection. The soul of an ant that is operating above may give you the strength of an elephant there, which you cannot understand. Nobody is an ant always. As I mentioned earlier, different things are of different statures in different space-time orders. Though in one space-time order it is an ant, it may not be like that everywhere.

Therefore, there should be compassionate treatment of animals, human beings, guests, teachers who give you knowledge, and the gods in heaven. This is the concept of sacrifice in India. It covers everything that is required of you.

What is the implication of all this teaching? It is a development of a universal view, which alone can be regarded as

the means to your self-transcendence in the highest comprehensiveness of God-being. You know Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. You know Narada's Bhakti Sutras. You know the thoughts of great Western thinkers. You know the message of Swami Sivananda. You know so many things, the knowledge of which has been imparted to you by different teachers of this Academy. All these should be brought together into a single attention and a collective knowledge which must help you.

In summing up, what you have gathered here as a new knowledge is the art of developing a comprehensive view of life, which is sometimes considered as the obligation of a judge in a court. The judge does not belong to any party. He is not interested in favouring this party or that party. He extracts the cream and the essence of the whole situation, and it is a wholesome judgment that he exercises.

Likewise is this approach to an inclusive view of life. Whenever you think something, remember that there is a counterpart to it. Unless there is another thing which has incidentally been excluded from your thinking, there would not be a possibility of thinking it. There is no such thing as one thing. The one thing is an abstraction from a wholesome involvement, of which the person concerned is totally unaware. Wholeness does not mean only one particular kind of wholeness. It is a mental wholeness, a gestalt, as they call it—a total action of the mind, vital energy, emotion, understanding, and will. When you leave, you carry yourself in an enhanced manner, having achieved a larger dimension of your own self, and you go home as a different person altogether. Your face is brighter.

The Upanishads mention a student who studied for years under a Guru, and wanted initiation. For some reason or the

other, the Guru never initiated, never cared for this student. He only told him, "Take these cattle to the forest, take care of them, and don't return until the number of cattle multiplies."

Caring for cattle until they multiply takes years. The disciplined student accepted this instruction, and went to the forest. Poor person that he was, he tended the cattle. When years passed and the number of cattle increased from a few to four hundred, he thought the time had come for his initiation.

The student said, "Guruji, I have done my duty. Will you give me initiation?"

The Guruji said nothing, and went on a pilgrimage. The *patni*, the consort of the Guru, was also surprised that the Guru was so callous.

Again the student took the cattle to the forest. The gods knew how this boy was suffering. The divinities in heaven appeared before him in the form of a bull, a burning fire, a flying bird, and a swan.

"Upakosala," they cried, "I shall tell you one fourth of the truth."

They described an aspect of the Supreme Being in their own illustrative style. It was the divine power that was working through these animals. Each divinity told him one fourth of the Supreme Reality.

When this knowledge was received, his face started shining with illumination. He returned home, and again asked his Guru, "Please initiate me."

The Guru asked, "Upakosala, why is your face shining today? Who taught you?"

The student replied, "Guruji, it was someone who is not a human being."

Through intuition, the Guruji knew what had happened. “What you have learned through these divinities is enough for you, and you can go now. I relieve you from every obligation to me. There is no need for me to initiate you again.”

After hearing all this, your face will become brilliant by the joy that is in your mind. Your face shines due to happiness. If you have a very good lunch, your cheeks swell a little due to so much happiness. That is an illustration of satisfaction. There are also other kinds of satisfaction in the world that can fill you with happiness in a complete manner, and you feel that you are elevated to the heavens. Therefore, what makes you happy also makes your face shine; and what can be a greater joy than knowledge? Knowledge is virtue, knowledge is power, knowledge is happiness.

Thus, go as the disciple mentioned in the story of the Upanishad. Remember that the whole of your life is an aspiration for the Ultimate Being. You are not going to your house; you are going to another part of the universe itself. Do not say you are going to your house. Where is your house? It is inside the universe only. From one atmosphere of the universe you are going to another atmosphere to live a whole life wherever you are because wherever you are the whole universe will pursue you. Just as you cannot run away from the sun and the moon, and they are always there wherever you go, so this great requirement on your part in terms of the universal operations will pursue you wherever you go, and keep you restless and unhappy until you attend to the call of the Great Totality.

I conclude what I have to say. All shall be well. God bless you.

Appendix

TWENTY-ONE 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 or useless items 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 the 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, the Bhagavadgita, 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 with moving the 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 for at least 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.