

**SPRINGS**



**OF ACTION**

**TALKS ON THE BHAGAVAD GITA**

**by**

**Swami Venkatesananda**



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## Talk 1

The purpose of discussing or studying the text, known as the Bhagavad Gita, is not to make converts. It is only because someone is a bit more familiar with some classic, he deals with that. Just as some of you are more familiar with the Bible or something else, and may more freely deal with the same truth through the channel of that particular scriptural text.

The fact that we are here and Acharya leads us in some chants, or we listen to something in Sanskrit or some other language, that does not need to worry us. 'Oh, am I being converted?' 'Is my religion being threatened?' I eat butter and cheese that came from New Zealand. I do not become a New Zealander - I still need an entry permit to go there. So, just because I pick up a book called Bhagavad Gita, I do not become a Hindu.

It is extremely difficult to convert somebody. It is not possible. If I see some advantage in becoming a Muslim or a Christian, then I may. But then I am not becoming a Christian or a Muslim because I want to, but because I see some advantage. It is a risky business. So, first of all, I am neither frightened nor tempted by all this talk of, 'Can I touch this book?' Of course you can. You can even use it as a pillow, nothing will happen to you. You will probably sleep better.

I wonder if you see a difficulty here? Talking to one another or exchanging ideas is possible, but someone sitting here and talking to you about the wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita, or yoga, or this or that, should not even for one brief moment imagine that thereby he can effect a change in you. It is not possible. Transformation is possible only for each one, for himself or herself and by himself or herself. It is possible for me to speak, it is possible for the microphone to pick up the sound waves, perhaps magnify them, perhaps distort them - even as this man-microphone sitting here on this chair can also magnify or distort. But nothing is of any use to you except what you hear, and what you allow to filter through your mind and into your heart.

Filter - that is the next problem. Do I hear any words at all? Do I hear words or sounds? Sounds. These sounds are somehow interpreted as words by you, whereas the tape-recorder or microphone do not interpret the sound into words, they merely transmit and convey the sound as sound. There seems to be something in you and me, or that is you and me, which is capable of interpreting the sound and converting it into words. What is that? What is it? I shall still use the expression 'in me'. We will come to that later. What is it in me that picks up this sound, and converts it into a word?

Audience: The mind.

Swami: Your breakfast also.

Audience: Consciousness.



Swami: Anything, a tape-recorder ... What is consciousness? What is ... never mind - and what is no-mind? 'Mind' is a word. Who makes that word called 'mind'? Does the mind also make its own breakfast? Next time you sit in front of a piece of toast, look at it and say, 'Do you make your own toast, or do I make the toast?' So, who makes the word called 'mind' intelligible? All other sounds are interpreted, transformed to words by the mind. Who transforms the sound 'mind' into mind? We do not know, we do not know anything.

Let us proceed cautiously, watching our step. This much is clear. What is spoken is sound and the sound is filtered. The filter can let the sound pass through, or accept, reject, decipher, distort, understand, or misunderstand - all these are possible. What is it? It is better for the present to know that it is the responsibility of the listeners to listen. It is up to the listeners to receive to accept or to reject, to perceive or distort. Therefore, immediately, I am free from fear. I can listen to the most atrocious speeches. Nobody can pollute my brain, definitely not those areas which are beyond the polluter's reach. The filter is there, acting both constructively and destructively. Destructively it keeps away knowledge which may be useful to me, and constructively it exposes itself to healthy understanding. It is up to me.

We are dealing with the Bhagavad Gita because I happen to be a bit more familiar with it than with some other scriptural texts. As we proceed, I may entertain you with some quotations, and we may discover that this is what all the other scriptural texts that you are familiar with also deal with. The message is the same, exactly the same, but it is presented in different languages, or idioms, to suit the idiosyncrasy of the listeners. To a German audience you speak German, not because you are speaking a different truth entirely, but so that communication becomes easy, nothing more. There is nothing to be afraid of in the first place, and nothing to be complacent about in the second place. We are not here to convert each other, so there is no need to fear, and what is heard does not immediately produce inner transformation, and therefore there is need to be vigilant and not complacent. Just because we are all using the English language and seem to understand the words, we should not imagine that therefore we have understood what the message is.

I will tell you story and see if the story, though it is considered a legend or a myth, has some relevance to our own life. The reason that tempts me to use this scripture is that my guru, Swami Sivananda, often insisted that this Bhagavad Gita has an immediate relevance to you and me, because it deals with this fundamental problem that faces each one of us in our own life - the problem of human relationship, the problem of action, and the problem of living itself. Why have we made it a problem? Instead of solving the problem, is there a possibility we can dissolve it?

Having created a problem by trying to solve it, you only create two more. I often refer to young boys and girls; they seem to be all right until suddenly they find

that they are lonely. Loneliness is a problem? Loneliness is not a problem. I am alone. Anyhow, loneliness is seen as a problem. They go and get married. They think that they have solved the problem, but the problem has been multiplied by two. I have got only one problem, I wash my clothes and shave myself. If I bring a wife along - I have to wash her clothes too, so the problem multiplies. Then the two of us get bored, so we bring in a third problem called a child. It offers a sort of a solution for a little while because we do not quarrel any more, we are too busy fighting with the child. So, instead of solving a problem, can we dissolve it? That is the basis of the scripture. Can we free life from conflict? We have somehow made it a problem, and we see that solving the problem of life aggravates it. Can I somehow dissolve it, or allow it to dissolve itself?

This theme is dramatised in the Bhagavad Gita. In the story there were two princes who were brothers. One was blind and the other was anaemic. I will only merely hint at the possible allegory, though the orthodox pundits of India insist that all this is historically factual. The blind man had a hundred vicious and wicked sons, and leaned heavily on the side of wickedness. A blind man naturally leans towards wickedness. This is the basic reason for studying the scriptures, for meditating and for practising yoga. We see that it is not because man wants to be wicked that he is vicious, but he is blind and he is ignorant. How often have we told ourselves, 'If only I had known the consequences, I would never have done this'? That's it. It is not so much some silly little devil sitting inside me, prompting me towards evil, that I commit evil, but because I am ignorant. Remove this ignorance, and evil also goes away. Blindness, spiritual blindness, is the cause of all our evil actions. It gives birth to evil actions. The wicked blind king gave birth to a hundred wicked sons, and once this blind ignorance has given rise to a hundred evils, it leans heavily on them. It is not very difficult to see, though whether we would admit it to ourselves is open to question.

Let us say we have committed a grave blunder in ignorance. Am I prepared to admit it, drop it and get out? Hardly. You see this in politics. I make a jolly good mistake. I was stupid, foolish, and this needs tremendous, super-human suicidal courage to get out of it. But I try to patch it up and rationalise it, seek some way to overcome it, and so this wickedness multiplies. When you have made a mess of your life, why do you not get out of it? 'Oh no, it is so difficult and I do not see any alternative'. I lean heavily on my excuses - my children, my property, my business etc. If I get out, the whole thing might collapse. So, somehow I have to go on. Perhaps if I go to church on Sunday and pray, or give some donation to charity, it may buy some indulgences. It does not work. I cannot see any other way out of this evil I have created. If I have encouraged my children to rob or steal, what should I do? Abandon them? Is it not cruelty or violence? And so we go on making excuses.

On the other hand, the other brother was anaemic. He had five children. What is anaemic? A good man, but one who is so weak he is worse than wicked. Our society is full of them. It is strange - the wicked ones seem to be strong and vocal, while the good ones hide under the bed. 'I do not want to do anything evil'. But

they do not do anything good either. This is another very serious problem in our life. I see someone doing something vicious. If I fight with that person, I also become vicious. Two wrongs do not make a right. If I do not want to fight with that evil, what do I do? I hide under the bed. 'Oh, I do not quarrel, God is there.' What is God? God is there in you too. Why do you not let that God wake up and do what he wants to do?

We have learnt only these two - either I resist evil, fight with it, or I withdraw. Is there not a third alternative? Neither this, nor that. What is there in the middle? I do not know if you like a simple formula - he is doing his job, let me do mine without hating him, without resisting him or getting in his way at all. I do not care whether you call him evil or holy. I am not interested in destroying what is evil because then I become the destroyer - again evil. Can I not go my own way? That is it and it is very rare. Either you fight and get involved in the fight, become evil, or, like this man in the story, our goodness becomes so anaemic, so weak, that it is useless worse than evil.

Good and evil are cousins. Do not let us think that good people are all in heaven and the evil ones are all locked away in a thing called hell. We mingle freely at all cocktail parties and everywhere. They live in tremendous harmony. It is the good that becomes evil in certain circumstances and it is the evil that seems to become good when it seeks the light - because these two are not two completely different and totally antithetical beings, but the same thing that seems to undergo a certain inner change or transformation. The two are cousins and they fight. The whole story is contained in the Mahabharata.

These two families go on and on, fighting and fighting. One thing the reader cannot fail to notice is that, whenever the wicked cousins plot against the good ones, there is perpetual unanimity, no arguments at all. But when the five good brothers got together to decide upon the next step, there is difference of opinions. One says we must kill them, the other says no. We notice this in our own society. Gangsters unite, they appoint someone as leader, and all implicitly obey him. But put three good people together - yogis, priests, or swamis or whatever, they go on endlessly bickering amongst themselves, never coming to a decision. The good people seem to be so fond of argument, so fond of being heard, each thinking he has seen the truth, the light. I have also seen the light from the back-side. What does it matter from which side the light is seen? Light is light. No, but it must be done my way, not your way. Put half a dozen hooligans together - one says, 'Let us rob the bank', and they all say, 'Yeah'. Why can we not learn some unity from these people?

Eventually the good ones are exiled. It is a long story and on the advice of Krishna, the friend of the good ones, war is declared. I would very humbly refer you to Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3. 'There is a time for everything. A time for peace and a time for war. There is a time to be born and a time to die. There is a time to love and a time not to love.' There is a beautiful parallel saying in one of the scriptures: 'What does man do? Time does everything.' When you are 25 and your



hair is black, try to turn that hair white now. It is not possible; leave it alone. In time, time changes even the colour of your hair, time changes the texture of your skin. Time brings things into being, time wipes them out. Whatever there is - is done by time.

Says Krishna in the Gita, kalo 'smi lokalsayakrt pravrdho lokan samahartum iha pravrttah.

When Arjuna, the disciple, asks him, 'Who are you, O Mighty Being', he says, 'I am Time. I am the perpetual eternal destroyer. No one destroys here except me - Time'.

Can you think of all those hundreds and thousands of people who were killed and who killed during the wars? 'Aah, we must fight and kill them. They are our enemies.' The man who killed and the man who was killed, both have been killed by time. The first one was killed and then a little later the other. There is no power in this universe except time. It is time that gives rise to a things and time wipes them out in the course of time.

So, Krishna says it is time to fight, you have been brothers too long. The leaders of both groups go round canvassing and there follows a rather interesting situation. Krishna was having an afternoon nap and both the contestants went to him asking for his support. The wicked king Duryodhana arrived first and stood at the head of the bed. He did not want to stand at the foot of the bed. 'I am King. It is not that I am proud, but as king I do not stand at anybody's feet.' Then came the good man, He thought, 'There is God Almighty. It is good to stand at his feet.' Right. If you have been sleeping on your back, and open your eyes, who do you see first? The man who stands at your feet. You have a saying in the Bible, 'He who comes last, is chosen first.' So, Krishna saw Arjuna first, 'Hello, how are you and what is the matter?' Arjuna who was standing at the foot of the bed said, 'I want your blessings and your help.' The mighty king, at the head of the bed, coughed loudly. 'Oh, so you are also here'. 'Yes, I also want your help'. As a king, Governor-general or God Almighty, Krishna had to be impartial, above party politics. So he said, 'Of course I will support both of you.' How do you support two people who are fighting and wanting to kill each other? Then Krishna gave a proposition. 'I have an army, and there is myself, choose one or the other'.

Krishna was considered a very delightful companion and a lover, and he said, 'I know only how to love, not how to kill, so you can have me, but I will not fight. I will smile at you and play my flute.' This king laughed at this. 'No, I will have your army.' And the good man said, 'Thank you very much, I will have you.' Another biblical quotation. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all else will be added unto you.' Take God into your heart, let him be unveiled and there is no need to fight or quarrel, no need to be excited about anything, and everything seeks you. In the course of time and because he is Lord of Time, what has to happen will happen, so let me be on the side of God, comfortable, peaceful and happy right now.

So, now the battle started, and now the time had come to make a disciple of this warrior Arjuna. The armies were all assembled and Krishna, the Incarnate

Godhead, offered this warrior, who had chosen him in preference to his army, to be his chauffeur. He said, 'I am not going to fight, but instead of being totally useless, I will drive your chariot. I will just take you wherever you want to go. I may also tell you what to do and what not to do'. This is a marvellous thing. Already the first lesson of the Gita is there. Even if you are God Almighty, it is just as well to do something with your life - and do it without any pretensions, as time determines, whether it be driving a car, serving someone or any kind of works - menial work or non-menial work. Do whatever is needed, with a smile, a cheerful face, a cheerful heart, not grumbling and downcast - 'I have to do it'. Do it cheerfully. Arjuna the warrior, 'Krishna, take my chariot and put it right in the middle of the battlefield. I want to have a look at the two armies and assess the relative strength.'

Then comes the crucial moment. The hero looks at that army and then looks at his own army and says, 'My God, I thought these were my friends, and these my enemies, but it is not true. These are my relations, my kith and kin and even the ones ready to fight with me, they too are my own relatives.'

That suggests the beginning of the problem of our life, I would like to get rid of my evil qualities - my vanity, arrogance, hate, hostility, jealousy, anxiety, and fear, but how? They are all mine. How do you want me to get rid of mine? Would I want to get rid of my wife, my children? No. Then why should I get rid of my hostility, my arrogance, my fear? Keep them. That is our problem. The moment I see I am afraid of something or jealous of somebody, and I see it is destroying my life, I want to get rid of it. The very next moment, I see all of them as my own, and I do not want to overcome them at all. At this point, the hero collapses, and the teacher - Sri Krishna - commences his teachings.

## Talk 2

The hero on the battlefield suddenly undergoes a change for the worse - which is you and me. We are not talking of an ancient historical evil, but about you and me. If we are awake psychologically and spiritually, this happens to us a thousand times a day. If it does not seem to happen to us, it is simply because we are asleep. The clock strikes every hour. During the daytime we notice it, but during the night we do not. However, that does not mean that the clock has stopped striking.

This kind of challenge occurs a thousand times a day in our life, especially if we are awake. Incidentally, it may be mentioned, in passing, that this is one of the complaints which you usually hear from people who have started to practise yoga and to meditate. Suddenly they come up to you and say they seem to be worse off than before. 'Since I took up meditation, I feel terribly confused and worried and vexed'. You can tell them, 'It is nice that you are awake now, whereas before you were fast asleep and so nothing bothered you.' That is also a transition which must take place before enlightenment. First there is ignorance, then there is awakening plus a little confusion, then there is total resolution or enlightenment.

Again, we could probably get our definitions clear at this stage. Enlightenment as far as I am concerned, is not what it may mean to some of you. To me, enlightenment means feeling of light, not within the sense of luminosity, but light in the sense of being feather weight, so that we can float through life without making ourselves a burden on others and on the world, nor allowing others to be a burden upon our shoulders, our mind or heart.

To begin with, I am ignorant, I am in the dark, and there is no confusion, there is nothing. As we wake up and become aware of what goes on in life, then we are also awake to the endless and ceaseless conflict in our lives, in our relationships, in our emotions, in everything. We have to face that conflict, we cannot avoid it. Then comes the resolution which is enlightenment.

The hero on the battlefield collapses. The battlefield here is our own life. I am sure those of you who meditate regularly feel a kind of wonderful bliss and joy during meditation. Then you are in a different state of mind or consciousness, in a different world. As you return to this everyday consciousness, you tell yourself not to bother about all these things. 'I do not want to be jealous or to hate anyone. I want to be free from all this. I am not going to get into this rat-race any more. This is not for me. The family can look after themselves. They are all God's.' Then you come out of your little shell called meditation and face the first person, and you are on the battlefield. You find that your husband is picking up your yoga books and throwing them in the rubbish bin. What happens to the feeling 'I am not going to be bothered by all this'? That is where the battlefield is. You have decided that your children are grown up and can look after themselves, and then you find your son or your daughter doing something of which you disapprove. All your resolutions disappear into thin air because you do not look at that person as

a person anymore, but as 'my' son, 'my' daughter, 'my' husband, 'my' wife, 'my' reputation, 'my' business, 'my' religion and 'my' God. My God! Everything 'my' which has to be defended from something else. So, the world is immediately divided into 'my' and 'the other'. This has to be protected and that has to be destroyed. 'My', whatever it may be, is right, and 'the other', whatever it may be, is wrong.

You have heard people say, 'My son smokes. It is bad, but poor child,' Whereas others who smoke or take LSD are spoken of as, 'Horrible creatures, do not join with them.' If my son smokes marijuana - 'Poor thing, he had a difficult childhood' If the other person does it - 'He is horrible.'

It is extraordinary, I have often wondered about English grammar - 'you' is nominative and 'your' is possessive. 'He' is nominative and 'his' is possessive. But 'my' has no relationship nor is there a similarity in the spelling to 'I'. The founders of the English grammar were philosophers and realised that 'I' cannot possess anything, so there is no possessive case 'I'. 'My' is not the possessive case for 'I', because 'I' can possess nothing. The word 'my' is a word by itself, independent, and has nothing whatever to do with the word 'I'. In looking at the word 'my', it seems to be an abbreviation - like 'mister', which is abbreviated to 'Mr.' by taking out some letters. Even so, with the word 'my' we can fill up the blank space between M and Y with something, e.g. 'misery'. Instead of writing 'misery', you take the first and last letters and put them together and this gives you an abbreviation. It is not a word at all, and has nothing to do with the possessiveness of 'I'. I can possess nothing. The moment I use the word 'my', I walk into misery. It is crazy.

When you read of a child who has drowned in a swimming pool, you become a little mad at the parents and say, 'Why did they not look after their child properly?' If it is my child, it is different. Do I really love life? Do I revere life as such? No. All the people in world can go to hell as long as you and I are all right. My family, My little yoga school - these must be saved by a special effort of God. That is the monstrous thing that this 'My' is capable of doing - it brings endless misery. Examine your own anxiety. It is not concerned with the world or life as such, but Mine - my property, my health, my body.

So the hero goes onto the battlefield and discovers 'my' interests are threatened. My people are about to be destroyed, killed, and the student or the future disciple, the hero, quakes and shivers and says, 'I should not fight at all because I may be killing my own people. This war involves the destruction of all that is mine.'

This might be allegorical of what happens in my own life. Here I am embarking on a spiritual adventure, a search for truth, and I want to battle against and destroy all that is untrue or false. I want to face the fact, the truth, and there is no such relationship as 'my'. It is an assumed relationship - My property, My son, My husband, My house, it is an assumption, a notion in my own mind and not a

true relationship.

Suddenly I turn round and wonder, 'How can one live without all these relationships? I love her, I love him, I love this and that. How can I face this and destroy the relationship which has been so painstakingly built up over the years?' Ears - do you know what this means? This means all these relationships are literally in the head and I do not want to face the fact that a thing called 'my' does not exist. So, I bring in all kinds of theories, all kinds of lovely ties, and call them philosophies. That is what Arjuna is saying in the Bhagavad Gita: 'Krishna, there are all My brothers, aunts, uncles and nieces and nephews. How can I engage in this war which brings about their destruction?' We are all capable of that. Confronted with a delicate situation which demands that I should look you in the face and say, 'Brother, I am afraid this situation cannot last long. We shall no longer be involved in a false relationship, no longer be comrades. I invent a philosophy and call it a social philosophy, religious, ethic, moral code, or whatever it is, and conveniently hide under the quilt' We are capable of doing it.

If someone is asked: 'Why are you smoking?', he says, 'I know it is bad, but I have had the habit for a long time and if I give up smoking, I am afraid I will put on weight.' More often than not in our lives we are tempted to rationalise what we know to be defective conduct. I have over-simplified the problem by saying that anything you are tempted to justify is already wrong. Why do you want to rationalize something? Why do you want to explain something? It may be wrong; and so, to cover it up, you bring in a lovely philosophy. Here is another example. You want to dominate your wife, your husband, your employees or your employer, customer or whatever. You want to dominate another person, perhaps your students. If someone suggests: 'Why do you not stop this spirit of domination?' 'Ah no, Swami, I do not want to dominate - it is only a matter of discipline and I have to maintain discipline in my school'. Can I see that it is a mask to cover up my own viciousness - which I do not want to face because it is 'my' viciousness and therefore not viciousness?

*'Thou hast grieved for those that should not be grieved for, yet thou speakest words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.'*

This is the first teaching verse and it contains the very cream of the Bhagavad Gita. 'You are worried about something which need not concern you at all, yet you are talking as though you are a wise man.' It is not that we should not be concerned at all. We need to be concerned, but with what? Not about getting rid of a migraine headache; let it come - let it go. Whatever has a beginning must have an end; whatever has been put together, or constructed, must be destructed; whatever is made of component parts, must be disintegrated. It is nothing to worry about; so your concern need not be with regard to these things. If you want to worry, please worry; if you want to be concerned, be concerned, but be concerned about something which deserves your concern. If you must worry, then worry about the root of worry itself, worry about this problem. If I am afraid, that is not serious. Why should I not be afraid? But is it possible for me to direct the searchlight of observation or enquiry at the fear itself - to become aware of



that fear? There is no need to fear. Fear - it is there. If I am worried, I am worried. Why should I run away from it? Face it. Worry not about the situation, but look into worrying itself.

If I am attached to you, I do not have to detach myself. But enquire into the nature of the attachment itself; inquire into the truth concerning the attachment. In other words, what Krishna is telling us here is, 'Do not waste your time running after the shadow. If you run after the shadow it is impossible to catch it, for it runs faster and faster. I can get rid of my migraine headache today, but later on I will probably get something else - a heart attack. But if I get at the root of the problem of life which includes death, it takes me away from the migraine headaches - they can come and they can go.

Have you had headaches? Do not you remember when the headache passes, is that not a beautiful thing? You would never have experienced that beauty if the headache had not been there before, so that is not important. So, become conscious of that state which remains, which was there before the headache came and which remains after the headache goes. That is marvelous. Why must I concern myself with this passing phenomenon? Why not call my attention to that which was there before the headache came on and which is there after the headache has left, and which therefore must also have been there while the headache was on? That is terribly important.

*Beings are unmanifested in their beginning, manifested in their middle state, O Arjuna, and unmanifested again in their end. What is there to grieve about?*

You are worried about people being killed, destroyed in the war. That is a mistake. That is a rationalization. Take it away. How do I take away this fear of death? By facing it. I was there before and it will be there after. There is something in the middle also. That which was there before and which will be there after is there now too, not subject to this change. This body has come into being now. Before this body came into being, I was there, and after this body has gone, I will still be there, just like in sleep. Before I went to sleep, I was there, after I wake up, I am still there - in between there is a state of ignorance.

What is that which is permanent, unchanging, in and through all of this? Merely by focussing one's attention on that, the changing situation ... - how do you complete that sentence? You do not 'overcome' that, you do not 'get rid of' that. Why must I get rid of something which is in any case going away? What do I do here? I understand it. I come to terms with it, know that it is changing. That is all that is necessary in self knowledge. It is not that when you become enlightened, or you attain self-realisation, you will not have a headache any more. When you are enlightened, you will still have a headache, but your attention will not be concerned with the headache, but with that which is permanent. Take the mind and attention away from that which is changing. That which is changing will continue to change; it came into being and it will go away without telling you.

I do not think any of us here can truthfully or honestly say that we wanted to be

born here as a man, a woman, a blonde, or a brunette. In the same way we will all leave this place whether we want to or not. The ego or the 'me' is not involved in birth and it is not involved in death. I did not want to be here, I am here. I do not want to go, I will go. But in the meantime I am full of worries and anxieties concerning how I am going to be here - why does it get involved in between? You have every right to enquire into, to know to be concerned about the reality. Please go into that as much as you want and as deeply as you want, but to worry about life is a silly concern.

It is not that Krishna sanctions violence on earth, or is callous or indifferent. It is a ridiculous thing, for we seem to be greatly concerned about the baby who is drowned in a swimming pool, but we do not mind thousands of children being starved to death elsewhere. Some years ago when I was in California, I opened a newspaper and found the whole front page and most of an other page was taken up with photographs and a report of the death of some famous person. I am sure she was a marvelous person. On page 67 or so, there was one column about 250 people killed in Vietnam. Then, on about page 50, column 8, there was one inch about 25,000 people killed on the roads last year. Have you no sense of proportion at all? 25,000 people die - one inch; 250 people die, one column; one girl is drowned - 17 pages.

We are not concerned about life. We are not concerned about people, but something else. So, do not bring in any of those lovely arguments. Face the fact that everything that is born must die - that does not mean that we should go on killing people and helping them to die - therefore there is no concern about life or death. What I am concerned about is the truth. What is it that comes into being, exists in all this, and continues to exist when the form which has been put together has disintegrated? We are not talking about whether to kill or not to kill, whether to wage a war or not. That is not important at all. Do not let the mind dwell on these things, says Krishna. There is something else worth considering, worth exercising your mind on, worth looking into. Attend to that.

Take for instance the simplest act of murder. If someone threatens me with a gun, is he going to do something which will not happen, which is not part of nature, which is unnatural? What is unnatural in him getting up and shooting me? I would have died in any case. He is wasting a bullet. What is unnatural in this? When a bullet enters this piece of flesh called the body, that body's life comes to an end. It is absolutely natural, and nothing that would not otherwise have happened, happens now.

In the Bible you are told that even a sparrow would not fall except by the will of God. That is what all this Bhagavad Gita and other marvelous scriptures are about. They say, 'Examine yourself, face yourself and see the hatred welling in your own heart. Look at yourself and see the hatred welling in your own heart. Look at yourself and see the notion arising.' 'I hate him and I am going to kill him.' 'This is false and that is truth.' He is not doing it; it is a bullet which is doing it.

You cannot kill me at all. It is only the body which is killed.

Just as in this body the embodied one passes into childhood, youth and old age, so also does he pass into another body. The hero does not grieve thereat. II.13

I see most of us belong to my age group. If we pick up a photograph taken when we were two months old, would we recognise ourselves? According to science, every seven years the entire body undergoes a complete change, all the cells of the body are renewed. This means that today there is not a single cell in the body that was there 10 years ago. Where is that body? It has gone. Bit by bit it was renewed, a little each day. When someone gets up and points a gun at me I say, 'You are not satisfied with this - you want to give me a new body.' Neither the fact that this body is destroyed, nor that the gun is pointed at this body is unnatural. What is unnatural or false is the notion that arises in the man's head that I am killing this person. That is the only falsehood.

So, instead of concerning yourself with all these false ideas, turn the gaze of enquiry within and see what it is - what does hate mean, what does fear mean, what is this 'I' which says 'I hate' another person, what is it that says, 'I want to destroy them', or 'I am doing this'? Even without this ego jumping up and down, life goes on. Beings are born without the ego wishing it, and beings leave this stage without the ego willing. Is the ego involved in enlightenment at all? Is it involved in life at all, or is it merely an imposter? If I know the truth concerning this, I am instantly free from ignorance. That is all the Bhagavad Gita demands.

Krishna merely suggests that the ego is not doing anything at all. Whatever is happening, is happening. When the eyes are open, they see. There is no ego required to see. It is natural for your eyes to see, for the ears to hear, for the mind to think. But why does one entertain the notion 'I am doing this'? Enquire into the nature of the ego and realise that it is a shadow and not the substance, and then you are instantly free.

## Talk 3

We saw how the hero entering the battlefield suddenly changes his mind, is confused and does not know what to do. But unwilling to face that, he pretends to know what is right and what is wrong. This is our problem. In order to rationalise what 'I' want to do, we bring in some philosophy or other.

Most of these philosophies are human inventions. It is not to say that they have no validity. They are often necessitated by some circumstances and these circumstances are always changing. Therefore, whereas these philosophies may be valid for the time being, or in a certain situation, they do not represent the truth. Truth cannot be represented. Truth has to be seen to be realised. I do not think there is any difficulty at all in seeing the truth. The very definition of truth is 'what is self-evident'. There is no problem at all in seeing it, but I am unwilling to see it and, unwilling to accept that unwillingness, I bring in some kind of philosophy to cover up my unwillingness to seek for the truth - to say 'it is not right' or 'no this is right'. This applies to all of us.

There was a public meeting in Perth in 1961 and someone had found out that in order to become a swami you had to abandon your home, family, etc., and she had come to that meeting eager to challenge. It was about 10.30 p.m and question time. She stood up and said, 'Swami, I understand you have to renounce your family and go away in order to become a swami'. I said, 'Yes, Madame' 'Do you not think that that is running away from your duty?' A flawless question which was a bit difficult to answer in detail; so I looked at her and said, 'Only when a spiritual quest or a life of yoga comes knocking at your door do you ask that question.' 'What about my wife, and children, what about my business, what about my students?' Somebody else can also come and knock at the door. Yes. You know him. He is universal, ever present, everywhere - death. If death comes and knocks at the door, can I tell death, 'Oh, wait a moment, I have got my wife and children to look after. As soon as my third daughter is married off, I will surrender myself to you?' No, you do not ask any questions; just pack up and go. That is the thing.

I am seeking the truth, even if it hurts, knowing that it hurts, where it should hurt. In that quest for truth, I am not deflected by unwillingness, that is all. Inability does not come into the picture because the truth, being self-evident, there is no inability to see it. Is it difficult for you and me to see that we are all doomed to die? It is self-evident, isn't it? Everything that is born must die. It is terribly simple, obvious, self-evident, and yet we are unwilling to face that truth; not that we are unable to face the truth, but unwilling to face it, and unwilling to face our own unwillingness, we cover that up with some kind of nice philosophy.

Krishna knocks these things down. He says, 'Do not be silly, we are all bound to die. Do not bring in your arguments that in all these battles we might kill each other.' That is rubbish. Right or wrong, we will discuss later. But see that this is inevitable - everything that is born, must go. So a sloppy rationalization is

disposed of.

There is another extraordinary and beautiful approach to our unwillingness to face the truth, and that is what is called a tradition - a traditional belief or doctrine. We are told that we should suffer here and lead an ascetic life and should sacrifice our life for king and country. If you do all that, you will go to the other place called heaven and there ... Oh, beautiful, you will have all the opposite of all this. You will enjoy yourself, never get hurt or injured, etc. I have a rather crude way of responding. If I live for 70 or 80 years, and all this time I am suffering continuously, suffering for my family, suffering for my country and suffering for God, for my church and for my religion, all this - I would have gotten so used to this suffering, that if you send me to heaven, I would suffer there again. Whether that makes sense or not, it does not make sense that I must go on suffering now, in the hope of something happening later on. It may not, then what? If I suffer my whole life because the Swami says that afterwards I go to heaven - when I die - I do not see him and cannot even check. What if I am duped, cheated by this man? In heaven I look around and he is not there obviously. There is a dramatic and beautiful statement in the Gita:

Even here, birth is overcome by those whose minds rest in 'sameness'. Brahman is spotless indeed and 'sameness'. Therefore, they are established in Brahman. V.19

God or Truth is here and now. If God and Truth is there, it is here and now, not only later. So, if I am devoted to God, I must experience the bliss or the peace and the glory of this God-realisation, or realisation of the Truth here and now. It is not as though God or Truth is not here now, or self-realisation is not here now and I must torture myself and go and get self-realisation in the Himalayas or Nepal. It is here and now. Krishna introduces a subtle hint here:

birth is overcome by those whose minds rest in 'sameness'.

When your mind is established in extreme tranquility, here and now, you are in the Truth already, because God is supreme peace. So, instead of looking for it here and now, why do you want to go around it, which is another sign of immaturity? What we all say of course is, 'I would love to meditate and find the inner peace, but I have got a family and a nagging wife, or a brutal husband, and you know, my friends and my office and my work, the whole thing is disturbing.' It is extremely rare to find someone who says, 'Sorry, my fault.' We always look for, and find a scapegoat. Why can you not meditate at the airport? Because it is noisy. Alright, use earplugs. I personally cannot complain. I live in all sorts of places with all kinds of people. Sometimes, like here, it is blissful and peaceful, sometimes I go to New York. I cannot ask the whole city to come to a standstill, because the Swami is going to meditate.' So, plug your ears.

There is a beautiful saying in one of the scriptures. 'For a man whose feet are covered with leather, the whole world is covered with leather'. You do not have to smooth the whole world before you begin to walk; put a shoe on your own foot. I cannot rearrange the world. I must learn to live in it. If you do not have ear plugs,



the yogi invented yoni mudra and then the world is wiped out from my senses if I want to do it. If I do not want to do it, I bring a transistor radio when I come here. The whole place was full of so much music with each person tuning their radio to their favourite station, all different, so that nobody could hear anything properly. There is no disturbance except that caused by ourselves. Why do we not keep quiet and enjoy this peace and serenity, and utilising every available moment to find this inner peace? There is no excuse, there is no rationalization. We always find an excuse, it is extraordinary. Once, in Canada, in a very beautiful ashram in the mountains, with only a few people there in the first part of the course, the first morning I met a few of the guests and said, 'Hallo, did you enjoy your stay?' One lady said, 'Oh no, I could not sleep last night.' 'Oh, I thought there was such peace and quiet'. And she said, 'That is why - I am not used to this, it is so quiet here it felt strange and spooky.'

Krishna points out,

For this self alone is the friend of oneself and this self alone is the enemy of oneself.  
VI.5

Do not blame anyone else for your miseries. You are your own friend and your own enemy - there is none outside. Try to look within in spite of the conditions you are in. Or, using the conditions you are in, if you are in a peaceful state, challenge yourself, 'Now the whole environment is at peace, what about me?' And I come face to face with the truth that the mind is disturbed. There is no disturbance outside. When I am in a noisy place, it is possible to look within. What does the external noise mean to you? Nothing. In spite of this noise, could you still be still, regardless of the external circumstances which we cannot change.

Lastly there is a rather charming and what looks like, externally, an introversible argument. 'God made it this way. It is all God's Will', and when you look at people who are fond of this expression, they give you the impression that they are God's private secretaries and have just taken notes at a conference with him. 'He dictated his last will and testament to me and I know that this is God's Will,'

There is a rather shattering note sounded in the Gita:

The Lord takes neither the demerit nor even the merit of any. V.15

Do not throw all your sins and your virtues upon God, he is not interested in all that. Do not say it is God's will that I must live like this and not live like that. Do not bring in God when you are up to some mischief. He does not share your sins and is not even interested in your being virtuous. That is your problem - face it. What is it that stops me from facing this problem?

Knowledge is enveloped by ignorance. Therefore, beings are deluded. V.15

There is a veil of ignorance within me, and that prevents me from seeing the

truth. What is the veil? The veil is the truth itself. I am living, I am functioning here. Am I living, am I doing anything here at all? What an extraordinary statement, 'I am seeing you'. Is this right? As you have the feeling that you are seeing me, as your face is turned towards me, tell yourself, 'I do not like this man, I do not want to see him,' Keep the eyes open - can you stop seeing me?

Audience: I can look through you.

Swami: Yes, that is a different story, it means you look at me and through. So it is the eyes that see, it is the mouth that speaks, it is the brain that thinks.

All actions are wrought in all cases by the qualities of Nature only. He whose mind is deluded by egoism, thinks 'I am the doer'. III.27

Nature works here. Wind blows and it does not prattle or boast. And yet, if someone can do some bhastrika he says, 'Look what I am doing'. You have never heard this wind boast about how well it breathes, and when the wind is still, does it come and tell you, 'I can hold my breath for three days'? And yet when we are indulging in these silly little acts, what is it that suggests, 'I am doing this'? So, Krishna insists in the Gita that without ever wishing to change your life-style, without wishing to do or not to do - there is a catch in this, can you still watch and see who does it? Am I speaking, or where is the 'I' that says 'I am speaking'? If the vocal chords are paralysed, would the Swami still be able to say 'I am speaking'? If the optic nerve is paralysed, would the Swami still be able to see your face through the eyes? If one little nerve in the auditory system goes wrong, what would music sound like? Could I enjoy music? Who is it? When the whole nature functions without any egotistic notion, where does this ego arise in me? It is that which says 'I am doing this'. It is that which gets hurt. Fair enough.

If that is removed, there is no hurt at all. You are neither interested in hurting others, nor in being hurt by others. The sun shines - it is not at all interested in people glorifying, 'Ah, how lovely it is', nor is the sun hurt by people saying, 'Hah, scorching sun, it is terrible, dreadfully hot!' It goes on. It 'is'. It functions without intending to do so. That is what nature and also your body does.

If you observe what goes on in the body, all that happens involuntarily is blissful and peaceful. The moment we bring something under our control, we mess it up. There are only a few things we can really do. We can eat, we cannot digest; assimilation is involuntary. We can eat, or not eat, and this we have always messed up. We deliberately try to do something which nature does not want, and it rejects this quickly. The more natural the system is, the more readily it reacts. Those of you who have babies have seen this. Give it a spoon of nice curry that you love, and the baby does not seem to bother about it, it all dribbles out; whereas you and I have been trained to enjoy all that, and so it comes out of some other channel - it burns.

The more natural a person is, the more naturally life goes on without a hitch, without a problem, neither with mental disturbance nor psychological distress.

But the moment there is a feeling 'I am doing this', trouble starts because it is almost impossible to treat the sentence 'I am doing this' as a complete expression in itself. It may not be such a terrible thing for me to say 'I am talking to you', but that sentence does not sound complete, it needs a 'because', and this has infiltrated our life so totally that even when I say 'I love you' the sentence does not seem to be complete. It needs a 'because'. 'I love you because you are good, because you are so kind and generous, or because you are such a marvelous yoga teacher.' The mind seems to rebel against the simplicity of 'I love you'. It can also be framed another way. 'I love you as long as you love me, or as long as you do what I tell you'. That is rubbish. So 'I do this' is immediately followed by 'because I want to get that'. There is a desire, a motivation, and as long as this motivation exists, it is bound to be hurt. What happens if your desire is not fulfilled, or even if it is fulfilled? When I entertain a desire, or when my action is motivated by a selfish desire, it either becomes boring, and therefore I keep on entertaining greater and greater ambition, or I get frustrated. Your husband says, 'I love you', you say, 'I also love you - because you bring me a nice fur coat'. He gives it to you and so the desire is satisfied. But it is not satisfied. Now you upgrade the desire; now you want something more. The value has doubled. One day he is bound to say, 'Enough'. So, here we are caught between boredom and escalating ambition, and frustration and nervous breakdown. Nerves do not break down, we are pulling them in different directions.

God's nature is there. The tree grows, giving you fruits. It does not say, 'How much will you pay me?' In the biography of the Srimad Bhagavatam or 'The Book of God', Krishna, it is said, was roaming one day in the forest with a few friends. They were hungry and there were plenty of fruit trees. Krishna looks at them and turns to his companions, saying, 'Look at those trees laden with fruit. The more fruitful they are, the more humble they are. They bend down to give their fruits to you so that you do not even have to climb the tree. They ask you - please take some lovely fruits. The fruits do not belong to me but to you.' No tree is ever known to eat its own fruit. Beautiful imagery. If I am a scholar, I wear a collar to protect my stiff neck so that, even by mistake, I do not bend. If I have some talent, I am so proud and haughty that you must crawl on your knees before I will teach you.

Can I, whilst living this life, function here, realising that 'I' is part of nature and therefore in functioning is doing what has to be done, I am not doing anything at all. I am neither interested in blocking what has to be done, nor do I entertain an idea that I am doing this.

Seeing hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing, convinced that the senses move among the sense-objects. V.8-9

The yogi sees a correlation between the body and the rest of the world - the body is also part of the world and this body and the rest of the world react on each other. There is a faculty of sight and vision, and there is the phenomenon of light in the world, so they react upon each other. If both the sight and the light is good, there is seeing. As long as the vocal chords are healthy, and as long as space is

able to transmit sound, speaking takes place. It is quite simple. These sound waves are picked up by the eardrums, which are also part of the mechanism. What is missing here? 'I am doing this' is missing. When this notion is dropped, along with it goes the further clause, because I want to achieve something. When these two are not there, you are never hurt. This is the beauty, here and now. It is not a heaven you will go to hereafter. No, here and now. There is no ambition to achieve anything, knowing that all that is needed is already provided, I am reminded of the parallels between the teachings of Krishna and Christ. Who has by taking thought, added one cubit to his measure? You grow, that is all. Not because you want to, or do not want to. There is growth built into this body. She and I drink the same milk and yet out of that milk a brown skin is manufactured here and blonde skin there. How this happens, I do not know. That is nature. Without my entertaining the ambition, desire or craving, that this should happen, it happens. Why must I waste my time craving for what is already predestined?

Another beautiful story in The Book of God is about a young saint who teaches his own comrades. One day he tells them, 'Friends, I understand all of you are learning arts and crafts so that you may become wealthy and prosperous. I have a question. Does anyone of you want to get sick? No. Do you ever get sick? Yes. Do you want to become poor? No. Do you lose your wealth? Yes. Do you want to die? No. Do you die? Yes. When all these things can come to you without their being sought - we are not interested in discussing how or who brings all this to me, why do you not think that similarly health, happiness, prosperity, will also seek you unsought? If sickness can come to me without my working for it, health can also come to me without my working for it. If unhappiness can come to me without my working for it, happiness can also come to me without my working for it. So, better find out who you are. Acquire self-knowledge.'

All actions are wrought in all cases by the qualities of Nature only. He whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks 'I am the doer'. III.27

When it is God's nature that is functioning in and through all, why does stupid man entertain the idea 'I am doing this'? Can this idea be dropped? All right - God is doing everything. Om. Let's see who is going to make the lunch. Oh no, I am not nothing. I am suppressing an urge to function, and therefore this is not a gospel of laziness,

Thy right is to work only, but never to its fruits. II.47

Some amount of energy has been built into this body. Let it function; do not stop it, do not restrain, do not push. Do not suppress yourself, let actions take place. Let the body, the mind, and the whole nature function. There is no need to suppress even desire. Desire has no place and does not even arise with the understanding or realisation that we are all part of the one nature. So there is no suppression.

This is very important. It is not as though the yogi suppresses his desire. No, when he sees that it is God's own nature that functions here, desire becomes

irrelevant, ambition becomes irrelevant. Only when it becomes irrelevant are we able to live an active, fruitful and dynamic life, without entertaining a selfish motive, knowing that as long as there is life in this body, it will continue to function. You have the right to function, the right to work; let it go on, do not suppress it.

You are not here to determine what might happen or what might not happen. That is not in your hands. That is extremely simple and it is the Truth, basic fundamental Truth, direct and self-evident and obvious Truth, and that is called Karma yoga, an extremely simple thing ... directly facing Truth. Karma yoga is to let the body, which is part of this created universe, be part of it, without puffing itself away and without motivated action. Motivated action is poisonous, and pulling oneself away is also poisonous. Let it be. There is peace instantly, here and now.



## Talk 4

We hear this expression 'Karma Yoga' very often and it is an expression also used by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita:

The Blessed Lord said: Renunciation and the Yoga of action, both lead to the highest bliss. But of the two, the Yoga of action is superior to the renunciation of action. V.2

Self-realisation can be attained by abandoning action completely, or by the practise of Karma yoga, and he says of these two, Karma yoga is to be preferred. Why is its so?

One simple and straightforward reason given by Krishna in the Gita is that not for a single moment can you remain inactive. When you are lying asleep, you are sleeping - that is another activity. 'I am sitting doing nothing' is a defective expression. 'Sitting doing nothing' is only a figure of speech, it is not true. So, as long as life is there, and as long as life animates this body, it is impossible to do nothing. Therefore, while keeping active, is it possible to attain externally the same freedom that was indicated by the total renunciation of action, which is impossible physically?

What is Karma Yoga? Karma yoga is not a kind of action or service which is certified to be unselfish by someone else. How do you know I am unselfish? If I come to your house to stay with you and wash your clothes and tell you, 'I do not want any wages for what I am doing', that is supposed to be Karma yoga. It is only honorary work. And why is it called honorary work? Because there is an honour attached to it. By doing it free, I am earning your admiration, your approval, honour and prestige - a deadly word. People go to no end of trouble gaining a little more prestige.

I know a very nice man in South India who nearly killed himself in order to get a knighthood. What do these three letters 'Sir' mean? Nothing. Yet, if that prefix was attained, I do not know what he gained out of it. Even a banana is more beautiful than all that, at least it tastes nice and it appeases the hunger.

I may do something which may superficially appear to be unselfish - unselfish in the sense that all others are doing it for the sake of money or something, and here I am doing it, not according to that pattern but with some other motive. I may even do it very quietly. The Bible says, 'Let not your right hand know what the left hand does'. I can do that - perhaps slip a basket of fruit at the door of a very poor man and walk away without wanting any return and without mentioning it to anybody. The word 'body' is important. Then I lock my door and I look in the mirror, or at a picture of some deity and say, 'God, I did exactly what you said, I pushed that fruit behind the poor man's door and did not take any money for it, or tell anyone about it. Please send me to heaven.' Is it not selfishness? Yes.

It seems to be extremely difficult to detect selfishness, until we come face to face

with this thing called self - what 'that' is. It does not take long for us to realise that it is the self that divides this from 'that'. 'That' is made of the same stuff as 'this'. What is the difference? I think I am different. I think I am so-and-so and that he is so-and-so. It is the self that divides. If there is no division in sleep, there is no division, the self is asleep - temporarily suspended.

Yoga means union or non-division. There is a risk in using the expression 'union', because union immediately suggests two things coming together. Yoga is non-division and Karma yoga is the state of non-division being sustained, while engaged in active life. It is a state of non-division at all levels; at the level of personal relationship, that where there is a need you rush. 'You' is who? You is the same as 'he'. If he needs something, you fulfill that need without asking questions. Just as the fingers will scratch the neck without even telling themselves that they will go to heaven for rendering this wonderful service to the neck. Why is it so? Because the hand and the neck belong to the same body, the question does not arise. That is the point. The question 'why?' follows a sense of division, then comes rationalisation and philosophy and so on.

In human relationships, can this division be totally avoided? Can there be action without division? Must action always be motivated? Can life not go on without motivation? You must now watch yourself, watch what is happening. When we do something, it is either because we think this is right and the other is wrong. Why must I do the right thing and not do what is wrong? There is some motivation there. I want to be approved, admired, I want to go to heaven, I want God to be pleased or my neighbour to be pleased. Or, if that is not there, I like this, it is beautiful, it gives me pleasure. So, I avoid what is painful and do what is pleasurable. What is right, I do, what is wrong, I avoid. Therefore, all my actions are motive tainted, not just motivated, but motive tainted.

If, when I am walking along the road and a tree or branch breaks and falls on me, it breaks my leg - who is responsible? Does the tree commit a sin by breaking my leg? Is somebody responsible for it? Even the insurance companies call it nicely 'an act of God'. Sometimes insurance companies speak the truth without meaning to. Let us take another example, for instance, if, while I am walking along a balcony, I slip and fall off, and you happen to be sunbathing down below and I land on your ankle and crush it, you would not really blame me, I have not committed any crime. The argument is that there is no will in it - I did not intend to do so.

Action without intention, therefore, is an act of God. Action which does not spring from will is an act of God. It is extremely important to bear this in mind. We often use the expression 'It is God that does all this through me - I am only an instrument in the hands of God'. That is a very slippery expression, it is a double-edged sword, and one has to use it very carefully. An act of God is totally free of self-volition, self-will. The tree did not intend to fall on my leg, I did not intend to slip from the balcony and crush your foot, and therefore there is no sin involved. In an act of God, there is no sin.

When this was said, Arjuna, the student, turned to Krishna and said,

*But impelled by what does man commit sin, though against his wishes, O Krishna, constrained as it were by force? III.36*

If we are all instruments in the hands of God and if, as the Bible says, even a sparrow does not fall unless it is the will of God, and therefore whatever happens in the world is the will of God, why do we say that 'he' did something wrong and 'he' did something wonderful?

Krishna gives a dramatic and beautiful reply,

*It is desire, it is anger born of the quality of Rajas, all-devouring, all-sinful; know this as the foe here. III.37*

It is desire, it is craving, it is self-will which is the mischief maker and that itself is sin. That self-will, that desire, is what comes between the pure action creating a division in this good actions. The self-will enters into pure action, casts a shadow on pure action and creates an apparent division between the actor and the action. If you watch very carefully, you can detect it. When the eyes are open and turned in a certain direction, seeing takes place. But you think, 'Ah, I see'. The moment 'I see' enters into this, it creates a 'me' and a 'you'. In pure action, there is no division, there is no volition, no intention. Pure action is pure experiencing. In pure action, there is no sin - that is, in an act of God there is no sin at all, nor is there a division between you and me. There is no division between the tree and the foot, it has no hostility towards me, there is no intention at all; in an 'act of God' there is no division, and in the in pure experiencing there is no division.

I once read an intriguing and interesting statement in a book on forensic medicine to the effect that the last experience of a drowning person is one of great joy. This was later confirmed by a doctor. I believe they conducted autopsies on drowned people, and from examining the state of the nerves decided that the drowned person must have experienced joy, delight, before actually passing out. I was discussing this with some medical people, and a nurse who was also interested in yoga came up with a beautiful answer. She said, 'If you fall into the sea and fight and resist, as long as you continue fighting it, you are in misery. Then, when you realise that it is too much and surrender yourself to the sea, at that moment you become one with the sea - the resistance is gone and therefore there is no pain and no suffering. Total surrender of the personal will of the individual will immediately lead us to peace. Krishna specifically points this out in the Gita:

*Peace immediately follows renunciation. XXI.12*

Abandon yourself and the next moment you are at peace within yourself. 'I want this, I do not want that' - these are two sides of the same coin. I want something and therefore I do not want something else. If I do not desire something, I do not reject anything in this world.

Therefore, Karma yoga is inexplicably connected with what you and I call meditation. One must become aware of the springs of action. The 'I' or the ego sense which has ruled so far, has determined that this I shall do and that I shall not do, and this I shall do in order to gain so and so, and this I shall not do in order to avoid so and so, and therefore gain something else. That is the ego sense, the 'I'; and the intelligence must be able to look within and question the fundamental and simple truths concerning ourselves which we have never challenged.

I have continued to entertain the idea that I am sitting here and speaking to you, and you feel that you are listening. I have never asked myself, 'Who is it that is sitting and talking? Is it me? If it is me, who is 'I'? Is it God speaking through me, or the devil speaking through me, or my own previous conditioning speaking through me, my education or my conscience?' Where does this discrimination between right and wrong spring from? What is conscience? Did I bring it from somewhere else, or did I put it together now? Is it made up of the teaching I received from my parents, my teachers, my religious leaders? What is conscience? I have never bothered to enquire into this or to look into myself and see exactly where the motives arise. I still do not know if it is possible for me to catch myself acting selfishly or unselfishly, but I may be able to see selfishness tainting every one of these actions. If all my actions are motive tainted, there is a desire, open or hidden, and it is not difficult to see for oneself what the motivation is. One uses the word 'subconscious mind' as a very sophisticated excuse for not looking where one should look - it is hidden away. It is not hidden. I put the blinkers on because I do not want to look that way and I do not want to accept the responsibility for this, and so I put on blinkers and say, 'I am not consciously doing this but subconsciously doing it.'

If I commit an offence in which someone is injured, and my lawyer can prove I was under the influence of alcohol at that time, I am excused. Nonsense! If I am under the influence of alcohol, I have done two wrongs and should be punished twice - once for hitting and the other for being under the influence of alcohol. One does not excuse the other, it only complicates it. So, if someone says, 'I did not consciously do it, I must have been motivated unconsciously, punish him twice. Acting foolishly or stupidly is not right action.

I saw a man who was drunk trying to make up to a girl, and later on when some of my friends were talking about this they said, 'He did not know what he was doing - he was drunk.' If that is so, why does he not do some of those other things; why does he not go and jump off a bridge; why doesn't he, if you will forgive me, go and molest his own mother? His conscience. The alcohol is merely brought in as a sort of white-washing, knowing that society excuses him if he does it when under the influence of drink. Punish him twice, once for molesting, and once for drinking, and he will not do it again.

Even so, in yoga, craving is the root of all sin. Craving itself is sin. Action tainted

by motive is sin, whether the motivation appears superficially to be holy or unholy, It is craving that veils knowledge.

The senses, the mind and the intellect are said to be its seats; through these it deludes the embodied by veiling his wisdom. III.40

Craving seems to throw a veil of ignorance on self-knowledge, and this veil casts a shadow on that knowledge. In that shadow, a division takes place between you and me. 'I' and 'you' is the first division. The second division is between 'I' and the action do 'this'. There is a division between action and its own source, which are non-different. The wave which appears on the surface of the ocean is non different from the ocean, the wave being part of the ocean - the wave is the ocean. We all use silly expressions like 'the waves dancing on the surface of the ocean'. It is like saying your face is covered by skin - the skin is part of the face. What is it that creates a division here, the division between 'I and the action, the intelligence from which the action springs and the action itself? That is the motivation. If the motivation is not there, if the will is not there, if the desire is not there, if the craving is not there, there is no division between the action and the source of the action and the action becomes pure - an act of God.

In order to re-discover the fact of the act of God, one has to see where the division takes place. The division is the self, the divider is the self, and that is selfishness. When that divider comes in, whatever be the action, it is selfishness and therefore tainted. The self, however, is not a solid reality, but merely a shadow caught by the veil. It is not even a veil; it is a shadow cast by the veil. When does the shadow disappear? The shadow cannot be cut, cannot be burnt or vacuum-cleaned. Absolutely no detergent or anything manufactured so far can clear that shadow. Yet that shadow goes the moment the light is turned on. That turning on of the inner searchlight is called meditation.

In the Gita we have a rather interesting definition of meditation. Why does one meditate at all?

*practise Yoga for the purification of the self. VI.12*

We practise meditation in order to purify ourselves. What is this shadow which is cast round the intelligence, which brings a division between action and its source, which brings about a division between experience and the experiencer? The moment that division goes, you are blissful, even when you are drowning. The moment when the division between the experience and the experiencer is taken away, we are blissful, like in sleep. You may have an ulcer, rheumatism, or something else, which causes you to suffer; you go to sleep and as soon as the self is put to sleep the pain is lost. What happens during sleep? You have become one with the pain, the division has gone, the feeling 'I am suffering' has gone. It is not a substance which has to be burned or dried out; it is only a shadow. So, turn the light on and the shadow is gone. Turning the light on itself on the psychological phenomenon is called meditation

Krishna does not beat about the bush, but goes straight into it in the sixth chapter. He gives a few nice explanations, instructions for meditation. Select a clean, pure place, and establish there a nice seat for yourself. Some of the instructions are very down to earth and full of common sense. Do not hoist yourself high above the ground. Sometimes we feel very happy sitting perched on a rock to meditate, but sometimes during meditation we can become sleepy. Once you transcend the level of the conscious mind you are not in control of what might happen afterwards. One day during meditation it may so happen that the moment you cross that boundary you fall asleep and fall and break your neck. So, do not sit too high up.

If you sit in the bush to meditate, and you are seated on the ground, it is possible that insects may crawl over you and one day a scorpion will come along. After that you will never be able to meditate there. What beautiful common sense and practical instructions of how to sit and how to arrange the seat. Blades of grass, which are plentiful in the forest, and on it a nice skin which prevents the condition of the earth affecting your body. It may be damp, cold or hot. A tiger skin or deer skin which at the same time prevents the body electricity or psychic energy from being lost. Then there is an interesting suggestion. On top of that skin, spread a piece of cloth. Why is that so? We usually sit for meditation with not too many clothes on, and if you sit on a skin without clothes on, it is not very comfortable; so sit on a cloth.

Keep the back and the neck in a straight line. This you can experience if you gently rock your body back and forth. You will find that at one place the body feels weightless; that is your own centre of gravity, and at that point it is easy to sit for a long time without any stress or strain. It is all extremely simple. Let the gaze be directed in front of the nose. In Hatha yoga, this is called shambhavi mudra. Gently let the vision rest on the space in front of the nose and let your attention not be diverted. From there on you will focus the attention of the mind upon itself.

From that let him restrain it and bring it under the control of the self alone. VI.26

I am not interested in what goes on outside but in what goes on inside. I hear the crickets but the hearing is within me. There are no distractions outside, but only distractions in my own system. If I stop resisting, they cease to distract.

Krishna does not give us any elaborate technique beyond this, except to drop a lovely little bombshell. Consider:

Having made the mind establish itself in the Self, let him not think of anything. VI.25

After doing all this, calm yourself, turn the attention upon yourself and do not think. That is extremely beautiful. Immediately you realise two things. You realise 'I do not think' - that is a thought. Secondly, it is only when you tell yourself 'I will not think' that you become aware of thoughts arising. Thoughts



have been there all the time, the mind has been thinking all the time, but I was unaware of it because I did not pay any attention to it. Now that I am telling myself 'I will not think,' I realise I am thinking.

There are two realisations. I will not think is itself a thought, and strangely enough, I am not able to confine myself even to the thought that I really want to think, that thought being 'I will not think', without being pestered by so many thoughts around. Those of you who meditate seriously, please try this. Is it possible for me to distinguish between the thought that I want to think and the thought that merely occurs to me? Can I distinguish one from the other?

When you become aware of the distinction, you have got the key and you can turn it when you like. You will notice that the thoughts which occur to your mind are pedestrian thought. There are thousands of people walking along the other side of the road and they do not distract your attention at all until one of your friends appears and then - Ha! Now you are no longer 'here' but 'there'. As long as these pedestrian thoughts cross the field of your inner vision, you are not really distracted, because you are thinking the thought 'I will not think' or if you do not want to do that, you can repeat a mantra which is a thought I want to think. I can hear people moving chairs and other sounds, but they are not distracting at all. As I go on, that which I am thinking - the mantra or the image or whatever it is, is absolutely clear. Then, next thing - 'I have forgotten to answer that letter from New Zealand, whatever will they think? I had better send a cable. This thought is something I am interested in, and as it appears on the consciousness, the attention seems to jump on that band wagon and is carried away. So, the distraction is not outside, but inside. I want to see you, or I can look at the most wonderful thing and keep looking and not see, because I am not interested or because I do not want to see. So, it is good to learn to distinguish one from the others.

Then one learns another interesting feature which is part of the training suggested in Patanjali's Raja Yoga. I learn to recognise the exact moment when a thought arises in the mind, and when the thought subsides. When does a thought subside and the next one arise? That moment is very important. If I know that, and know that mechanism, I can make any thoughts subside at will, and the next one come up, and there again I have no business to blame others.

This is the yoga of meditation as taught by Krishna in the Gita. But he does not end there. When the mind is completely freed of the shadow of ignorance, which is the self, there is self-knowledge. Where there was self-ignorance before, there is now self-knowledge. The moment the shadow of self is discarded, instantly the division between 'you' and 'me' goes, the division between action and actor goes, the division between experiencer and experiencing goes. You can see that that is an act of God. From there on the yogi is an act of God, and whatever he does is an act of God - absolutely non-volitional, without motive tainting. There is peace and pure experience of bliss.

## Talk 5

Meditation, when it is seriously practised, discovers the self, not in the sense perhaps in which most of us have used the word 'discover', but in the strictest literal sense of taking the lid off. The self being the lid, the cover or the veil or shadow. Meditation, the light, discovers the self. When the light shines, the shadow is gone - all stupid silly words. Does the shadow go away at any time? No. Please remember this, it is rather serious. Watch next time. Cast a shadow and then flash a light on it. See what happens to it. Does it go away?

Audience: It does not exist.

Swami: It is rather strange. Do you see something in my hand? (Holds up a spectacle case) You cannot stop seeing it unless it is taken and put somewhere else. Now you do not see it. It is in that context that you say the spectacle case has been taken away. When you turn a flashlight on the shadow, what happens to that?

Audience: When there is light, there is no shadow.

Swami: I am asking about the shadow, what happened to it? Where did it go? That is inexpressible and the mind boggles. You cannot think of it. How can a thing which I saw till a moment ago ... what happened to it? That is precisely what happens when the light of meditation is turned on to this thing that we have been calling the self: I am, Me, My. When the light of meditation is turned onto that, the rest is inexpressible. The sentence can never be completed.

The only thing that can be said is that a unity that was there is revealed. So, meditation literally discovers the self, and you have to discover what that means. It is not that the self has gone. It is not that the self is still there or that the self is seen as cosmic. You first look at the ocean and think it is one, and then suddenly you see there are many waves on it. It is not the waves that are dancing upon something called the ocean, the waves are part of the ocean. You cannot take the wave away and put it somewhere else, it is still there. And even after all your enlightenment, your self-realisation, you blink and there are still the waves, there is still the ocean, but it is all the ocean. What happened in the meantime? Nothing happened.

An assumed separateness is dispelled, or rather an assumed separateness is seen as an assumption of separateness, not a reality. The reality is that it is an assumption of separateness. It is very important to remember because we read about all these - the ego being dispelled and the self being eradicated, and then the yogi becomes so and so, and he is cosmic being, and therefore if a piece of bread is placed in front of him, he takes it and puts it into the mouth of a rabbit. That may not happen at all, he may still keep on eating. The only thing that can be said, which was said twice in the Bhagavad Gita by Arjuna, the student, is:

Destroyed is my delusion as I have gained my memory (knowledge) through Thy Grace, O Krishna. I am firm. My doubts are gone. I will act according to Thy word. XVIII.73

By your Grace, my delusion has gone and I have regained an awareness. In that awareness, shadow is seen as shadow, substance is seen as substance. That is all. It is also seen that these two are not totally disparate entities; they are somehow One. You and your shadow are somehow one. Your shadow does not exist apart from you. One, yet two; two, yet one.

When this happens, the entire life undergoes a transformation. Action becomes spontaneous, free from the taint of motivation. The removal of this taint is the purpose - if there is a purpose - of meditation - not self-realisation, or God-realisation.

Practise Yoga for the purification of the self. VI.12

Again and again this expression occurs in the Gita. All that you do is merely purify yourself, your vision. When the vision is purified, in that vision there is no division, that is all. Then you are free. The division between the action and the actor, the experience and the experiencer - that is not there. You become one with the experience, one with the action. Please, I hope by now you realise all these expressions are terribly inadequate.

When this division disappears and pure experience alone remains, all experiences immediately shine as pure experiencing, and therefore the distinctions drop away. That is what is meant by Krishna in the Gita, insisting that the yogi should treat honour and dishonour, pain and pleasure, heat and cold, alike. It does not mean that he becomes aware that this is pain and this is pleasure, and I, being a yogi, treat them alike. That is a fairly crude way of putting it. But if you enter into the spirit of it, it becomes beautiful; subtle but very beautiful.

A pinch on the cheek is painful. Is it? Painful is a word, an interpretation by the mind. It is a pure neurological phenomenon, and as such it is neither pain nor pleasure, and as an experience, it is also neither pain nor pleasure. How can I treat this as pleasure? It is painful. But then, if your very dear friend pinches you, you feel delighted. This is merely in the words of Raja Yoga Pratipaksha Bhavanam. Where there is a perverted reasoning, you stop that perverted reasoning with another perverted reason. If someone who loves you does this, you are delighted, so it is neutral, neither painful nor pleasant. If I did not know these words - 'pain' and 'pleasure', or their corresponding concepts - concepts being mental activity - what is the nature of that pure experience? It is only the self, the ego, that comes in and chooses 'this is pleasure, this is pain'. When the shadow has been dispelled by the light of meditation, there is pure experiencing in which there is neither pleasure nor pain, but experiencing is still there. As long as there is life and consciousness, the movement of life in consciousness will throw up millions of experiences. There is no problem at all. It is good to remind ourselves again and again that yoga does not stop our life or interfere with our life. It does not make you an inanimate being. Life goes on. As long as there is life

and as long as there is movement of that life in consciousness, these experiences come floating along. But something that kept dividing everything in life into pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, praise and censure, these have gone. Have gone! They did not go away, they were never there. They were but notions, ideas.

In the same way, as you go on living your life in this world, fully and fruit fully, you watch your own thoughts. Meditation is this constant self-watchfulness. In that light of self-watchfulness, you are often amused to see how the mind undergoes various diverse emotions. This is common knowledge, especially to those who are working and those who have a family. You get up in the morning and are in a very nice mood. Your child runs up to you, and you hug the child. If at that moment you are also watchful of yourself, you cannot fail to notice the joy, the delight, 'Ah, lovely, marvelous. I am full of love, there is nothing else in me'. Then you turn round and go into the kitchen, switch something on and something else explodes; and if your meditation has been serious and you are watching yourself, you suddenly see a change. That love seems to have gone away somewhere. It does not go away, we do not know what it is. Then some kind of irritation sets in. Something is disturbed. Just at that time, your child or your partner or someone else does something and provokes you. Aha! provokes you ... but that is not important, this is important. As that other person says something, that which was love and that which was irritation suddenly becomes venom - anger. Then you walk out of the house with all these. The original state of this mind has been totally forgotten. It has undergone so many changes that you do not know which one was closer to the truth or reality. So, we jump from frying pan to fire and back into the frying pan, and so it goes on - we never get out of that. We know only these, either - or, and the truth seems to be neither - nor.

If you have been seriously meditating, you could come to grips with the arising thoughts or emotions and directly see that, whether the thought is of God or the devil, the truth is that it is thought, nothing more. That in which the thought arises is the truth. You go back to the ocean and look at it. Whether the wave is big and beautiful, or small and filthy, or insignificant, in essence it is nothing but sea water. When the absence of that distinction is realised during meditation, and when you come out of that meditation room and you see all this play of your own thoughts and emotions in your own mind, you suddenly realise that never mind what these things are called, in essence they are all the same. They are a complete and crazy mixture of consciousness - which is the substance, the essence of the whole thing. In that consciousness there is a movement called life or energy, which is indistinguishably one with that consciousness; and from somewhere something jumps up and gives it a name - old Adam. Adam was told to give all these things names.

What I called love, in essence or substance is non-different from what I call dislike or anger. When this is seen, then one does not want to become angry. Because the movement of life in consciousness continues, thinking continues and naturally there is a taste of the joy that is felt in love and the non-joy that is felt

when there is no love. When these two are seen to be identical in essence, the mind naturally flows along the channel of love. If one is more valuable than the others or if it is more profitable to you to hate me than to love me, you can jolly well hate me. When both are the same in essence, why do you not love? That is an extremely simplistic argument which the yogi adopts. In essence it is the same, there is no difference at all. It is the limited consciousness called mind that undergoes these changes from moment to moment, so that when I love you, it is the consciousness that seems to have undergone this change; the mind has put on the mask of love. A little later I am mad at you, angry. Nothing whatsoever has happened. Nobody is interested in my loving you or hating you. The same mind has put on another mask. A devilish dance, and I, the dancer, am still the same; behind the mask the substance is the same and when that is realised there is no need to be nasty, vicious. In that light, the virtue that arises is pure - that is beautiful. When actions spring from that consciousness, they are Karma Yoga.

You love, not because you are afraid to be angry. If you want to be angry, why not, what's wrong with that? There may not be a revolutionary external change. Krishna specifically mentions this,

As the ignorant men act from attachment to action, O Arjuna, so should the wise act without attachment, wishing the welfare of the world. III.25

Do not pretend to be something different from others. You may be the greatest yogi on earth. Your flesh is also made of the same tomatoes which I ate - no distinction at all. That is unnecessarily giving this piece of flesh a glory and a prestige it does not inherently possess.

The ignorant, when they live and function here, their light is darkness. In the words of Jesus in the Bible: if your light be darkness, what a great loss it is.

Audience: If thy eye be single, thy body will be full of light.

Swami: Right. The ignorant function here, but their light is darkness, whereas the enlightened live - in their case - in the light of their understanding or inner awareness, and there is no darkness of ignorance, although outwardly there may not be change or a difference. When thus, in the inner light, all experiences and all expressions are seen to be homogeneous, of the same substance, of the same essence, it is then that true unselfishness 'happens'. You cannot walk out of this place and say, 'I am going to be unselfish hereafter.' 'I am going to be ...' is already selfish, and there is a motive behind that 'I spent a lot of money coming here, and when I go home, I must show my students or my husband or wife, that all that money has been worth spending, so I am going to show them that I have undergone a complete change. Previously I was vicious, now I am going to be non-vicious.' It will last for three days. It does not work that way. I cannot jump about and declare myself to be unselfish. The unselfishness happens only when the self is discovered, dis-covered, seen to be non-existent.

In meditation, the truth of the oneness in the essence of all concepts, all thoughts,

is seen. Thoughts go about playing, but in essence they are all one, the mind. When that inner light is kept bright, while being involved in the assumed relationships in our daily life, it is seen that all experiences and all expressions are similarly one in essence.

Then we go what is called sight-seeing, a beautiful expression, I love it. You suddenly realise that it is the sight that sees, there is no 'I see the sight'. Sight-seeing tours are tours in which the sight sees. The eye is completely absent and in the case of American tourists the sight is guided or helped by the camera. I saw a number of such tourists being herded like sheep in Israel. All the cameras were clicking. They came to the hotel in the evening and were asked - 'What did you see?' 'Oh, I do not know, we will have to wait until the films are developed.' It is pure sight-seeing, ears are hearing, and the mind which has the imprint of past experiences or memory, goes on thinking. Life lives. That life is blissful, that life is divine. One can say nothing concerning that life. It is totally unpredictable and I saw this in the case of my own Guru Swami Sivananda. He was totally unpredictable. You might have been in trouble, or starving and might have walked into the Ashram and He might have lavished milk and honey, etc..., but no-one could take it for granted that if hungry people came to Him, He would go on doing that all His life. No. Someone else walks in and says, 'I am so hungry' and He might say, 'Go and wash that man's clothes and he will pay you some money.' 'How come the other man came and you did so and so?' That's it. No questions asked, He was totally unpredictable.

Patterned behaviour is usually selfish behaviour. When the self is seen to non-exist, then that life becomes a continuous unbroken act of God. In such a person, since the body is still there, life is still there, and therefore, in a manner of speaking, the personality is still there. Persona means mask, and that mask is still there, that spark of consciousness, animated by that much of life, still wears the mask of that person. In the heart of that person, there is the realisation of cosmic oneness - these two are words, the truth is indescribable.

He who being established in unity, worships Me, Who dwells in all beings, that Yogi abides in Me, whatever may be his mode of living. VI.31

He, the yogi, sees God and God alone in all, in everything, not merely in human things, but in all things. His consciousness is perfectly rooted in oneness. In oneness - that is not the opposite of diversity, but which is a synthesis of oneness and diversity. That is neither just the ocean, nor just the waves, but the ocean as the ocean plus the waves. It is not that you will instantly be free of all diversity so that you go and embrace a tree and kick at your husband; that is madness. It is that oneness that transcends unity and diversity. Such a person's life is itself a blessing. The golden rule is also given in the same chapter of the Gita. In order to dispel any doubt that meditation is an exercise, one does sitting bolt up right, Krishna introduces these ideas into the same chapter:

He who, through the likeness of the Self, O Arjuna, sees 'same-ness' everywhere, be it pleasure or pain, he is regarded as the highest Yogi. VI.32



That yogi is supreme whose life is one continuous unbroken adoration of God. There are translation problems here - it does not say treat your neighbour as yourself, but everything that the yogi looks upon as his own self. Whether it is pleasure or pain, it is all the same in essence, and the experiencing is the same.

I will leave you with this last beautiful thought, or imagery perhaps: 'Such a yogi's life is one continuous adoration of God'. One of the most inspiring verses in the Bhagavad Gita describes it as follows:

He from whom all the beings have evolved and by whom all this is pervaded - worshipping Him with his own action, man attains perfection. XVIII.46

Man attains perfection, fulfillment. How? By worshipping God with one's own actions - there is no distinction here at all between what you call right action and wrong action, virtue or vice - and by treating every one of your actions as a flower offered at the feet of God. Who is that God? God is the source of all beings. In order that we may not consider that from which the stream of the flows down as the sun or the moon, the verse says, 'By whom all this is pervaded'. Therefore, the Upanishads consider God as supreme consciousness, which is all-pervading, omnipresent, eternal, infinite. It is all beings, all things, not merely human beings or living beings; all things are pervaded and filled by this consciousness and the yogi's actions are the flowers with which he worships this cosmic being. As long as there is individuality, or personality, as long as this yogi wears the mask of an individual, he adopts this attitude of worship. The yogi himself is an act of God and all his actions are acts of God. They could be called acts of creation, sustenance, and even acts of destruction, but whatever be the external semblance, in truth and essence they are all acts of God.

## Talk 6

The whole teaching of the Bhagavad Gita naturally hinges around a nice little word 'God', in the English language. In Sanskrit, you do not have the word 'God'. We have countless words which signify more or less what you mean by God, one of the most popular being 'Isa' or 'Isvara'. But this Isa or Isvara is not a bald-headed flowing bearded person somewhere behind the clouds. 'Isa' is precisely 'what is'. That which 'is' is Isa.

A gentleman who came here a few days ago was a bit nonplussed when he asked me, 'What is God?' I replied, 'What is God.' - instead of putting a question mark, I put a full-stop. What is God? You better figure out what 'is'. If you are quite sure that this 'is', then take it for certain that that is God, that that is Isa. This raises a lot of questions; more questions than are answered.

What is God. Then, what changes is not God. In what is subject to change there is something which is not changing. When you refer to the universal phenomena as being constantly changing, you have introduced a paradox. What is 'constantly changing'? It is changing, it is not constant. If it is constant, it is not changing. This is a problem of your language, not mine. It is constantly changing; if it is, it is constant, it does not change; and yet, unfortunately, the statement is true. So, there is a constancy in change and the change is non-different, inseparable from the constant. The constant is not a static dead thing. There is nothing at all in the universe that is totally dead and inert. Everything is ... you could just as well put a full stop there ... constantly changing.

If you contemplate that, you have understood vaguely what the yogi means by Isa or Isvara. It is only when one has this attitude- in the words of the Yoga Vasistha: etam drstim avastabhya - that established in this vision your life becomes divine.

When your vision becomes this, then the division outside disappears. It does not mean that therefore everything becomes uniform, or uni-substance, but somehow what appeared earlier on to be a confusing and perplexing diversity, becomes what it has always been.

You see the nose and the eyes, you see the forehead, the lips and the chin, and then suddenly you see the face. When you see the face, it does not mean that the nose and eyes have disappeared, or that the eyes look like a nose or the nose looks like the eyes. No. You can all play this game as often as you like. Take note of each little thing - the hair, a single lock coming up crooked, etc., but that is a face. When you say 'that is a face', the different elements that compose this face do not disappear, they are still there, but they are no longer perplexing and confusing; they are no longer diverse. They constitute a oneness, which is not a contradiction of diversity. That is the vision in which there is no division.

The prefix 'di' in English means duality, for example, dichotomy. So, division is a vision which contains a dichotomy. When the dichotomy is dropped, there is pure

vision, and that vision includes the valley and the mountains; not just the vision valley, but the vision mountains, the whole thing, the totality. That is Isvara and that is Isa. Isa is that which exists and that which is constantly changing.

Metaphysically, or philosophically, however, the expression Isa is made to imply the constancy in this charge. A lady can keep changing her hair style, but underneath it all there is a scalp that does not change. Water, H<sub>2</sub>O, keeps on changing. At one stage it is called water; at another, ice; and at an other, vapour. It is also called cloud. The molecules may be very close together, or very far apart, but the H<sub>2</sub>O-ness of these does not change, only the form changes. When you have said that 'the form undergoes a change', it is not a change, in fact. You have the same problem. Do not think that I am trying to confuse you with some kind of crazy idea. Unfortunately you never thought about it before. You read in the Bibles Genesis again, that God made man in his own image. You have seen an image of yourself in the mirror. Next time you stand in front of a mirror, ask yourself, 'What do I see?' I see my face. True? Yes. 'Is it there in the mirror?' No. Is it not there in the mirror? What do you see there?

Audience: An image, a reflection.

Swami: Did you see a reflection of your face in the mirror or not? The reflection of your face is in the mirror, yes?

Audience: No. Yes. No. Yes.

Swami: Please, make up your mind. That's it. It is the some problem. It is not some exotic oriental thing, it is there in all philosophical doctrines. Next time you stand in front of the mirror, please watch again.

When the Gita talks about Isa, it talks about the mirrors. When it talks about the universe. of diversity, it talks about the reflection in the mirror, concerning which you can neither say, 'It is', nor, 'It is not'. The only problem in this is that this mirror is cosmic, the reflection is cosmic, and the observer and the observed are all caught up in the some mirror. It is a cosmic mirror which is at once everywhere, at once reflecting everything apparently within itself.

Only if that is understood as clearly as possible, it is not possible to say that 'I know this', because 'I' am still 'I' and the knowledge is somewhere outside. Unless this is directly realised - realised in the sense that you know you are real - you know you are alive, you know you are a man or a woman without having to examine yourself. How do you know? If someone asked you this question: 'How do you know you are alive?' you would think that fellow is mad, crazy. Do you know why? Because you do not know how you know that you are alive, and therefore you think that the other man is crazy.

What is it that sees without eyes, without even what one might call a sensation? That is direct realisation. Only when one has reached that point is it possible to

suggest that 'he knows' without a division in his consciousness between 'I' and the knowledge. He knows that this is the truth, this is the reality, this cosmic being 'is', and the cosmic being alone is. The cosmic being is consciousness - that is the truth.

All your yoga is based on this and if one may suggest that the practice of yoga has a goal, or an aim, it is to realise this directly. Again the word 'realise' is defective. To 'realise' is to make something real. Here, it is real already, but since the mirror is misted, we commit mistakes in perception. When that mist is removed, the mistake is also removed. It is quite simple. 'Mistake' is taking the mist to be the meal. You see a misted mirror and then you see your face has gone. You wipe the mirror clean, mistake that the face has gone; the face has not gone, the face is there, it has always been there. That is what is called a mistake. The practice of yoga is meant merely to remove this mist so that there may be no mistake. no error in perception.

Why must one practise yoga?

*Practise Yoga for the purification of the self. VI.12*

For self-purification and, in the course of this purification, it is the self that is removed. That is one reason why people resist any attempt at the practice of yoga, whether it is called western yoga, eastern yoga, christian yoga, hindu yoga, or buddhist yoga. They all aim at this one thing - can the self be purified? Which means - the self itself being the veil, the shadow, the dirt, the filth. Purification removes itself. 'Oh, will I go away? Will I be dissolved? Will I be annihilated?' What is truth cannot be annihilated, what is constant cannot cease to be, and what is changing is changing in any case. Why are you worried about it? Isa is that which is constant. Meditation seeks to realise it and meditation becomes effective only if the self ceases - by seeing itself to cease, by seeing itself as non-existent. That is what ceases. It does not come to an end as though it were a reality which has attained destruction. When the light is turned on, something happens to the shadow. That is precisely what happens to the thing called the self. When that shadow disappears, the substance continues to be.

The yogi in meditation may focus his attention upon the heart, the mind, or upon some psychic centers. You can do what you like. Luckily for you, the self is right up to the tips of your toes so you can meditate on your toes if you want, anything. There needs to be a focal point for the attention, so they suggest the heart. You can visualise a glorious temple in the heart, and there the Lord is seated and there you bow down to him and worship him with lotuses and other flowers. Ah! beautiful! You open your eyes. 'All that I saw was merely imagination.' Image - in. The image was inside. Am I now quite sure that this is somebody sitting in front of me? 'But I saw something like this inside, before.' Do you see the problem? That is why it is said that sometimes these great yogis behaved like madmen; not that they are mad, nor that madmen are yogis. Suddenly there is a serious problem. Here is a young lady sitting in front of me. Sure? But then, a few

minutes ago, when I was sitting with closed eyes, I saw a big temple and a deity and beautiful things happening in my heart. When I opened my eyes and looked down, there was nothing but the shirt - no temple, no deity. During that experience, that appeared to be real, and during this experience, this appears to be real. Is it not then right to say, that 'this' is as real as 'that'?

I suddenly realised, while meditating, that what appeared to be solid meat - this body - is radiant with light. This appears to be solid meat normally, and carcasses you have seen, do not appear to have any light shining in them. Yet, when I meditate, the whole body seems to be full of some glowing and glorious light. Then you look around the ceiling, the pillars, or floor, all of them similarly have the same light. If I do not see them, it is because of faulty vision. We are merely through a series of challenges. That is when meditation becomes more meaningful, more purposeful, more effective. It does not solve any problem, it gives me the key with which I can dissolve all problems. It presents me with that acid in which all problems can be dissolved. Because the creator of the problem is the unreal shadow, no solution is sought. Any attempt at solving the problem treated by this unreality is only going to lead to greater problem. So, I must find the alchemical solution in which the problem-maker can be dissolved. Therefore, meditation does not really solve a problem but puts you in direct contact with that which creates the problem. Dissolve it and everything is gone.

Why fight a shadow? Why must I struggle to remove a shadow? How can I wipe the shadow out? I must see it as a shadow, and when this shadow is seen, which means light, the shadow is gone. Gone? - not gone . Disappeared. When did it appear? It appeared only to a defective vision. Hence the Bhagavad Gita says:

The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His illusive power, to revolve as if mounted on a machine. XVIII.61

This Isa, or God, which is the constant, is constantly changing phenomena. This God is seated in the hearts of all beings. The word 'bhuta' can mean beings and also elements, earth, water, fire, and air. In the very core of all that, there is this consciousness, this life-force, this prana, this vitality or energy, which is conscious - cit-shakti. The whole universe is pervaded by it. This consciousness, energy, is there in the heart of every cell of this body. Even in what is mistakenly regarded as inert substance. Look at your own hair - there is nothing inert there. It seems to be inert, you can trim it very nicely, but it is not inert, it knows how to grow. How can an inert substance grow? Look at your nails. If such an inert substance comes out of you, you are also inert. How can a conscious, sentient being produce such an inert substance? It is not inert. There is energy in it, there is vitality in it. From horses and cows' hooves they make gelatin and we eat it. A doctor would probably say that there is a lot of Vitamin A23 and that without it your hair and nails would not grow. There is something in everything. There is this energy and this consciousness hidden in the core of all things.

There is another interesting and extraordinary statement in the Guru Gita: isvarogururatmeti murtibhedavibhagine vyomavad vyaptadehaya sri

daksinamurtaye namah, singing the praise of a Guru.

The one truth or reality assumes the aspect of a trinity and what is the trinity here? Isa or Isvara - the omnipresent consciousness which is eternally and constantly existing, Guru and the self. The three in fact constitute one reality. This trinity which is in fact one, is like space. When you look at this space, you think that there is infinite space outside, these walls. Inside this hall is a much smaller space and inside this glass there is a tiny space. But this is rubbish. Space cannot be divided at all, space is space. Even when you put that wall up, the space is not destroyed, the space is not occupied. That is a silly expression, as all expressions are silly. This building does not occupy space. Before this building was put up, there was space, and after this building is pulled down, that space will continue to be. That space is there even now, completely and totally, unattached, unaffected at all by the building that seems to exist there and ceases to exist. It has nothing whatsoever to do with it. In the same way, this infinite space, which is consciousness, which is energy, undergoes no change whatsoever. It is there constantly. Whatever changes take place, take place within it - apparently, not in reality. That infinite consciousness, though it is one, is said to assume the aspect of a trinity. One aspect calling itself the self, 'I am so and so'. In order to remove this mistake or misunderstanding of individuality, of finiteness, of littleness, of smallness, the some God, the same infinity, the same space, appears in front of me as the Guru. The three are non-different - God, Guru and Self.

God as the infinite consciousness, assumes the form of the Guru. I hope you see the snag here - assumes the form, in relation to whom? In relation to the perceiver. I am the one that perceives the form. Why does the guru appear in this form? Because I need it. I am caught up in this dream or hallucination of finitude, smallness. Rigidly I am clinging to this little image of myself, I am hanging onto this mirror and I do not want to drop it, to the extent that 'Oh, my face may be broken if ...' and so on. It is possible in the case of a child, or some demented person. He picks up a mirror and, seeing his face in it, he says, 'My face has gone into the mirror, so I should not drop it because my face will also get broken. I should not leave it for then I will be without face.' Such a thing is possible, yes. You think it is far-fetched, but that is precisely what you and I are doing now. We are afraid to lose face lose face - an English expression. Next time you are afraid to lose face, remember this, it is a mirror. I am seeing my face in that mirror, break the mirror and my face is still there. How do I lose face? I am afraid to lose this body, afraid to lose this life, because I have imagined, when I look at the face in the mirror, that my face has somehow gone into the mirror, it is no longer here, it is there. That is the mistake we are committing.

In this inner agony, in what St John of the Cross describes as 'the dark night of the Soul', there is an intense anguish. In Bhakti literature, it is called 'verah', and this is likened to the anguish that the beloved feels. In the absence of her lover, that restless, deep anguish. 'I have lost something, I am confused and anxious.' That is one of the expressions that Arjuna uses in the Gita:



My heart is overpowered by the taint of pity. My mind is confused as to duty. I task thee. Tell me decisively, what is good for me, I am thy disciple. Instruct me who has taken refuge in Thee. II.7

I do not know what to do, I do not know what not to do. Everything seems to be right, everything seems to be wrong. Whichever way I turn I find only challenges. Wherever I turn, I see only problems, no solutions. Every solution seems to have a couple of problems on its own shoulders. Every advantage seems to have a disadvantage and a half. I do not know what to do. When this spiritual anguish possesses me I have tried all my tricks, all my gimmicks. I have tried to satisfy myself and the satisfaction has only brought on more dissatisfaction, more craving. Then, completely bewildered, you look to somewhere, something, anything, saying, 'God, I do not know what to do now.' Then that infinite consciousness, which is everywhere and therefore in you, this is something the yogi never allows you to forget, appears. It is not as though this God is somewhere else and you have to go and look for him there. That God is here, in you, being infinite and omnipresent. There is this intelligence, this knowledge, this understanding that 'I' is unable to dive deeper within and to contact this indwelling divinity, and that indwelling divinity in its struggle to manifest itself, appears as the guru. What does the guru do? He may merely knock this mirror from your hand and give you a slap. 'Yes, that is the face. Sorry, you thought it was in the mirror. I knocked that mirror down and to make it even more clear, I gave you a slap, but you are still here.' That's it. You are enlightened. It is silly, but that is all that enlightenment is. In order to reveal the indwelling divinity, the infinite consciousness seems to appear in front of you, in your eyes, in your vision. The guru outside is necessitated by your own inadequacy, and that guru is only relevant to your inner vision. All this talk about 'who is that guru and what is this guru?' is nonsense. The guru exists only in relation to me, my vision. If this gentleman worships someone as his guru, I have absolutely no right ever to entertain an opinion about it. It is rubbish because it is real to him. This guru may be human, super human, divine, sub-human, animals, plants, trees, stones, statues images, vision, psychic experiences, hallucinatory experiences - anything you want, provided this happens: the mirror is smashed and the face is slapped. That's the guru.

The Bhagavad Gita, however, also transmits the tradition of incarnation, etc., and one of the most interesting features of the Gita is the recognition that even after this guru has appeared in your life and brought about an experience of the truth, Krishna being a very practical philosopher and teacher, seems to realise that even after this awakening, one can go back to sleep - as we all do. You have a shattering and mind-opening, mind-expanding, and heart-opening experience, and possibly something related to my relationship with my guru. Then immediately the mind defies that form, that personality, and the truth is lost. Once again, there is a limitation, a confinement and the truth is lost. In order to avoid this, Krishna suggests a beautiful exercise, which my Guru also was very fond of. This comprises the whole 10th chapter of the Gita, in which we are given what are known as special manifestations of divinity.

God is omnipresent. But it is possible to see this omnipresence in and through some extraordinary phenomena. For instance, God is the light and God is the energy that enabled even this lamp to glow. The energy, or whatever it is in it, is divine. But then, looking at it, I may or may not be reminded of God. However, when you look at the sun - that is an extraordinary light, there I see the divine. When you see the moon, that again is extraordinary - it is light without heat. Fantastic, and you bow down to that as a special manifestation of God. In this way, the 10th chapter gives a catalogue of the special manifestations. The purpose? Whenever I look at these phenomena, the mind dwells on or entertains thoughts of God. Significantly, in that chapter are mentioned the names of animals, plants, trees, and other such natural phenomena, so that we may not cling to the idea that God must be some kind of nice, good-looking and handsome man or woman, or superman, or superwoman. When it said that God is omnipresent, that word meant one hundred percent and more. Even the chairs that you are sitting on are divine. My Guru was very fond of that chapter. He used it in His own life. Even though He was an enlightened sage, every morning when He came out, He would look at the Ganges and bow down because it is mentioned there: the Ganges amongst rivers am I. He would look at the Himalayas and say, 'This is what Krishna said in the Gita: I am the Himalayas amongst mountains'. All this is divine. Look at the sun, the sky, look at the images of God. Once you get into that spirit, you are not terribly bothered about idolatry or anti-idolatry. It does not matter at all - that's nonsense. You look at any picture - Krishna, Christ, the Buddha - and it does not matter what it is. It is what happens to your mind, what happens to you, that is important. When I look at that, I think of God. When you look at a beautiful face, again you are admiring the presence of God in that, otherwise it would not be beautiful. When you look at a very strong man, how marvelous, that also is God.

*Of the strong, I am the strength, devoid of desire and attachment, and in all beings I am desire unopposed to Dharma, O Arjuna. VII.11*

I am the strength of the strong. I am the radiance of the radiant. I am the intelligence of the intelligent and I am even the cunning of the crook. Once this gets hold of you, then the whole life becomes divine and there is nothing from there on that could be regarded as secular or worldly life, or something set apart as yoga, as something set apart as religious life. The entire life becomes divine.

*Fix thy mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me - work for My sake, bow down to Me. Thou shalt come even to Me. Truly do I promise unto thee, for thou art dear to Me. XXIII.65*

Let the whole mind be saturated with the divine. It is then that the heart loves the divine in all. There is love and love only. You may act appropriately. We are not suggesting that your acts are uniform; but even if you spank your child, it is with supreme love. There is nothing but love in your heart, and that love flows towards all beings, in various appropriate ways, but without a tinge of hate or evil in it, and all actions take place without motivation, without a goal, or ambition for some achievement. Action 'takes place', because action is part of this total conscious energy which is God. Therefore, every action becomes an act of God.

Your life becomes divine, cosmic. Such a life is what is indicated in the Bhagavad Gita.

Om Tat Sat.