

# KRISHNAKATHA

by

SWAMI VENKATESANANDA



॥ स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥



Swami Venkatesananda delivered a new series of lectures at the Mitra Hall on the essence of the Gita.

Talks were given at the Mitra Hall Mowbray, Cape Town, January, 1975

The series is presented under the title of Krishnakatha

The Bhagavad Gita is perhaps the most systematic scriptural statement of the Perennial Philosophy. It has been translated into most of the languages of the world. The first English translation was done by Charles Wilkens in 1785. Shri Krishna! What a name to conjure with!

Every mother or father of a child, every boy or girl who has a playmate, every lover who has a beloved, every soldier who has an enemy to fight, every king who has a political opponent, every aspirant who has a spiritual goal. Everyone in India thinks of Shri Kshna as the perfection.

Hindu life is woven with the memory of Shri Krishna and with truth, Love and beauty he stands for.

Cape Town devotees of Swami Venkatesananda always contend that the very first Gita lectures in South Africa were given by Him in the Mitra Hall, Mowbray in 1962.

Since that time Swamiji must have delivered thousands of talks on this ancient scripture all over the world, but the same excitement is always present among his friends when it is known that a new series of Gita talks is about to begin.

It was therefore quite understandable that some of us felt the old enchantment again at Swamiji's latest talks in January 1975. Old memories were revived, We remembered the first talks, when many like myself were introduced to the Bhagavad Gita.

We nostalgically reminded each other of how the talks were originally summarized, and were ready for the devotees to study on the following evening. How Shanti organized, Gita typed and Amrit produced the copies. How later on Monsookbhai conducted weekly study classes. How the talks were then presented in monthly magazine form, and were finally brought out in book form by Mr. Palsania as "The Song of God".

Once again these present talks have been produced by loving and devoted friends of Swamiji.

During His stay in Cape Town in 1975, Swamiji as Patron of The International Yoga Teachers Association attended the First South African Inter-Provincial Seminar, and it was therefore decided that it would be good to commemorate the occasion by publishing the Gita talks.

It is hoped that these talks will reach many of Swamiji's devotees and that it will be studied by them in conjunction with "The Song of God".

Jaya van Alphen

I

Perhaps many of you are aware of the background of the Bhagavad Gita. And, since we are going to meet only a few nights, I do not think we should waste time recapitulating the story. I might repeat the last bit of the story because it may be of some relevance to what we discuss during these five nights.

The hero suddenly collapses on the battlefield giving what appears to be a valid reason. He says, "I do not want to fight because fighting means destruction, killing". I suppose most of you know the soldier's watch word? "Kill before you are killed", and then they call it self-defense, This wonderful hero called Arjuna (who later became a disciple of Krishna said something very interesting, lofty, altruistic, "I don't want to engage myself in this battle, because it involves killing, destruction, violence". But somehow the teacher of the scripture did not think so.

This is a bit of a paradox, because later on in his own teaching, Krishna emphasizes that the man of God, the holy man, is non-violent. In fact non-violence is exalted again and again is the characteristic of a man of God. If non-violence is the characteristic of a man of God, if love is the characteristic of a man of God, and if the man of God naturally and effortlessly works for the welfare of all beings, then how is it that Krishna demands that the hero, Arjuna, must engage in this battle and not be allowed to run away from it? This is an apparent contradiction which we may as well clear so that the message of the Bhagavad Gita may be understood.

It is not as though Krishna, the author of the story and the master in the story, sanctions violence According to the Legend he himself had, just before the war had been declared, striven his utmost to bring about a peaceful, solution, negotiations had failed and the parties concerned had declared war. War was on them, that is the most important thing to remember. Now the armies were assembled on the battlefield and war was about to commence. Good war, bad war, righteous war, unrighteous war, holy war, unholy war - we are not concerned with that. The supreme hero and warrior collapses and, having collapsed, he rationalizes his weakness, his unwillingness to fight, by saying all sorts of wonderful things.

Krishna asks: "are you really being altruistic? Do you really have respect for life, reverence for life? Or are you using this to camouflage weakness? Are you saying that war is evil and that therefore you will not fight - in which case you would not have declared war in the first place? Or are you saying you do not mind killing anybody in the world but you don't want to kill your friends, your relatives - that you don't want to kill them as they are your people. This

means you don't mind killing the rest of the world. That is not the spirit of non-violence. This is where the whole story begins.

Thou hast grieved for those that should not be grieved for, yet thou speakest words of wisdom. (II-11)

You talk as if you are a wise man but examine yourself, examine your own heart to see if, in the heart, there is wisdom or darkest ignorance. It is only in the darkness of ignorance that you assume relationships which do not exist.

That is the point at which the master opens the teaching. Here we are not concerned whether Krishna actually wanted Arjuna to fight or whether he did not want him to fight. He makes it clear right in the beginning that to fight or not to fight is not a very serious question.

Even if you don't want to fight, you cannot avoid death because everybody is in the queue to the grave. Some go a bit early - they are probably the blessed ones - they do not have to see the destruction and the violence that are constantly being built up in our society. Those who died early in the second world war were blessed because they did not see what the atomic bomb was capable of doing.

That is not the problem at all. The real problem is one of ignorance, of enlightenment or wisdom. This word wisdom is interesting and important because the other word, philosophy, means love of wisdom - a friend of wisdom. As usual with all the words we use we have forgotten this. Once again we seem not to be interested in philosophy, in wisdom as such, but in the use of wisdom to camouflage our own hollowness, our emptiness, our fear, our insecurity, and our viciousness. What is it that characterizes us, you and me? The compelling urge to dominate one another. We talk of survival in this world - but we have survived for thousands or maybe millions of years. We have survived as humanity, as mankind - but we have not survived as individuals for more than sixty or a hundred years. So we are not fighting for survival in this world. All wars, all conflicts, whether national or international or intensely personal, are fights for the survival of domination. Hence, even violence or non-violence is not the problem.

Wisdom or ignorance is the problem. Wisdom is something other than what our philosophy seems to imply. We have even used philosophy as a sort of cover to camouflage our desire to dominate. And therefore even wonderful teachings, universal teachings of Buddha, of Krishna, of Jesus Christ, of Moses and all the prophets, the teachings of Mohamed, of all the great mystics that lived and enriched our earth throughout its history, have all been perverted by the spirit of domination. These great ones built an edifice which might bring us all together - yet we pick up the very bricks of that edifice and

use them to destroy each other. We do not want wisdom, we want to dominate.

Even the Bhagavad Gita which is a universal message meant to Promote wisdom or philosophy, has given rise to schools of philosophy. We are not interested in wisdom any more, we are not even interested in fundamental truth any more - that truth that is wisdom. We even ask each other which school of philosophy we belong to. Thus we see that the cover used by Arjuna, the disciple and student, was used in the Bhagavad Gita to cover his own weakness and wickedness and is still used by us in another form. I do not ask myself what true wisdom is but I ask which school of philosophy you belong to, which religion. I ask you who your God is and what you think of the soul. Instead why not strike at the very roots of this ignorance, so that I may rediscover the wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita?

We must rescue this wisdom within ourselves, from all the encrustations of schools of philosophy that have accumulated. Are we interested in that? Or do I still want to carry on the tradition of fighting with another, fighting in the name of philosophy, even in the name of non-violence, even in the name of love? That is the question. Am I prepared, am I willing, am I eager, do I want to go to the source of this wisdom? How can I do that? By dis-covering. And in order to dis-cover the wisdom covered by ignorance, by cowardice, by weakness, by wickedness, I must have the courage to look at this cover, however painful it may be. Am I prepared to confess, am I prepared to admit that I am ignorant, weak and wicked? Only then can one look straight in the face of this ignorance and, by uncovering it, dis-cover wisdom.

You know, our master Swami Sivananda Himself wrote and gave us a very beautiful universal prayer. We often repeat it. And often, when I repeat the line, "Thou art omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient" - I feel like stopping there. Then what must I say? He knows what to do - but we go on and say, "Free us from egoism, lust, anger, greed, hatred and jealousy". But how can God free me from all this unless they are all there in me? While you repeat these words, is it possible for you to look within and ask yourself, confess to yourself, and not just to God? Can you see that you are full of these? Do you have this feeling? Honestly? Sincerely? Do you feel you are full of vanity, egoism, lust, anger, greed, hatred and jealousy? Do you also want, sincerely and honestly, that these should be taken away from you? That you should be freed of them by God?

That's it! It is sincerity that is lacking in us, awfully lacking. Therefore we use this wisdom itself as the cover. This is the worst of all tragedies because, instead of confessing, instead of seeing that the wisdom is covered by ignorance, by viciousness, by wickedness, and looking boldly at this cover, lifting the cover, to discover the wisdom - we have used our idea of wisdom

(which is ignorance) itself as the cover. I am chewing this cover, chewing this ignorance called wisdom, and therefore I find nothing interesting in any of the scriptures, in any of the teachings. This is what Krishna points out. He says "You are speaking words of wisdom, mere words!". Marvelous. But your actions betray your utter ignorance, your foolishness.

The philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita cannot be contained in any school of thought - it is wisdom, pure and simple. This wisdom is some thing beyond rationalization. That which you see directly does not need rationalization. The fact that I am alive does not need any reasoning, it does not need a medical examination. Is the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita as clear to me as the fact that I am alive? Then I need no proof at all.

Krishna tells us that in order to solve this problem - the problem of ignorance, not the problem of whether to fight or not, you have to discover this wisdom within you. Then it is that wisdom that will act. Then, if that wisdom demands that you fight - fight, and if it demands that you allow yourself to be shot, be shot. But do not worry about the application of this wisdom - because wisdom is not like a cosmetic which you apply on top of your skin - it is an inner growth. There is a world of difference between your inner growth and an external application. You cannot apply wisdom. The teaching, the wisdom or jnana is not like lipstick or rouge - it is not something to be applied, When the true light of wisdom shines in you, in that light alone life will find its own course.

Arjuna said, "If I fight this war, these my friends and relations will be killed. Some of us also will be killed and we shall incur the sin of this violence and destruction". Is this so?

The unreal has no being; there is no non-being of the real. (II-16).

Krishna says; "Arjuna, that which is cannot cease to be. The truth or the reality never ceases to be and that which is unreal is not. Are you afraid that, by engaging yourself in this battle, something that is real, something that exists, is going to be destroyed by you? Can you destroy something which IS? Can you destroy something which exists? This is pure physics, the principle of conservation of matter and energy. You may change its form - static energy may be changed into, transformed into kinetic energy - just as this piece of wood may be transformed into a stick. But while this transformation takes place, transformation - the form being changed - something that IS remains unchanged, it cannot be destroyed. The form is but an appearance and changes all the time.

Just as in this body the embodied one passes into childhood, youth and old age, so also does he pass into another body. (II-13).



Look at a photograph of yourself at six years old. Would you recognize yourself? What happened to that body? You are merely saying that it is a picture of you, but you do not really know - if you found it lying in a dustbin somewhere, you would not pick it up, you would not even recognize it. That form has disintegrated, gone. It exists in the present to the some extent as a glass of milk exists when it is poured into a swimming pool - it is gone. A lot of things have gone into this body - a mountain of bread and a garden of potatoes. And where is the body which was called the baby fifty four years ago? It is gone, but something which IS continues to be. It was there even before. Can you tell me what your face looked like fifteen years before you were born?

That is a question worth meditation on. That is the truth and that is never destroyed. It is that which is called God, that which IS, which exists, and therefore in sanskrit it is called ishvara or isa. It is almost English. It is that which IS - that which does not undergo any change at all! That which IS, is obviously not physical, not material, not mere energy. It immediately becomes clear that it is not limited to this body - perhaps is has nothing whatsoever to do with this body. It is energy, it is consciousness, it is intelligence, (why not use the word God?) and that God has nothing whatever to do with this body.

Know that to be indestructible, by whom all this is pervaded. (GII-17).

That being, that truth, that reality which pervades all this, is indestructible. Nobody can destroy it; so forget your argument that "I do not want to fight because I do not want to destroy these people". By him, by that reality, is all this pervaded. This word - tatam - occurs a number of times in the Bhagavad Gita. It says that the whole universe is pervaded, permeated, by this reality. I do not have to worry how to preserve It. I know I cannot destroy it. Can I then go around cutting everybody's throats? No, no that is foolishness. Why should I want to do that? Because I think that if I do that, I will have destroyed him. It is ignorance, foolishness that makes me do that. When I realize that he is indestructible, why will I want to do that? It is absurd. It is only when one sees the absurdity of violence that one will abandon it.

In another place there is another interesting statement which says, "The entire visible universe is pervaded by just one small part of my being". This is corroborated by modern science which says that, in this vast space, matter occupies only a small part. A few particles of dust, floating in infinite space, are called stars and planets and all the rest of it. Within that, you and I are occupying a not even mentionable amount of space. And that is what we are fighting over. Only when this is realized will all this violence stop. It will not stop as long as I think that I should be violent or that I should not be violent,

but only when one realizes the very magnitude of creation and the fact that something, that reality which is indestructible. In the face of all this, what you do is of no consequence whatever. When that is seen, violence ceases. Just as in this body there are billions and billions of cells, each one invested with the same consciousness that pervades the entire body, even so is the whole universe pervaded by reality - God. Why do you call it God? Why not call it God? As long as when I use the word God I do not conjure up a nice, lovely figure of an old man, an ancient person with white hair and a black beard, it is alright.

It is interesting that religious people must use, at least in the English language, a word which has three letters - g-o-d, because in algebra an unknown quantity is usually referred to as x,y,z, or a,b,c - also three letters. Therefore when one uses this word God one should realize that I am talking of an unknown quantity. It may be knowable or unknowable - but it is certainly unknown. What is God? You ask it as a question, but it may also be used as an affirmation - what is God? What is God - until you see that what is, is God, that that which pervades the entire universe, both inside and out, is God, that there is nothing other than this God.

So if God pervades the entire universe, you, me, all this and, even as the intelligence of this personality pervades the billions and billions of cells of this body - then how is it that I feel I am different from you? How is it that I think I am different from you? And how is it that your experience is not my experience and vice versa?

I am not manifest to all (as I am) veiled by the yoga maya (VII-25).

Says Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, this truth of the omnipresence of God (which implies that God alone exists), is not understood, is not appreciated, because of our ignorance. How does this ignorance manifest itself? By thinking. Therefore we say, "God pervades all, but I think I am different from you". As long as we continue to think like this, as long as thinking goes on like this, as long as thought continues, as long as thought continues or think that I am different from you, so long will this distinction, this division also continue. The removal of this division is called yoga.

When Krishna says, "I pervade the entire universe", it is not the person of Krishna that is alluded to. There are some who insist that the Gita was taught by Krishna, by Lord Krishna - therefore when he says, "You must come to me", you must go to Krishna, not to somebody else. Again, when he says, "Take refuge in me", it means Krishna. In the Bhagavad Gita it is not a personality called Krishna that is referred to, it is God, the reality, the supreme reality, the cosmic reality which pervades the entire universe. This is beyond the intelligence, beyond the intellect.

That supreme being is omniscient as well as omnipresent and omnipotent. And therefore it has the power to manifest itself whenever that intelligence, that omnipotence desires. Thus the student of the Bhagavad Gita does not see any difficulty in accepting that this omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent God can appear, manifest himself or herself or itself, anywhere, at any time he she or it decides. So there were some incarnations of God which were male; some female and some neither - which were half men and half animal, half lion, Why does God so incarnate?

Whenever there is a decline in righteousness, O Arjuna, and the rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest myself, for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of righteousness. I am born in every age (IV-7,8).

Whenever there is imbalance, whenever the world order is threatened, then the divine manifests itself in an appropriate form, in an appropriate place and at an appropriate time, to restore the balance, to restore order for the time being. It is not that when God thus manifests himself, he restores order for ever and ever. No. The inner battle goes on, life goes on, the churning goes on. I think some of the Middle Eastern legends also mention a certain churning of an ocean, from which creation started. This churning did not take place in legendary times only; it takes place even now, in your heart and my heart, in the hearts of millions of people all around the world. And, as this churning goes on, it throws up a disorder in our own life. Every time this disorder reaches a certain climax, there is a burst of light and there is the manifestation of God, in you, as the inner light - and in the world as some kind of manifestation.

Lastly the Bhagavad Gita also recommends a delightful approach to God-realisation. Seeing that it is our ignorance of this cosmic reality that is the base of all our confusion, all our conflict, all our sin and sorrow in this world, the Bhagavad Gita suggests we ask ourselves where this God, this omnipresence is. But wait just a moment. You may not be able to jump on your own shoulders; it is difficult. So, let there be concentric expansion of vision - ever expanding. This is the unique teaching of Krishna. He says, "Start from where you are, from wherever you are". If you can only love yourself, and you say, "As long as my wife does what I want her to do, I can love her too". Good. Start from there, it is a little expansion. And then? Well you love your wife dearly and there are a few additions to the family, as the fruit of this love. Now extend this love to them too. You love only them? Good. Very soon you will discover that unless you love your neighbors also, neither your wife, your children nor yourself are safe and happy. Do you see that? Now extend your love to the neighbors too, just a little more and a little more - but do not be in a hurry. People have been in a great hurry driving along the

road or driving themselves to madness in their own lives. Then after this great hurry there is the grave of peace, resting in the grave. So, do not rush, even in good things. Let there be concentric expansion of your consciousness, of your vision of God. If you can see God only in the temple, worship him there, kneel down, pray.

Go on from there and let there be expansion in your heart, in your consciousness, in your vision of God. That is the beauty. And so, in the tenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna describes himself as this and that, as holiness, as so-and-so, as Krishna, as all sorts of divine manifestations - also as a tree, as the king of animals, the lion and even as the cleverest among the cheats. Yes, Krishna says that even the cleverness of the cheat is also a manifestation of God.

Whatever being there is glorious, prosperous or powerful, that know thou to be a manifestation of a part of my splendor. (X-41).

Krishna says, whatever you see in this world that is glorious, realize that all this is my own manifestation, my own glory. My expansion is there in him. In the strong person, the wealthy person, the clever person, the intelligent person, the wise person, in the ascetic, there is my divine manifestation in them. Learn to look there, do not look at the other things. If I train myself in that way, I have discovered the key, the wisdom that is so beautifully illustrated in some oriental religious writings. It is said that the wise man is like the legendary swan. If you mix milk and water and place it in front of the swan, it can extract the milk and leave the water. In this mixture called the world, the wise man is able to extract the divine and see this divinity which is hidden in all beings.

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

"I dwell in the hearts of all beings". By discovering this divinity which lies in the core of all beings, he has completely transformed himself. He has made himself transparent and, in his vision, there is God and naught else. That is what my guru, Swami Sivananda used to emphasize all the time. He would say to us, "See God in all faces". Krishna says, "All these great and glorious beings in the world have me, have my glory, at their core. Then you see that, then you see God in all".

## II

There is a small problem when we discuss any philosophy and that is, when we endeavour to apply that philosophy to our life, to our conduct, to our behaviour, to our relationship with our neighbours and friends - what I call the 'and therefore' mentality - it leads to rather interesting consequences. There is an interesting parable told of how a man tried to apply the philosophy of oneness. "You and I are one". He had a small garden which lay adjacent to his neighbours garden. One day he had gone into his own garden with a large basket. He had collected the fruits not only from his own garden but from the neighbours garden as well. When questioned, he said, in effect: "After all, aren't we one? And what is yours is mine and what is mine is mine". So when we listen to these teachings of the Gita, are we also anxious to find ways and means of applying these to our daily life on the valid pretext that these teachings have to be practised? Teachings are not meant merely to embellish our brain, our mind, they are not to be treated as intellectual embellishments, ornaments - nor are they mere marks of culture so that you and I can talk about the Gita, the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bible, the Koran. But at the same time they are not to be applied blindly. You would not apply make-up blindly, you need a mirror.

We have grown a lot from childhood. All that we have acquired has come from vegetables, bread and butter, and so on. But if I took that bread and butter etc and started applying it to the outside of the body, it would never produce any growth, it would stink. And this is what happens when we try to apply the teachings directly. If however we approach the teachings of these masters in exactly the same way as we approach food - food is to be digested, assimilated, it must become like me - the teachings are no longer the teachings of Krishna, or Jesus Christ, or Buddha, or Mohamed - they have become me. They are no longer outside, they are inside, they are within me, they are assimilated. This means that they are the thing that lives. They have become a living reality, in the sense that it is this reality in me that lives. Life goes on smoothly because it is no longer the vicious little selfish personality that lives. It is wisdom that lives.

We are taught this in the universities too. We learn psychology and immediately follow with other courses in applied psychology. We learn mechanics and then we learn applied mechanics, we learn physics and then we learn applied physics, because we find that in our educational system, we begin to feel that the same is true in the case of spiritual understanding, wisdom. Wisdom is to be inhaled, imbibed and then it is no longer the ignorance that talks, it is the wisdom that talks. It is the wisdom that lives. When I know this then I do not have to be anxious about applying these teachings to my life -actions will spring from this wisdom.

The basic philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita is, "God is omnipresent". You cannot ask the oriental mystic, "Prove to me that God exists", because the very definition that he gives for God is, "That which is". It is very difficult, unless we are at a very advanced stage of madness or perversity, to be quite sure that nothing exists. Even if you are able to say that nothing exists externally, as the external object in the external world, the Indian philosopher turns round and says, "What about you? You who say that nothing exists, what about you? Do you exist or not?" You have to say yes and he says, "Something IS. That which is, is God and that which is, is omnipresent, is everywhere - and omnipresent means, that alone is. Let us not gloss over this important word - omnipresent, it means that alone is.

Yet immediately this truth is seen, lightly grasped; immediately this truth is even heard without being digested or assimilated; it poses a big problem. If God alone is, and if God alone pervades all this that exists, when I have headache, do I suffer or does God suffer? Is God so mad that he wants to suffer aches and pains, old age and death, sin and suffering, sorrow, oppression, depression, hunger, and thirst?

Does God suffer all this? Who is to answer? There is only one person to answer - God. We have not yet dared to ask him; because in order to ask him, you have to find him first. That is the difficulty in finding God? If God exists everywhere, why is it that I do not see him. If God exists everywhere, what is it that stands between me and God? Obviously nothing but me, and that almost glides into the famous question - what am I? What am I that is sitting here and talking? Who is it that is discussing whether or not God exists. Who am I that is trying to see God? Who am I that complains of suffering? Who am I that is getting older? I must know that. If I know who I am that suffers, then I can know if God also is involved in that.

First of all, take a simple and crude illustration. If God alone exists, there is nothing called theft. I am carrying a bag with my right arm, it becomes fatigued and so I transfer it to the left arm - that is not called theft. And if God is omnipresent, there is no theft in the world - it is only changing hands. Thus we see that all sorts of problems can arise from this simple feeling that God is omnipresent. Again I ask, "Who am I? What is I? What is me? What stands between me and God?"

An eternal portion of myself having become a living soul in the world of life, draws to itself the five senses with the mind for the sixth, abiding in nature (XV-7).

What you call an individual, a personality, a jiva, is not but a small part of me, a cell in my body. Do you like this habit of playing with words? Look at this

word cell, it sounds like soul - cell is a soul. Perhaps each cell in your body has got its own soul, and perhaps you yourself are a cell in the body of something else. Perhaps the whole earth is but a small cell in the body of something else - God. I do not know if it is true but I think it is a sublime vision, a sublime thought - that soul in you is but a cell in the body of God. Sometimes it is called the self, sometimes it is called a cell, sometimes it is called the soul.

The jiva is not restricted to the human soul. This is a nice theory isn't it, that only human beings have souls and that, even amongst human beings, only cultured human beings have souls. All these are merely theories, invented by us to rationalise our own viciousness. You want to eat meat - this means somebody has to slaughter an animal. The animal is you, as it were. "Must I die? Must I be killed so that you may have a meal?" Yes it hurts and that is why we rationalise and say that a human being has a soul or jiva. There is a famous statement which occurs again and again in another scripture called the Yoga Vasistha. It says, "Everything from Brahma the creator down to blade of grass pervaded, permeated, vibrant with the spirit of God. And where there is a being, that being has a soul" We may not have discovered this scientifically but it is quite possible that the earth itself has its own soul. Have you come across the theory that the beehive is soul and the bees form cells in that one soul, in that body? It is one organism, not one organisation. It is also possible to conceive of the human body in similar way, that it is one organism with millions of different cells in it, millions of living cells in it. All these cells may be partly independent or interdependent. In the same way it is possible that all of us are cells in the body called earth - with earth itself having its soul independent of us but with an interdependent relationship.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect, and egoism - thus is my nature divided eight-fold. This is the inferior nature, O mighty armed Arjuna, know thou as different from it, My Higher Nature, the very life-element by which this world is upheld. (VII-4,5)

In these two verses there is a marvelous description of not only what we call earth but also of what we call creation. It is created of the elements - water, fire, air and space. I think that for some time we believed that there was a thing called ether, but it is a big question whether there is a stuff called ether or not. The oriental does not become involved in such discussions, he calls it space. A plant has four elements in it. Earth - it grows in it and has earth in it. Water - you can almost feel it. Fire - without sunshine nothing will grow. Air - I breathe oxygen and plants breathe carbon dioxide. Some kind of air is necessary. But what about space? A great sage called Vasistha has a wonderful explanation as to how space is involved in your growth. Space does not yield the space, everything is choked. The plants would be choked, you and I would have been choked. By merely allowing the growth to take

place, by yielding room for the body to grow, by yielding room for plants to grow, space also contributes its own share to the existence of all beings.

Manas, buddhi and ahamkara - these are also cosmic elements. Manas is the mind. Buddhi is not the intellect only; it is the awakened intelligence which is able to reason, to rationalise, to justify, to judge, discriminate - and all these in their good and bad senses. Ahamkara - there is in the composition of the universe an ego sense. It is extremely important to bear this in mind.

Otherwise, whilst endeavouring to live a non-volitional existence, an ego-less existence, endeavouring to be selfless in our actions and in our life, we might fall into another gap - that of thinking we shall be ego less if we shun the use of the 'I'. There have been good examples of this principle. There was a man called Swami Ramdas in India - he was a contemporary of my guru - Swami Sivananda. Swami Ramdas had reached a certain stage of inner maturity and therefore he had found it rather burdensome to use the word 'I'. He would say, "Ramdas says", or "Ramdas would like a glass of water". Quite a number of others have copied him - but please remember when you imitate somebody, that you are not a carbon copy.

You can imitate somebody else, that is not what we are talking about; that is external imitation. But to get into the spirit of what the other man does is different. We do not know what the spirit of Swami Ramdas was, that he had dropped the use of the word 'I' and went about saying, "Ramdas says this" and "Ramdas thinks that", "Ramdas feels you are right" or "Ramdas says you are wrong". All these things he used to say - but what was the inner attitude with which he said those things? We do not know. There were others who used to do something similar, avoid using the word 'I' - but they were even more arrogant than the person who used the word 'I'.

There is an ego sense in us and in all beings, not only me but in all beings. It is the ego that co-ordinates the functions of all the other senses - so that it is part of creation, part of God's own nature. It is part of the world-scheme. We are not here to cancel out God's creation, we are here to understand it - the correct understanding of creation, the correct understanding of the existence of you and me, and the correct understanding of who I am, who you are - that itself is liberation. The above eight factors constitute, says Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita VIII, my inferior nature. (See previous page) Apara and para are two words which are a bit difficult to translate. We may call them inferior and superior, in the same way as I call the hair on my head inferior to my teeth and my neck. These degrees of importance, if one may use such an expression, do exist in nature.

All these eight factors are inferior! There is something that is superior and that is the living principle, the living soul. Please, when the word soul is mentioned, try not to think of it as a sort of nice little brilliant spark. Jiva is



the living soul, it is the thing that LIVES in the body but is not confined to the body - in as such as it does not die when the body dies.

Krishna calls this para prakriti. Prakriti means nature. Look at the way we misuse these words. Scientists and great men of culture have played havoc with these words. In sanskrit there is the word prakriti and in English there is the word nature. Both of them have been misused. Originally perhaps they meant the nature of a certain person or being, but we have taken this whole expression apart and we use the word nature totally independently. We have our own image of what is called nature. We are not supposed to have images of God, so we have quietly dismissed this God and have invented a thing called nature, independent of God. Now we speak of 'my' nature, 'your' nature, God's nature or the nature of a dog or cat. But what is nature? "Ah, but you know Swami, nature - look at all this, this is nature" Look at what? The trees. Then why do you not say, "The nature of the trees". I might irritate you by asking you, "What exactly do you mean by the word nature? Do you mean this wall?" "No, no, not the wall, but this, this, this ...." And that is precisely because you do not understand what nature means that you become irritated. This nature belongs to something, some being. Just as I have my nature, this thing that we call nature, prakriti, belongs to some being. Who is that? Call it anything you like but why not use the simple word God? This whole, total structure is nature and in this nature there are certain factors which may be considered of greater importance and others not so important - some are called superior and some are called inferior. Do not divide the world between the good and the bad, divide it between the good and the not so good - then you will not have such bitterness in your heart. If you divide it between good and evil you are going to be very bitter and hostile to this evil and so say this person is good and this person is not so good.

Take a look at this nature. You see that it is constantly active, constantly in motion. There is energy everywhere and this energy is constantly changing from one state to another. It is the very nature of energy to be constantly in motion. If it is static, if it is completely dead. You would not find energy. It is a mass and therefore matter. You call something energy because it is in motion, it is vibrating, it is active. The whole of nature is filled with energy because the life force, the living principle, the living soul is every where. And this living soul, being alive, is vibrant, dynamic, active, in motion all the time, As a corollary to this, Krishna warns us -

Verily, none can ever remain for even a moment without performing action; for everyone is made to act helplessly by the qualities born of Nature (III-5)

Some of you have children and if you find that boy or girl a bit lazy, you complain and-say, "Oh! He is so lazy, he does nothing all day". He must be a superman to be able to do that. Can you do nothing? It is not possible to do a

thing called nothing. I can sit - that is doing something. I can lie down - that is doing something. I can sleep, that is doing something, What do I mean 'I do nothing'? This, incidentally, is one way we torture our children, by teasing them and saying to them, "You are doing nothing, you are lazy, you are good for nothing". 'Good for nothing' is a wonderful expression, it means that without any reason you are good, without any motivation at all you are good. All the others are good for something! I have an idea in my mind, that my son or my daughter must be like this and if they do not measure up to my expectations I must push the child. It is not the fault of the child, it is your fault. You have your own expectations. Do you ever look into the mirror and see if you have measured up to your own parents' expectations? We do not do that at all, we do not see that at all. We want our children to be all that our grandfather expected of us. It is in this spirit that we use the words, 'He does nothing'. It is not possible for any living being to do nothing. I think I must correct this - it is not possible for any being, even a dead being, to do nothing. Even a dead body disintegrates - that is doing something.

The entire universe is vibrant, dynamic, constantly in motion. It is living, alive. Just as the entire universe is in constant motion, so too, this body, this mind, these things, are also in motion. They are also vibrating, they are also active, also alive, they are doing something. This body is also a part of this nature, part of the world creation or world appearance, and it goes on performing its own functions.

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)

Somewhere the feeling arises, "I do this" The 'I' has got its own role to play. The ego-sense has its own function in our life but that function is not like this - that the mouth, the teeth have got their functions, legitimate functions. So that, when you put a piece of bread into the mouth, the teeth bite that piece of bread - important for digestion. The teeth can either bite the bread, or the finger also - this is easily appreciated. When you feed somebody else, if they bite the food, that is wonderful; but if they bite your finger, that is a bit of a painful thing. Each one of these things, the organs, the body, the mind, the ego-sense, even what is called the discriminative principle, the buddhi - all have their own particular role to play. As long as they play their own role, there is no harm at all - it is beautiful. The world has been so beautifully adjusted that each one, performing his own role, can experience the greatest delight in life while promoting the delight of the entire community, the entire world. But this thing called ego-sense somehow has the nasty habit of arrogating to itself the functions of nature, God's nature. Speaking happens, but while it happens, somehow, from somewhere, the 'I', the ego-sense jumps in and says, "I am speaking". It is God's own nature that does everything in

this world. But somehow this foolish man, this foolish ego, arrogates to itself the doer-ship of the action.

We shall go back to the story for just one minute. What was Arjuna's objection, what was the student's objection to the war? Because that 'I' will be responsible for the killing of all these people, that 'I' may have to kill my own kith and kin. And Krishna, rather dramatically, makes a rather shocking pronouncement which has been interpreted rather theologically - but I think the simple meaning is better.

I am the mighty world-destroying Time, now engaged in destroying the worlds. Even without thee none of the warriors arrayed in the hostile armies shall live. (XI-52)

Even if you did not fight, even if you were not born, these people standing in front of you will not live forever - that is obvious is it not?

This, incidentally, is the solution to all the problems of violence? There was once a discussion in New York and I was asked to participate in it. They were all discussing the vital problem of world peace and what to do about wars and violence. My turn came and I said, "I only know this much - that if everyone who wielded a gun realized that he was wasting a bullet, he would drop his gun. If this man jumped up and pointed a gun at me, I might say to him, "Wait for a couple of years more. Why waste a bullet. Leave me alone and I will still die, I am not immortal". Only when you see the absurdity of killing one another, knowing that both the killer and the killed are going to die, will violence cease.

So, do not come up with the excuse that 'I will not kill because I am so important in this game'. You are not important - with you or without you, life will go on on this earth. What a blow to this silly little ego. We may not take such a great pride in fighting and killing. I hope not - at least most of you here. But we do take a lot of pride in saying, "Ho, what a nice man I am. What a great service I am rendering, in the Name of God". When you are preaching a sermon or teaching a class, when you are doing something marvelous, humanitarian, can you not for one moment see that even if you are not here, nothing would be worse. Can I see that this applies even to domestic situations? Can you look at your own son and see that, even if you drop dead now, he will live? I am here, I am here for a purpose. You are also here for a purpose. And as long as we stand face to face with each other, we will do all sorts of things, but inwardly I know that it does not matter. What a brilliant and beautiful feeling one will have in human relationship then. I am not saying that I am totally unnecessary because then I would not be here at all. I need not think that I am so terribly important but, again, I use a

particular expression whose meaning has to be discovered - 'God's Will be done'. Nature is active in this world, nature goes on functioning, life goes on living. I do not live life, life lives me. Why does the 'I' arrogate to itself all these functions, all these happenings?

On the other hand there is the other man who says, "Oh no, God does everything. God will do everything and I will do nothing". That is the other side of the same coin - egoism. Some people are vain, full of vanity. They might come and tell you, "Have you got a garland for me today? Put it around my neck". This is one kind of vanity. Then one kind of vanity says, "You know what a nice man I am, what a brilliant man I am". Another kind of vanity says, "Even though I am capable of giving a nice lecture, I do not, because I am very humble". This is another type of the same vanity. "Oh no, I do not like garlanding at all, I do not like this. Leave me alone". The man thinks he is so great that he should not stoop to accept it.

If, filled with egoism, thou thinkest: "I will not fight", vain is this, thy resolve. Nature will compel thee. (XVIII-59)

Again this is the same thing. If you think egotistically, that 'I will not fight', that again is foolishness, it is vanity. This\_ is important as it is perhaps difficult to understand. The pushing man is vain, that is obvious. But the retiring man is perhaps even more vain, more egoistic. You have no right to decide whether you would do or would not do. But as you go on seeking an answer to the question 'who is I?', you will discover that life lives. And let this life live joyously.

How does a wise man live?

'I do nothing at all', thus would the harmonized knower of Truth think - seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing (V-8)

The one who is enlightened will know that life lives in this world. I do not have to push forward nor need I pull back, my business is to remember that God is omnipresent and that His Nature lives here.

Renouncing all actions in Me, with the mind centered in the Self, free from hope and egoism, and from (mental) fever; do thou fight. (III-50)

This is a beautiful expression which is hard to translate. The routine translation is, "Renounce or place all your actions in Me" - which means simply - "Know that My nature alone functions here". God's nature alone functions here. The energy that is part of the divine nature keeps the whole universe in motion. You are not the saviours of this world, you are not even the servants of humanity. You are not philanthropists nor benefactors.

Without you the world will go on as it has gone on for millions of years. What have you and I done to promote happiness, to promote joy, to promote human welfare? So, true non-egoism is not demonstrable, it is the indwelling spirit.

Thy right is to work only, but never to its fruits. Let not the fruits of action be thy motive, nor let thy attachment be to inaction (II-47)

Therefore give up all hope, give up all vain expectations, and live, live, live! The message of the Bhagavad Gita, the gospel of the Bhagavad Gita, is to live, live, live. Live intensely, but totally non-egotistically, non-volitionally. The less the hope, the less the sense of possession or expectation, the greater the energy that is available for us to live. The less the hope, the less the expectation, the greater the delight that we experience in this world. It is strange. The only thing that stops me from enjoying life is the anxiety to enjoy life. The only thing that reduces the value of anything that I get, is the expectation of more. The joy of receiving a gift is in exact inverse proportion to your expectation. If you expected more, less would be painful. If you expected less, that less would be more than you expected. Live, live intensely. Let your role be performed, fulfilled in this world without saying, "I am doing this" or "I am serving humanity" - for once again Krishna insists, he repeats his injunctions - 'Within you is God'.

The Lord dwells (abides) in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His illusive power, to resolve as if mounted on a machine, (XVIII-61)

It is God who dwells in you, it is God's energy which is Nature that functions in you, enabling you to live, enabling you to perform all your actions from day to day. So it is not 'I', it is God who does it and He comes to you in million ways, offering you an opportunity to realize this truth - and this is called life.

Finally; the Bhagavad Gita gives us a beautiful picture. It is a picture and also a ritual but if one enters into the spirit of it, life becomes enriching and ennobling.

The picture is -

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)

It is one of the most sublime verses in the Gita, "O man, treat your whole life as worship". What do I worship? I worship God. But where is this God? That spirit which pervades all, dwells in all, from which all these have come from, from which all beings have emerged, that God who pervades the entire

universe; I worship. What are the articles of my worship? What are the flowers with which I worship this God? Every action that I perform, from moment to moment, throughout the day, that itself is the flower that I offer at the Feet of the omnipresent God. It is a beautiful picture.

And the ritual? I think some of you who have been here on Sunday morning might have noticed a ceremony that is called fire-worship. They kindle the fire in a small pot and pour ghee (clarified butter) and something else into it. Using this symbolism, Krishna repeats his teaching by saying -

Brahman is the clarified butter. By Brahman is the oblation poured into the fire (Brahman). Brahman verily shall be reached by him who always sees Brahman in action. (IV-24)

Brahman here means God. The fire is God, God being omnipresent. And who is pouring the offerings into the fire? Also God, who is omnipresent. "Whatever you pour into the fire is also God." Can you live such a life, feeling that God does everything Himself, with His own energy and intelligence? When this is directly realized, the very next moment one is freed from sorrow, sorrow which comes from expectation, from hope. One is freed from suffering, from pain - and this is called Karma Yoga.

### III

We were discussing what is popularly known as Karma Yoga. It is interesting that, as we become more and more cultured, more and more literate, more and more knowledgeable, that is, as we grow taller and taller, somehow we become more and more shallow. If you watch, observe the natural growth of a tree, you will discover that they are as deeply rooted in the ground as they are tall. And that is why they are able to weather the storms. You find very few trees going to psychiatrists. And indeed they grow, they grow a lot - they live and most of them live to a ripe old age, often two or three hundred years old - and yet they are young and productive. Even when they are dead they are more productive than we are. They have a role to play even in our cremation or burial! For without them we may not be buried or cremated. They are useful even after they die and we are not useful, even when we are alive. This is because the taller they grow, the deeper are their roots. In our case, the taller we grow, the more shallow our life becomes.

One of the immediately noticeable signs of this is our use of language of words. Originally some of these words were intended to convey some meaning. For instance the word gentleman was intended to refer to a man who is gentle and kind, but somehow it has come to mean an arrogant idiot - the more rude he is, the more crude is his behaviour, the greater the respect that he commands. A noble man is supposed to be a warrior, a soldier, someone who can kill without blinking. In the same way we have forgotten what this expression 'Karma Yoga' means. We take it to mean some kind of service, social service, which we somehow regard as unselfish service, Is it possible to elevate our service, our work, to the level of unselfishness or selflessness, unless we know what the self means.

However much I may endeavour, struggle, in this world, to remove this selfishness, I realise very soon that it is selfishness that removes selfishness. When you realise that there is a greater reward somewhere else, you renounce a lesser reward - "I do not mind giving ten rands in charity if you will put my picture and my biography in the paper, saying what a noble person I am". This is advertisement charges. Or, "I am prepared to give up all this if you will glorify my name from every platform in the world. I am prepared to give up even that if you will promise that after living the next few years incognito, I will go to heaven and enjoy celestial divine pleasures forever and ever. This has been our way. Is it possible for us to be totally devoid of motivation, of any motivation whatever? In the words of Jesus, in the words of Krishna, in the words of all noble people, is it possible for us to die, here and now? That is what Swami Sivananda also insisted. He said, "Kill this little 'I', die to live, lead the divine life". How do I die? What happens to ME when I die? Is that

not a wonderful question? 'What happens to ME when I die? If you are worried about what happens to you, how do you die? You have one eye cocked on something which is going to happen after that. Is it possible for me to die and say, "That is it?" Can you watch your own mind and see what happens to you now? After death what happens to me? Then how does 'me' die? As someone said to me a few months ago, "We want to go to heaven but we do not want to die". But without dying you cannot go to heaven. Do you see the problem? We associate unselfish service with Karma Yoga, but we have not even found out what the self is. How do I perform unselfish service if I do not know what the self means? If all the time I am trapped in this selfishness, whichever way I turn, then what is unselfish service? This is one aspect.

Now, the other aspect. We go back to these two words 'Karma Yoga'. Karma means action - but all work is not yoga. You can make work yoga, yoga can make any work yoga. But what is yoga? Yoga is reunion. Can I find out what it is that has to be brought together with what? What is it that has to be healed? A division that is taken place has to be canceled and a reunion brought about - and that has to be done in active daily living. And that is Karma Yoga. Karma Yoga therefore is not only some kind of unselfish social service, however great and glorious it may be. It is action, every action performed in the spirit of yoga. When an internal division that creates the self or egoism is transcended or healed - the action that proceeds from that spirit is called Karma Yoga. And therefore it is not any different from any other aspect of yoga which we may discuss.

We have seen that Krishna has given us a beautiful picture, a symbolic ritual, to remind us of the spirit of Karma Yoga - that I perform all actions as acts of worship, that I perform all actions remembering the doer, and that the action itself and the person or the environment towards which it is directed, all these are one indivisible being which is called God.

There is one chapter which is entitled Bhakti Yoga, the yoga of love. That chapter on Bhakti Yoga also contains the word karma.

But these who worship Me, renouncing all actions in Me, regarding Me as the supreme goal, meditating on Me with single-minded Yoga (XII-6).

This is quoted from the chapter on Bhakti Yoga. But we also get Karma Yoga and Dhyana or meditation from it. These are not separate parts, each one distinct and different from the other, one superior or inferior to the other, so that we can go about saying, "I am a bhakta, I am superior, I worship the supreme God." There is one God and one God is enough I think. Why should we bring in superiority and inferiority, and even in the case of God, superior God, lesser God, good God, bad God? If he is bad, why do you call him God? Why do you call him 'my' God, 'your' God. Because we are not interested in



God, we are not interested in religion, we are not interested in a truly enlightened life. Our own quarrels, our own fights and our own selfishness, greed, desire to dominate others, our aggression - all these we extend to cover whatever we touch. It is dreadful. Whatever it is, I must be first, I must be the most successful, I must be the superior person. And this means that you must be inferior! Otherwise there is no superiority. It is a dreadful feeling, and yet we extend it to cover whatever we touch - my religion is superior to yours, my God is superior to yours, my scripture is superior to yours, my commentary is superior to yours. It is terrible. It is good to realise that in yoga there are no superior yoga or inferior yoga. Yoga means harmony, yoga means getting together, bringing together. For heaven's sake, let us not create trouble here - then we will be left with nothing else. Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth and if the salt loses its savor, how will you savor that?"

Anyone who practices yoga will very soon discover that the spirit unfolds and expands, every aspect of yoga that is described in the Bhagavad Gita will be found in him. This is automatic if one is sincere, earnest, serious. Such is bhakti, such is devotion, such is love of God - not ringing a bell and waving a lamp and praying, "O God, be pleased with me", or "God, please can I have freedom from this headache for a while." He might ask, "What for? I have given it to you, have it for a little while." We treat God as some kind of domestic servant, nurse, doctor, anything but God. No wonder this God does not appear anywhere near us. If God happens to enter this hall now, you know what we will do? We might trample each other to death first of all (it is an accident), and so tear him to pieces. We might say, "God, what have you got for me?" For me, not the others. Why is this 'me' so important? This is what we call devotion and if you carefully observe this, you will see that here again, having failed miserably to love one another in this world, we are extending the same miserable connotation of the word love, to cover God. We cannot live together - friends, brothers, sisters, husband, wife, parents, children, without preying upon one another, without crushing one another, without demanding all sorts of things from one another. And the same thing we extend to God, that this God must do what I ask him to do. If this God answers all my prayers, then I call him God. If he fails to answer, then our faith is shaken, something happens in us, something becomes sour.

How deep rooted this expectation is, I saw in the case of a wonderful man - please do not let me give you the idea that I am criticizing this wonderful ascetic in the Himalayas. He had given up a prosperous career and a lot of wealth and so on. He became an ascetic and came to live in Rishikesh, near the Master's ashram. I had the good fortune to visit him a few times. In his house, his room, there was nothing and he did not even own his room. Even in winter he did not wear any warm clothing, nothing at all. He wore one piece of cloth around his waist and one around his shoulders, that is all, and

he had a begging bowl. He was a very good devotee. All of us have to go and when that time comes, the body, that is made of food, has to undergo some change, some degenerative change - sometimes called cancer. This man had cancer of the throat. He refused to leave Rishikesh even for medical treatment. I used to go and visit him and give him some medicine. There was no hope for his recovery. I think it was on the penultimate day - the day before he passed on - that we went to his room. He was rolling in pain, almost unconscious. We heard him say, and it was almost like a complaint to God, "God, I renounced the world, I undertook this ascetic life for you. Look what you have done to me." This is not strange. For instance, Jesus Christ is supposed to have said something like this, "Lord, why hast thou forsaken me?" This is so deep rooted in us all that, if I love you, I expect you to answer my prayers, to reciprocate my love and affection. I love you and I expect you to do something in return. Thus the division is perpetuated - the division between you, me, God, or me and someone else. As long as that self, that 'me' remains, there is no love.

"I love you" is an absurd thing, it is a contract. I wonder if you have looked at the word contract? 'Contract' has got two pronunciations, two different meanings. Contract is something which you and I sign. It also means to become smaller. So every time you sign a contract, please remember that your heart is becoming a bit smaller. If it is a marriage contract, it is worse! The marriage itself is contracted already. When we vow that you and I have become one, two bodies in one soul, already the heart is contracted, smaller. When you sign an agreement, that signature already suggests that there is a dis-agreement already inside; otherwise why do you want to sign it? If you and I agree, we agree; but if there is a suspicion that something may go wrong later, then that means that there is the seed of disagreement there already. 'I love you' is a contract ... it contracts our hearts, destroys our being. Love is not a duality relationship at all - love is oneness. If it is not oneness, then call it something else and realise that I do not have this love. Once I allow myself the arrogance of calling this mutual kind of relationship 'love', then I am going to extend it to the love of God. "God give me this. God give me that."

In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna turns a blind eye on that.

Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me, O Arjuna, and they are the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth, and the wise (VII-16)

People go to God, worship God, that is - they go to temples and churches and so on, motivated by these four reasons. One of them is artha: one has some aches and pains, "I have seen all the doctors, God, all of them. I have given up hope. What about you?" God might come and say, "I have not given up hope - you will come to me very soon." When we are in pain, in distress, we go to

church and pray there - that is not love, that is not devotion. But why not call it devotion? Arthartha is one who wants wealth - he tried to make a living and failed; he is depressed and therefore nobody wants to hire him. So he does to God, "Oh God, can you help me?" So, one who wants wealth and prosperity goes to church or the temple, prays and indulges in all kinds of practices - and these are known as bhakti, devotion, love of God. Students, seekers of knowledge, the curious, jijnasu, the one who is about to write a thesis for his or her doctorate in Bhakti Yoga. Now this person too wants to know what Bhakti Yoga is and what it involves. They say "I am conducting a research in Bhakti Yoga, can you jump and dance and sing God's Name for me so that I can measure your pulse and your heart rate?" They are devotees in a way too, are they not? They are interested in devotion, they pay some kind of left handed compliment to devotion - this is alright too. Such is the magnanimity of the Bhagavad Gita that even these people aren't not looked down upon, they are patted on the back and encouraged to go on. Go on, never mind. If these baser motivations can make you kneel, form and pray, then go on, you are not lost. The other one, the jnani, is the wise man, the person who knows. All these people are good - those who worship God for the removal of their sufferings, those who worship God for wealth and prosperity - and people who worship God to gain mere understanding. But the 'jnani-va naiva me matam' (VII-18) is a beautiful phrase. It means, "The man who loves God does and not ask why - that person is myself". That person is God himself, he has solved the problem of division. In his case no question such as, "Why do I worship God, why do I love God?" arises.

In human relationships it is the same. 'I love you' is alright to begin with. After all I have to use some expression. But if, while I say 'I love you', somewhere within me a little monkey jumps up and suggests, 'because ...', then there is no love. If I suggest that I love you because you did something nice to me, that you pleased me, then that is not love, it is business. There is no love in it at all because there is division, and division is perpetuated by this kind of motivation.

Hence Bhakti Yoga, the love of God, is to live in the spirit of oneness.

In the case of these devotees of God, lovers of God (it is a lovely expression), 'They worship Me, but they worship me feeling I am non-different from them'. This is another puzzling statement and it seems to be one of Krishna's favourites, it occurs again and again in the Gita.

May your whole being be so saturated with God consciousness that your actions are God-oriented, your feelings are God-oriented, and your thoughts are God-oriented. This means that you are the living expression of God's omnipresence, and this means that there is no selfishness at all. The self has completely vanished. What is, is but a cell in the body of God.

What I have called the self so far, that which has expressed itself as an individual, independent of the totality, has ceased to regard itself as independent - it has not ceased to be, it cannot cease to be, a cell in the cosmic body of God cannot cease to be. It used to entertain the notion that it was an independent individual, different from the totality of existence and now, that notion has been dropped. That is all. I do not cease to be, I does not cease to be, I does not cease to work, I does not cease to live, I does not cease to function in the way I is meant to function. There is no change at all in any of these. But everything has changed with the giving up of the notions that I am an independent being - that it is me versus the others or me versus God or that you and I are opposed to one another and that, in order to gain protection from you I have to resort to God - this is a dreadful mentality. It is not love and it is not God. There is no love in it, there is no God in it, and therefore it is not Bhakti Yoga.

As long as this division is perpetuated there is no love and there is no love of God. I must adore God, feeling that I am non-different from God. Ananya yoga also means that I am non-different from the totality. I am saturated with this realisation. It is not a notion any more, it is a direct realisation, you 'know' that this is the truth. Upasata means worship and 'sitting near' - such a person sits near to God, close to God. In the words of Jesus Christ - such a person sits on the right hand of God. Who is God? God is the omnipresence and therefore you sit on the right hand of every being in this world. That you are on the right side of every being in the world - that is called love. Can I be on the right side of every person? Then I am practising Bhakti Yoga. Then I realise that this Bhakti Yoga is not merely jumping up and down with a few clappers. That is good, wonderful. Our Master, Swami Sivananda used to love singing Hare Rama and dancing. He used to do that for the whole night sometimes. He did not have any specialities. Some days it used to be 'Om Namah Shivaya' the whole night, some days it used to be 'Om Shakti Om', that was his uniqueness. He did not create a division even there. On some special days he would sing 'Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya', sometimes 'Sri Ram Jaya Ram', 'Om Jesus, Om Christ'. Every morning he would repeat the formula 'Banami Khuha', a muslim salutation. He used religion, not to divide, but to bring us together.

Merely singing and dancing is not Bhakti Yoga, it is not yoga at all - loud singing is good for your throat, it improves your voice. Loud singing incidentally, especially if it is rhythmic, also produces a tremendous amount of energy and enables you to overcome fatigue. All this is wonderful but watch and see if this ananya yoga is there - watch and see if, at the same time as this, I am getting closer to God, if the gap, the division is getting smaller and smaller, weaker and weaker. If I see that the division is getting stronger and stronger, wider and wider, then there is something wrong.

See the previous sanskrit quotation from the Bhagavad Gita, chapter XII verse 8. They are the people, the devotees, the lovers of God, who have entered their consciousness, their mind into God. It is a tremendously important expression to remember. Perhaps many of you practise meditation in some form or other, adopting one technique or another. Perhaps you meditate and focus your attention on something. As you do this, can you see the division in your own mind? "I am aware of an image of God, or the presence of God, within me. I am aware of the repetition of the mantra in me, I am aware of the sound of the mantra within me". Can you become aware of this? Then, as I am aware of the repetition of the mantra in me, as I am aware of the presence of God within me, my attention is directed towards that focal point. Is it possible for me at the same time to watch, to see when the attention is directed towards that focal point. Can I see that there is a sort of channel, a communication channel between the observer and the observed? A neat little channel through which the mental energy, called attention flows? Now listen carefully. Can you also discover how the mind, the attention which has been focused on this focal point, suddenly jumps out of your body as it were, and thinks of something else? The ego is capable of doing this.

This is how the ego is born. There is just one being, one cosmic being, and in that being ceaseless motion takes place, on a cosmic scale. Every atom of existence is vibrant, nothing is static. If some things seems to be static, it is only from a relative point of view, otherwise everything is vibrant. In accordance with that cosmic principle, that which is sitting here now is also vibrating, and that vibration is called speech. While all this is happening, something gets up and says, 'I am talking'. This is the secret. Why should we suggest to ourselves that all our actions are worship of God who is omnipresent? Why should I love God in a spirit of unity and oneness? Because only then is it possible to cancel out the rising of the ego. The ego cannot stop itself from rising, but it is possible to work the whole thing in such a way that I detect the rising of the ego, that I realise that all my thoughts take place within God, all my actions take place within God, within this omnipresent reality. Do not say, "Ah, yes, I've got it! Now God, I am perfectly ego-less, when are you are going to appear in front of me?" God laughs and says, "I thought you were rid of your ego." Why must I liberate you and not somebody else? Even that liberation must happen to 'me' and not to you. Do not say, "When God comes along, I must be at the head of the queue - not somewhere else. I must be some favourite person, some special person".

Krishna says, "Enter your consciousness into Me". "Enter your whole mind and heart into Me so that ... " - but there is no sequel to this. This itself is a complete action, it is final and full action. In order that the heart of the devotee may not be tainted even by the desire for liberation, Krishna tells us in the Bhagavad Gita:

Those whose minds are set on Me, O Arjuna, verily, I become ere long the saviour of the ocean of samsara (XII-7)

"They do not kick themselves out of their own skins, I liberate them." That is - my business is to knock and wait, and God, God alone, can free me from bondage. When mature love manifest itself in the heart of each one of us, it is then we become devotees, bhaktas, lovers of God.

This is the essence of Bhakti Yoga. But this does not mean that all other devotional practices such as worship, prayer, repetition of God's Name, doing japa, and so on, are inferior. But it does mean that whatever be the practice we adopt in life, the spirit must manifest itself somehow or other. Krishna himself exalts the aspect of bhakti, called japa. "Among so many forms of worship, I am the repetition of the mantra". At another place Krishna says:

Whoever offers Me with devotion and a pure mind, a leaf, a flower, a fruit or a little water, I accept (IX-26)

Whatever you give, it does not matter - even if you offer a flower to God, a leaf, a bit of water - all that is accepted if the offer is made in the spirit of love.

Whatsoever form any devotee desires to worship with faith - that faith of his I make firm and unflinching (VII-21)

You can adopt any method you like, worship anything you like, because the omnipresence fills everything that you want to worship. This is freedom, freedom of worship and freedom of the mode of worship, freedom of the spirit of worship. This freedom is there as long as there is love and that love is total, that it is a love that does not ask, does not beg and does not expect.

Here is a little story to illustrate what we have been saying. Krishna, the teacher in the Bhagavad Gita, was married to quite a few girls. It is said, and in addition to them, he had a circle of devotees, lovers. Among them was one called Radha. She was supposed to have been a very special person, a very special devotee of Krishna, a great lover of Krishna. If you go to India, you will hear thousands of stories to illustrate the love that Krishna had for Radha and that Radha had for Krishna. This is one of the stories. As usual there was some jealousy among the girl-devotees of Krishna. Many of these girls felt, we are devoted to him, we serve him, we wash his clothes and we give him his food. We do all sorts of service for him and we adore him - but Krishna has a special corner in his heart for Radha. Krishna wanted to prove to them that Radha was a special person, but his love was not partial. One day he rolled from his bed in agony, crying, "There is a pain in my stomach, dreadful colic". Everyone rushed around, one got a doctor, one brought someone else, and so on. Soon everyone was at Krishna's bedside. One person tried one thing and

another person tried something else, but nothing was of any use. Then an old wise woman stopped the whole ceremony. She turned to Krishna and said, "You are God, don't you know what will cure you?" Krishna answered, "Yes I do know what will get rid of this colic". She said, "Please tell us, we will do anything for you". Krishna said: "There is only one thing that will cure me and that is that one of my devotees must come here, allow me to bathe his or her feet and then I must drink that water. That is the only thing that will cure me". Each looked at the other and said to him, "But my Lord, you are God, you are our husband, you are our elder. No, no, I cannot do it. If I do it I will go to hell". One by one they refused and ran away saying, "How could I allow you to wash my feet and then drink the water? Impossible, terrible". Krishna then suggested to the old woman, "See if Radha is around, perhaps she will help me". Meanwhile, Radha had heard about Krishna's colic. She came running up to Krishna and asked, "What is going on? Krishna is in pain, what does he want, what must I do?" Again the answer came, "There is only one remedy, he says he must worship the devotee's feet and then drink that water - only then will he be alright. But that is a terrible sin, we will go to hell if we do it". Radha pushed the other girls aside and said, "Hell? Well I am prepared to go anywhere. Bring some water. Come on Krishna". She put her feet on the bed and said, "Wash them and drink the water. All I want is that you should get well. Hell can come later on!" But Krishna did not have to do that. He laughed and said, "That is all I wanted to do, merely to demonstrate that my devotee is not even afraid to go to hell, knowing that God is omnipresent".

If God is omnipresent, he must be there - in hell, also. What is so terrible about going to hell? Hell is nothing more than shell - when you are imprisoned in your own ideology, when you are imprisoned in your own concept, in your own mind, in your own thoughts, in your own self, then that shell is hell. There is no hell other than this shell and when I can break out of this shell, I am free. No, I am not free at all, God is free, God is omnipresent - whatever I do is done by him, by his own energy, for his own sake.

## IV

We were discussing what is commonly considered as bhakti or devotion, love of God. I do not know if we can clearly understand this, define it, describe it, God being omnipresent, or that which is omnipresent being called God, that which is infinite being called God by the finite mind. How does one who is finite, love the infinite? We talk of self-surrender; this is a common word. "I must surrender myself to God." Again, this is a problem. I do not know what I am, what my self is. How do I surrender myself to God. When I why I meditate on God, again there is some problem. I do not know who 'I' is, I do not know what love is, I do not know what devotion is. We have made nice little cliches with these words, these concepts, notions, ideas and thoughts. Unless we understand thought and how it arises, it is a tricky thing to think 'I love', to think 'I see', to think 'I know'. One must understand thought and its limitations. And understanding thought by thought is another futile process - thought does not understand thought. Thought thinks it understands thought, that is all. Just as thought thinks a hundred things, so I can go on thinking I see God, I can go on thinking I see you all as my own self. But, if I am able to watch my own life, sincerely and seriously, I realise I fail a million times. Because I only think I think, I only think that I know, I only think that I love. So too, I think I love what I think is God. It is a very clever way, terribly clever.

This afternoon we had a discussion and while we were having lunch somebody pointed to a piece of bread and remarked, "If I think that is poison and if I eat it, I shall get sick immediately". You will not, unless you understand what thinking means. This is the problem with the wonderful theory called positive thinking. Yet we do not even know what thinking is. I suggested something which might make some sense. I look at that bread and tell myself it is not bread, it is poison. It may be true that bread does not agree with me but even then, it is unlikely that if I ate it, it would make me seriously sick. But, and here is a drama which you must listen to carefully, and enact within yourself. Just before I came in for lunch, one of my friends informed me that one of my friends - Mr so-and-so, is so mad with me that he wants to poison me, kill me. Nothing else is said, no other hint. Then we sit down and get ready to eat lunch and someone remarks to my hostess, "You know this bread was sent by Mr So-and-so, and he said that Swamiji would like it very much, and he must have it". I only heard two possibly unrelated statements. One, that Mr So-and-so wants to poison me, and secondly that the bread come from Mr So-and-so, specially brought for me. That is it, I would never touch the bread at all. Then, if I eat it I shall get sick, a thought happens within me - it is not something which is applied, you cannot pick it up somewhere and push it into yourself. Only when your whole being becomes aware of something, then thought arises. A thought has to happen, it has to arise deep within me. Until I understand this, nothing makes sense, not



positive thinking, not meditation, not contemplation, not prayer, not bhakti, not love, nothing.

That is why we do not have even that fundamental devotion for God that we are supposed to have when we visit the temple or church or participate in a ceremony. It is still a vague belief. True faith in God, in the neighbour or in X,Y or Z is impossible until we have even a veiled experience. When I have some experience of the Grace of God, or the presence of God - then the whole being trembles because of that devotion, that thought, that feeling, that faith, that comes from within. Without knowing what thought is, we have been trying to apply it again as cosmetics. Even in yoga and in religion this cosmetic rules. It is applied from outside. The whole inside is so hollow that nothing works - and that is the reason why, even though day in and day out though we repeat these prayers, "Oh admirable Lord of mercy and love, you are omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient", it does not shatter our ignorance.

Incidentally this is the reason why the oriental sages insisted that the heart should be purified and prepared by self-discipline for meditation, 'for contemplation, for love, for devotion to God (all these are the same) or for unselfishness, for self-realization, for God-realisation. It is not as though God is unreal and that I have to realise God. No. God is eternally real! It is not as though the self is unreal and I must do something to realise the self. Krishna makes this very plain in this chapter on meditation that we are going to discuss. Why do you practice meditation or yoga. - atma suddhaye?"

There, having made the mind one-pointed, with the actions of the chitta (the subconscious mind) and the senses controlled, let him, seated on the seat, practise yoga for the purification of the self. (VI-12)

"For purifying yourself, for self-purification". When you hold a dirty mirror in front of you, you find your face is absent. Someone points out that the mirror is dirty, that there is a film of dust on it. You take a tissue and wipe the mirror clean - suddenly your face is seen there, it suddenly appears. It did not jump in, it did not come in from the outside. It was there all the time, but the film of dust had veiled it. The face was real, the mirror was real, but no reflection could take place because of the dust. When the dust, the veil of ignorance is removed, the self shines, God shines. I do not have to bring God into my heart, he is there already. I must look within and see what is dirty, what is so filthy. Krishna while discussing what is known as love of God, bhakti, insisted: "Enter your heart in Me". It is not as though my mind or my heart is not in the cosmic being, but it has enclosed itself in its own shell of ignorance - which is hell. 'Entering the heart into Me' only means breaking the shell, breaking the veil. The moment the shell is broken, the heart has 'entered into Me', entered into God.

Whereas the twelfth chapter is considered to be a chapter on devotion, yet we see how Krishna deals with right action in it. It is important to remember - this right action is not something which someone says is right, it is action done in the right spirit. In the same chapter Krishna insists that one must enter the mind into God - and this is meditation. He even says:

If thou art unable to fix thy mind steadily on Me, then by the yoga of constant practice do thou seek to reach Me, O Arjuna. (XII-9)

"If you cannot hold your mind steadily on Me" - feeling the omnipresence of God constantly - then you can resort to all kinds of practices". You can resort to any practice, for any practice is as good as any other if you are serious, if you are sincere, if you are earnest, and if you feel that at this moment it is not possible to enter deeply into meditation, that it is not possible for me to enter my whole heart, my whole personality, my whole being, into God.

However there are some obstacles here, physical obstacles, mental obstacles, psychological obstacles - and in order to overcome them I have to adopt practices like yoga asanas. Each time you sit for meditation you find that the body becomes restless within ten minutes. What do you do? Practice some asanas. If your mind becomes restless and your nerves are not strong, practice some pranayama; if your mind becomes dull, sing, chant, sing hymns of any kind, clap your hands, raise your energy. Keep on performing these exercises, inwardly wishing, hoping, to attain God-realisation. All this is good, but when the mind becomes steady and you are able to realise, to feel, to know God's omnipresence, then you are in meditation. You do not have to call it God, you can call it anything you like - G-O-D - this is just like A-B-C - both are pictures and man needs an audiovisual aid in modern language. If you think you need these audiovisual aids, then use them; if you do not need them, discard them, it is up to you.

Whatsoever form any devotee desires to worship, with faith - that faith of his I make firm and unflinching. (VII.21) .

This is one of the greatest and most interesting statements in the Bhagavad Gita. "Please choose what your heart likes". In the Yoga Sutras also the same thought is reflected. The author, Patanjali gives a few hints on what objects to choose for meditation. He says, do this, do that, get hold of this, get hold of that - yatha abhimata dhyanad va - or do what you like. If my heart is not there, if my mind is not there, then it is impossible for me to focus my attention on it. As long as the mind and heart are harmonized within themselves and the whole being realises God's omnipresence - the omnipresence of being, of cosmic consciousness, of Buddha or of Christ - or pure omnipresence - then we are free.

Dhyana, which we translate as meditation, occurs in two completely different contexts in the Bhagavad Gita. It is brought in here so that we may not make a concept, image or routine technique out of meditation. We must understand what meditation means. Here is the first aspect:

When a man thinks of the objects, attachment for them arises. From attachment desire is born. From desire, anger arises. From anger comes delusion. From delusion loss of memory. From loss of memory the destruction of discrimination. From destruction of discrimination, he perishes. (II-62,63)

This is called anartha parampara, which means "the family tree of destruction". Self-destruction also starts with dhyana, meditation, contemplation. Not only self-realisation but self-destruction also starts with contemplation, meditation. The meditation which leads to self-destruction starts with contemplation on objects of pleasure. One need not be in the presence of temptation - and that is why people pray 'lead me not into temptation'. It may not be in front of me and yet I can still think of it, see it in my mind. Having seen it in my mind, I shall make a beeline for it unless you help me. This thought of an object of pleasure is also contemplation.

If you have ever been subjected to a serious temptation, you will immediately understand what dhyana means - it is the bluntest truth. Unfortunately we do not have the presence of mind 'at that time' - which is what presence of mind means, to observe, to see what the state of mind is when it is subjected to a terrible temptation, when one walks as if hypnotized to where the object or attraction is. That is called meditation. Meditation leads you to self-destruction and not to self-realisation or self-knowledge. Because of the fact that most of you have not noticed it, the power with which this thing grips you, shows that at the time, something which would have illumined the whole of your inside, was somehow veiled; the power was cut; the light was off. Whilst a person is subject to this kind of temptation, when the mind is in a turmoil because of the thought of pleasure, there is a craving for pleasure and that craving for pleasure is so intense that it occupies your whole mind, your whole heart, your entire being. If I can be aware of that, even for a split second, I have made a most tremendous discovery.

In Indian legends there are quite a number of stories where the most vicious person (only the most vicious person) attains immediate self-realisation, God-realisation. Krishna mentions this too:

Even if the worst sinner worships Me, with devotion to none else, he too should be regarded as righteous, for he has rightly resolved. Soon he becomes

righteous and attains eternal peace. O Arjuna, know thou for certain that my devotee is never destroyed. (IX-30,31)

"Even the worst sinner, if he comes to Me, towards Me, is redeemed already".

Even if thou art the most sinful of all sinners, yet thou shalt verily cross all sins by the raft of knowledge. (IV-36)

There is a lovely story and I will relate one incident out of it. There was a man who was so terribly fond of a prostitute that eventually she got fed up with him. One day the prostitute turned to him and said, "If only you had devotion to God, one hundredth part of the love you love for me, you could have been redeemed long ago!" He bowed to her and said, "Thank you very much, you are my guru". It is said that immediately after this he saw God - because of the intensity of his feelings. Intensity either of love or hate is intensity all the same. Intensity of hate only needs a little twist, a little turn, a touch on the steering and you swing one hundred and eighty degrees. In our case we are so good that we have no intensity at all - we have some kind of luke-warm faith in God on Sunday mornings, and some sort of faith in the bottle-store on Friday nights.

When a person contemplates, thinks, meditates on an object of pleasure, a contact has been established. Then your whole psychic energy is flooding in one good stream towards that object of pleasure and you are not even in possession of yourself. That is the only difference. Contact means division - that I am different from the object of pleasure - I love him, I love her, I love it - there is a division and this is like a rubber band - when it is stretched, the tension increases. Now, you are thinking of the object of pleasure, which is away from you and there is tension. You think the tension will end only when you possess the object of pleasure. There is desire and this is one side of the coin - but no coin has been invented with only one side. Every coin has a second side - but this is something we always forget. We want pleasure, but we do not want to see the other side - pain and suffering. On the other side of desire we have kama and krodha - anger and frustration. A desire may be satisfied now and repeatedly satisfied during the next few years, but then the time must come when somebody interferes, then the satisfaction of that pleasure becomes impossible. This is when frustration starts, the mind is in a tremendous state of confusion and you do not know whether you are coming or going. Next comes absence of memory, total absence of memory. You do not know what is right and what is wrong, you do not know what your name is, what your status is. Nothing, absolutely nothing. One does not even remember one is a human being. I know what is good but when I am overcome with desire, I do not know what is good and what is wrong. The intelligence, normally awake in a human being - the buddhi, is switched off. Then there is self destruction, then there is meditation.

Therefore we see that dhyana is not restricted to certain religious practices, but it is whole-souled, total devotion, it is a totally harmonised being. And that totally harmonised being flows in one direction. If it flows externally there is no self-knowledge. But you may become very efficient in your work, you may become a business tycoon, you may earn a lot of money and get more frustrated, or you may become a tyrant, which means that you are a wonderful organizer. All these are possible, but self-knowledge is not possible. Sooner or later the momentum is lost because there is a hollow inside, a vacuum and that prevents the momentum from giving strength - as forcibly as you wish to project yourself outside, with the same force you are creating a vacuum inside, and this force is soon lost. This is why you find people in life who are hollow inside, people who have no depth - like the tree that grows tall without growing deep roots - so we find these people collapse easily. It is a nine days wonder - then it becomes a blunder for all time to come.

The other type of dhyana is introversion. Here the attention is not focused outside, the flow is not external but internal. In order to do this I must understand the inner hierarchy. I open my eyes and they are seeing you. I do not know that I have eyes because the moment the eyes are open they see something external. I only become aware of the external world, that I know exists. Normally we take no thought at all for what we are, all our attention is directed to the outside world.

From here on one has to be careful. Is that a bad thing? It is not. If the inner being is full of love, full of compassion, full of godliness, full of light, full of divinity, then you can be as aware of as much outside as possible, because then you are radiating that love, that unselfishness. But when you do not know what that self is, when all that you do know is that you want someone to scratch your back or that you want as many people as possible to scratch your back, then all I am aware of is that I am craving for pleasure, craving for power, for wealth, for some kind of psychological satisfaction all the time. When such a person directs his attention outside himself, he is a menace. These are the people who will come running up to you, saying that meditation is selfishness. On the contrary, the meditator has the opportunity to come face to face with the self and then to tackle selfishness, there, at its very root. Whereas the man who pretends to be a great social worker may be nothing more than a busybody collecting compliments, engaged in self advertisement and the worst form of selfish activity. Let us clear this up first. To be constantly aware of the external world is neither good nor bad, it depends entirely upon whether I am full of love, full of joy, full of peace, full of happiness, full of harmony. So it is that the yogi, sitting for meditation, is not becoming more selfish or self-centered - he is trying to discover where selfishness exists, where it springs from. Where does this craving for pleasure, for prestige, for

honour, for domination arise? Naturally therefore a person who is truly meditating becomes less aggressive, less arrogant; he becomes sweeter, humbler, more loving, unselfish and affectionate, he becomes more and more good.

Therefore one should understand the hierarchy of the inner eyes, the nose, the ears. I become aware of the world through the senses - through the eyes, the nose, the ears.

They say that the senses are superior. Superior to the senses is the mind. Superior to the mind is the intellect. One who is superior even to the intellect is the Self (III-42)

And these senses are tremendously powerful. Anyone who has tried to restrain them, control them, or give them a better direction, knows what power they are filled with. Still, the mind is more powerful than they are, because the eyes function, the ears function - only because of the mind. If I am in a state of deep coma, my eyes may be wide open but I see nothing. If the mind is paralysed for one reason or another, the eyes are open, the ears are open, but they do not function at all. The buddhi, the awakened intelligence, the intelligence in me that is awake is therefore able to direct the mind what to think, what not to think, how to estimate and how to judge, how to discriminate what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil. That awakened intelligence is superior even to the mind because the mind functions at the behest of this intelligence. Even beyond this intelligence then, is something - just as, in that lamp, though the tube appears to shine, yet there is something else which shines, the electric current within it is the real shining agency, the tube being the external instrument. Even so, what is known as the buddhi is so powerful that it is beyond the mind, beyond the senses, everything. And that which is beyond the buddhi, that is the light, the inner light. It is because that inner light shines that the buddhi shines.

You have heard this expression, 'the inner light', so often. Have you ever thought about this inner light. If you have, you might think of it as a nice little fluorescent lamp within you. Can I make this clear? It is not my invention, it is in one of the Upanishads - the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad. I will tell you one of the stories. There was a great sage called Yajnavalkya who was having a debate. The other sage asked him, "What is the light which enables you to see?" "The sun". "And when the sun has set, what is the light that enables you to see?" "The moon". "And when the sun and the moon have set, what is it that makes you to see?" "The stars". "And when the sun and the moon have set and the stars do not shine, what is it that enables you to see?" "Fire, a lamp". "And when the fire has also gone out? And you are walking in the forest and the lamp goes out - what do you do?" "You talk to one another - 'speech' - that is the light".

Let us take for example, a fairly long tunnel. You have to go through that tunnel. You are standing on this side of the tunnel, you look around, you can see everything. Why? Because there is light and you have sight. When these two come together, there is vision.

Either you were born with what you have been seeing on this side, or you want to run away from it, you want to see what it is on the other side. You have seen what is on this side, it is finished, you do not want it any more - now you want to know what is on the other side of the tunnel. Then what must you do? Enter the tunnel. "It is dark, I can see nothing" - what a marvelous expression. We have all said this, "I can see nothing". You must be a super God to see what is nothing! You decide to enter the tunnel, to go through it and not to turn back. It is absolutely dark and yet you go on waking. I wonder if at some stage you will ask yourself the question, "Heavens, it is as dark that I cannot even look at my own foot and yet I know which is my right foot and which is my left. How?" It is pitch dark, it is midnight, it is dark in the tunnel, and yet I know that I am, I know that I am alive, I know I am walking, and that I am walking forwards not backwards. How do you know, in the darkness, that you are walking forwards and not backwards? As you ask yourself this question, suddenly you realise it is not dark at all, and that it is true that you are able to see in the darkness.

There is an inner light, a light within you. When you apply this same thing to what is called sleep, you realise what they may refer to, allude to, when they mention these two words 'inner light'. I see. I see the world now, as it is. I see all of you. Even if I go to sleep here, I may probably continue to dream that I am talking - for a little while. My consciousness is getting narrower and narrower and I enter the tunnel called sleep. It is like a tunnel. But even when you are asleep there is something in you which is awake. What is that? It is because that something is still awake that you are able to wake up next morning. Otherwise you would not wake up. That inner light shines constantly and it is because it shines that everything else shines. The discovery, the direct knowledge of this inner light - but not as an object, is called meditation.

In the Bhagavad Gita there are wonderful descriptions of the techniques of meditation. I am sure most of you are familiar with this quotation:

Let the yogi try constantly to keep the mind steady, remaining in solitude, alone, with the mind and the self controlled, free from hope and greed (VI-10)

The yogi must sit alone, not in company, not for the purpose of demonstration. Demonstration is indulged in by one who measures up to the first five letters of that word. Only a demon is interested in demonstration.

One who really wishes to meditate would retire to his own solitude, because this is an intensely private and personal affair which you do not want to parade in public, and at least for the time being, one would have no contact with the outside world. Then the attention begins to flow inwards.

In a clean spot, having established a firm seat of his own, neither too high nor too low, made of cloth, a skin and kusa-grass, one over the other (VI-11)

So first find a nice place, a pure place, a clean place, a place which your mind and your heart associate with the religious practices, spiritual practices, or God. As soon as you go in there the mind gets into that mood. Sit on something firm, otherwise you will be adjusting your seat all the time. Do not sit too high because if you start nodding, you will fall. If you sit on the floor then there is no such problem. Do not sit on the ground as there may be some worms, germs, bugs or other insects. Arrange a seat for yourself.

There, having made the mind one-pointed, with the actions of the chitta (the subconscious mind) and the senses controlled, let him, seated on the seat, practice yoga for the purification of the self. (VI-12)

Now concentrate the mind. Let all the rays of the mind be gathered together and focused on yourself. This is the first step - concentration. Take any form, any object, any concept, but let the vision, the perception of the object exist in you. I may use a picture of Krishna or Christ or Buddha, but, as I keep looking at that figure, or at the sunrise, I ask myself, "where do I see this?" The thing may be outside. But where do I see it inside me? And, therefore, can I become aware of the image that I see inside me? At the same time I can repeat a mantra, that is up to me.

Now, if you will follow this carefully, it may become clear. I am repeating a mantra, the Name of God, a short prayer and I see something which is outside and which I realise is reflected in me, in my mind. I do not know what it is, but I do see it inside me. Then I ask myself what it is. I am seeing a statue, a picture or an image in me - but there is no image in me. There is - there is not, but I can see it there. One has to have the curiosity of a child; if you have a serious curiosity then the attention is easy to focus. Otherwise the attention wanders away. If the mind answers quickly, "Oh, it is just imagination, a mental hallucination", these are words which have no meaning at all. I am seeing it inside me! What is it? And if there is serious curiosity, then the rays of the mind, the attention are focused more easily. When the rays of the mind are focused on to this thing which you see within yourself, there is intense concentration of energy, intense concentration of attention and light - therefore there is a total black-out around this, the field of observation. The field of attention narrows and so the energy that flows becomes terribly



intense - like when you hold a magnifying glass in sunlight and focus it on a piece of cotton.

Now, where are we? I am still asking the question, "where is this image that I am seeing within myself?" That again can, at best, give me a vague idea of how thought arises, how a thought exists in the mind. I want to think this thought, it is also a thought. The image of God, the image of Christ, the image of Krishna or whatever it is which I am observing, is also a thought. But I want to think that thought in order that the attention may be focused on it.

Then our friend Krishna suddenly turns around and says:

Having made the mind established itself in the self, let him not think of anything. (VI-25)

Focus all your attention on it and do not think, "That is a bit of a tall order". Do not think, "Now do I know what to think". Is it alright if I sit down and say, "I do not think, I do not think?" Or if I say, "I will not think, I will not think?" Then I am only thinking. I will not think. It is a very beautiful suggestion. Here I am watching this image that I see in myself - it is still an object and as long as I am seeing an object, then there is thought. As long as I see an object, within me or outside me, there is function of thought, there is mental activity. That is clear isn't it? Am I thinking this thought? How does thought arise? What is the difference between a thought I think and a thought that occurs, happens, that just passes like a cloud in the field of consciousness? This is a very important question. When I tell myself I do not want to think at all, then I suddenly discover that I cannot stop thinking, I suddenly discover that thoughts keep happening, keep arising in consciousness. At this stage it is important for me to distinguish between thoughts that I think and thoughts that arise.

This is a thought I want to think, the mantra is a thought I want to think, the image of God is an image I want to think. Can I restrict my attention just to this, can I do this and not allow the mind, the attention, to waver? Then I begin to see how distraction happens. What is it that distracts my attention? What does it feel like when the mind is totally concentrated? What does it feel like when the mind is distracted? But even this is objective consciousness. I, I am thinking of God. I am so big that I can even think of God. Krishna gives us a knock on the head and says, "I am infinite and you are a small little creature; and if you push this infinite into your heart, you may burst - so better offer yourself to me". One can use some very useful techniques even for this. One can visualise the image of God expanding and filling oneself. This is a beautiful technique, provided one is awake and alert and does not make it a dull routine. Ultimately, the division between I and 'meditation' must go.

And so, the ultimate question arises. The question must arise, I cannot ask myself the question. I can ask myself, "What is this image of God that I see within myself?" but I cannot ask myself who I am that sees this image of God - because again I am dividing it - I am seeing myself, which is an absurd expression. Am I one or two?

When the perfectly controlled mind rests in the Self only, free from longing for all objects of desire, then it is said, "He is united". (VI-18)

When the mind is totally concentrated, disciplined, inwardly directed, so that there is absolutely no division at all in the self - then there are not two streams of thought - one that 'thinks' and one that 'arises'. There is only one stream and that is not a thought which I think. Is this possible? Is it possible to let thoughts happen, just as the heart beat just happens? Is it possible for the thoughts to arise and cease just as exhalation and inhalation follow each other? Then you have strictly adhered to Krishna's injunction, "Do not think", and you are functioning in this world.

Meditation is not something which one can practise for ten minutes or half an hour in the morning or evening and then pretend that I am in supra-mental consciousness. Meditation must be constant, it must enable one to discover the self, to discover that the self is non-existent, to discover that what is, is God. Then there is no division, no division within oneself, between I and God, between I and you. It is then that there is pure love, true love. To underline this, Krishna demands:

He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him. (VI-30)

This occurs in the same chapter which deals with meditation.

It may be possible to recognize vaguely three steps or stages in meditation. I say vaguely because we use words, and words are but symbols or images, perhaps a necessary means of communication, though there is a better means of communication which is non-verbal. For instance, we may use a word in one sense, and the listener may interpret it differently. Perhaps, if we follow this carefully, without trying to understand it immediately, if we just listen to it, then maybe the meaning will become clear.

The first step in meditation is fairly external. You sit in front of something and try to concentrate on it. This is not terribly difficult. But how can I ensure that the mind sees what the eyes see? Often we do not see what the eyes see because we are dreaming of something else. I am sitting here, focussing my attention on an object outside myself. This is not too difficult.

Now can I shift the attention within myself and recognise that that which is seen outside, is really seen inside? I do not see the person sitting in front of me, because the brain is only aware of the impression of this image which is found on the retina. This is physiological language, but please forget it immediately because we are not talking physiology. The image of that which is outside is found inside - can I become aware of this? In other words, I may close my eyes and look at the outside object, or I may keep my eyes open and still visualise the image within myself - this is stage two, where the attention flows within me, not outside. Within me here means within the body.

In this process, can I ensure that there is no distraction? You might find this a bit more tricky, because if that which is perceived within, whether you call it imagination, vision, thought, or whatever you wish to call it, if the attention is totally focussed upon that which is perceived within. 'That' must be as clear as 'this' - as the paper you see in front of you. If I am looking at John sitting here in front of me, his image is perfectly clear - but I cannot see Jaya clearly, she is not right in front of me, she is sitting in that corner. Of course the perimeter of my vision extends to the whole hall, but I cannot see her clearly. Now comes a problem. I have my eyes open and I am looking at whatever is in front of me, but I am seeing within. This means that that which is seen must be absolutely clear, and that on which the eyes rest outside should become unclear. When will that happen? When I have whole-souled devotion or love or interest in it. Therefore meditation cannot be done without falling in love with it.

Therefore the yogis, especially the masters of Raja Yoga insist - yathabhimata dhyanadva - choose some object which your mind, your heart loves, otherwise you will find it impossible to focus your attention on it. When the mind learns to flow in a single stream towards that which it visualizes, then you are truly

seeing into your own mind. If you have the courage to eliminate the object that you are visualizing, what you are seeing is the mind. You do not have to eliminate the object as such, but you have to eliminate the action of the object as such and such. When that goes a way you are looking at the mind.

Not clear? There is a book and I am going to concentrate on it. I look at it for a while and then transfer it within myself. I am still able to look at it, and I still see it within me as a blue covered book with a golden title - The Song of God. I have not swallowed the blue book nor the golden print - it is only a concept in the mind. If I am able to look at it without the concept arising in the mind, that this is a book, that it is blue, that its title is The Song of God - when all these notions are disposed of, but the image, the vision or whatever it is, is kept - then you are seeing the mind. Take anything you like, perhaps a flower. Hold a rose in front of you, look at it and visualise it within yourself. Can you continue to see it without mentally calling it a rose. Then you are looking into your own mind. And if you are serious, to the point of breaking into a thousand pieces, you literally see a thought coming up. Then you know how the mind functions, how thought arises and how, after it comes up, you begin to jump on its shoulders and own it. A thought arises because of some kind of habit, a trigger mechanism, what may be called a conditional reflex or association of thoughts, ideas. In response to this stimulus from the external world, as it enters through the eyes or ears, through the senses, it goes into the mind and thoughts jump up. Let them.

But to come back to the original theme. If the total attention is focussed on this person, all the others are non-existent. If you hold a magnifying glass in the sun, there is a pin-point of brilliant light, of flaming fire, and around it there is total darkness. When you try this, as you go on practising this, you are learning more and more about your mind. It is only when I tell myself that I am not going to think, that I know how thoughts arise, that I know how I think. I know the distinction between the two. I eliminate thinking, volitional thinking, voluntary thinking, and I ignore non-volitional thinking. Let it go on. This is something beautiful and can be extended to your whole life. One can live without thinking. Just as the body does, the eyes do and the other senses do; so the mind can also respond to situations without ego interference. We have not tried this non-volitional living at all. It seems to be so strange, the eyes are equipped with non-volitional action, the digestive mechanism is equipped with non-volitional action, the heart functions non-volitionally - you cannot stop it and you cannot make it run faster. Even so with the activities of billions of cells in the body - they go on totally independent of the will. And the doctors and nurses will tell you that the best repair work goes on when you are least concerned with your health or your sickness, that is in sleep or in coma. People worry about health, thinking that if they do not worry, they will become sick, not realizing that that worry makes you sick. The less you care about it, bother about it, the more freely the

intelligence in the body looks after the health of the entire body. It may even throw up what we call disease, but that is its own reaction to an unhealthy situation. Even so the mind can perform its function, the ego-sense can perform its function without creating conflict and contradiction in our life. Thus, life becomes so blissful, so peaceful, so beautiful.

Two stages are over, the third one has to happen. And this is where those who believe in God, bring God in. I see the object externally, I have focussed my mind, learned to concentrate my mind on it and I see the same object inwardly. I have learned to focus all my attention on it and to unravel the mystery - called the mind. But what is it that sees? When it comes to the external thing, I know the whole lot, I can rattle off all the things I learned at school - physiology, anatomy, all about the eyeball and the retina and so on. When I ask myself what the image that I see inside is, again I can rattle off lot of answers - thought, memory, the response of the memory to external stimuli and so on. Yet the question remains, "What is it that sees?" What is it that sees, not the external object but the inner thought? What is it that becomes aware of this thought? This question cannot be asked by me because that question becomes another thought and thought chewing thought leads nowhere. It is like water drinking water - it is a never ending process. But when that question happens in a disciplined mind, a mind that has been properly prepared for it, then there is a burst, a well, call it what you like - call it samadhi satori, enlightenment, or liberation - wonderful, so long as you cannot make an image of it. Something has happened, it is a total revolution – an inner revolution. But it cannot be hastened, cannot be rushed, cannot even be made to happen, Here one has to knock and then wait. If you like, knock again until your knuckles hurt, but you cannot open the door. The key is with some body else. The ego may tell itself that it has the key, but it has only one key and that is thought. The ego has no access beyond thought. That which is a ware of thought is not thought.

It is a very strange thing - we are told constantly to become aware of our actions, our thoughts, our emotions, and when we learn to meditate, we suddenly discover that it is the desire for awareness itself that creates and perpetuates the division. Therefore it is that one of the greatest sages born in India, called Ramana Maharishi, is said to have remarked that dhyana, meditation, is still in the realms of ignorance, because there is the possibility of dual consciousness in it, and one has to transcend that also by the method of self-inquiry - who am I? But perhaps we can see that that meditation is not complete without asking the vital question, "Who am I that is looking at this?" Division is divided vision - when the vision is divided into 'me' and 'you', there is division. When the vision is divided into 'me' and 'God', there is division. That 'God' is a thought - a glorious thought, no doubt, a wonderful thought, a sublime thought - but still a thought. That is not to say that there is no God.

God is beyond this division and therefore something which links this division - it transcends this division - it alone is.

I wonder if you have ever thought of this. This is a handkerchief and I am supposed to be holding two ends of it. I wonder if you have ever thought about that statement, that it is terribly absurd? There are these ends, where is the beginning? It is the beginning which is the whole thing - there is only one. And yet this is called one end and that is called the other end. This is called one end and only because the other is called the other end, there is no other reason for it. How look at it this way - you are you, I is I, one end is you, the other end is I and the middle is God. There is no end at all. The whole thing is God. It appeared to have two ends and the two ends come into being only because I refuse to see the handkerchief as handkerchief . I was only interested in this end and therefore I created the other end. When the two ends are abandoned and I begin to admire this handkerchief, there is only one handkerchief, without end and without beginning. What did not have a beginning cannot have an end. Therefore this handkerchief has no ends at all, it is one whole. If I roll it up you cannot even see this end - that is God. The ends are imaginary. This is how meditation should be.

Meditation should not perpetuate the division between I and you, I and God. When that division disappears, what remains is God. I am meditating on God, the image of God or whatever you like, there is still a division. I see God, I have a vision of God - 'I' and the vision are the two ends, where is the handkerchief? When you jump in from this side, he jumps in from that side and there is only one beginning-less, end-less existence. For the present this is intellectual and therefore there is a little puzzle in it. Therefore meditation becomes a kind of joke - something which I do for fifteen minutes or half an hour in the morning and then pretend I have attained satori.

Preparation has to go hand in hand with meditation. Krishna prescribes a very simple discipline. He says:

Verily, yoga is not possible for him who eats too much, nor for him who does not eat at all, nor for him who sleeps too much, nor for him who is always awake, O Arjuna (VI-16)

Yoga is impossible for one who goes on eating - which means most of us, three meals a day and snacks in between, chewing gum and sometimes something else as well. Do not get mad at yourself and say, 'I have been eating, eating, eating, all my life, now I am not going to eat' Then you will be chewing your empty mouth all the time, day and night. At last now we do not eat at night! If you abandon eating food all-together, you will be eating food at night, in your dreams. So instead of indulging in those mad extremes -

Yoga becomes the destroyer of pain for him who is moderate in eating and recreation, who is moderate in exertion in actions, who is modest in sleep and wakefulness (VI-17)

Nothing need be abandoned, everything may be done in moderation, What is moderation? "Neither this" "nor that" is moderation - neither expression nor suppression, neither ambition nor inhibition, neither push nor pull. That is difficult. What pushes and what pulls? The ego. When can life go on smoothly, spontaneously? Only when there is no volition in it, when there is no will pushing it. As long as the I jumps up and says, I want to be a yogi now, right now, or I want to lose this fat, right now. Of course you want to - then you will boast and say, "Ha, look at me". You are still where you were. It does not work.

The ego functions only at the extremes and is destroyed in the middle. There is no vanity, nothing that you can boast about, if you are treading the middle path. This is the most beautiful thing in yoga, the most disconcerting thing when it comes to popularity - there is nothing for you to boast about. All you have acquired is an intensely personal knowledge of yourself, intimate knowledge of yourself.

If you lead such a disciplined life, a regulated life, a life of moderation, you will know no sorrow. You may get some pains, but you will not be filled with sorrow and unhappiness. This is because there is no ambition, no craving, no pushing, no competition. We do not jump on to one another's shoulders, so there is complete and total freedom from sorrow.

Arjuna asks Krishna a specific question. He says, "You have described meditation so beautifully. I appreciate that, but it is impossible because the mind is constantly agitated". What agitates the mind?

The mind verily is restless, turbulent, strong and unyielding, O Krishna. I deem it as difficult to control as the wind. (VI-34)

Kama and Krodha. As with all the wonderful words that we use, even these have been misinterpreted. You have heard the word Kama - have you? It is usually translated as desire. We still have our own desires for a cup of coffee in the morning, for some particular food, for fruit, for nice clothes, for popularity, for name, fame, adoration. We do not like the word desire to be left free and so we usually add some adjectives to it. We may even restrict it to sexual desire. What is Kama? Sexual desire. So as long as you do not indulge in sex you are free from kama.? But I may be full of a million other desires, often more harmful - what of them? Desire for domination is a million times more harmful than an innocent sexual desire. Kama is regarded as an obstacle because it agitates the mind and therefore any desire that produces mental

agitation is an obstacle, even if it is a cup of coffee that will make you jump out of bed and run fifteen miles, when you ought to be sitting and meditating. This is something which is worth abandoning, dropping. Perhaps we can adopt Lord Buddha's attitude to that.

Buddha used another word instead of kama. He used the word tanna, which is trishna in Sanscrit. Trishna is a definite craving. We should abandon the word desire for normal living. He says, "I desire to have a glass of water - but that is not desire, it is thirst that is demanding water. When the water is drunk, the thirst is quenched. 'I' have nothing to do with it. Some time later perhaps, the hunger in your abdomen demands food - put food there and it is finished. That is, hunger eats food, thirst drinks water, fatigue goes to sleep - these things have nothing to do with me. In their operation there is no mental disturbance, no psychological distress, no agitation. Even so, I may accidentally touch something hot and the hand will pull away, involuntarily. This does not mean that my hand hates the hot pan; it may even love it.

So, kama and krodha, attraction and aversion, affection and hate - these also have to be watched very carefully and understood. In the Mahabharata war, of which the Bhagavad Gita forms a part, there were many great heroes who fought each other - without the least trace of hate in their hearts. One has to learn to distinguish the craving that disturbs mental equilibrium - that is to be avoided. How? By abhyasa and vairagya. For one who really and truly and sincerely and seriously practises meditation, this becomes natural. Why so? Krishna defines yoga in a rather interesting way. Yoga is not standing on your head, that is easy; it is standing on your feet - and that is a lot more difficult. Can I have my feet firmly planted on the ground and stand on my own feet, not depending on anything, not trampling on anything, walking softly upon this earth, leaving no trace behind? That is difficult.

... which, having obtained, he thinks there is no other gain superior to it; wherein established, he is not moved even to heavy sorrow. Let that be known by the name of yoga, the severance from union with pain. This yoga should be practised with determination and with an understanding mind. (VI-22,23)

One who has made this self-discovery through meditation is quite satisfied. Satisfied, not in a dull fatalistic way, saying, "I cannot get anything better - so I am satisfied with this". This is weakness, misery, self-repression - he has reached the goal and there is nothing beyond, there is nothing worth striving for beyond that. "I have got this. I do not want anything else", means I do not strive for anything other than this. If something comes my way, take it - and if it goes, leave it. This is only half the definition, the other half is - he is not shaken by even the worst calamity. That is yoga - complete non-contact with sorrow.



In that person there is no cravings, no hatred. There is no ambition and therefore no craving - these will help you only in the first two stages as that enables you to focus your mind, your attention, making the intelligence, the energy in the mind, flow in a single stream towards the object of meditation. Even there, there is a division between the perceiver and the perceived - I and you, I and it, I and God. I become aware of the object of meditation and in that process I may even have a vision of God in the chosen form. This need not necessarily be called an hallucination, it may be a lot better than a hallucination. The deeper the concentration is, the profounder the meditation and the clearer the image becomes and then there is a burst of experience, psychic experience, spiritual experience. Still the ego sits there looking very cautious and thinking, "Ah, aren't I a marvelous man. I saw God last night". To avoid this, Krishna describes the meaning of dhyana:

When the mind, restrained by the practice of yoga, attains to quietude, and when seeing the self by the Self, he is satisfied in his own Self. (VI-20)

The meditator (words, unless you are terribly careful the truth will slip through the fingers) through meditation, practised by the self, sees the self by the self, without any division whatsoever.

Some, by meditation, behold the self in the Self, by the Self, others by the yoga of knowledge and others by the yoga of action. (XIII-24)

Some may approach it this way through meditation, other may approach it through self-inquiry, others through Karma Yoga, which we discussed earlier. In all these the one inescapable criterion is the abolition of this division between I and you. When it comes to Karma Yoga, active life in this world also practised as yoga, then this 'I and you' relationship must disappear and all action must be performed spontaneously, without motivation, without desire of any sort whatsoever, even the desire for heaven.

When it comes to dhyana, meditation, this division between me and God, between the meditator and the object meditated upon, must disappear. This can only happen by the Grace of God. What do I mean by 'the Grace of God'? Something other than the will of the person, other than your personal effort - only when personal effort ceases - which means it was intense before.

There Was a great man called Sankaracarya and he sang a lovely song toward the end of his career. These are the words:

Worship the Lord, O foolish mind; at the time of death your scholarship will not protect you.

He said, "Worship, sing the Names of God with all your heart and with all devotion because, at the time of death, knowledge of sanscrit grammar or philosophy is not going to help you." Right? When did he say this? After he had mastered all the philosophies of the world. Sometimes people quote him prematurely. "Ah, he said that it is not necessary, so let me abandon it now, right in the beginning", this is another danger. Striving must cease - this means that the striving was there before. If the striver was not there at all, what is there to cease? So I must make the most intense effort to discover this, to find this, to concentrate the mind, to focus the attention, to know the contents of the mind first-hand, to know thought and its inherent inevitability of dividing everything, to create a division. Next comes a stage where only two things remain, the object and I. This division cannot be abolished. I become intensely aware of this and I merely ask myself - what is this division? If God is omnipresent, who am I, what am I?

It is here that we enter the last stage, the last aspect of yoga - Jnana Yoga. It is not considered in independent yoga. As I have pointed out again and again, all these have a common factor. Yoga is the common factor. Yoga is something which brings everything together. What is jnana? Self-knowledge or wisdom. Krishna gives a rather strange definition - he could have said that when you meditate upon God, what stands between you and God, that is jnana. To KNOW, that is jnana. As long as the ego asks this question, "What is God?", it will find an answer which suits itself, because it is the ego itself which provides the answer. That kind of knowledge is thought or memory and therefore, it is not truth. So, Krishna completely avoids this approach and says, "You want to know what wisdom is? You want to know what self-knowledge is?"

Humility, pretentiousness, non-injury, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control,  
Indifference to the objects of the senses and also absence of egoism,  
perception (or reflection on) the evil in birth, death, old age, sickness and pain,  
Non-attachment, non-identification of the Self with son, wife, home and the rest, and constant even mindedness on the attainment of the desirable, and the undesirable,  
Unswerving devotion unto Me by the Yoga of non-separation, resort to solitary places, distaste for the society of people,  
Constancy in Knowledge of the Self, perception of the end of true knowledge - this is declared to be knowledge and opposed to it is ignorance. (XIII-7.11)

These are all ethical qualities, personality traits. What do we mean by non-attachment? Non-attachment means that I do not have the illusion that my life depends upon you or that your life depends on me. This is the truth, the simplest form of truth. When all these ethical qualities, all these virtues, are

found in the person - that person has self-knowledge. It is a very beautiful way of getting round the issue and facing it.

Knowledge of the scriptures is knowledge of the scriptures, knowledge of the other is knowledge of another - and that is not going to put an end to the inner conflict, the disharmony. Inner conflict and disharmony will disappear only when there is self-knowledge, in which the division between me and the other has been completely eliminated. True humility is not pretentious - it is unpretentious, natural, spontaneous - and that spontaneous humility is the product of, the result of self-knowledge. A person who pretends to be humble, pretends, he is not humble. That is pretension. I suppose you hear another word in this word pretension? As long as there is pretension, you cannot avoid tension. Pre-tension is that which precedes tension. It is pretension. The only way to avoid tension is to stop pretending. If you are aggressive, if you are violent, if you are rude, somebody will put you in your place. Unpretentious humility is possible only when the self-arrogating ego - and this is the expression of my guru, Swami Sivananda - has been directly seen to be non-existent. This is the object of meditation, the purpose of meditation.

Then I look, I turn the gaze within and ask, "Lord, who is this? "Who am I? What is this?" 'When this 'I' dissolves, then this 'I' becomes one with everything. Suddenly you look at the same vegetables in the back yard, the same fruits, the same trees, the same cabbage, the same lettuce and you suddenly think, "My brother" - you know that this body is also made of the same lettuce, this came from you - that this is one carrot and that is another carrot, only this carrot was eaten last year. What is this body but the product of the same vegetables? Are we not cousins? The humility that is born of that understanding is different, completely different. It is then that you and I can look at each other and recognise that we are one. We are not imagining, we are not thinking that we are one - that does not help. Because today I am in a brilliant mood and think you are my brother, then tomorrow somebody comes along and says, "That man robbed you". Suddenly you are not brothers any more. When I reach that stage of total unselfishness, because I have seen that the 'I' is not, then I look at you and suddenly realise, "My God, didn't you come to the vegetable market, didn't you take one cabbage and I an other? You are made of that cabbage and I am made of this cabbage, both are the same. Even this knowledge springs from within. It is not put on for show, it is not something which you apply to yourself, it is something which grows in you. This is the spirit of yoga, the object of yoga. Krishna has a word of great hope -

Others also, not knowing thus, worship, having heard it from others. They too cross beyond death, regarding what they have heard as the supreme refuge.  
(XIII-25)

There are millions in this world who have not heard of the Bhagavad Gita and who do not know what Karma Yoga means, who do not know what bhakti means, who do not know what Raja Yoga means, what meditation means, nor the enquiry, "Who am I?" What about them? They do not know these teachings and they follow their own practices - they too shall attain liberation.

So, if we are honest, the first thing we shall drop is the feeling that somehow we are the chosen ones. Salvation, liberation, moksha, self-knowledge is not restricted. That which is in you nobody can restrict or stop you from realising. Nobody can help you to realise that and nobody can prevent you from realising that.

Let a man lift himself by his own self alone, let him not lower himself. For this self alone is the friend of oneself, this self alone is the enemy of oneself. (VI-5)

This is the message of Krishna. One who follows these teachings may find them of great help, may find great inspiration in them and then, from there on, the vision changes. One does not pretend to be unselfish - one is unselfish. One is not unselfish because somebody said that unselfishness is good, but because this person has seen directly within himself, seen that the selfish man is sunk in sorrow, haunted by pain, suffering and in psychological distress. Prodded by this he turns his gaze upon himself. He enquires, "What is this? If God created the world and me too, why should he intend me to suffer? Who made me, who created me? Whoever it is, did he intend that I should live a life of suffering, sorrow, grief, constantly?"

When this question arises within a person, he turns his gaze within. When one observes the world and the sorrow in it and the suffering that man inflicts on man, one cannot but question oneself, "Have I been put here on earth to suffer. What is suffering, what is sorrow and what have I to do with them? Have you and I been put here to fight one another?" All this does not seem to make any sense. If this was the intention of God or the creation, then why do we not fight during sleep? There is a misunderstanding somewhere. Realising this, I want to understand the nature of the world, the nature of the self. Whilst investigating this, I suddenly discover for myself (though it is intellectually at first) that the self does not exist. This seems to be clear, but it is not a realisation because the self is still eager to attain realisation. When I see that this too is selfishness, that the attainment of what is called self-realisation too is selfishness, then from somewhere, in some mysterious way, the door opens.

Is this possible? Is a life of total unselfishness possible? I would say, "Yes!", for the simple reason that I have seen a person live like that - Swami Sivananda. I am not sure whether it is possible to have faith in this if you have not seen one who is a living example of what we are talking about. But once

having seen this, there is no doubt that it is possible. From day to day, I saw in the life of our master, Swami Sivananda, that He seemed to have no personal will at all - and yet He was not weak. Again it is neither-nor. He was not a' jelly so that you could put Him in any cup you liked. No, no, no. He was neither jelly nor hard granite. He was honey, beautiful. He was not too soft, He was not too hard - He was not this, He was not that. He was able to flow without being made to flow. It was beautiful to live with Him, to watch Him. He could express affection as perhaps no one else could. He could express grief as perhaps no one else could. It was a delight to see Him laughing - when He hugged, it was not with His lips, it was not with His throat, or His nose - from head to foot, every thing was trembling and the tears used to pour down His face.

When Swami Sivananda apologies - I have seen Him do it verbally just once in His life, one could feel it. He did it, not as you and I do, saying "Oh I am sorry". Just once I saw Him express this "I am sorry" to someone in Delhi, and He did not even use these words. One could see how He felt by the way He stood there and looked. It is beautiful to see a person who is completely and totally whole unto him self. And because He was all whole unto Himself, within Himself, because there was no conflict at all in His personality, He had no disharmony with anyone in the world.

It is because we are divided within ourselves that we find conflict with others. In Him there was no such thing. He was totally whole, absolutely one and therefore He was one with all. One has to observe, one has to see, one has to live with such a person and only then, I think, we are truly inspired to investigate yoga, to investigate non-volitional living, investigate what true unselfishness may mean.