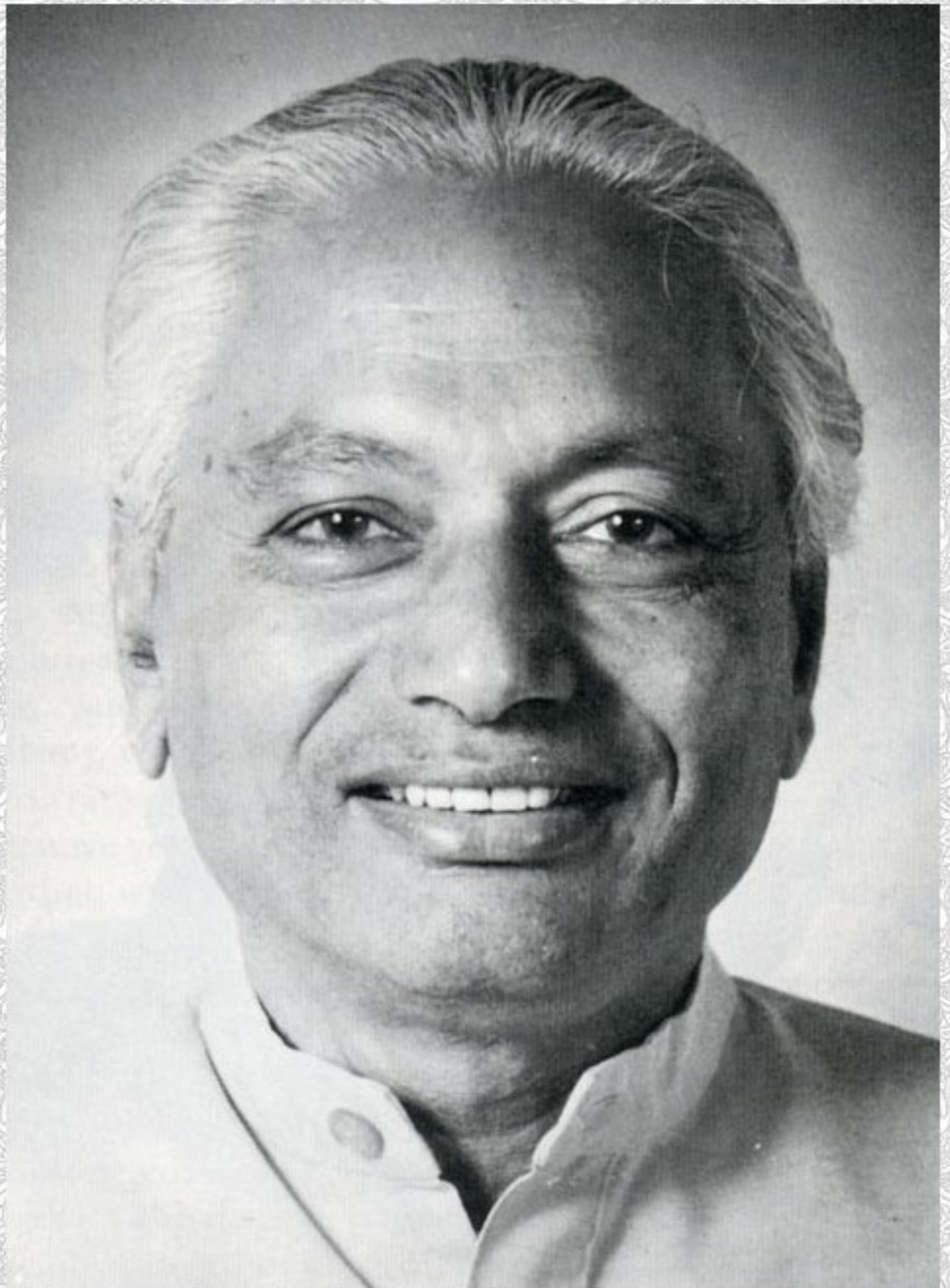




The Art of Dying Spiritually

talks on the 8th chapter
of the Bhagavad Gita

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Introduction

Death is not merely a possibility, a probability, but a certainty. The moment you realise it is a certainty, it assumes a tremendous importance. I may die tomorrow or over 200 years, but still it has to happen. It is a certainty. Faced with this certainty of death, how do we live? That is the question asked by Parikshit and later on by Sage Suka in the Bhagavatam. "What does one do faced with a certainty of death"?

There was a siddha, one of those mighty spiritual beings who had no contact with the world at all. Their lives did not depend upon anybody and therefore they did not depend upon anybody. This naked holy man had only one possession, a clay pot. Since the body was still living, it needed food. He would occasionally stand in front of somebody's house, and if somebody puts something in that pot, the pot received it. He had only one stipulation. He would cook whatever it contained. So he needed two things: fire and water. He had to pour some water into the pot, put it on fire, cook it, eat it, lie down and sleep; later on, he would get up and walk in whichever direction the legs took him. Everything else was uncertain.

One day, he collected some rice and dhal in a village and he kept walking. Somewhere he saw fire but no water, and somewhere there was water but no fire. He continued walking until he passed a cremation ground which is usually located near a water source, a river or a canal. A body was burning on the pyre. There was water and fire. He sat down, took a piece of burning wood from the pyre, filled his pot with water and started cooking his food. It is said that cremation ground is the property of the Queen Bhadrakali. At midnight he heard some jingling bells. He looked around and saw Kali furiously walking straight towards him. He kept looking at the pot.

Being a siddha, he could not be molested, even by Bhadrakali. No god or goddess could touch him. So she danced round him, trying to frighten him. He was not frightened. He was waiting for the food to be cooked. Then she eventually addressed him and said; "Do you know that this is my property? I would have killed you had you not been siddha. All right, since you have trespassed my property I must either punish you or I must reward you. Ask for a boon." "There is nothing that you can give me. What must I ask for?", he replied. "You have insulted me; ask for something", she retorted. "Can you lengthen my life span by one day?, he asked. "That is not possible. Ask for something else", she replied. The siddha continued, "All right? make it a day shorter." "That is also not possible", she replied and went away.

So nobody, not even a god or a devata can shorten or lengthen your life. When death is going to happen, is a complete mystery. Faced with this, what does

one do? That is the central theme of the 8th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita and of the Bhagavatam also. The Bhagavatam starts with that note: 'What does a man do when he is confronted with a certainty of death?'

One should avoid the temptation to assume that there is immortality beyond death. This is not dying. If you are telling yourself, "I want to die so that I may go to heaven," you are not dying, something else is being done. If you start off with the philosophy that it is only the body that is dying - 'I am immortal', then you are not dying, you are still clinging to that silly little 'I'. If total death is possible, then instantly you face God. This is the secret that we are told.

Everything physical, everything that has come into a being has to go. Whatever is made or composed of other substances must disintegrate in those other substances. If this fact is directly and intelligently seen, then there is instant death. What is death? Is it possible for us to face that death? Can we face the death of something which creates an illusion of immortality? To learn the art of dying spiritually or psychologically is an art that must be learnt before the body falls.

The body is like a boat crossing the ocean of Samsara, the ocean of Sorrow. In order to cross this ocean, go quickly before the boat cracks. Once it starts leaking here and there, you are caught halfway through. Before it cracks completely, reach the other side quickly. If you seriously want to go across this ocean of samsara, discover how to die here and now, before the body falls. Before the body falls, is it possible to die totally?

In that total death is Liberation.

Talk I - The Confused Mind

At the end of the 7th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna has suggested that a total knowledge was essential to avoid confusion, as fragmented knowledge always leads to confusion. If I know you and I do not know me, or if I know myself and I do not bother to know you, that itself leads to confusion. How to get total knowledge in which there is no confusion? Lord Krishna had said that the seeker should understand such expressions as adhyatman adhidaivam adhibhantikam, and the great activity that goes on in this universe if he wants to know the character of that total knowledge.

Arjuna, being perplexed, asked for more clarification: kim tad brahma kim adhyatmam kim karma purusottama adhibhutam cakim proktam adhidaivam kim ucyate - (VIII.1)

What is that Brahman? What is adhyatman? What is karma? What is all this activity that is going on in this universe? What is declared to be the adhibhuta and what is adhidaivam said to be? And how is this related to this individual body or the cosmic body?

Adhiya jnah katham ko 'tra dehe smin madhusudana prayanakale ca katham jneyo si niyatatmabhih - (VIII.2)

O Krishna, what is adhiyajna here in this body, and how does it function? And, how art Thou to be known by the self-controlled at the time of death?

How shall I think of you at the end of this embodiment? This embodiment is there, nobody is going to take it away from you, nobody is going to liberate you from it until that time comes. Though you may try by several means to be unaware of the body, to remain dis-connected or freed from body-consciousness for some time, the connection will be made again. Even great jivanmukta - liberated beings have found that unless a special effort is made through practice of meditation or yoga, they cannot disengage the intelligence that is trapped in the body feeling 'I am this body. There is a feeling - however vague, however nebulous or amorphous it may be - that this is my body and therefore I must eat. That much of identification, that much of body-consciousness is inevitable as long as the body lasts. If this confusion is not resolved before this connection is severed, then the confused intelligence will continue to connect itself to more bodies. If by that time the confusion is resolved, it is possible that there is no more birth.

Prayanakaleca katham jnano si niyatatmabhih (VIII.2) - How are Thou to be known by the self-controlled at the time the body is dropped?' Arjuna uses the expression 'prayanakale' - the hour of departure, because we believe that one leaves the body and goes somewhere else. We abandon the body and that is the end point; we do not leave and go somewhere else. That going itself is a confusion. The confused mind, the confused intelligence thinks 'I am this

body and now that this body's life is finished. I must leave this place and go somewhere else.' This is the confusion and that confusion arises, because there is a feeling that 'I am this body' - 'I am'. At least the body is mine.

We must remind ourselves here that Krishna did not deliver the teachings in terms of chapters. It was a continuous flow of ideas - a continuous exchange of views.

Aksaram brahma paramam svabhavo dhyatman ucyate - (VIII.3)

Brahman is the Imperishable, the Supreme. His essential nature is called self-knowledge - the adhyatman.

Brahma or the infinite is aksaram. The word aksara in Sanskrit means alphabet as also the imperishable. Alphabet comes from the first and second Greek letters alpha and beta joined together, whereas aksara is a separate word which has its own meaning. Aksara embodies the first and the last sound. But aksara also means imperishable. Sound is imperishable. If a radio gadget could be invented to capture not only sounds but also speech which is not limited by space and time, it is possible for us here to listen to the sermon of the Buddha or Krishna or Jesus Christ. The sound is all there, it is imperishable.

A South Indian lady once said, "If you pick up a hot iron and hit me, I can go to a doctor or to a hospital where the injury can be treated; but if you use bad words to insult me - aksara is permanent, however much you try to make amends later on, these sounds - words, never go away'. That mind keeps the insult and it is never completely wiped out. If that person consistently and persistently behaves nicely towards you, the insult remains forgotten; but if another insult is added - even after a lapse of fifty years you suddenly remember the first insult. It is always there ready to pounce on you. It does not even deteriorate but stays as it is. What does not even deteriorate is the Infinite.

Talk 2 - Death, The Complete Mystery

Arjuna said, "adiyajnah katham ko tra dehe smin madhusudana" - O Krishna, what is adhiyajna here in this body and how does it function?

In the body is the infinite and what is known as matter. In it is power of perception and also the source of action. The body is the spirit of sacrifice. The spirit of sacrifice denotes the capacity to interrelate. When we observe the relationship with what we call external nature, we realise that everything is ultimately bound, that there is always a natural give and take. The air that we breathe out is breathed in by the plant, and what they give out we consume. Can we refuse to share our carbon dioxide with the plants? This inevitable relationship is called 'adhiyajna'. If there is a relationship, it is not mine alone. It is cosmic. The action is cosmic, the whole thing is cosmic. What arises as "my" is a mysterious entity.

The ego is a thought, which thinks it is - and does and acts. There is no existential substance to which you can refer to this ego. It is this ego that seems to pass from one embodiment to another. Otherwise one puzzled by these two phenomena called birth and death.

What is birth and what is death? What brings about death and a thing called birth after that? For the time being this is part of the infinite. This is vasana or conditioning. The individuality is an irrevocable and indisputable fact and the brain cannot think in terms other than that of our human nature. The thought that we are human beings or Mister or Miss So & So is repeatedly in our mind and forms a groove in the brain. That is called samskara. It becomes so strong that the brain is unable to extricate itself from this mould. And there is the danger. That is what undergoes successive embodiment - Mister or Miss So & So. The vritti cannot be so easily dissolved. The brain becomes the grooves and becomes aware of these three basic factors which are time, space and substantiality. When there is no brain, these three factors do not exist. What happens at death when the brain ceases to function is a very interesting question.

When the brain ceases to function, the vasana or the habitual thought from that function through these brain cells is suddenly released from the brain and floats around as the fragrance of a flower. That is why the word 'vasana' again has one of its meanings 'aroma' which also means love. The brain ceases to function but the aroma wafts along giving, rise to a thought form.

Yam-yam va'pi smaran bhavam tyajaty ante kalevaram tam- tam evai'ti kaunteya sada tadbhava bhavitah (VIII.6) Whosoever at the end leaves the body, thinking of any (state of) being, to that being only does he go Arjuna, because of his constant thought of that being.

That concept or ruling passion that prevails in you when the body drops generates a momentum which goes on. Where does it go? In which direction and how long does it take to be embodied again? These questions cannot be answered; because the moment the brain stops functioning, time is. When the brain ceases to function, can we say that Mr.X will take birth again next year? There is nothing called next year or tomorrow.

These are all brain functions. However much we want to think that these are real substances, they are not. They are unreal and useless.

Tasmat sarvesu kalesu mam anusmara yudhya ca mayy arpitamanobuddhir mam evai 'syasy asamsayah (VIII-7) - Therefore, at all times, remember Me only and fight. With mind and intellect fixed (or absorbed) on Me, thou shalt doubtless come to Me alone.

The consciousness with all its thought forms is relieved and is going to build another embodiment. If, at that point, the mind does not entertain any hope or fears or anxieties, a future will not be created. If at that moment the brain does not think at all of an object, it is deeply absorbed absorbed into itself by taking the name of God, then there it goes. But if the fundamental thought or habitual thought form contemplate something other than this, then naturally you will think you are in that state. If you carefully consider this, you will realise that heaven, hell, another birth are merely thoughts. The dying man thinks he is going to heaven and thinks he is in heaven. At the same time he may be entertaining some fear that it may not be terrible. That terrible thing may also be realised at the same time.

A man was walking in a forest. He was tired and rested under a tree. That tree happened to be a wishful tree. The man was very hot and wished he would find some water. So some water came. Suddenly he realised that this may be a wishfulfilling tree and may fulfill his ambition. There was a dense forest nearby and he thought: "I hope a tiger does not come and eat". A tiger came and ate him. So when you look forward to a glorious future in heaven fearing that it could also be terrible, the terrible thing may also be realised at the same time.

Tam- tam evai'ti kaunteya sada tadbhavabhavitah.

The last thought form is not something that can be accidentally or deliberately created. The last thought will be naturally the predominant or the dominant thought which you entertained throughout your life.

Talk 3 - Discovering How To Die

There are theories that it is possible for one, while living in this body, to be free of body consciousness. Body consciousness here means the wrong notion or idea that 'I am the body'. Every moment of our life our entire organism screams 'I am the body'. This is only intellectual misunderstanding. Is it possible, while yet living in this body to be freed of body consciousness? "I am this body and mind", and "I am not this body and mind" - both these are affirmations of the body and its connection to me.

As long as the mind functions in this body, it makes itself susceptible to the arising of the subject. 'I am the doer of this deed' - good or bad. The brain being the seat of consciousness receives these stimuli constantly and from that the personality is made and eventually the world. The personality being the subject, the world being the object is an indivisible totality.

As the sense stimuli lodge themselves in the brain cells, stimulating the consciousness, there also the world and the personality arises. If this can be understood correctly, then one suddenly realises why it becomes so difficult for a human mind to abandon error, or why he clings stupidly to a thing called 'my life'. There is nothing called 'my life'. Why does the mind cling to it and does not wish to abandon it. It is seen even in wise men. The person may sit here and talk high philosophy, but when the body is hungry he says, 'I am hungry' or when the body is sick he says, 'I am sick'. Why is it so? Because the brain functions within the framework of time, space, substantiality, materiality in accordance with the information or data supplied to it. As long as the brain functions, one may intellectually misunderstand the doctrine of a jivanmukti. It is the brain again that becomes aware and characterises sugar as sweet or lime juice as sour. Neither the sugar cane juice nor the lemon juice proclaims its sweetness or sourness. It is the brain that does it, and the brain has been conditioned and programmed to experience these different tastes. Then by further conditioning one begins to like something and dislike something else.

One begins to depend on something and rebel against another thing. One begins to depend on a certain relationship and resent a certain other relationship. All these are fed into the brain and from there the world takes a certain colouring. Without these likes and dislikes there was only a subject - object relationship. You look at a mirror. How does the mirror look at the person? The mirror has no love or hate. The mirror does not refuse to look at an ugly face or at a pretty face. With the colouring, the extension of the subject-object relationship also becomes inevitable because of the psychological functioning. The likes, the dislikes, the sourness, the sweetness, all these are fed into the brain; and from there arises greater and more fatal dependence upon external stimuli, external relationship to such an extent

that at some point we cannot think of an independent existence from that body or independence from this world. The rejection of body consciousness does happen to a living being through a certain effort.

In this chapter there is an insistence upon experience of death. How to sustain one's consciousness in a certain frame of mind, in a certain attitude, in a certain knowledge, so that, when the body drops, there is no hankering whatsoever for a further repetition of this sort of life. Is it possible to train oneself in such a way though there is still a semblance of attraction and repulsion, though one has not really experienced total freedom or independence from the world?

Is it possible to train oneself in such a way that there is no gross clinging to the world? The understanding is not shining brightly. It is not in its zenith, it is rising. There is a dawn of understanding that all this is only because of a slight misunderstanding and that the misunderstanding need not even be dealt with. The understanding that something is misunderstanding itself is its cancellation. It does not need further struggle or effort. This is a misunderstanding and this may continue as long as the body lasts. If this understanding arises, then the whole attitude of life undergoes a drastic change. Sugar still tastes sweet, a piece of chocolate still tastes nice, but you won't walk a mile to buy a bar of chocolate. That is it. Something is painful - drilling a tooth can be a bitter, painful experience, but you do not run away from it. You can avoid it if it can be avoided. You do not resist it and make it worse and make pain 'painful'. Pain can be pain but it needs not be painful. That is the reason why in this chapter we are asked to train ourselves. The techniques are given in great details:

Prayanakal manasa calena bhaktya yukto yogabalena cai'va bhruvor madhye pranam avesya samyak sa tam parampurusam upaiti divyam - (VIII.10)

At the time of death, with unshaken mind, endowed with devotion, by the power of yoga, fixing the whole life breath in the middle of the two eyebrows, he reaches that resplendent Supreme Person".

If these conditions are fulfilled, then, when the body drops, you reach the ultimate and Supreme - bhaktya yukto.

First of all there must be intense and total love of God, love of the Infinite. The little assumed personality must be in total love with the totality of existence. Then suddenly it realises 'I have always been one with this totality. I have never been separated from it.' - bhaktya yukto yoga balena cai'va. This is a very important point in this chapter. Bhakti or devotion must be exalted above all ends. Krishna recognizes here that to love God with all your heart and soul is not enough. You have to love God with all your strength and with all your might too. Yoga balena - by the strength and vitality of yoga. Krishna

explains a little later. You need a certain training which is called Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga is that training which enables us to pull the prana away from its normal avenues of activity and concentrate this life force in the middle of the two eyebrows. That is not done in a day or by wishful thinking. One has to train oneself in this practice and gain the ability to make this possible at the right time.

There is no leaving this body. When the time comes, life comes to an end and body consciousness ceases. You only have to love God with all your heart and soul and nothing else. How is that possible? It is possible because as it was explained right in the beginning of this chapter. Every factor in this body, the physical body, the senses, the intelligence, the functions and the forces or energies that make those functions possible, all these are divine. The body belongs to Him. The mind belongs to Him. The senses belong to Him. He is the intelligence in the body. Since this is so, is it possible for you to love God with all your heart and soul, knowing he is the very reality of your existence.

However, loving God with all your heart, with all your soul, is not enough. It is necessary to love God with all your might and that is the technique of Hatha Yoga which is mentioned in great detail in the eighth chapter - how to raise the consciousness to the level of agna-chakra which is the seat of individualised intelligence. It is from then that one surrenders oneself to the divine.

One of the Upanishads says: "Then you do not live. You do not go anywhere.'

There is no going anywhere even otherwise. If you are an idiot wherever you die, you create your own hell and your own heaven and enjoy those pleasures and pains. If you are a stupid person attached to your own family perhaps you hanker around the same family and become something else in that family. A rat or a mosquito, or a cat, or a donkey, or a son or a grand son, whatever it is. There is no going and coming. Going and coming are only in relation to our present brain function. When at death the brain function ceases, there is no time, there is no space, there is no materiality, except what is created thereafter by the data which has been supplied to the brain during that period. So, in the case of the yogi, all these datas are cancelled. The computer is smashed through of commission and the prana is raised to the agna chakra, and from there directly offered to the divine who is omnipresent - that is liberation.

Om.

Talk 4 - Total Surrender

In order to release the consciousness from the wrong understanding of the body, we need abhyasa - devotion and yoga bala. These 3 are specifically mentioned.

Abhyasayogayuktena cetasa na' nyagamina paramam purusam divyam yati partha 'nucintayan (VIII.8)

With the mind, not moving towards any other thing, is made steadfast by the method of habitual meditation, and constantly meditating, one goes to the Supreme Person, the Resplendent.

One should practise the art of freeing the awareness from the wrong notion. It is not something which can be turned on or off like an electric switch. A great saint pleaded with Krishna, "Lord, let my mind enter into Your Lotus Feet now." "When my throat is choked at the time of death, what guarantee is there that I will think of You?", sang Gurudev Swami Sivananda. So, the method or technique or the way in which it is done has to be learnt and put into practice before the event.

We must cultivate Abhyasa or repeated practice of the way in which awareness can be separated from the wrong notion 'I am this body'. This cannot be done during the last hour of your life unless you have perfected the abhyasa of the technique and then acquire yoga bala. In addition to that, total devotion to God is necessary. Only then there will be a free release from body consciousness. Abhyasa is necessary, so that one knows what has to be done. Then yoga bala, the strength of yoga, is necessary in order that, at a particular moment, there is shakti or power or energy enough to do all this.

Yad aksaram vedavido vadanti visanti yad yatayo vitaragah yadicchanto brahmacharyam caranti tat te padam samgrahena pravaksya - (VIII.11)

That which is declared Imperishable (Akshara) by those who know the Vedas, that which the self-controlled and passion-free men enter, that desiring which they observe Brahmacharya - that goal I will declare to thee in brief.

This verse also occurs occur in the Katho Upanishad where Yama - the god of death himself, teaches to his disciple Nachiketas: Visantiyad yatayo vataragah.

Your mind must be kept under control and you have to practise vitaragah. The mind must be completely free of all colourings, not only passion, desire, or craving. The mind must not desire anything of this world or the other like heaven or hell, because as long as that colouring is there, the mutual energy will flow in that direction, creating an illusion of another birth and another death. If you think of something very strongly just before you go to bed, you

will dream of that thing. If you are contemplating something, your mind and your heart are attracted to that something. When awareness or life force drops this body, then that awareness will create a world where all those cravings could be fulfilled.

Vitaragah is a very important concept or teaching in the Bhagavad Gita and this occurs several times in every chapter. It is greatly emphasised. Vitaragah does not merely mean a sort of abstract non-attachment. That is how it is usually translated - free from attachment. Why am I attached to anything at all? Why do I desire anything? It is because there is a mental coloring, Raga also means coloring. Your pleasure and your happiness depends upon that. As long as this feeling exists it is not possible to free the mind and the heart from clinging to those objects. And since there cannot be a perpetual clinging, it takes strange forms. You and I may be friends and we may be clinging to each other, but I am a passenger, you are a passenger. We are both pilgrims in this world I am bound to leave, you are bound to leave. Then what happens. First cleanse the mind and all of these wrong ambitions and wrong understandings which create those ambitions.

Yad icchanto brahmecaryam caranti - Brahmecaryam has been translated variously. Ramana Maharishi takes it as a total dedication to the truth, and not merely as chastity, celibacy, but as a total one-pointed flow of your own energy, heart and mind. In Buddhist text, it is the holy life, life of renunciation and life of holiness.

Then just a hint of the technique is given: Sarvadvarani samyamya mano hradi nirudhya ca murdhny adhayatmanah pranam asthito yogadharanam. - (VIII.12)

Having closed all the gates, confined the mind in the heart and fixed the life-breath in the head, engaged in the practice of concentration.

This is the yogadharanam. It is only a matter of concentration. It is not even meditation, only concentration. Everything else follows later.

All the holes 'dvara' through which consciousness leaks, must be closed and let the mind be fixed in the heart. What is the heart? Heart is not the physical heart, but the heart of your own being, the very core, the very centre of your whole being. The consciousness where the feeling 'I am' arises. That makes it much easier and more complicated. Why are we asked to concentrate on the heart? Heart means consciousness, consciousness of 'I am this body'. I live in this body.

Elsewhere in the Upanishads we are told: "The knots of the heart are cut asunder." What are the knots of the heart? Hatha yoga mentions 3 knots.

Brahma granti, Vishnu granti, Rudra granti. We are tied in 3 different ways. First of all the Infinite Consciousness is tied to what is known as individuality. (vishnu granti).

The second is Rudra granti. In the Yoga Vasistha, Rudra is taken to be the ego 'I am'. This Rudra granti is supposed to be located in the ajna chakra, between the eyebrows. This is a consciousness being limited and tied to an individuality. Then there is the thought process, the thinking process, the mind being tied to the body. Why is the mind tied to the body? It is because the mind is tied to the body that the body is protected and preserved. If the mind is not tied to the body at all, it disintegrates. You would not even care or bother to eat, to look after the body. Because the mind is tied to the body, you are looking after it, protecting and preserving it. That is the vision of granti. Some people say it is in the heart area.

Then there is the Brahma granti. Brahma granti is the creation. The body itself, the life force is tied to the body, and it is the life-force that activates the body; so there is prana that is tied to the body, the mind that is tied to the body and finally the spirit that is tied to the body. All these three grantis, knotted together, constitute ignorance. Where is the Brahma granti tied? It is through the umbilical cord that life force entered us all and therefore it is in that area that the Brahma granti is situated. In the heart centre is situated the Vishnu granti and in the eyebrows centre, the Rudra granti. These are the ways in which consciousness or awareness is bound and one has to come face to face with this problem before release can be obtained.

This release is not such a difficult thing. You fall asleep without struggling. As a matter of fact you fall asleep only if you do not struggle. If you struggle, you do not fall asleep.

People die, nothing seems to happen to them. The body is totally here, and the person is totally gone. The life force has left, the mind has left and the individualised consciousness has left. What happens. No one knows. It is so simple and yet if it is not understood, it becomes extremely difficult. When there is pain in the body, why is it that I feel I am suffering. Obviously because this Brahma granti is great. Why do I not say that 'it is the body'. It is because the Brahma granti is strong, the life force is strongly attached to the body and secondly the Vishnu granti is strong. The mind is strongly attached to the body and therefore there is the feeling 'I am suffering'. Is it possible to untie this knot.

That is the process.

Sarvadvarani samyamya mano hrdis nirudhya ca. - (VIII.12)

The mind must seek the source of pain and pleasure, the source of happiness and sorrow, the source of thought and feeling and eventually the very source of individualisation of consciousness. This must be done everyday.

Abhyasa yogayuktena cetasa na nyagamina - (VIII.8)
Therefore, at all times remember Me only and fight.

So that by this repeated practice of the technique, the mind does not waver at the time of death, or whenever this becomes necessary, and the release is greatly facilitated. There is no release at that point because you realise that the body is not my body, mind is not my mind, I am not myself, the whole thing is cosmic. I have nothing to do with it. The technique that helps us here is provided in the hatha yoga text which is known as laya yoga. This is the life force and this is what happens when it is gently folded up and withdrawn. When the life force is withdrawn, the individualised consciousness dissolves into madhava. Madhava is God consciousness, the way in which God looks at the world, the way the Infinite looks at the Infinite itself, the way in which it becomes aware of itself. Not as one person, not as an individual looks at it, but as God looks. at it.

How does one do that? By reversing the process of creation. How does consciousness get involved in all this? By becoming aware of itself as an object. Then the ego-consciousness is born and this "I" consciousness arises. In that 'I' consciousness the world is reflected and therefore the objects are born. When the objects are born, the 'I' consciousness enters in relationship with them, liking some and disliking some. This is how the awareness is converted, transformed into energy. It merely exhorts itself in all these and gets dissipated in all these. The yogi, by the practice of hatha yoga, first restrains 'sarvadvarani' and 'sarvadvarani mano'. It controls all this, prevents them from flowing along the so called natural channels. restrains them, and endeavours to return all the energy to its own source.

Then you raise the prana with the consciousness, with the awareness to the 'sahasrara'. Here it may mean just the crown of your head, but it may also mean to the very source of the heart. When that is done, when that is repeatedly practised and the technique understood, then it becomes easy for you to enjoy or experience temporary periods of death called meditation; and when this technique is perfected, it must be easy when the time comes to leave the body without the wish for another embodiment. When that happens, when the consciousness is solely devoted to God, then there is no return to embodiment again.

Talk 5 - God-Realisation

These instructions must be observed within the last hour as it has been described in this verse: *ananyacetah satatam yo mam smarati nityasah tasya'ham sulabhah partha nityayuktasya yoginah* - (VIII.14)

I am easily attainable by that ever steadfast Yogi who constantly and daily remembers Me, not thinking of anything else, O Partha.

You cannot possibly engineer your last thought form unless you are used to it. You are accustomed to it and you have trained yourself to it.

You cannot learn how to shoot on the battle field. You will have no time there, you will have no opportunity and there will be no need of it. So, how does one train oneself? By "*ananyacetah satatam*". The whole mind must be totally saturated by God thought. In which case, naturally at the last moment also, it will be the same thought. There is no other possibility.

Satatam yo mam smaratinityasah tasya 'ham sulabhah.

He who constantly and always meditates upon me, for him, God-realisation is very easy.

The practice of what is known as the presence of God is not difficult for one who is sincere. Sincerity is not a virtue which can be cultivated. There we get a block. God realisation is easy for one who practises the presence of God and lives in the constant awareness of the Infinite. This practice of the presence of God or the Realisation of the Infinite from moment to moment is not difficult for the simple reason that it is there when you open your eyes and see God.

When you close your eyes and think you are meditating, you are seeing God. When you open your eyes and live in this world, you are seeing God. What is the difficulty in realising God? The practice of the presence of God demands sincerity. That sincerity is beyond our reach. It cannot be cultivated, it cannot be imparted, it cannot be produced, transmitted. It has to happen. How does it happen? There are millions of theories concerning that. God being omnipresent, God being infinite, God being the sole reality - it is absurd to say that it is difficult to realise God. Do we sincerely feel that God is the sole reality? No. Our world is composed of this and that, my friends and my enemies. What is it that decides this? The mind. The mind which thinks itself as eternal, educated, and inwardly awakened creates all these images or impressions. If that has no other impression or image, then God-Realisation is easy. To realise something which is always real does not need any effort.

We accept something as real and we madly cling to it as the sole reality. That effort is directed to think that you are my friend, my enemy and other illusions. I am a Swami . If you peel me, you will not find a Swami anywhere.

These images have been imprinted on what is called the mind. Those impressions bring about further embodiment. If those impressions are completely wiped out, there is no embodiment - which means liberation or God-Realisation. Then that consciousness or intelligence on which these images are apparently printed, remain without any impression whatsoever. That is God-Realisation. If you write something on a blackboard, it may need some effort to wipe it out. God-Realisation is very much like writing in space. It does not need any effort at all for it to be wiped out.

What is mind? Mind is defined in terms of thought . What is thought? Thought is defined in terms of mind. Believing something to be true makes it appear to be true. You are in love with somebody. He is your lover and sometimes later you get married to him and he is called your husband. Later you are divorced. Nothing happens within you; you are exactly the same and the other person is exactly the same. But something has changed. Your belief that she or he is so and so has changed. How could it change so completely and disappear so thoroughly? Because it was never there. The whole thing was total nonsense and therefore it was easy to drop it. If there was something, it would leave a trace.

To see this clearly for oneself, is the arising of sincerity. How is it done? You need sincerity to make this happen. But when this happens, when this conviction arises, then the mind is nothing but only a word and the thought is a thought. It is like the movement of air.

When that stage is reached, there is a clear understanding that all these images that prevail in the mind are fictitious. They seem to exist only because you have decided that they exist. When that point is reached, the solid reality of the thought is gone. Thought continues to be a thought and mind continues to be a bundle of thoughts. They are not accepted as real. When what has been assumed to be true is seen to be not true, the awareness of the truth arises without any difficulty.

Mam upetya punarjanma dukkhalayam asasvatam napunvanti mahatmanah samsiddhim paramam gatah - (VIII.15)

Having attained Me, these great souls do not again take birth in this world which is the place of pain and is impermanent; they have reached the highest perfection.

That is the supreme state of perfection - 'samsiddhim'.

A brahma bhuvanal lokah punaravar tino' rjuna mam upetya tu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyatet' - (VIII.16)

All the worlds, including the world of the creator, are subject to return (re-manifestation) again, O Arjuna; but he who reaches Me has no rebirth.

Sahasrayugaparyantam agar yad brahm ano viduh ratri yugasahasrantam te horat ra vido janah

Those people who know the day of Brahma - the creator, which is of a duration of a thousand ages and the night which is also of a thousand ages duration, they know the real meaning of night and day.

What does the word yuga mean? Yuga means an epoch, an astronomical period of time. Yuga means coming together. Evening and morning are both yugas. A thousand yugas might mean different things to many people. When night is dissolved, the world comes into being. How is it that I feel I am the same person again and the world I wake into is also the same world? Even so the so-called Brahma who remains awoken for a thousand yugas and remains asleep for a 1000 yugas thinks that the world has gone. He wakes up and thinks that the world has come into being again. And since, a 1000 yugas have elapsed in the meantime . There is absolutely no reason for this. Time has no sense, no value.

Your lifetime itself may be composed of a 1000 yugas or 1000 days and 1000 nights. We cling to those concepts as if they are invaluablely real, only because we have not enquired into them. In the case of the mosquito, their yuga, life time is 3 days, but they do not know it is only 3 days. They have a whole life time. Yuga may mean different things and we are caught in some sort of ideas and ideals. Ideas of time, of events, of life and death, of existence, of non-existence. Ideas that I existed before I went to sleep. I existed during sleep and I am the same person who wakes up after I went to bed last night.

And in the same way, when the body is dropped, you probably wake up and continue to think that I was the same person who enjoyed or suffered in another body, and the same ego continues. The continuation of the ego is questioned by Buddha. There is no ego to continue or to perpetuate, but there is a thought that seems to transmit its energy which keeps the whole cycle going. You have to work at it and realise it for yourself.

At one level it seems to be unbroken; at another level it seems to be broken. Broken by 2 states called waking and sleep. One who investigates into this truth realises that the reality is consciousness infinite, eternal, cosmic. He who realises this is not born again and he attains perfection.

Talk 6 - Enlightenment

This chapter on death and how to die contains two extra important special messages.

One is:

bhutamah sa eva' yam bhutva-bhutva praliyate ratryagame' vasah partha prabhava - (VIII.19)

This same multitude of beings being born again and again, is dissolved, helplessly, at the coming of the night and comes forth at the coming of the day.

The whole of creation is compared to the successions of nights and days. It is a very interesting thing if we contemplate the truth concerning this without thinking, but by merely observing. Observe a leaf swinging, a branch swinging, a tree swaying or the blade of an electric fan rotating. The fan stays where it is. It does not move. And whatever moves seems to move a little while away from wherever it was and then returns to it. It is a funny movement and if you have observed a very fast moving wheel, in a sugar factory you can see it too. If it is moving very fast, you do not even see the movement. It seems to be still. And even so the earth rotating on its own axis seems still. These are 'nyo 'vyakto 'vyaktat - he two states that everything seems to undergo. The same idea is expressed in the words 'nasyatsu na vinasyati'. These expressions used here have more or less the same connotation, not necessarily meaning 'coming and going'. Not necessarily going from here to there, but merely appearing and disappearing. Things which appeared to be obvious suddenly begin to fade, and after some time it is just not there. They have disappeared. What has disappeared does not exist. It is not that something is destroyed. Nothing can be destroyed. There are two states: one - vyaktam, manifest' and the other - avyaktam, unmanifest. We see in nature, in everything that exists, the succession of these two states. During the night things disappear, and appear again at day time.

Is the world, including me, the body, exactly what it was last night? There may have been some changes. Here we are told that the things disappeared during the night and appeared during the day. That is all we are concerned about. While all these are happening, the hair is getting grey, the teeth are falling, etc. But nothing really has happened. Why? Because we are tied to the tree of this creation. We are attached to the tree of this creation. This is the most important factor to remember. It looks as though that what applies to a leaf on a tree, what applies to the succession of day and night in relation to the earth, applies to living beings in a certain different way.

There is the expression 'the tree has gone into the seed'. That is probably what happens to us. The tree that is coming up, blooming up, has suddenly gone

into seed - which means it returns to the seed. The entire tree has come into that seed and the seed falls. You think another tree has gone up. It is not another tree, but the same thing continuing. The whole thing grows, goes into seed, returns to the seed, leaves again, and returns back to seed. Nothing happens. As long as there is ignorance, as long as there is non-understanding of the ultimate reality of truth or God, this thing goes on.

Paras tasmāt ty bhavo 'nyo 'vyakto 'vyaktat sanatanah yah sa sarvesu bhutesu nasyatsu na vinasyati - (VIII.20)

But verily there exists, higher than the Unmanifested, another unmanifested Eternal Being, who is not destroyed when all beings are destroyed (dissolved).

Everything goes on like this. They do not move from one place to another as long as they are tied to an identity. As long as you think you are a Jiva, you are so and so and you want to become this or that, you are tied to the tree and you keep on revolving. That is called samsara. A fan swings but does not move one single inch; and we have been swinging for the past 30 or 40 or 60 years and we have not moved half an inch. You may go around the world, but there is no movement, nothing happens. In all this seemingly feverish activity, nothing happens, until one is able to see the totality. In the totality there is no movement. When there is fragmented consciousness, when the awareness is limited in time, limited in space, when you look at it merely during the period of its appearance, of its disappearance, when you look at it only when it is here and elsewhere, then you are confused. Then you think you are born, you are dead, you are doing this, achieving this. Tremendous things have been built, tremendous work has been accomplished. All this is nothing. All this is the result in the limitation in awareness. When that limitation is gone, the totality is realised - and in that there is no movement, no change.

The heart pumps a great amount of blood per minute. But we are not aware of this thing, which flows all the time. We are the whole thing in which the blood flows. That is the point. In the totality called God, there is no movement. Or to put it even more correctly, there is tremendous movement in that which is called God. But in relation to God, there is no movement. All that happens within Him. There is no change in that totality, no fragmentation in that totality, there is no division in that totality, and therefore there is not even a distinction between life and death, between appearance and disappearance, between creation and destruction, between birth and death. It is all there, all the time merely swinging. Appearance and disappearance are the two faces of the same reality that continue to chase each other in succession. He who knows this is not deluded.

The last few verses of this chapter give us a glimpse of these two parts.

Agnir jyotir ahah suklah sanmasa uttarayenam xtatra prayata gacchanti
brahma brahmavido janah - (VIII.24)

Fire, light, daytime, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern path of the sun (the northern solstice) - departing then (by these) men who have known Brahman, go to Brahman.

Dhumo rattris tatha krsnah sanmasa daksinayanam tatra candramasam jyotir
yogi prapya nivartate - (VIII.25)

Attaining to the lunar light by smoke, night time, the dark fortnight also, the six months of the southern path of the sun (the southern solstice), the Yogi returns.

The story is told of Bhisma who fell sometime in December and it is said that he kept himself alive till the middle of January because of this understanding that it should leave the body after the sun has commenced the northwards journey. There is also another problem introduced and that is 'brahma brahmavido janah'. One will attain enlightenment if he dies during the uttarayana, but also he must know Brahma. When he who has attained enlightenment, drops the body during uttarayana, he attains brahmajnana.

Only the knowers of Brahman and enlightened people who drop the body during uttarayana would go to Brahman. That is obvious; but it is possible to look at it in a different light and that is the difference between light and darkness. If the body is dropped when there is light in your mind, you are enlightened. When the body is dropped when you are sunk in darkness, you are still asleep. It is as simple as that. That is tremendous and of great value. So at the time the body is to be dropped is there an enlightened awakened awareness of consciousness or is there unawareness unconsciousness, ignorance.

And Krishna therefore warns: nai' te srti partha janan yogi muhyatikascena '
(III.27).

One who understands this is never deluded. The man who dies in fire, light, in daytime, uttarayana, attains enlightenment. If he dies in smoke, at night, during the daksinayana, he returns to earth again.

Knowing this, how can one be free from delusion. It is possible if you understand it in a different light; that is - if the mind is completely free of confusion. That unconfused and uncluttered mind leads you to instant enlightenment. If the mind is confused, if there is darkness, if you do not know where you are coming and going, you keep dreaming dreams of achievement, dreaming dreams of 'I am going to do this'. And since other people have been dreaming these similar dreams which might come into conflict with your dreams, you will be reborn again in a world like this - to enjoy, suffer, fight, love, hate. All this will continue. You come back here. It is

not as if you are going somewhere and then coming back here. You do not go anywhere; just as in dream there is a feeling that you are born to some place and then you wake up and find that you have not moved at all. You are still in your room. So the confused mind, the buddhi keeps this swinging, keeps the pendulum going. And when that confusion is removed, when there is light and the body is dropped at the same time, then there is no return to this life of pain and death.

'tasmāt sarveṣu kalesu' - As you do not know when the body is going to be dropped, therefore remain inwardly awake all the time. This is the message of the 8th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita - to remain alert, awake to the fact that our consciousness is perverted, twisted, that the mind is cluttered, that it identifies itself with this body and all things that are related to this body. As long as that identification lasts, you are rooted in this earth, and therefore the tree has to grow up and go to seed and come back. As long as the tree is rooted to the soil, as long as the blades of the fan are tied to the fan, it has to keep on revolving. And therefore, one should carry on this practice of enquiring in the relationship between consciousness and the body, the mind, and the life force throughout the period when the body seems to be 'me'. When there is a feeling that 'I am this body' or 'this body is mine', as long as that feeling lasts, one should be vigilant and examine this problem. When the body aches, why do I think I am suffering from pain? When the body enjoys, why is there the feeling that I enjoy? That is the whole essence of the two approaches. The ascetic approach and the so-called tantric approach.

This enquiry must go on as long as there is even the tiniest filament which binds the consciousness of the awareness to this body. If this inner awareness is awake and shining bright, if the life span comes to an end, if this swinging comes to an end, and if the association of this body and mind which keeps it going comes to an end, at that time then there are no more dreams. You are awakened and this is called enlightenment or moksha.

Om