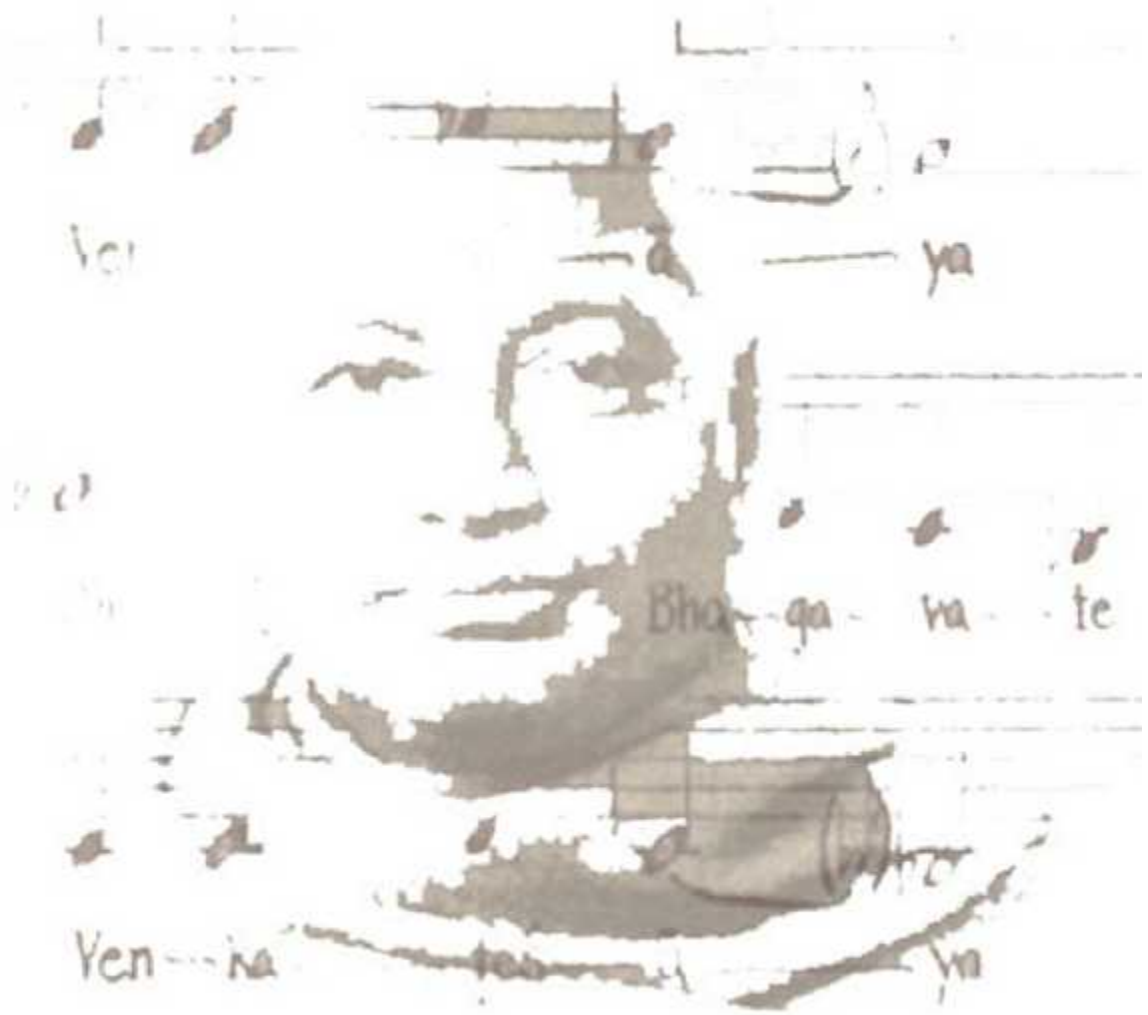


**Philosophy  
Psychology and  
Practice of Yoga**



Om Namah Venkatesaya  
Om Namah Shivaya

# The Philosophy, Psychology and Practice of Yoga

Swami Venkatesananda

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# The Philosophy, Psychology and Practice of Yoga

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These lectures were given by Swami Venkatesananda to students of the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy course in Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, Himalayas, India, in Nov/Dec. 1980 and Jan. 1991, at the invitation of the Divine Life Society.

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## Foreword

The philosophy, psychology and practice of Yoga is one of the subjects chosen for instruction in the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy of the Divine Life Society. It needs no mention that the handling of this intricate theme, which covers almost everything which can be regarded as a foundation of the different branches of learning in their basic structure, calls for great ability on the part of the teacher, even as it demands an immense receptiveness from the well prepared student.

Before I venture to say anything in connection with the present publication, I deeply regret that this book should come out of the press after the noble author has been called back from this world into realms where He is perhaps needed more than anywhere else. HH Sri Swami Venkatesananda Maharaj, with Whom we have all lived and worked for many years in the Ashram of the Divine Life Society, and Who is the author of several important treatises on Yoga and Vedanta, is now no more to see physically the emerging of this very valuable book consisting of His lectures on the subject which He delivered in the Academy of the Society. Swamiji's lectures kind writings have always been down-to-the-earth, practical and of immediate utility as a direction to people in their daily lives.

The material content of this publication embodies the theoretical basis which is the philosophy, the analytical investigation which is the psychology and a discussion of the methodology and way of the implementation of the doctrine which is the practice of Yoga. Since the book which is so elevating and interesting will speak by itself, I conclude with a prayer to the Almighty that the divine spirit of the respected Swamiji, who is not with us now, may rest in the Peace of the Eternal.

Swami Krishnananda

## 1. Communication

It is not possible to understand yoga and vedanta through books, but only when you live with someone like Swami Sivananda - Who embodies the truth of yoga and Vedanta, where you see it, not just think about it. During these few sessions we shall attempt to directly see the truth, not just think about it.

There is a big difference between a class like this, and a lecture situation. The more incomprehensible a lecture is, the greater the impression produced, but then there is no understanding. In a class we are all seeking and working together, and if someone who is speaking is not able to communicate with those who are hearing, it is waste of time. If the listener dozes off, there is no feedback. The energy of the speaker comes from the listener.

The following beautiful verse is recited before the daily reading of the Bhagavad Gita:

sarvopanisado gavo dogdhagopalanandanah partho vatsah sudhir bhokta dugdham gitamritam mahat

The Upanishads here are likened to a cow. The cowherd is Krishna. The hearer (Arjuna) is the calf who draws out the milk. In other words, this verse suggests that even Krishna would not have been able to release that wisdom if Arjuna had not been receptive. There is an interesting legend to make this clearer. The Bhagavad Gita was taught on the battle-field just before the war commenced, and in that stress situation Arjuna did not have time to sit down and contemplate the message. Long afterwards Arjuna sought Krishna again and said: "Many years ago when we were about to fight, I collapsed, and you gave me a brilliant exposition of philosophy. I have forgotten that. Won't you repeat?" Krishna replied: "I was in a different mood then, because you were in a receptive mood. It is not possible to recapture it now. But I remember vaguely what was said, so I'll repeat it." (This is the scripture called Anugita, which is not as inspiring as the Bhagavad Gita.)

It is the class situation that brings out the inspiration and communication. So, whatever the speaker says, the hearer has to understand very clearly. Then, when you also work as hard as I work (not merely sit down, listen and go away), it is possible for us together to understand the philosophy, the psychology and the practice of yoga.

What is philosophy, what is psychology, and what is meant by the practice of yoga? We should understand these basic terms very carefully, otherwise we assume an incorrect meaning, and get lost. If you understand the simplest meaning of the word, it is possible to see the truth in it. For instance, what does the word 'philosophy' mean? 'Sophy' means wisdom, and 'philo' means love, devotion to, friendship, affection. So, philosophy means 'a total love for wisdom'. If that is not there, then we are wasting out time. Philosophy is not a text book or a syllabus that you study at the college, but the total dedication to the search for

wisdom. Someone very rightly (according to me) said that there is no philosophical system in Hinduism. We do not have a philosophical system, we are philosophy. Some have tried to construct some sort of philosophical systems into the Upanishads according to the Western pattern, but that is not possible. The philosophical system that the Westerners are thinking of is a very rigid pattern, there is neither wisdom nor affection in it. It is just a book, it does not inspire wisdom in you. It confuses the mind, disturbs the heart. Western philosophers have always regarded philosophy as a sort of intellectual gymnastics, where you are considered a great philosopher if what you say is terribly confusing. Gurudev Sivananda discouraged this type of dry intellectualism. Philosophy is not intellectualism. Wisdom is a simple thing, and one must see it directly - not think about it. Thinking about wisdom is waste of time, like thinking about food at lunch time. Hence, in India, Yoga and Vedanta are known as darshana - direct seeing or experience.

This three-month course is the beginning of an adventure. After this course you must be so utterly dissatisfied, that for the rest of your life, you must be looking for confirmation, or better understanding of what you have learnt here. Though you might perhaps share whatever you have learnt here with others (just as I am doing now), the heart should never be satisfied. Satisfaction is death to the heart and the spirit. When you have attained enlightenment, you are perfectly satisfied (what they call Krita kritya), but not till then.

What is psychology ? Psychology is truth concerning the psyche. Usually, they say that psyche is the mind, though perhaps it means a lot more than that. Surely, mind itself means a lot more than what we have come to regard as mind. Superficially it is the thinking instrument, but what is that power, what is that energy that makes the mind aware? What is the content of awareness? What is the meaning of awareness? What is the meaning of consciousness? This is what we should try to discover. This discovery is made by insight - that which sees into oneself, into this awareness, into this consciousness, into this mind. The Kena Upanishad hints that that supreme principle within which enables all these to happen, is God - the mind of mind, the life of life.

The religious quest is directed towards the realisation of God. How do you know what God is? If you already know what God looks like, you know God. Then what are you looking for? If you do not know God at all, how will you recognise Him if you see Him? Both ways you are caught. To avoid this impasse, they introduced the Guru - Jesus Christ, your Guru, or Buddha, and He points out, 'This is God, bow down'. Now comes a difficulty. Will you accept that or not? You might think: 'What is He trying to do to me, is He cheating me or indulging in some kind of mesmerism, hypnotism, black magic?' This is because you have no faith either in God or the Guru. If you have no faith in the Guru, you will suspect whatever He says, even when He points to God - which means you are not sincere, mature or eager in the first place. Therefore, in both yoga and Vedanta, they insisted upon maturity - adhikara. In ancient times the Enlightened Ones remained incognito, unperceived, unrecognised. They 'veiled' themselves, so that only the mature

disciple went to them, in a state of readiness. Then it was very easy for them to indicate the truth, and the disciple was enlightened.

That is perhaps what was meant by the holy ghost. In German the word 'geist' means mind. So, the holy ghost is a purified, mature, sincere, virtuous mind, a mind that is ready and eager - which naturally seeks the truth. In that natural search for the truth, you may need some help, which comes to you as your Guru, as God almighty, as the Son in Christianity. So, the holy ghost takes the help of the Son (or the Guru) and finds God (the Father).

How does the mind become holy? If the mind becomes holy, who makes it holy? Does it make itself holy? How? Psychology is meant to find the answers. The psychology of yoga demands that we should directly understand the mind, not think about it. For instance, supposing you have a bowl in which somebody had put some cowdung. (Very often we use cowdung to clean with) Would you want to clean that vessel with a little more cowdung? Thinking about thought is like washing a cowdung vessel with some more cowdung, it will lead you nowhere. There is another method, which is often recommended, and which may be very useful in its own context. That is, never mind about this filth. Pour some good ideas into the mind, and then the filth will go away. I am not discouraging this. Even Gurudev Swami Sivananda liked it very much, but there are some 'ifs' and 'buts'. If you pour a whole pint of milk into the cowdung vessel, will the cowdung go away? No - unless you pour probably one tanker of milk. What must you do? Look at it, see that 'this is cowdung, this is ugly, filthy'. Then you will know how to clean it. However, since the mind is not material like cowdung, the 'seeing' (awareness) itself is the cleaning.

The psychology of yoga demands that you should look at the mind, become aware of it - not think about it. Studying the states of the mind is also useless for our purposes. Instead, is it possible for us to look directly at the mind and to become aware of it? That is the psychology of yoga.

Both the philosophy and psychology must immediately manifest themselves in practice. If you are totally dedicated to wisdom (philosophy), and if you directly understand the mind (or directly become aware of it), then you are practising yoga. It is not as though you must first understand the philosophy and psychology, and then go somewhere and practise yoga. No. While you are doing this, you are practising yoga. The truth of yoga will manifest itself in your daily life, if you are sincere, earnest and keen.

Though Swami Sivananda has left an enormous amount of literature for the transmission of the theory of yoga and vedanta, He did not set great store by a theoretical or intellectual understanding of yoga or vedanta. If I close my eyes now, I can almost see and hear Him emphasize "Yoga and vedanta must live in you. Your daily life must be vedanta." Therefore, one of the first books He wrote was entitled 'Vedanta in Daily Life', and another one, 'Yoga in Daily Life' - how not merely to translate all these theories into one's daily life, but to live it. The



difference is that, if you are translating the yogic or vedantic doctrines in your daily life, you know that you are practising yoga, you know that you are applying the principles of vedanta to your daily life. But, if you are living yoga, if you are living vedanta, then you do not know. Others may discover that you are a yogi or an enlightened person. That was what He wanted us to become.

## 2. This is Wisdom

When you are wise, there must be an inner joy - when this wisdom is absent, there must be some restlessness. Wisdom is your best friend. According to the Bhagavad Gita:

bandhur atmi 'tmanas tasya yena 'tmai 'va 'tmana jitah anatmanas tu satrutve varteta  
'tmai 'va satruvat (VI-6)

"The self is the friend of the self for him who has conquered himself by the self; but to the unconquered self, this self stands in the position of the enemy like the external foe."

You are your own best friend, and you are your own enemy. You are your own best friend when you have won yourself over by yourself. It does not mean that you conquer - 'to conquer' means that you fight with someone, and put him down, and sit on him. When someone stronger than you thus conquers you, you want to get up and kick him off! That is what the mind (or whatever it is in you) does when you conquer it. 'Winning over' is quite a different thing. Swami Sivananda's approach was to wean your mind from running astray and win it over, so that it naturally does not pursue pleasure. Such a mind becomes your friend. When this happens there is wisdom.

When you hear the word 'philosopher', you hear the two words 'philo' and 'sopher' - 'suffer'. So, the philosopher who analyses man, God and world, suffers! He has found neither wisdom nor peace. If you want to be philosophy (which mean that you are in love with wisdom), the path is quite different. Within yourself there is an inner joy, which is quite different from pleasure. Pleasure disturbs the mind, but this inner joy enables the mind to rest.

What is this wisdom, having found which one is not disturbed at heart? There is a very big difference between the word and the substance. The philosopher usually takes words for the substance. He uses the words 'Isvara', 'God', and 'Atman', as if they are real substances. They are not - but they probably indicate something which one has to investigate and discover.

The two words 'yoga' and 'jnana' are often regarded as completely different and distinct. In the Bhagavad Gita, you have these two used almost interchangeably as synonyms. What is yoga? Krishna says:

yam labdhva cha 'paran labham manyate na'dhikam tatah yasmin sthito na dukkhena guruna  
'pi vichalyate (VI-22)  
tam vidyad dukkhasamyogaviyogam yogasamjnitam (VI-23 line1)

"... which, having obtained, he thinks there is no other gain superior to it; wherein established, he is not moved even by heavy sorrow. Let that be known by the name of yoga, the severance from union with pain."

That having realised, which you do not crave anything, and established in, which the greatest calamity doesn't have the least effect on you. That is yoga. That is jnana also.

It is perhaps very easy to say this, and of course easier to listen to all this. It is perhaps not terribly difficult to apply this to your daily life, and endure small losses and misfortunes. But what is hinted at here is perhaps very different, very sublime, very holy. I saw this in the life of our divine Master, Swami Sivananda. What would normally have destroyed our peace of mind and our tranquillity, what might have made us insane (not merely have a nervous breakdown), did not touch Him at all. It is not as though He recognised these as calamities, and reacted one way or another - in a saintly or not-so-saintly way. He was endowed with a certain insight, a certain vision of the truth concerning life and the world, so that He looked at those events in a light that is very different from ours. During the few years I was at His Feet, there was a financial crisis at least once a year in the ashram. After some time, even we became immune to it, but not in the sense in which He was. He almost looked forward to the next financial crisis. In one such extremely grave situation we observed the way Swami Sivananda behaved, and it was extraordinary. On His face you could see not resignation, not acceptance, but the recognition: "This is God's will. This is as it is, as it should be. Isn't it marvellous that God has given us this wonderful gift of a collapse". And when the financial crisis was brought about by one person who had embezzled a lot of money, He refused even to be drawn into an adverse criticism of that person, but kept on reminding us "He was a great worker. He was a man of great renunciation. He had such wonderful qualities", so that, while the others were looking at the dark side of the picture, to Swami Sivananda Himself only the bright side existed. He wasn't even aware of the dark side. This is something extraordinary. I do not know if it is possible to put it into words - one had to see such a phenomenon as Swami Sivananda to understand this.

This is wisdom, which directly perceives a certain oneness in diverse beings - in all beings. As Gurudev very beautifully put it in the Universal Prayer: "Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms". When we become swamis, we put on these orange clothes and change our names. A name is merely like a collar you put around your dog, in order that you may recognise it, and not throw a piece of bread to another dog. It has no more value than that. Many great saints did not have names at all. A saint doesn't need a name. He doesn't have a bank account, a passport or legal documents. But, in order to recognise him, you give him a name. So, name and form are creations of your own mind, meant to make your life easy. This does not imply that diversity is somehow affixed to reality. If you go to the ashram kitchen right now, you will see a mountain of roti, rice and vegetables, which will be consumed by all of us, and will become all of us. The same mountain of rice becomes diverse bodies. It is one, yet later it somehow appears to be different, diverse. That which recognises this is wisdom.

He seems to be he, I seem to be I, but in and through this, there is something which is one, indivisible. This hall seems to be a certain entity, the library another, and the temple a third, and so on. But if all these walls are pulled down, that which was, 'is', and ever will be, the space being forever indivisible. That which recognises this is wisdom, is satvic. All else is non-wisdom. The Yoga

## Sutras of Patanjali define the opposite of wisdom as

anitya 'suchi du'ikha 'natmasu nitya suchi sukha 'tma khyatir avidya (Sutra II-5)

Asuchi - impure, dukkha - sorrow, anatmasu - not self. In these, the perverted understanding of unwisdom sees permanency, purity, happiness and self. Self-realisation is considered to be the goal of yoga and vedanta. In that case, what is the self? Do you have a nice image of the self seated in the heart, shining resplendent like a tube lamp? The self or the subject is 'That which cannot be seen'. Then, how are you going to see it, to realise it? Because you can become aware of what can be seen, you say that it is an object, and that it is not the self. Yet there is a dreadful misunderstanding or confusion that the body is the self. Whatever happens to the body, you assume happens to you - "I am suffering", "I am happy", "I am hungry", "I am full". Whether you use these expressions or not, there is an inner experience which still identifies the self (subject) with the body (object).

Quite a number of very holy men refer to themselves in the third person: "Give this something to eat". If you do that, you have not used the word 'I'. But look within, and see if there is a thought or a feeling within you that 'my' body is hungry. Sivananda never wanted to appear as an enlightened person by using such gimmicks as "Give this something to eat." What is it that creates this confusion? That is avidya. You are still thinking.

As long as the mind is thinking, you are unable to see it. Seeing is very different from thinking. For instance, when this book is held up, first you see something. Then the name and form arise as soon as you begin to think about it. But without thinking you can still see it. Similarly, are you able to see this confusion without thinking about it?

Wisdom is not a gimmick. Removal of avidya is not a gimmick, but a very real problem, which has to be solved in a very real way. Only vidya (or jnana) is an antidote to this avidya. One attains vidya or jnana through viveka. Viveka or unbroken wisdom is when you are so steadily and firmly established in this wisdom, that it is continuous, whatever you are doing, and wherever you are. If that arises, you will not mistake what is impermanent for permanent. You know that the body is impermanent - use it, live in it nicely, wisely - and when the time comes, drop it. You do not think that it is permanent, but that does not mean that you are asked to think that it does not exist! It does exist, but it is not permanent. That is pure vision, clairvoyance.

When this viveka becomes continuous, there is comprehension of the reality as such, and the heart (or this awareness) constantly seeks the reality. That is the nature of wisdom. Krishna also suggested this in the Bhagavad Gita, when he commanded Arjuna "Therefore at all times contemplate me, and do what has to be done." Wisdom and action must go together. It is in and through life that this wisdom has to be realised. Swami Sivananda was very fond of this particular

phrase in the Bhagavad Gita, and He quoted it on almost every occasion that He talked or lectured. It was heard by millions in 1950, during the All India Tour, and also during the ashram celebrations, when He used to address the gatherings. He used to turn to the women in the audience and tell them: "This is how you can combine remembrance of God with your daily chores. While you are preparing roti and clapping your hands over the dough, sing God's name - "Jaya siyaram jaya jaya siyaram ..." The roti is made, and at the same time you remember God. "With a little training and practise," Swami used to impress upon us, "this is not only possible, but easy, and its benefits are incalculable." That which befriends this wisdom, which forever seeks this wisdom - and which doesn't want to be separated from this wisdom, is philosophy.

### 3. What Has To Be Done

What is the source of wisdom? Jesus said: "The kingdom of God is within you," but that was Jesus' realisation, not yours. It is not enough simply to believe this. 'Tat twam asi' (that thou art) is the Guru's realisation, not yours. The Master's realisation must become your realisation, otherwise it is not real. Until that time the sources of wisdom are the scriptures and the Guru. In the Gita Krishna says: "Therefore the scripture is your authority." We can possibly depend on the scripture alone, but that is not easy. You read the scripture, and your own mind interprets it. Sankaracharya in Viveka Chudamani says that for the wise and for the idiot, scriptures are of no use.

The Bhagavad Gita says that truth can be known if you resort to a Guru. What does the Guru do to you? He teaches you, converses with you. So, the scripture is a visual source, and the teacher is an audio-visual source. There is something more; non verbal communication. Together all these form our sources of wisdom.

Since we cannot draw upon the source of wisdom within ourselves, we look outside. Who is it that looks outside for wisdom? Me! 'I' want wisdom. What is the nature of that 'me'? Who is I? What is seeking that wisdom?

The seeker within 'me' is subject to one or the other of the three qualities (guna) of nature - satva, rajas and tamas. Swami Sivananda was insistent that one should remain constantly aware of which guna prevails within. As I close my eyes, I can see Him standing there thundering: "Do you know which guna prevails in you? Do you know what vritti prevails in you at this moment?" Even though He did not indulge in too much of philosophising during His talks and discourses, He made it very clear that the dynamic service that He emphasized was to be combined with a continuous unbroken inner awareness or insight, which alone remains aware of which guna and which vritti prevail. Another aspect of this should not be lost sight of, and that is that He insisted that, if you are aware which guna prevails when, you can adjust your activity to take the fullest advantage of it. If satva prevails, meditate, study, worship. If rajas prevails, do something dynamic. If there is tamas, probably you need some rest, so sleep.

It goes without saying that one could see from His face, from the way He conducted His own daily life, that He Himself was constantly aware of which guna prevailed when. Naturally, when the awareness is thus trained and awakened, one moves closer and closer to satva, rajas is flavoured by satva, and tamas is kept at a minimum. Satva is something close to truth, reality - sat. If your awareness is of satvic nature, there is almost immediate grasping of the reality. Rajas not only means activity, dynamism, but also dusty - a dusty mirror does reflect, but it is not a clear reflection. Tamas means total darkness, inertia, and an unwillingness to put forth effort. We can visualise these three as coloured lenses. Each colour gives the object a different appearance.

The receptacle of the inspiration for the arousal of this inner wisdom is what

matters most. It should be uncluttered and uncoloured. That is why the great masters insist that the preparation for self-realisation is more difficult and more important than self-realisation itself! Hence Krishna insists: "Yoga should be practised for self purification" - atma suddhaye. Meditation and yoga practice purify the inner receptacle, so that the inspiration is undistorted.

The inner receptacle is called buddhi, awakened intelligence. It is not wisdom itself, it is not yet capable of rising to those heights where you see just oneness alone in all diversity - which is wisdom, jnana.

pravrittim cha nivrittim cha karyakarye bhayabhaye bandham moksham ciza ya vetti buddhih sa partha sattviki yaya dharmam adharma cha karyam cha karyam eva cha ayathavat prajanati buddhih sa partha rajasi adharma dharmam iti ya manyate tamasa vrita sarvarthan viparitanshcha buddhih sa partha tamasi (XVIII-30,31,32).

'That which knows the path of work and that of renunciation, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation - that intellect is satvic (pure), O Arjuna. 'That by which one wrongly understands dharma and adharma and also what ought to be done and what ought not to be done - that intellect, O Arjuna, is rajasic (middling). That which, enveloped in darkness, sees adharma as dharma and all things perverted - that intellect, O Arjuna, is tamasic (stupid).'

The satvic buddhi knows nivritti and pravritti. (One leads you away from involvement in the world, the other leads you towards involvement in the world.) The satvic awakened intelligence knows what has to be done. Krishna says: "Karyam karma - do what has to be done," but doesn't define what has to be done, it is left to you. What you have to do is very different from what I have to do. It is a waste of time to imitate one-another. The awakened intelligence does not do that.

Swami Sivananda in the thirties lived in Swarg-ashram among great yogis of different types, and yet did not imitate any of them. He took it upon himself to serve them all. Whenever there was satsang, He arranged the platform, carpets, cushions, etc., so they could all be comfortable. He knew "This I can do." They had their special faculties; He had something else to contribute to that company of saints (that was his genius); with the result that He outshone them all - but that was not His intention. What has to be done, and what has not to be done, must be very clear, and therefore imitation had to be ruled out. The intelligence that is satvic knows what has to be feared, and when the fear is psychological, pathological, unwarranted, irrational. One had to observe this in a great master like Swami Sivananda to know where self-respect ends and arrogance begins, where timidity ends and humility begins.

One has to learn the difference between meekness and weakness, when to bend down and when not to, when to fear and when not to. Both bending down and not bending down can be attributed to arrogance. Here one sees the beauty of appropriate action - and it needs an awakened intelligence which is satvic. The behaviour of our master was incomprehensible to us, because we looked at Him

through our glasses, our lenses, and they were not pure.

Swamiji was not afraid of public opinion, but that did not mean that He defied public opinion. These are two different things. We may be afraid of public opinion, and so avoid action, or we may defy public opinion, to assert ourselves. We have a rigid pattern of behaviour. Swamiji took into account public opinion, social customs, the spiritual goal, the end, the means - and these were all reflected in His conduct. Sometimes it may be necessary to defy public opinion. For instance, in the early days, the heads of ashrams could be seen walking with disciples behind carrying things for them. But Swami Sivananda preferred to walk alone until Jan. 8, 1950. No one dared to walk with Him, and so He had to carry His own things - various bags containing medicine for the sick, books and money to distribute to the people He met. Some of the other swamis criticised this and called Him a householder, because He carried money and so many other things. Also, He would dance and sing chants, which wasn't done by swamis. He did it because it had to be done - not to flout others' opinion.

What sort of awakened intelligence is it that can derive inspiration from the scripture or the Guru? The awakened intelligence that is satvic knows what is bondage and what is freedom; what are one's limitations and to what extent one is free. It needs great humility and almost impossible courage to understand this. When one says egoistically, "I don't feel this cold" (though inwardly he is shivering), that is arrogance. Another person says, "This cold is terrible. I can't bear it", he is weak. Where do these meet? How to distinguish one from the other? Once again you have to see it manifest in a great being like Swami Sivananda. If it was cold, He put on an overcoat. He did not indulge the body, but gave it what it needed, and made it work.

If one is able to see through all this, then one can recognise that that intelligence is awake, and it is pure and satvic. Such a person is capable of deriving wisdom from everything in this world. All beings become his guru. When he talks, there is communication, when he looks into a scripture, it becomes immediately clear to him, and when he talks to an enlightened person, there is perfect communication.



## 4. The Need for a Clear Vision

Jnana is considered to be of two distinct types. One is known as paroksha jnana and the other is aparoksha jnana. The scripture and the teacher are said to be the source of paroksha jnana. Paroksha literally means 'somebody else's eyes'. So paroksha jnana is wisdom which belongs to other people's eyes, it is not yours! What the teacher says is true to him, not to you. It is of no relevance whatsoever to you, but people foolishly believe that that is some kind of a wisdom which is of great use. I don't know if you have seen this phenomenon - supposing you phone someone in Bombay : "Hello. The sky is very clear here. How is it there ?" and he answers, "It is raining". You say, "Oh, I see." You see nothing! The sky is clear here. What do you mean by saying that you see it is raining? It is merely a figure of speech, a bunch of words that mean nothing. That is paroksha jnana.

Aparoksha jnana is a fantastic word. It is merely 'not someone else's vision'. They do not say that it is your vision, that that which you see with your own eyes is jnana. No, that which you see with your own eyes is not jnana; that which you hear with your own ears is not jnana; that which you cook up with your own brain is not jnana. What is jnana? Keep quiet! You will understand. So, someone else's point of view is useless to you, and it is quite possible that your point of view is equally useless to him.

Sat is the reality. Satva is the characteristic of that reality. It is not the true reality itself, because reality cannot be grasped - but it is that which is very close to reality. In terms of the examples we have been using of coloured lenses, it is the ultra-violet lens. It is clear. There is no tint, no coloring. It is transparent. Whatever is satva, is transparent, it doesn't distort. There is no distortion of the truth; but it is not the total reality, it is only one point of view.

All of us have jnana and buddhi or awakened intelligence. Even vegetables have buddhi - that is the reason why a pumpkin grows into a pumpkin, and a potato grows into a potato! Everything has buddhi, awakened intelligence, and everything has jnana. The entire universe is pervaded by jnana. There is a long mantra in the Aitareya Upanishad which declares : "Whatever there is in the world, moving or unmoving, is established in consciousness." But there is also this mysterious maya, which is of the nature of the three guna. When there is this satvic intelligence, there seems to be transparency and non distortion of reality, and the satvic buddhi knows what to do and what not to do, what should be feared and what should not be feared.

What happens when the buddhi wears tinted or colored glasses? If you are dull, if you are not aware, it is as if you are wearing dark glasses and riding a motorcycle at night. If rain falls on the glasses you will perhaps see the lights of the oncoming cars, but you don't know from which side they are coming. There is dangerous distortion of vision. The satvic buddhi sees reality as it is, and the rajasic buddhi sees something else, through blurred or distorted lens. You don't see a thing as it is, but you see something different.

sarvabhuteshu yenai 'kam bhavam avyayam ikshate avibhaktam vibhakteshu taj jnanam  
viddhi sattvikam - (XVIII-20)

I have seen this quite a number of times in Swamiji's life. Even when somebody approached Him with mischievous intention and wrong motive (which to others seemed to be apparent), He saw only the good points. He once said that it was impossible for Him to suspect anybody. Somebody came here years ago, when the ashram was very poor, and said "Swamiji, I am a very big business man in South India, and I want to add another wing to my business to distribute your books". He selected, collected, packed, and sent about 500 rupees worth of books to Madras, and said he would send a cheque. It is still to come. When the secretary complained, Swamiji said : "He is doing some good work. In the meantime, he is making a little money, but that doesn't matter. He is distributing jnana, spiritual knowledge, and that is what we are here for". That reaction is satvic.

prithaktvena to yaj jnanam nanabhavan prithagvidhan vetti sarveshu bhuteshu taj jnanam  
viddhi rajasam (XVIII-21)

In 1950, there was the kumbha mela in Haridwar, and a few hundred thousand people walked along the road near the ashram. In order to cater to the needs of the pilgrims, the ashram had established a small shed on the roadside, to give the pilgrims some buttermilk and water. We had also established a little bookstore, to distribute pamphlets. Swamiji also used to go there and sit for a little while. One day He heard a small group of young men singing nicely. Swamiji didn't understand Hindi very much, and so, whatever they sang was bhajan to Him. He asked the secretary to give them 20 rupees, fruits and sweets. Someone standing next to Swamiji told Him : "These are vagabonds. If you give them so much money, they will probably drink, smoke and misuse it." This is the rajasic point of view. If someone asks for money, without any suspicion or twisted logic, you can say : "I can give you" or "I can't give you". The transaction is over. But to say "Oh, why does he come to me? He has some mischievous intention" is imagination. You are introducing a perversion into it. That is the rajasic buddhi. You are still looking, and what is being looked at, is visible through the lens; but because of the splashing of the rain on the lens, you see things other than as they are.

In tamasic buddhi it is totally upside down. In 1945, some of us new recruits decided that we would bow down, and touch the feet of the senior swamis. The next day, I went before a certain swami, and bowed down to touch his feet. He said : "Why do you do this? You want me to touch your feet. That is why you are doing this." I had not the faintest intention of making him do that. His thinking was completely upside down.

Dharma is not merely righteousness or righteous conduct. The essential nature

of an object is its dharma. The dharma of water is to be liquid, the dharma of fire is to burn. When somebody does something, that is probably his nature - even if he is a hypocrite, that is his nature. To introduce some other element into this, which is entirely yours, is perversion.

If you have understood the beauty of the three modifications of buddhi - the transparent lens, the distorted lens and the darkened lens - then you will naturally understand that whatever is learnt from a teacher or a scripture, is not learnt at all! You are listening to a teacher or studying a scripture, your buddhi - your intelligence - is awake. Are you learning? How do you learn? You hear with your ear - hear, ear! Right in the middle of that word 'learn' there is also the word 'ear'. So, in order to learn, you need the ear. But what we call the ear is just a piece of flesh. Where is the ear? There is another word with ear right in the middle - heart. You hear with your heart. So, if you really want to learn, the ear with which you learn is in the heart, and the heart should wear a transparent lens.

Before you can attempt to even hear the truth, you must become an adhikari. In the beginning of the Yoga Vasistha, it is said that an adhikari is one who feels 'I am bound, may I be liberated'. He who is firmly determined to be liberated, can derive inspiration from this scripture, otherwise it makes no sense - if you are not an adhikari, it is as if you are wearing dark glasses. Then you blame the whole world that it is dark. Your own meaning seems to color the whole world, your whole life. That sort of jnana is, dangerous.

yat tu kritsnavad ekasmin karye saktam aheturkam atattvartha vad alpam cha tat tamasam udahritam (XVIII-22)

Jnana and buddhi are completely interrelated. If your buddhi is tamasic, the jnana that is derived through that buddhi is also tamasic. The tamasic buddhi thinks that one point of view is the absolute truth, which means that you think that your point of view is the only truth in the whole world. It may refer to your concept of god, your religious doctrine, your community, caste, religion. He who imagines that one fragment of existence is the totality of existence, has tamasic jnana.

When you hear this, perhaps in your heart there arises the feeling, "Ah, this is the basis for the yogis' tolerance." Tolerance is an inadequate and insufficient quality. We saw in the life of Swami Sivananda that He never exhibited tolerance. There was, of course, not the slightest trace of intolerance in Him; but He was not tolerant. He had His own faith, He had his own deity (if you wish to call it so), His own philosophy, His own teaching, His own ashram, His own disciples; but He loved, appreciated, admired, revered, honored all other doctrines, all other points of view, all other philosophies, and all other saints of all the religions of the world - not in a spirit of condescension or tolerance, but (that is the most beautiful thing) in the fullest realisation that 'that' is 'this'. It is not even a feeling of "This is

my point of view, and that is your point of view, you can have it," but the fullest realisation that your point of view is the same as 'my' point of view. We are both looking at the same truth. There is no difference. In Swami Sivananda's vision, there is, or there was, or there will always be, only one truth. That will be seen by diverse people from infinitely diverse points of view, and each one is exactly the same as the other.

What is so beautiful about Krishna, is that there is no condemnation of anything. I hope you appreciate that. He says : "This is tamasic jnana." One who says "I alone am right, all others are wrong," is tamasic. To get hold of a small fragment, and give that fragment the dignity of the totality, is tamasic.

Philosophy is the love of wisdom. Wisdom has to arise within in an aparoksha way - not 'my' point of view, nor anybody else's point of view. For aparoksha jnana to arise, it is possible that we need an external help, like a scripture or a teacher - but unless we make sure that we at least have satvic buddhi, the jnana that is derived from the scripture or the teacher is likely to get lost, or heavily distorted.

## 5. Five Sources of Sorrow

Philosophy is the pursuit of wisdom. What you love, you pursue. The mind automatically and naturally flows in that direction. That is why, in the Yoga Sutras, we are told that you can meditate upon anything that you love, for God dwells everywhere. But why don't you meditate upon this desk? Because you don't love it. Why then shouldn't you meditate upon your husband or your wife? Because then your mind is distracted. That is not love, but some kind of excitement. Only if there is love of wisdom is there a natural pursuit. We should understand quite clearly what wisdom is, and what unwisdom is; where this leads us, and where that leads us. If that is clear, then the heart loves wisdom, and the mind flows naturally towards wisdom (jnana). Love of jnana and jnana are one. So, philosophy is jnana, jnana is love, love (bhakti) is jnana. Gurudev used to point out very often that they go together. If you are wise, you will love wisdom. If you love wisdom, you will be wise.

Unwisdom can be 'ajnana' or 'avidya' - you can use a hundred words, but you still do not understand what it is. The Yoga Sutras state that there are five sources of our sorrow. Avidya is the first. Then comes asmita - the feeling 'I am this', not merely the feeling 'I am'. In other texts you have two words - ahambhavana and ahankara. There is a slight difference which one must appreciate. Ahambhavana is the feeling 'I am' - whether you are a Buddha, or a total idiot, you cannot escape that. In avidya you add something to it - 'I am this body'. 'I am' is truth, but 'I am this body', is ignorance. If it were true, you would die when the body dies. Or, if one of your arms is paralysed, you are 'I am' minus the arm! Even when the arm is paralysed, 'I am' is still there, which means that I was not this arm before. 'I am' is true; 'I am this body' is false. The latter is an idea, and as an idea, it is true - but not as truth. So ahambhavana is correct, but ahankara is not correct.

It is arising of this 'I am this body' idea as truth, which is known as asmita in yoga. This arises in ignorance. This is ignorance. There is no difference between what is known as avidya, and what is known as asmita. Avidya is unwisdom, ignorance - and asmita is 'I am this body'. Avidya is said to be the cause of asmita. But what is the cause of water vapour? Water. That is, the cause is always found in the effect. Similarly you see that this is a desk. This is an effect, but the cause of this is wood. Wherever you find a cause-and-effect relationship, the effect contains the cause. Once you learn to look at it this way, then you have understood the entire vedanta. The effect is non-different from the cause. The effect is the cause.

Gurudev often used to say that you cannot see maya, you cannot see avidya - but avidya or maya can only be recognised in the effects. Long ago, in the late 40's, He used to write some sort of blank verse, and on occasions, He Himself used to recite them during the night Satsang. One such was about maya - it was very funny, and it used to make the entire audience roar with laughter. He used to sing it in his own way.

"When your wife quarrels with you ... jaya, jaya ram You think of coming to Rishikesh to take sannyas ... sita ram Then she smiles at you ... jaya jaya ram And you cling to her like a leech ... sita ram This is maya ... Jaya jaya ram."

Maya cannot be seen, but its existence can be intuitively understood by its operation. Do you see wind? The wind is blowing into this room, and those posters are moving. By the movement of those posters, you realise that there is movement of air in this room. By the effect, the cause can be known. In the Bible there is a lovely expression 'By their fruits ye shall know them'. So, when there is asmita or 'I am this body' idea, there is also avidya of ignorance or unwisdom - which is the negation of wisdom. Look at it straight without any explanations. Explanations are always dangerous.

What did Patanjali see that made him express those sutras? Where there is asmita, there is avidya, where there is avidya, there is asmita - these two go together. Someone might tell you that, though the cause is found in the effect, it is possible that the cause can exist without the effect - but the effect is hidden in the cause, latent in the cause, potentially present in the cause. If you have a son, you are a father, because of the effect. But at present you have no son, so you can't be called a father. But you are potentially a father. The 'father-ability' is still there. In the cause the effect is hidden - in the sense that it has not manifested itself. But one cannot, on that basis, deny the truth that cause and effect are one - indivisible. How can you recognise that you are ignorant? By the fact that you have 'I am the body' idea.

If you have a still bowl of water in front of you, the bowl looks empty. When you throw a pebble into it, it gives rise to one wave - but it doesn't stop there, it goes on and on and on. Similarly, when this wisdom is disturbed by unwisdom or avidya, it immediately gives rise to asmita - 'I am the body' idea. But it doesn't stop there. It keeps going. The next stage is raga-dvesha. Raga-dvesha means attraction and repulsion, love and hate, like and dislike. This necessarily depends upon the feeling 'I am this body' or 'I am this personality'.

You cannot say that raga-dvesha is independent of the 'I am the body' idea - the cause is in the effect, the effect is in the cause. When the 'I am the body' idea is absent, for instance in sleep, there is no raga-dvesha. So, this unwisdom or non-philosophy gives rise to the ignorant feeling 'I am the body'; that extends itself into 'I like this, I don't like that' - and all that it involves.

People are often puzzled when they walk into a Sivananda library. There is a book on hatha yoga; and if you study that book, it is possible that you find that Swami Sivananda was a great votary of hatha yoga - possibly you build an image within yourself that He was all the time standing on His head, which is not true. And it is possible that when you pick up the other book 'Practice of Bhakti Yoga', you have a similar misconception about what Swami Sivananda stood for. He didn't stand for anything. This is and branch of yoga, that is another, and in His case there was no comparison. He advocated ayurveda when it came to ayurveda,

He exalted nature cure, He exalted namopathy, He exalted homeopathy and He exalted each one in its own due turn, but without comparing one with the other, without suggesting that one is superior or inferior to another, or that He liked one and disliked or even did not like the other.

One of Swami Sivananda's oft-repeated declarations was : "The world is nothing but raga-dvesha. Remove raga-dvesha, there is no world." When He said this, there was light. All this seems to be very simple and very easy if you merely listen to the words and indulge in in hallucination; or it seems to be impossible if you suddenly become too serious, and visualise the application of these truths and their consequences. This is because we tend to put the cart before the horse. It is impossible for us to realise that these things are possible, unless we come face to face with someone who is an embodiment of this wisdom we are only talking about. Such a one was Swami Sivananda. If you had lived with Him, it is quite possible that you might even have misunderstood that ambition, that he was always working towards a goal that he hoped to reach - to have a huge ashram, to be known throughout the world, and so on. But if you knew Him intimately, if you were able to observe Him without projecting your own infantile philosophy upon Him, then you could see that His action was pure action. It was not motivated by fear, and therefore there was no hope in Him at all. I have not seen another great saint, or another head of such an enormous organisation, who almost seemed to welcome failure. He wasn't afraid to fail, He wasn't afraid that His mission would fail. There was no fear in Him at all. Fear leaves you if there is no hope, and hope does not arise if there is no fear (they go together). He had no fear, and therefore did not hope that this would happen or that would happen. The day's mail might bring Him some fantastic news. For instance, He was very fond of His books being published. It is quite possible that a letter from somewhere - France for instance - announced the publication of a French edition of His book. This thrilled Him. The next letter may be that a branch collapsed, somebody swindled, or some project disintegrated - somebody who might have offered to translate one of His books into Tamil or Telegu had disappeared. He would handle both of these with precisely the same inner feeling. He was momentarily happy that the French edition was coming, and He momentarily pulled a long face that the other thing fell through. But that was all. Both of them were disregarded the next moment; except in as much as they were facts. The fact here is that the French edition has come, and the fact there is that there is going to be no Tamil edition. That is all, He forget all about it - because in Him there was no fear and no hope, no hate and its counterpart of love. His love was something very different. His love arose in the supreme wisdom of the recognition of universal oneness.

It can work both ways. Love and attachment arises in you when you think that your pleasure comes from So-and-so. Aversion arises in you when you think that something gives you pain. Somebody is friendly to you, serves you, helps you, makes your comfortable - so you love him. If someone is a pain in the neck and nothing but trouble, trouble, trouble - you don't love him.

In a state of ignorance (when you identify yourself with the body), when that ignorance imagines pleasure in a certain relationship, that pleasure is deluded. You have an experience of pain - like hunger - and when something is done to take that pain away, you consider that a pleasure. Swamiji used to remind us that what you call pleasure is merely scratching an eczema. There is itching - and when you scratch that part of the body, you are making it worse. The pain that you are giving yourself by scratching, is more intense than the itching, so the itching is forgotten. And you think it is pleasure. So, in raga-dvesha (which is the effect) is also involved asmita ('I am the body' idea) and ignorance. (Raga-dvesha here also implies all that we do in pursuit of pleasure and in running away from what we call pain.)

The world, as experienced by you, is nothing but a projection of your raga-dvesha. Can you look at something and feel neither attracted to it or repelled by it? If you can, the world disappears. For instance, when you are in a railway train, about 90 percent of the people who are also on the train are 'neutral' to you. You are neither attracted nor repelled. Such persons do not leave an impression upon your mind - so they 'don't exist'. When we say that the world outside does not exist, that does not mean that the whole thing disintegrates, but the world does not exist for you, in you. Unless you establish a relationship of love or hate, the others do not 'exist' for you.

You pursue pleasure, you avoid pain - and then you discover that whatever you do, pain is unavoidable. Pleasure is there some of the time, but pain is there all of the time. Then slowly, after scratching the eczema a few times, you realise that you are making it worse and worse - and you realise that, however much you pursue pleasure, pain pursues you. Hence Patanjali reminds us "If you are wise, your whole life seems to be full of pain" - not in a pessimistic sense, but in a realistic, spiritually uplifting sense. You pursue pleasure, you avoid pain, and this keeps you moving on. However much you pursue pleasure, you realise that you are miserable all the time. However much you try to avoid pain, you find you cannot. Then there arises in you what is called abhinivesha. In the Yoga Sutras it is usually translated as 'clinging to life', or clinging to the idea that you are the body, or clinging to unwisdom, to avidya. Patanjali himself says very beautifully:

svarasavahi vidusho 'pi tatha 'rudho 'bhiniveshah (11-9)

'This abhinivesa continues even in the wise.'

In other words, he seems to suggest that as long as the "I am the body" idea is there, this abhinivesha will continue to exist.

Closely related to his "I am the body" idea is 'I want to be happy, I don't want to be unhappy', which means 'I want pleasure, I don't want pain'. But you discover very soon that you can't have pleasure and you can't avoid pain. Then hope arises. You are afraid that suffering is inevitable in this life, and you hope that it will somehow come to an end. That is what I think abhinivesha really means. Unwisdom hopes. Where there is hope, there is lack of understanding. Where



there is hope, there is fear. Where there is fear, there is hate and love. If you don't hate anything at all, you are afraid of nothing. If you don't love anything at all, you won't hate and there is no fear. The whole thing is just one chain reaction, even though we have used such a lot of words - avidya, asmita, raga-dvesha, abhinivesha. Wherever these exist, it is a clear indication that wisdom does not exist.

## 6. Why Practice Yoga

Everyone in this world, whatever be his nature, lifestyle and behaviour, has a philosophy. It is very important to remember this, because, unless a person's philosophy changes, you cannot change his behaviour. Philosophy in this sense is the pursuit of wisdom, and that wisdom can be an intelligent, a foolish, or a stupid type of wisdom. It is only when we become aware of this that we will reach self-realisation or God-realisation, and not make a superior/inferior distinction. It is then that you will probably not want to use the words, 'he is wise' or 'he is foolish' (unless in your mind these are synonyms for satvic and tamasic), because there is no higher or lower. The higher/lower is your own confusion.

There is a very beautiful saying in Tamil (which may not be very decent, but it makes you understand something very clearly). Two four-legged creatures are standing side by side, and a man puts a pail under one and starts milking. It is a cow, so he gets milk. He goes to the next animal and starts doing the same. It is a bull. It will still give something, but not milk. That is all the bull is capable of giving. It is not the bull's fault - that is how it is. You do not say, therefore, that the bull is inferior to the cow. No, without the bull, the cow would not exist. There is no superior/inferior judgment. This is a cow, and that is a bull. Even so, this satvic, rajasic or tamasic buddhi (or jnana) is a description, and not a distinction. You may want to be satvic, but it does not mean that the other person, who has a tamasic buddhi, is inferior to you.

What you do is based upon your inner vision of yourself, the world and of ultimate reality, and his behaviour is totally dependent on his inner vision. There is no reason why you should regard your inner vision as something superior or inferior to something else. But if someone says satvic vision is definitely superior to tamasic vision, my response would be, "That is your vision!" That was Swami Sivananda's unique genius, which I have not seen elsewhere in any other person. He never tried to change anyone. In the ashram, even when there were just 10 or 12 of us, one swami exalted bhajan, japa, kirtan. Another said "These people are sleeping! We must read the Ramayana or the Bhagavad Gita, morning till night". Another said, "All this is humbug. Serve. Be dynamic!" Another swami, who was very fond of yoga asana and pranayama, said, "Do asana, pranayama. Shake the kundalini. Raise it up. Then you can change the whole world." We were all Swami Sivananda's disciples. Between the meditator and the dynamic worker, He saw no distinction. His vision was different. He saw that their behaviour must depend upon their inner vision.

If one does not meddle with the expression of this inner vision, then there is no conflict. If someone makes you do what you don't want to do, there is a conflict within you. You have lost your peace of mind, and you will rob other people's peace of mind also. If your vision was such that you were a menace, Swamiji might suggest that the ashram is not the place for you. Supposing some part of your vision was very good, but there was some confusion elsewhere. That confusion must be resolved within you, but not merely by cosmetic treatment. So,

giving you the fullest freedom to express your nature, your own nature became objectively visible to you in a very delicate and beautiful way. At the same time you saw what other people were doing, and you were also exposed to the magnetism of the Master, the enlightened person. In that situation, it was possible that a change took place in your inner vision. When that change happened, your behaviour changed automatically.

I believe that this was the original intention of the founders of modern psychology. What they wanted, to begin with, was to enable you to find insight (insight is inner vision), on the correct principle that, if this insight was discovered, everything was discovered. If you become aware of this insight, and the inner vision becomes clear and transparent, you will be able to see for yourself that this behaviour leads to that result. Your problem is solved. I believe that was the original intention of psychology, but unfortunately, it has gone somewhere else.

Without making any distinction between the wise man and the fool, the Master saw instantly and immediately that each one's behaviour was completely and totally dependent upon the inner vision. The behaviour is the expression of this inner vision, the expression of your philosophy. In the Bhagavad Gita it is said : "What is a man, except his shraddha." 'Shraddha' is usually translated into belief or faith, living faith. The word 'faith' has unfortunately been used, misused, and abused, so we can change it to insight, inner vision, or inner wisdom. In that sense there is no real, fundamental distinction between a very wise man and a fool. A fool's behaviour is based upon his philosophy, a wise man's behaviour is based upon his philosophy. You can bring about a radical change, not by manipulating his behaviour, but only by dealing with the source of behaviour. If you make a change there, the whole thing is changed.

We were looking into the genealogy of disaster in the Yoga Sutras. Ignorance or un wisdom arises, then egoism ('I am this personality', 'I am the body' idea) leads to likes and dislikes, which lead to hope and fear; all of which together create a future, and a totally stupid and unwise clinging to something which we don't know. You don't know what this life is. You don't know who you are, why you are here, or why you are caught up in this body, and you don't know why you are thinking you are this body - and yet you cling to that! There is an interesting parable. A man happened to slip from a cliff, and as he was slipping, instinctively he caught hold of a branch of a tree which was growing down into the valley. He could not climb up. He looked down and all he could see was a sheer drop of 100 metres. He heard somebody say "Hey! Let go of that!" Let go? How to let go? He thought he would fall down into that ravine and go to pieces. He wouldn't let go. He clung to it, till eventually it was impossible and he let go. He didn't have to fall even one or two metres. There was a clearance right below his feet, and as he let go he landed there and found himself next to the fellow who had been shouting "Let go!" Then he thought, "My God! I could have let go six hours ago !"

You don't know who you are. You don't know what you are here for. You don't

know what terrible circumstances you are in, and yet you don't want to let this go. Maybe you drop this body. You don't know - but there is still this mad clinging. That is because of fear and hope. All these together conspire to create a thing called 'future'. We go on struggling and struggling, doing God-knows-what. This is a philosophy of foolishness. In other words, we are all wearing blinding dark glasses, which prevent us from seeing the truth, even though our sight is perfect. So, the inner vision is there, but completely blocked by foolishness. It is a paradox. How can such wisdom co-exist with foolishness? In exactly the same way as God exists with man. One can get rid of this, only if this inner wisdom is awakened and allowed to shine-constantly. Then this genealogy of disaster comes to an end.

What is the nature of the tamasic jnana? Tamasic jnana assumes the diversity to be eternally real. It clings to a fragment, believing it to be the total truth. To give you a very crude example : Each one of us thinks "My happiness depends entirely upon how happy this body is - so if I look after this body, make it comfortable, and give it all that it needs, then I will be happy." Very soon, if you are wise, you discover that it is not possible. If you are of tamasic buddhi, narrow-minded, and clinging to a small fragment - 'my' body, 'my' little family, 'my' little community - nature supplies situations in which the defect in this philosophy becomes clear. And so you begin to see. You want to get out of it, and then you say, "Oh I must be enlightened first". There is this see-saw and confusion. Gradually a little bit of awakening arises, and you see that this inner wisdom doesn't shine constantly. It comes and goes. Sometimes you behave atrociously, sometimes wisely.

Related to this is another serious problem in our conduct. That is, when there is wisdom, there is peace of mind, and an inner joy unrelated to the external experience - but we somehow associate it with something external. You come here and sit down on the Ganges bank. It is peaceful, heaven! You think that your inner peace is there only because you are sitting on the Ganges bank. What is wrong with the Mississippi bank? The mind associates peace with the Ganges bank. Then somebody calls you an idiot. You suddenly get upset, and you think that your inner peace was disturbed by this man calling you an idiot. If he had not called you an idiot, would you be a saint? One who thinks that is an idiot! The nature of an idiot is that he acts like that! So, sometimes there is wisdom, sometimes there is misaction. So, when the wisdom shines, you enjoy peace of mind, inner joy and so on, and when the dark glasses come on, you behave in a funny way. But instead of realising these are all happening within you, you attribute both wisdom and foolishness to an external source. Therefore the insight is lost, therefore you are dangling between the two, and therefore the Master prescribes the practice of yoga.

What is yoga? Why do we practise yoga? What happens when you practise yoga? By the practice of the limbs of yoga, the mist (or the dirt) on the glasses is removed.

yoga'ngan anushthanad ashuddai kshaye jnana diptira viveka khyateh

(11-28 Yoga Sutras)

"This awareness shines resplendent with the light of intelligence, when the inner psychic impurities that becloud the vision of truth have been eliminated by the intelligent practice of the 'limbs' of yoga."

Self-realisation is not the product of yoga. The self is always real, you don't have to practise yoga in order to make it real. God is real. If you are not able to realise this, then clean your glasses. As you practise yoga, the misting on the lens is cleared up. Therefore it is good to see if the mist is clearing up. If it is not, you are not practising yoga. You can stand on your head for 6 hours, you can stand in the Ganges and do tapas. I believe it was Swami Vivekananda who said, "If a Ganges bath can give you moksha, then the fish would have reached moksha." It is not all that simple.

While you are seriously practising yoga, it is good to become aware of this phenomenon. Is the inner vision getting a bit more clear? Is this inner wisdom sustained or does it come and go? Till you are fully and finally established in wisdom, yoga is to be practised; and it is to be practised not in order that you may be established in wisdom, not in order that you may attain self-realisation or God-realisation, but merely to clean this lens. The inner light begins to shine - unclouded, undistracted, undisturbed, undeflected.

## 7. This is Knowledge

What does this ego mean? Ego is 'I am body' (or 'I am this personality') consciousness. The 'I', the personality, the mind, the body, the eyes, the cap, the desk, all exist, but that 'they are mine' is not a fact. The desk exists and a student of the academy exists - no problem - but that student somehow begins to feel that this is 'my' desk. That does not exist. Nobody denies that this is a body, nobody denies that there is 'I am'. But 'this is my body' is mischief, it is not true; but you cannot deny that at present it is your truth. That confusion is called ego-sense. The ego is there and the body is here. Who brings about the linkage? If you don't understand it, you call it maya. It arises from avidya, and that in its turn gives rise to raga-dvesha (likes, dislikes), fear, hope, and so on. All these give rise to action motivated by all these - and that is called our life. Life goes on, whether or not you indulge in any of these. But, engaging in some of them, we weave a web of activity in which we get caught.

How to avoid the consequences of what you think you do and have done? The master says, "Your own foolish idea that all this belongs to you is the cause. Remove that, and the whole thing falls down." But unless you remove it, nothing will go! If you look at it without complicating it by thought, it is an extremely simple thing to understand. Since this fundamental ignorance (or unwisdom) is the origin of all this, serious wisdom must be the antidote to it. Jnana must end avidya, and when avidya is ended, all that must disappear. I will give you a rough example. If you walk into this room when it is totally dark, it is inevitable that you will knock some of these desks down. You knock them down because of darkness. When that darkness is removed, then naturally you won't knock the desks. If you do, that means the darkness has not been removed - which may mean that you have your eyes closed, or you are not seeing properly. Since something gave rise to some trouble, if you introduce the factor which is the true antidote, then the trouble also must go. If it has not gone, then the antidote selected is not proper, or has not been properly understood or used. So, if raga-dvesha does not disappear from your life, it means wisdom has not arisen. Since one cannot see what avidya or ignorance is, one cannot see what life is either! You can see light only in relation to darkness. And you do not see darkness at all!

In the case of avidya, we saw that it is known only by its fruits. In the same way knowledge (jnana) also can only be understood by what it gives rise to, by the way it functions. Hence Krishna defines knowledge, not as an intellectual or theoretical comprehension, but as something else. Ramana Maharishi was once asked by a student! "Did you have to struggle a lot in order to attain self-realisation?" He replied : "No. I didn't have a theoretical background, so I did not have to struggle against prejudices." It was possible for him to go straight to the source of knowledge. Knowledge is not something which you acquire, or learn. Knowledge is not something which can be transferred from one to the other. Knowledge is. When you practise yoga in the right way, the dust that covers this knowledge is removed, so the knowledge that is in you shines. The dust that covers knowledge is often regarded as knowledge - this is a danger. What is called

theoretical knowledge or intellectual comprehension is nothing but the dust that covers knowledge. Gurudev often used to make fun of these people who can deliver learned discourses on vedanta, but whose life is a mess. This intellectual knowledge is more ash than fire. This does not mean that you should not have theoretical understanding, but one should understand that theoretical understanding is ash which covers knowledge. I wonder if you also realise the value of ash? Fire produces ash, and the ash serves a very important role. It keeps the coals warm. Thus, theoretical knowledge has its own value. It preserves the fire of aspiration in you, and tempts you to realise the truth.

Where there is wisdom, certain qualities must be present. These are described very beautifully in the Bhagavad Gita. These verses were the favourite of our divine master Swami Sivananda. Nearly every time He spoke to us, or talked in public, He quoted these verses. They are worth studying and meditating upon.

amanitvam adambhitvam ahimsa kshantir arjavam acharyopasanam shaucham sthairyam  
atmavinigraha (XIII.7)  
indriyartheshu vairagyam anahamkara eva chajannzamrityujaravyadhiduh  
khadoshanudarshanam (XIII.8)  
asaktir anabhisvngah putradaragrihadishu nityam cha samachittatvam  
ishtanishtopapattishu (XIII.9)  
mayi cha'nanyayogena bhaktir avyabicharini viviktadeshasevitvam aratir janasamsadi  
(XIII.10)  
adhyatmajnananityatvam tattvajnanarthadarshanam ctaj jnanam iti proktam ajnanam yad  
ato 'nyatha (XIII.11)

Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control, (XIII.7)

Indifference to the objects of the senses, and also absence of egoism, perception of (or reflection on) the evil in birth, death, old age, sickness and pain, (XIII.8)

Non-attachment, non-identification of the Self with son, wife, home and the rest, and constant evenmindedness on the attainment of the desirable and the Undesirable, (XIII.9)

Unswerving devotion unto Me by the Yoga of nonseparation, resort to solitary places, distaste for the society of people,(XIII.10)

Constancy in Knowledge of the Self, perception of the end of true knowledge - this is declared to be knowledge, and what is opposed to it is ignorance. (XIII.11)

This is jnana, and all else is ajnana. Here there is very little which suggests that you can go to a school or a library, and study some books and acquire jnana. Amanitvam is usually translated as humility, but in fact it has a slightly wider connotation. It is the absence of abhimana. Abhimana is exactly what asmita is said to mean, 'I am this', 'I am this body', 'I am this personality'. When this is absent, you are humble, otherwise you are not. Humility arises when the 'I' is not associated or identified with all this - with even the idea, 'I am a humble person'. In 'I am a humble person' you are still identifying the 'I' with a personality, and this 'I'-dea is what functions, not the truth. So amanitvam is humility in a wider, deeper, more profound sense, as the quality that arises in you when this identification of the 'I' with the body, the mind, the personality, and all the rest of

it, is abandoned.

This humility is one of the most difficult virtues to describe, to detect, or to cultivate. It is not as if you can cultivate humility, then it only becomes a pretention. Humility has to arise when something else has happened to you. Perhaps only the enlightened person can be truly humble. We saw this in Gurudev. He was humble, He used to bow down to everybody, He used to fold His palms and greet His own disciples who might be half His age. I have never heard Him address even children except very respectfully. He always used the respectful form of 'you', so that He almost sounded formal when talking to His own disciples or visitors, whether they were young or old. Once I saw Him apologising for something which you and I wouldn't even consider an offence. He spent a few hours in someone's house during the All India Tour, when He was in Delhi, and He left the house without properly taking leave of the host and hostess, though after He got into the car He folded His palms and said "I am going". But then He returned to the house and there was a drama. He folded His palms, bent low and apologised to the lady for not taking leave properly. The expression of humility on His face at that time was inexpressible. But, on another occasion when someone who was acclaimed as an incarnation of God, and who was a well-known world figure, came to see Him in a fighting mood, we saw the other side of the picture. Coincidentally, that was when Gurudev was bedridden with lumbago, so He couldn't even move, He couldn't even get up and bow to the distinguished visitor. He folded His palms and greeted Him, but as soon as He discovered that the other person was in a threatening mood, He just ignored Him and said "All right, go, go. Do what you like". So, His humility was not a pretention, not some kind of a sales technique or a ruse to win fame or reputation, but it was quite different. One had to see this to know what it is.

Adambhitvam is unpretentiousness, non-showiness, unostentatiousness. Ahimsa is non-violence in thought, word and deed - which again is impossible as long as asmita exists. One has to look at this wrong understanding which manifests itself as 'I am this body', 'I like this, I don't like this'. As long as you think you like that, it is not possible to practise ahimsa. When you say, "I don't like this", then already you are violent. It doesn't matter whether you hit him or not. Ahimsa is not so easy as we often think it is.

Acharyapasanam is usually translated into service and adoration of the guru, but it also means being near the guru; which implies that there is in the disciple a sort of trepidation - it is not fear, it is not doubt, but a ceaseless questioning "Am I right?" It is then better to 'sit close to' the teacher, so that if you are wrong, at least he will be able to guide you. This sitting near the teacher may be physical, psychological, moral or spiritual. I remember even now that when I was living very close to Gurudev Swami Sivananda there was no doubt, fear or uncertainty. I was so close to the Master that if what I did was wrong, He could pull me up very easily, so there was a certain inner freedom. If that physical closeness is not there, then of course you have to build your own psychological closeness to the Guru.



Vairagya has to be very clearly understood. It is a very beautiful quality. It is not rejecting or shunning the objects of the senses. You cannot reject the objects of the senses, nor destroy the world, but you can destroy the world which arises in you. As long as your sight is good, as long as there is light, and your eyes are open, you cannot stop looking at me, for instance. But when you see me, you are not merely seeing me as I am, but you are seeing my image in you, and that image is quite different from what I am. That is raga - raga also means colouring; that is, you are not seeing me as I am, but through the coloured lens - the lens coloured by past experiences, which determine whether you regard the object as good or bad, desirable or undesirable. All these are based upon the lenses, and the lenses are the danger. The abandonment of those lenses (or at least the awareness that when you look upon someone as a friend, an enemy or a rival, you are straying from truth) is vairagya. Vairagya is removing that colouring, or (in simple words) prejudice. As Jesus said, "Judge not". Can you see a thing just exactly as it is, without allowing judgment to colour the mind?

There was a very beautiful incident in our life here. When the press was established, the ashram decided to print and publish our own books here. One swami said, "Mr So-and-so has been publishing the books for such a long time, and he has done such a tremendous amount of good work. Why not let him keep on publishing some of your books? Of course he gets some profit out of it. That's natural. He's a business man. But then, the books are being circulated." Impeccable argument. As soon as the swami had finished saying this, Swami Sivananda took off His spectacles and looked at him, and asked, "When you go to Madras, do you stay with him?" He had to say "Yes". Swami Sivananda remarked "The mind is coloured. The arguments are correct, there is reason in all your arguments, but they are brought up by a mind that is already prejudiced or coloured."

Can you become aware of this prejudice? Then you perhaps freeze for a moment - because nearly everything that you do, nearly every thought that arises in you, seems to be coloured. Become aware of it. Don't ask if it is possible to overcome it. When a thorn enters your foot, do you sit and say, "Is it possible to remove it? Ah, let it be!" No, your whole being demands "No! It must be removed". You sit down and you dig at it and do all sorts of things. If the thorn gets deeper, and you can't do anything with it, for a month afterwards about 80 percent of your mind is on your foot. That attention and awareness is vairagya. To say that it can be done is foolishness.

To say that it cannot be done is foolishness. If it can be done, why don't you do it? If you say, "It cannot be done," it means that you have decided that wrong is right. That is tamasic buddhi! The mind is working on the basis of prejudice, and you say it is not possible to get rid of this prejudice - which means you have accepted this as the norm, you have accepted adharma as dharma. It may be easy or it may not be easy, but it is like a thorn in the foot. The awareness that arises in that context is vairagya; and vairagya is one of the companions of jnana.

## 8. The Uncluttered Mind

Neither ajnana nor jnana can be seen and identified, because they are both subjective. The subject can never be objectified. Ajnana is like darkness. You cannot see darkness, you are in it. You cannot identify it as "This is ajnana". Gurudev often reminded us of this. He used to encourage us on New Year's Eve to take some resolves for the new year. He used to give out two copies of the New Year's resolve form. Some of the resolves were: 'I will get up at 4 a.m. every morning; I will do japa for so many hours; meditation for so many hours; asana for so many hours; I will give so much in charity.' Something which never failed to intrigue me was that, on January 1st, the first resolve was broken. The New Year's Eve satsang lasted till past midnight and everyone slept late. Even when we did get up at 6 or 7 o'clock, we were still dull, we didn't want to do any asanas, and we were in no mood to meditate. The first day was a blank! He also used to tell the visitors, "Watch out as you return to Delhi. Your spiritual mood lasts for about half the distance. When you cross that half-way house, the atmosphere of your home reaches you; unbeknown to you, it will grab you, and then slowly your mind will undergo some change." In the ashram you have the philosophy of renunciation, of self-realisation, of moksha, and you think "What have I to do with father and mother, wife and children? They are all God's creation. God will look after them". At the half-way house, something else takes over, and a new philosophy arises around the same mind. It says, "Doesn't Lord Krishna say that you must stay where you are, you must perform your duties, and be devoted to verbod - including your wife and children?" How this change took place, and what happened to you, you do not know. That is called maya. It is a great mystery. If you can say that you see all this, it is not maya, you have conquered it, gone beyond it.

Neither ignorance nor jnana can be objectified and seen. They can only be surmised or inferred by their activities. You cannot see darkness, but you can infer the existence of darkness by the fact that you cannot see. You cannot see light either, except in relation to an object which arrests or obstructs that light. From the fact that that object has been illumined, you infer that there must be some light somewhere. Even so, jnana cannot be known; but when these qualities, which have been enumerated here, are present in someone, you realise that there is jnana.

We were discussing some of those factors. 'Indriyartheshu vairagyam ...' Indriyārtha means 'object of the senses'. Vairagya (dispassion) does not mean running away from them. You cannot run away from them. The following is the first major instruction that I received from the Master when I came here in September 1945. Those days there was a river between here and Rishikesh, which was very difficult to cross; yet we had to cross over it to come here. It was like a barrier between the ashram and the outside world. Swamiji said to me, "Don't think that just because you have crossed that river and come here that all maya is there, and here it is all supreme purity and Brahman. You will find maya everywhere in the universe."

Can you run away from the objects of your senses? Wherever you go, you see something, touch something, and in response to these neurological stimuli, the brain (or the mind or whatever it is) generates some thoughts, some reaction. With every stimulus there is an inner reaction. Whether you live in one of the modern monstrosities called a city, or in a cave in a forest, you are still in the world. You are still in a situation where the senses are stimulated in one way or the other, and there is an internal response. You cannot run away from objectivism, till you have been able to deal with it completely. Living in such a world, how does one develop vairagya? This is of particular importance to those who live in the cities, and have a dual problem - how to overcome the external problem and the internal problem. When you come here, the external disturbance is absent, and then you come face to face with the internal disturbance. It is only then that you realise the real disturbance was not outside, but inside - your reaction. How does the mind react? And, why does the mind react ?

The way the mind reacts indicates the colouring of the mind. I gave you an example of how Gurudev reacted to affection. If you put yourself in a situation where you feel you are indebted to somebody else, the mind gets coloured. That coloured mind is unable to discover the truth. It is not even interested in the discovery of the truth. Or, what is worse still, its own version of the truth appears to be truth! One must take a serious-curious interest in this, in order to see its function. On account of some event, because someone was pleasant to you in a certain circumstance, you ignore all the trouble that person might cause to you and to society. In your eyes, he is alright, whatever he does.

I have never seen this in Gurudev's case. Once there was a bit of a problem. Someone who was an accountant here was grossly abusing and misusing the powers that he had. When this was brought to Gurudev's attention He said, "Oh, give him notice. Ask him to quit!" He Himself had appointed him, and He was very fond of this man, but He was firm; "No! This is something which should not be ignored." Another swami who was fond of this accountant, defended : "But he is a very efficient man". Swamiji replied : "Yes, he has done very good work. But this should not be done. He had better go." Two of us came here in 1945 and joined the ashram. The first night Swamiji called both of us to His room, where He talked to us for about an hour and a half. Instructions and instructions and instructions. He must have been terribly optimistic, for in order to carry out those instructions we would need at least 2.000 years! In the course of those instructions, He praised a senior swami here saying, "He is the very foundation of the ashram, without him nothing would go on. He is too much overworked and he's a wonderful man, a saint and a great yogi. Both of you must attach yourselves to him and serve him. Relieve him of all his routine work, so that his mind can soar higher and do great things for the organisation." This was September 4th, 1945. By September 1948 the situation had changed. That swami was neglecting the ashram work and there were lots of problems. He was very difficult and behaving in a strange way. Swami Sivananda asked, "Where is he?" "He is sitting

in his puja room meditating." "Ask him to resign!" I told Swami Sivananda, "It looks as though he is slightly off his balance." He turned to me sternly : "You are his advocate? You are pleading for him? You think I am so soft, but I am not soft all the time. When the need arises, I can be very stern. Two days after he joined the ashram, over ten years ago, he behaved insolently towards-me. Catch hold of his collar, and throw him out!"

I want you to look at the whole situation, and if you are able to grasp the heart of Swami Sivananda in this episode, you will understand what vairagya means, what a totally unprejudiced, uncluttered mind means. A totally uncluttered mind is vairagya. It is not avoiding something, shunning something, or running after something. It is total uncolouredness, which alone is capable of revealing the truth. This young boy behaved insolently towards the master soon after he joined the ashram. It didn't matter. The enlightened heart saw that this was a personal insult. He was forgiven. Then he became very efficient, a great organiser and a great worker, a dynamic man. He had very great qualities. And so, in September 1945 he was exalted. Then, he began to take advantage of his position and neglected the mission. The affection that was built up during this period was not allowed to interfere with the perception of the truth, that that person was useless and should be removed. So, neither the insult in the beginning, nor the later estimation of that person, was allowed to interfere with the vision of the truth, the truth being that 'here is a mission, and this mission has to go on'. If what he does, does not interfere with the mission, let him stay, but if it cuts into the mission, throw him away. The body keeps growing, and when it grows, it is full of that vitalised force. Then some growth appears, which is destructive to the entire organisation. It is a tumour, a cancer. That has to be removed, without prejudice.

What is that attitude or mentality or inner vision that is able to see through the superficiality without prejudice? Prejudice is not something you can objectify and see. One more example : This happened when Swamiji was writing a book about ashrams and saints in India. He used to write in a sort of poem form, giving the essence of each ashram, and the hallmarks or the greatest characteristics of each saint who founded the ashram. He came to Swami So-and-so, who had been a great yogi and a contemporary and personal friend of Swami Sivananda, and then he got married and set up a house - which was considered terribly unethical in those days. It was not tolerated by the orthodox sannyasins, so, in their language, he was a fallen yogi. Swami Sivananda had written a poem already, ignoring these factors. He brought it to the office, and was giving me the manuscript for typing. When he came to this person, he said, "Shall we include this man also ? He got married and he fell from the path ... Today he falls, and tomorrow he may rise up again. But whatever has been stated in that poem, they are simple truths -that he was a great yogi, that he established an ashram, that he had many followers and disciples and so on, all this is true. That he fell from the path is merely a matter of judgment. These are all opinions. Let his name be there. Include it."

Can you distinguish between truth and opinion? Opinions are always formed by mental colouring. When these opinions are seen as opinions or points of view,

and are rejected, then the truth shines. Not till then. That is called vairagya.

The swami mentioned earlier was also our spiritual supervisor. He was second in command, and so he used to give us instructions. I think he noticed that I had a special liking for sweets. In those days we didn't have much sweets, but once a week we had sweet prasad in the temple. One day he told me, "You must discipline yourself. You must take a resolve that you won't take sweets during a whole month." I said, "Yes, Swamiji." And so, the whole month of December I decided not to take sweets. One day Swami Sivananda was distributing prasad. He gave me some sweets. I said, "No, Swamiji, I am not taking sweets this month." "Take it! Eat it!" He stood there till I had eaten the whole cake. Then He looked straight at me and said, "Don't ask, don't reject! That is vairagya". So vairagya is neither running away from things, nor craving for something.

Observe your inner reaction. For instance, someone is very friendly to you, and he goes away. Do you miss him? Someone behaved rudely towards you, insulted you, hurt your feelings, and both of you parted company. A little later that person appears in front of you. Do you feel upset or not? These are opportunities to trace these feelings to their source. When you miss your friend, it is a beautiful occasion to sit down and work out this mystery. That friend was with you, that companionship was good, and that friend has gone. So what! Why does the mind long for that friendship, for that companionship? Do you know what 'longing' means? The mind is normally short, and when that other person goes away, it keeps on lengthening and lengthening. It stretches out, and tries to get hold of that person who is thousands of miles away. That is called longing. In meditation, see if you can draw the whole thing back into yourself and observe : "This person came, we became friendly, something nice happened, and in what is called the stream of life we have been separated. That chapter has come to an end. Om Tat Sat!" In the same way, the other person who insulted you, went away. Why do you feel happy that person went away?

The very observation of this psychological reaction, of this inner working of the mind, is meditation. This can be done throughout the day. There is no reason why it should be interrupted. I don't know if that is the reason why Swamiji always closed one eye when He had something interesting to say to us. We saw in the very manner in which He looked at us, that while He was looking at us, He was also looking at something else - perhaps within Him or perhaps within us. I never dared to ask Him this.

You should live in this world, but watch the inner world that the outer stimulus generates within you. That is a sign of true wisdom. It is not that you won't react at all. You will react naturally, normally. You may not crave but you certainly enjoy what comes to you. I don't know if such people exist in Rishikesh even now, but in earlier days, some swamis and sadhus used to come here when the kitchen was donataris, and receive bhiksha in their own begging bowl, then go down to the Ganges bank, pour water on the food, rinse it and throw the water away. The philosophy or psychology behind it being that one should not enjoy one's food, as

food is merely for the sustenance of the body. Swami Sivananda never did that. Whatever He, ate He enjoyed. He used to come all the way from His room to the temple for puja. There was a swami here who was an exceptionally wonderful cook. His khichari was super wonderful. Swamiji used to ask for it : "Give me from the bottom of the bucket. Hot!"

Whether you crave for a thing or reject a thing, the mind is coloured in both ways. One is probably better than the other, socially. Socially, if you have less craving, and more rejection, it is better. I am oversimplifying it. If six of you get together and there is one piece of cake, you would love all the others to reject it, to practise vairagya! It suits some people, who will promote your vairagya, but spiritually it has no value. Whether the mind rejects or craves, it is still coloured, and such a mind is foolish.

The sign of wisdom is when both of these are absent, and the mind is completely uncoloured and uncluttered. A very interesting feature in Swami Sivananda's daily life was that He had a very highly developed aesthetic sense. He enjoyed beauty, good music, art, fine arts, sculpture and all that, and He enjoyed good food - but there was no pursuit of pleasure. What the stream called life brought to His life, He enjoyed, and as it left Him and went away, He was left unmoved. The same thing with His affection for people also. When you were with Him, you felt that He was extremely fond of you. If you were unenlightened, you might even have felt that you were indispensable, that He wouldn't be able to live without you. But if you happened to leave, the very next moment - I wouldn't say that you were completely forgotten, but - you were not remembered specially, there was nothing special. He carried on as if nothing had happened. Obviously, to Him we were all present in Him, wherever we were physically; but that is a philosophical interpretation. Purely on the human level, He was extremely affectionate and loving, and He enjoyed life, but this did not touch the core of His being, which rested in the realisation of Truth.

## 9. Who Pursues Pleasure?

Vairagya is one of the signs of wisdom given to us. We understand more in others than in ourselves that, when these signs are present, there is jnana. In ourselves we can only discover when there is an absence of jnana. You cannot know when you are wise, but you can definitely know when you are a fool. If you are tempted to think, or talk, or behave, as if you are wise, you are a fool. Practically every fool thinks he is wise. So, in ourselves we can only detect when there is the operation of ajnana, and in others we can detect when jnana occurs. That merely gives us an example, and acts as an inspiration. Patanjali mentions vairagya also, as the one important sadhana for mastery over the mind:

abhyasa vairagyabhyam tan nirodhah (1-12 Yoga Sutras)

Abhyasa is practice. Vairagya is neither hating the objects of the senses, nor running away from them. You cannot run away from the objects of the senses. This story told of King Janaka illustrates this. Though he was an emperor and ruling the kingdom, tradition has it that he was an enlightened sage. One of the ascetics in His kingdom walked up to Him one day, and challenged him! "People say you are an enlightened man. Why don't you renounce all this and go! Why are you still clinging to your throne and empire? This is hypocrisy!" Janaka jumped down from his throne and bowed to this ascetic and said : "Maharaj, let's go!" This naked ascetic was highly pleased, having the emperor Himself as his first disciple, and they both walked away. Just as they were leaving the palace gates, suddenly this ascetic remembered "Oh, I forgot my waterpot in the palace! Let's go and get it!" They came back to the throneroom and found the waterpot still there. The ascetic breathed a sigh of relief and picked it up. Janaka looked at him and said, "You want me to renounce the empire, but you can't renounce your waterpot. Hari Om Tat Sat. You can go. I will stay."

As long as your senses function, they will pick up their own objects. I have seen this even in the case of swamis. You renounce your job and your home, and then you are greatly attached to a sweater or maybe a banana. Raga is an almost essential component of the mind, and that seeks to cling to one thing or the other. Till this is understood, it will not go. It is like cellotape. You take it off the roll, it sticks to your finger. You take it off that finger, it sticks to the other one. As long as the glue is there, it is going to stick somewhere! In Sanskrit there is a word 'sneha'. Sneha has two meanings - one is friendship, the other is glue. You are carrying a pot of glue in your heart, and blaming something else. The glue is raga - to stick is its nature. Washing the glue (the colouring) away is vairagya. Can that, which attributes certain values to these objects, be cleaned out, so that it does not judge anymore? Vairagya is very beautifully put by Jesus in the Bible as 'Judge not'. If you do not judge anything at all as good or evil, pleasant or unpleasant, happiness or unhappiness, the mind will not get attached to anything; because there is no glue. That is vairagya.

What makes you think that contact with a certain object is pleasure? There is

only one reasonable answer to that - the fact that you are looking for pleasure! Pursuit of pleasure is the root cause, pursuit of pleasure is the glue, and as long as this glue is there, you cannot avoid getting stuck! There is no sense in blaming XYZ for it. You want pleasure. Who pursues pleasure?

What pursues pleasure? When the question arises, it already indicates that this inner wisdom is beginning to awake. It does not conveniently propound a philosophy that rationalises the pursuit of pleasure. To rationalise this pursuit of pleasure, saying "It is natural", is a great danger. Then you are in avidya, the intelligence is not awake, and therefore it is not interested in enquiring. When you assert that it is natural, your intelligence has gone to sleep. Whether or not you are enjoying, if this intelligence is enquiring into it all the time, then the movement in consciousness is one of wisdom, and you are not doing anything automatically or mechanically. If you are enjoying something you are not supposed to enjoy, even then you are not doing anything mechanically or automatically, but doing it with great awareness. You are looking at it. Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." The spirit that insists on examining life in all its aspects, as life flows on, is wisdom.

There is a natural attraction and repulsion on the purely neurological level. It is very much like electromagnetic attraction and repulsion. You have two magnets. When you bring them together one way, they fly apart, when you turn them the other side, they stick together. They have no love or hate for each other, but this is purely a play of electromagnetic forces. In the same way, if there is something soft behind your back, it feels good, but if there is a hot plate behind you, you spring up. This is what you may call natural attraction and repulsion. However great and however enlightened you are, if my hand comes close to your eyes, your eyes will close. That is natural. If you say, "No. I won't close my eyes. I am not affected," that is ego.

Can we say that attraction between two people is also similarly natural? No. If it is natural it must be there all the time. For instance, unless your arm is paralysed, it will always pull itself away from a live wire or a hot plate. But we are not always attracted to each other, or always repelled by each other. If you keep on praising someone, he thinks that you are his friend, that you are a nice man. Having praised him for ten years, if one day he overhears you scandalising him, the whole thing changes, and you become his enemy. This is unnatural. That which comes and goes is unnatural. What is natural - which means whatever is part of God's nature - is there all the time. It doesn't come and it doesn't go.

ye hi samsparshaja bhoga dukkhayonaya eva te adyantavantah kaunteya na teshu ramate  
budhah (V-22)

**'The pleasures born of contact, which have a beginning and an end, are not pleasures. They are wombs of pain. A wise man does not indulge in them.'**

So, whereas there is natural attraction and repulsion in nature, similar to the play of electromagnetic forces, the attraction and repulsion that we experience in relationship is not natural.



What makes you feel that 'this is my friend'? What makes you experience a contact as pleasure? When the mind begins to enquire into this, the intelligence is awake. Either vairagya is already there, or this enquiry will definitely lead to vairagya. There is no doubt about that. There is a big question, "In the meantime, before you get established in this vairagya (or the clear understanding of the nature of the pursuit of pleasure) what do you do?" Here the do's and don't do's that have been given to us may be of some help. If an elder suggests to you, "Don't go and jump into the Ganges, it is too cold, it is not good for your health," it is better to listen. You don't know how cold it is, and what it is going to do to your system. Eventually you may want to go and touch it to see if the hand turns blue. It may not. Your system may be different from his, and you may want to enter into the water slowly, gradually. That is wisdom. But before you find out what it is going to be like, listen to what the elders say. If they say "Don't do this," don't do it. Observe the rules, and while observing them, try to find out how desire arises, what makes you feel that 'this is pleasure'. See for yourself that, when you have determined that 'this is pleasure', the mind pursues it. In the process of understanding this, wisdom is awakened, and that wisdom looks at the fundamental phenomenon of who pursues pleasure.

The next sign of wisdom is anahamkara. Anahamkara is egolessness or selflessness. Can you determine when you are selfless or egoless? Who is it that determines that? Once a wonderful devotee of Gurudev wrote to Him, "Swamiji, I am the humblest man in the world. I have absolutely no ego, and I am telling you that So-and-so is a fool". There is a beautiful mantra in the 'Katha Upanishad', where the master tells the disciple that atmajnana, or selfknowledge, is not the end product of learning, talking or hearing - that God-realisation is bestowed upon him who is chosen by God. Does God also have likes and dislikes? Is He some sort of whimsical ruler, who bestows His grace on who ever He wishes? The idea is that, even after having done all that you do, don't say, "I have conquered my ego, and I am completely egoless". You do not know that, only He knows. You can never know when you are completely egoless. That which says, "I am egoless", is terrible ego. Anahamkara is, again, a sign by which the man of wisdom is known. It is not something you can cultivate within yourself. It does not happen as a result of what you do, because it is the ego that does it. Even the enquiry which we have been discussing is done essentially by the ego.

A few days ago we discussed the sequence of disaster, according to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras : avidya, asmita, raga, dvesha, abhinivesha. From avidya arises asmita or 'I am the body'-consciousness. From one point of view it looks as though the 'I am the body' consciousness (or egoism) arises from ignorance. The moment egoism arises, the two become mutually dependent - and they feed and promote each other. Egoism promotes ignorance, and ignorance promotes egoism, and so it goes on.

How does one get rid of this? 'I' cannot get rid of this. 'I' cannot get rid of myself. But I can, when the intelligence is awakened, pursue this observation.

Who pursues pleasure? Who wants it? Where does this glue, this mental colouring, arise? Who determines that this is pleasure? You can play this even as a game. It will make the subject that we are discussing very much clearer. Get hold of a flower that you admire. Look at it. You immediately feel : "Ah, it is beautiful. Its perfume is wonderful." You realise that your attention is flowing out (which means the skin, the body wanting to touch, to smell). Still holding the flower, raise this question, "What is it in me that calls it beautiful? What is it in me that calls this perfume 'sweet'?" The moment you ask this question, the externalised flow of awareness is arrested and it seems to flow in the opposite direction. It is something worth experiencing. Once you really experience this reverse movement of awareness, you won't forget it. Enquire : "Do I appreciate that it is beautiful because it is beautiful, or is it beautiful because I consider it beautiful? Which comes first?"

When this question arises in you, immediately the awareness begins to flow back, or the movement of awareness is reversed. Wisdom is waking up. You may still see the flower as something beautiful, and still enjoy the fragrance, but something is stirring. This turning within is the path to the discovery of the truth concerning anahamkara. Anahamkara or selflessness or egolessness is not something you can practise or apply, telling yourself, "In this thing I am egoless, because I am not doing it. God is doing this through me." The 'me' is what you are supposed to have dropped! It may be a very good formula, I am not making fun of it. "I am not doing this. God is doing this through 'me'," sounds arrogant. It sounds as though you are even greater than God, and God has to work through you. When you use it as a cliché, you are misusing it - 'God is doing this' means 'I am God'. This may be quite true at some stage, but not now. So, ego itself cannot discover ego. But when this awareness returns to its source, then what happens?

Returning awareness tries to locate the origin of these desires and cravings, and the pursuit of pleasure which determines that the pleasure comes from the object. "I want pleasure. The pleasure comes from this object and therefore I love it", is the sequence of desire. Now that the awareness begins to return to the source, it seeks to find the source of this evaluation - 'I'. 'I' want pleasure. Who is 'I'? You don't know, but 'I' is there! You are completely trapped. That's the end. Only God's grace can help us through. You cannot discover what you are, because, when you say "I have discovered who I am", you have objectified the atman, which is absurd. The whole thing collapses by God's or the Guru's grace. There you have anahamkara. That is the sign of wisdom.

## 10. Appropriateness

Self is not something which you think about. What you think about is a thought! In that context, unfortunately, the thinker is also a thought. It is thought looking at thought ... and that leads us absolutely nowhere. A direct enquiry into the nature of raga (or bias or prejudice) is itself an investigation of the nature of the self. Why is it so? The thinker is a thought. The past, trying to become aware of the present, is what is called a thought. You may call it samskara or a hundred other things, that is not of great consequence.

The thinker of a thought being a thought, you realise that the thinker of the present is prejudiced, coloured, biased. That is raga. How did it come to be so heavily prejudiced? Even as you begin to enquire into this, you are really examining what the self really is. When you do that, the thinker becomes something else. When you sit on the beach and look at waves, you see that one is a big wave, another is a small wave. Then, you wonder what all these waves are. A wave is just water, there is no wave! That is the process. 'I' is the thinker. What is this thinker? Are you thinking about this thinker? If so, it is useless. If you are thinking about the thinker, you are objectifying the original thinker, which is an absurd thing! The simple fact is that the self cannot be objectified. Self is the subject. There was something that thought "I am the thinker". That was a thought. That thought is heavily coloured. That thought is the mind. The mind itself is nothing but that.

Modern psychology which had originally set out to bring about an understanding of the mind so that an insight might arise, has unfortunately gone into several byways, where you either study a sick mind, or try to find ways and means to manipulate the mind, which is worse. This is where, unfortunately, psychology is being led.

Psychology does not mean thinking about the mind, but understanding. This understanding is not a brain function, but the function of the insight. In order that this insight may arise, there should be a clear understanding that trying to fathom mind with mind is like diluting water with water - it is waste of time. It doesn't lead you anywhere. You go round and round in circles inventing new words for the same old concepts and think you are progressing. Tied to the pole of ignorance or unwisdom, you are trying to use the mind to understand the mind - which is futile. When that truth is grasped, then insight arises and that insight is able to see the mind.

The senses are very powerful. The entire world outside depends upon the senses. If they are not functioning, the world does not exist. The receiver of the impulses that the senses generate is the mind. Please don't think that thus you have understood the mind. This is merely a viewpoint. All these different stimuli of sight, sound and touch reach something through independent avenues. The co-ordinator of all these is the mind, called 'manas'. The mind is a synonym for the instrument of thought, the stuff with which you are able to think. Find out what

that is. That with which you are able to see is the eyes, that with which you are able to smell is the nose, and that with which you are thinking is the mind. The mind is a mere producer of thoughts. How is a thought formed? And, what makes the mind empower the senses to flow towards particular objects, and fall on them, and grasp them? In other words, in a crowd of fifty people, why does the mind impel the eyes to lock at someone and not at others? Because something within, which is not the mind, says, "He or she is my friend. He or she is attractive". Where is this opinion formed? That which entertains such an opinion is known as the buddhi.

There is an interdependence between the world of matter and the senses, so that when you want to see something very beautiful, you don't turn your ear. The ear cannot see. If there is a nice sweet fragrance, you don't stick your tongue out - the tongue cannot smell. There is a certain relationship and a limitation. Without sense stimuli or the revival of past stimuli stored in the brain as memory, thought cannot be formed. Thought is always in response to sense stimuli - either present or past. It is totally bound, it has no freedom. The senses have no freedom. The mind has slightly more freedom than the senses have, in that it can revive past sensations stored as samskaras or memory, and experience them as if they were present, but it is entirely dependent on the senses.

This thing called buddhi is a little more independent than the mind. The buddhi is the specialist. It can slip out of the beaten track, and examine a wider situation, and arrive at some other understanding. For instance, the face of a young lady is very beautiful, and you look and you are attracted. I don't know if you have seen untamed cobras. They are also beautiful. Both are beautiful, both are attractive. It is the buddhi which says that one is harmless or even pleasant and the other is dangerous. It has a certain freedom of movement, it is not restricted to merely flowing on the beaten track or on the basis of past impressions. It has a certain amount of creative intelligence. Why only a certain amount and not wholly so? Because of prejudice. Now let us examine that. The tribes in Central Africa are as intelligent as you and I are, but their buddhi says a certain shape of the body is beautiful, where to us it may be ugly. To us a certain shape of the body is beautiful, to them it is totally ugly and unacceptable. When you contemplate this you use the expression 'our scale of values differs'. What do we mean by scale of values? Who invented this scale, and who chooses this scale? That is the buddhi, which is often equated with the frontal lobe of the brain. That which makes these distinctions, and sets up this scale of values is the buddhi.

If you assume that there is a thing called buddhi, and then work on the basis of it, you have closed the avenue of wisdom. Any dogma leads to ignorance. When the intelligence is kept open and free to investigate, it leads you to wisdom. You thus investigate the mind and inner intelligence (or buddhi) and ask, "What is that made of?" It has taken on some sort of impression and therefore it is prejudiced; it has taken on some sort of colouring and therefore it is coloured, but the lens is lens. The tint has been superimposed on it. The scale of values is like the tint that has been superimposed upon something. That whole confusion is

called buddhi. Minus this tint or colouring or prejudice what is it? At that very moment you realise that it is impossible for you to think of it. 'That which is beyond this buddhi - is it'. That which is beyond the buddhi is That! This is the basis of the psychology of yoga, where you are not interested either in analysing the sick mind or trying to figure out how the sick mind maybe treated. Instead, is it possible to awaken the insight, the inner intelligence? Insight means 'inner light', the light that shines within in which one is able to see, not only what is outside, but inside. Is it possible to awaken this insight in which there is no sick mind or abnormal mind? Because whatever you are, you are not abnormal. You are normal to yourself. What is called a norm doesn't exist, but someone decides arbitrarily that this is the norm, and anyone who is not that, is abnormal.

All these troubles arise only when you compare your personality with someone else, and this happens because there is no insight. You have no idea who you are and how the mind functions. When, in this insight, you become aware of how your mind functions, then you understand yourself in a very different way. The self does not become the object there. The insight itself is totally free from the senses and the information that the senses bring; totally free from the mind which generates thoughts on the basis of the present sense stimuli and the past impressions stored; free from the buddhi or the scale of values, so that it becomes immediately aware of the totality of the Self. It does not have any need whatsoever to compare itself with others.

I hope one vital factor becomes slightly clear - that a yogi is not interested in wiping out the colouring. When I see that you are my friend, only because I consider you to be my friend, not in reality, you can continue to be my friend, but we are not caught in each other. When the insight sees that this is due to colouring, and not a fact, you are instantly free. This again is not very easy to understand unless you see this truth embodied in and lived by a sage. The sage has equal vision, and it has even been said in the Bhagavad Gita that the sage looks upon a clod of earth and a nugget of gold with equal vision. What does it mean? Does it mean that the sage would throw away gold, or put a piece of stone in his pocket and walk off, feeling that they are both one? No, we did not see that in Gurudev's case. He knew what 'this' was good for, and what 'that' was good for, and without getting emotionally involved, without getting distracted psychologically, He put each thing to its appropriate use. I think this 'appropriateness' is what is hinted at here, and this is extremely difficult, unless one has tremendous insight guiding one all the time.

I remember one interesting incident. The Mahant of Damnapuram came to the ashram, and while taking leave of Swamiji, he picked up a rudraksha mala threaded in gold and put it on Swamiji's neck. Swamiji accepted it, and a day or two later that gold was melted and sold. He said "This can be used to print some books. Gold as gold is of no value to Me, but it can be used." That was the attitude. Another more interesting incident : once the Ashram authorities decided that pada puja, which was almost a daily feature in those days, would be done by the devotee using small bael leaves made of gold. One great devotee - Devidas,

who later became Swami Sivananda - prepared these gold bael leaves and brought them to the ashram, offered them to Swami Sivananda and explained the whole procedure that they would be kept with the secretary, and whenever someone performed pada puja, he would take them from the secretary, do the puja with them, and return them to the secretary to be used by the next devotee. It was an extraordinary sight - Swamiji picked up these gold leaves. and threw them on His own Feet, and put a few on His head, smiling cutely all the time. The donor was highly pleased. Swami Saradananda was there with his camera and he took a few very interesting pictures, one of which is popularly seen in many devotees houses even now. Because of Swamiji's obvious delight, the authorities thought, "This is it - every thing is settled," but a few days later He had these gold leaves melted, and disposed of, so that the printing bills could be paid. The pada puja was done with flowers as before. That is something highly interesting which deserves to be meditated upon. The yogi does not alter what is, the yogi does not superimpose on what is, a value that it does not intrinsically possess; but he is aware of the intrinsic worth of each object, and uses it 'appropriately'. This is an extremely difficult word to understand, and it can be understood only if you are endowed with wisdom or insight.

## 11. Constant Investigation

Wisdom is not an intellectual exercise or embellishment. It is neither a set of beliefs nor faith, in the usual sense of the word, but an effervescence of life. It is a life which is enlightened in total accord with the truth, with the reality, in which there is no confusion or misunderstanding. Therefore its only prerequisite is a constant and persistent enquiry into the nature of the reality.

Reality is not some thing which can be fixed, in order that you may keep looking at it, or a fixture, or furniture on which you can sit and be comfortable. You do not know whether it is constant or changing, because when you affirm that reality is constant or changing you are making it a thing which you can think about, an object of your understanding. When you do not know for certain whether reality is constant or changing, what do you do? You are constantly observing, enquiring into it. That is the only sadhana, the only yoga.

Anahamkara - selflessness or egolessness - is a sign of wisdom. Wisdom is not recognised by itself, but total egolessness or selflessness indicates wisdom. Egolessness or selflessness means 'eradication of ego'. This expression is used, and it has a certain meaning. Does it mean that eradication of the ego is like eradication of a pest, where you see that the pest exists and you use an insecticide to kill it? In other words, does the ego exist as an independent reality? And if the ego exists as an independent reality, can that reality be wiped out?

According to both the Bhagavad Gita and Patanjali, yoga is to be practised for 'atma shuddhaya', selfpurification, the idea being that the self or jnana is there already but covered over by dirt, and we should remove it. No example, no simile given is an exact and total parallel, but the following is given to enable you to understand something more clearly, and we must discard that example in order that out of that the truth might emerge. In the case of a mirror and dirt, the dirt is not made of the mirror - it is completely different - so the dirt exists as an independent reality called dirt, and the mirror exists as an independent reality called the mirror. Is the ego like dirt, independent of the self (which is like the mirror)? If that is so, you can never get rid of the ego, because it is like sweeping this room and putting all the dirt in the next room - what else are you going to do? The dirt being a substance independent of the room, you can only sweep this room and accumulate the dirt somewhere else, in another room. If you understand that, you will understand why all our attempts to become selfless promote selfishness. It is strange but true. You think you are becoming selfless in one area, but you are merely sweeping all that and putting it in another area, both these being your house, yourself. For instance, you are unselfish, egoless, in that you don't accept any fees or demand any reward, but you want something else - others' respect, love, obedience, veneration. The self which you think you have eradicated is accumulating in another place, in another form, but self all the same. So, the example of the dirt and the mirror is not totally acceptable. Therefore, instead of assuming that the ego exists or does not exist, its effect has to be investigated into.

The spirit of investigation is wisdom. Never mind how far from or how close to the truth you are, as long as you are investigating it, as long as you are facing the light, there is no darkness, there is no ignorance. As you are investigating the truth, and as you are facing this light, however dim and distant it may be, you are growing wiser. This wisdom or awakened intelligence investigates this phenomenon called ego with the help of its activities - the activities being self-centred activities. That face is there, the eyes are here; the eyes see that face, the mind links it with memory, suggesting 'I know her, she is my friend'. Then the buddhi comes up and says, "Ah, she is a good person, she has been very kind to me, she is a great spiritual aspirant." Where does 'I' come into all this? Is there a thing called 'I' in the mind, the eyes or the buddhi? Why do we say 'my eyes, my mind, my buddhi?' Do they belong to 'me'? Or is it merely that the eyes see? When the eyes see, something called a mind generates a thought, something called buddhi sets up a scale of values with no judgment. There is an axiomatic statement found in the Bhagavad Gita, 'If it is real, you cannot get rid of it. If it is not real, it cannot be brought into being'. If you consider something real, you cannot get rid of it. If it is unreal, what are you trying to get rid of? So, the discovery that it is not real must be made.

That which does not exist seems to be capable of appearing to exist. A certain conjunction of forces brings about a result, a consequence, which then puts on the appearance of a cause. Example : the sun is shining and the light comes from the sun. If you hold a mirror in such a way that the sunlight is reflected by the mirror on to your face, it dazzles you. What dazzles you? The mirror, not the sun. But does the mirror in itself have the power to dazzle you? No! Is it the light of the sun? No! You are away from the sun's rays, this thing comes directly from the mirror. You cannot say it is one or the other, both seem to be true. It can be described both ways. By following the path of this dazzle you reach the mirror. Once you have reached the mirror you realize that the mirror doesn't have the power to dazzle you. Then you suddenly realise that the sunlight is what dazzles you, not the mirror.

In precisely the same fashion, you realise that there is the buddhi, the mental colouring, which causes attraction and repulsion. Trace that back to its source. You see the mirror. Then the mirror has to be dropped, smashed! You come to what you have regarded as an existential reality called the ego, ahamkara. 'I am', but when this 'I am' begins to function, it becomes ahamkara. 'I am' is true, ahamkara is not true. What is it that dazzles, puzzles you, perverts the vision? What is it that makes you feel, 'This is good, this is not good; this is pleasure, this is pain; this is happiness, this unhappiness; this is honour, this is dishonour'? A confusion! The elements of that confusion seem to be real, but their combination is unreal - or, the combination creates a sort of illusion. Sunlight is real, mirror is real; but that the sunlight comes from the mirror is a false statement. That the eyes see is reality; that the mind thinks is reality; that the buddhi evaluates is reality; that there is consciousness is reality. But the combination of all these (in which an experience is experienced as if 'I' experienced it, or an action arises as if



'I do this action) is a confusion. You cannot assume that it is non-existent; that is another activity of the ego. You cannot assume you are egoless; that is another activity of the ego. You cannot assume you are selfless; that is another activity of the self.

When the light of investigation is turned on this whole process, something happens which fundamentally alters the entire situation without altering any one of its components. The eyes continue to see, the mind continues to think, and the buddhi continues to function. You live and work in this world as you have always been working, but something has happened. The confusion which existed before has ceased to be. The eyes see, but this confusion that 'I am seeing' does not arise. The mind thinks, it is no longer 'I' that thinks "This is beautiful, this is not so beautiful". It is not 'my' judgment. Is that possible? That is Intelligence.

Krishna insists again and again in the Bhagavad Gita that to the wise man pleasure and pain, happiness and unhappiness, honour and dishonour, success and failure, are just the same. It is impossible to understand what that means, till this investigation is undertaken seriously. There is no goal for this investigation. The investigation is on-going. It is lifelong. It never ends. That is what we found in the case of our guru, Swami Sivananda. He even mentioned once or twice that Self-realisation is not some sort of event for which you can specify a date - "I attained Self-realisation on the morning of 1st January 1922." If you reach the pinnacle of Self-realisation, what do you do next? You come down! There is another example which may be more appropriate. There is a spider which is called 'black widow'. The story is that the male and the female of this spider family keep dancing the mating dance. Eventually the mating takes place, and as soon as it is over, the female chews up the male - so that as soon as the mating is over, she becomes a widow. That is probably a more appropriate example for Self-realisation. You go on dancing, investigating, to see what this self may be like, and at the very moment of enlightenment 'I' is swallowed by the Self. It doesn't have a thing called ego to experience it or confuse it.

'I' cannot exist in Self-realisation, and as long as the body-mind complex functions, and as long as there is even a trace of a personality, there is the possibility of the ego arising again. As long as there is a mirror, there is the possibility of a reflection, and the arising again of the confusion that the mirror's reflection is the original. Therefore the wise man never abandons this course of investigation. He doesn't pretend that at one point he had attained Selfrealisation and therefore there is no more need for investigation or vichara. That is what Sri Gurudev insisted, and that is also hinted at in the last verse of the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. 'If you remain established in this till the very end of your life (in the usual sense of the word), you are finally absorbed into the Infinite.' Selflessness does not mean assuming that 'I am selfless', but constantly investigating to see if there is a thing called ego, or is it merely a function which is conventionally called 'ego'?

The moment you take anything for granted, you have lost it - you can take this

as an axiom. This applies to relationships - friendship for instance. If you take friendship for granted, the friendship is destroyed. If you take love for granted, that love is destroyed. If you take God for granted, you have lost God. If you take health or life for granted, you have lost it. I can't think of any exception to this. If you take anything for granted, it is lost. You cannot take reality for granted. You cannot take your own enlightenment for granted. You cannot say : "I had a very amazing vision of God. Now I can go to sleep." The next thing you have gone to sleep! That so-called vision of God was momentary, but your foolishness is a continuing reality.

The only sadhana which itself is siddhi or perfection is this continuing enquiry into the nature of reality. And this continuing, endless, persistent enquiry gives rise to the qualities we have been discussing. You are not asked to deny anything that is real. If ahamkara is real, you cannot deny it. That there is something here performing the function of speaking, is real. Nobody is going to deny that. This is not an illusion. But you are asked to discover precisely what it is that talks here and listens there. That is all. Don't take anything for granted. Don't resort to a cliché, "The body and mind which are sitting and talking are illusory. I am the atma." Nonsense! That is not reality. The body is talking, the brain is involved in it. There is something more than the brain - there is life and intelligence. That intelligence is heavily coloured, because first of all it speaks English (which is a learned language) and certain concepts are expressed in words. Those concepts had a beginning, and everything that has a beginning will have an end, so all these things are the colouring material. When this talking takes place, it is not my talk. 'My' is not found anywhere. Talking happens. All these various factors put together contribute to the talking.

When you seriously enquire into it, you discover that that which you took for granted as the existential 'I', is missing. Something was there, something is there and you placed a 'disc' over that. That 'disc' is called 'I', ego. There is a disc over the reality, and the 'disc over' must be discovered. (The spelling is exactly the same.) When you discover it, it becomes a discovery. That discovery is true to you from then on. If it is not true, there has been no discovery. What these scriptures and teachers say is perhaps absolutely true, but not to you! So discover it. Yesterday I gave you the example of the mirror reflecting the sun. The combination of certain factors is called the ego. But, do they combine? When you have one table, and one other table you say it is two'. What is two? They never become two. You will realise it when you get married. You are one, she is one. You never become 'two'. And the struggle goes on till the end of your life! This is one, that is one. The mirror and the sun and the reflected light never become one. There is an illusory perception or an optical illusion which creates the notion that there is some kind of a combination. A very beautiful example (alata chakra) is given in what is known as 'Gaudapada karika' in the Mandukya Upanishad. When you set fire to one end of a hessian rope, and whirl it to someone standing at a distance, it appears as if there is a circle of fire though there is only one spark of fire. The one spark is only at one point at each moment, but for some unknown reason you see a circle. Another simple example is the movie film. Neither the

screen nor the film moves, and yet you see people moving on the screen. When you nod your head and somebody takes a film, there are, say, six frames (each at a different position), and somehow when it is projected, it creates a smooth movement. At least in the case of the alata chakra, the firebrand does move smoothly in a circle, but in the case of the movie film even that is not there. That is a mystery only God knows. You can give me a hundred explanations, but the truth is extremely interesting and extremely mysterious. So, where there is no combination, a combination is presupposed and seen. That applies even to what is called your life.

What is the relationship of the body, mind, and what you call the soul? This question is immediately relevant to us, and it seems to be so easy, yet nearly impossible to resolve. Are body, mind, and spirit glued together? When you fall asleep, you are completely oblivious of the world, and yet when you want to enter into that oblivion you cannot do that. When you want to meditate, it looks as though the mind is firmly fixed to the body - and yet you know from deep sleep that it is not so. If you want deliberately to take your life, it is a struggle, whereas when it happens, it happens so smoothly. So, on the one hand it looks as though there is no bondage or connection, on the other hand it looks as if all these things are tied together. What is the truth? Can you really see knots with which the body is tied to the mind, the mind to the spirit? If that is so, sleep and death should be difficult.

Again, the relationship between body, mind and spirit seems to be like the relationship between the fruit and the skin of the banana. I use the phrase 'seems to be' because it is for each one of us to discover, not take it for granted. The banana skin seems to hold firmly to the fruit, but it does not cling to the fruit. Feel it, and the skin comes off as if it has nothing to do with the fruit, and the fruit remains absolutely whole without any blemish. It is a mysterious relationship (if one can call it a relationship). This 'combination' is called ego. When you see that this is the skin of the banana and this is the fruit, where is the combination? The combination was imagined, assumed to exist. That assumption of a relationship between body, mind, and spirit, is the ego, especially the functional ego.

'I am speaking' is a confusion, which creates the bondage, a confusion that assumes there is a combination where no such combination is possible. We are not even saying that such a combination does not exist, we are saying that such a combination is impossible. Why is it so? Kaivalya is a word that occurs in the Yoga Sutras and also in the Bhagavad Gita. It means 'one and one alone'. Unfortunately this has also been translated into 'isolation', as if the spirit is somehow caught in matter, and through the practice of yoga and Samadhi, and so on, it isolates itself from matter. (It may be so. That is one point of view.) I suggest that the word 'alone' is all-one. It is 'all one' that has somehow become alone. So, kaivalya, 'one and one alone', is an interesting situation in which you are free, independent, isolated and alone, not because you are one against the others, but you are all one. That division between you and me disappears, and

therefore there is no combining. You and I never combine, because we are already one. No division is possible, and therefore no combination is possible. That infinite one, being consciousness, has the awareness 'I am', and that 'I am' is reflected in a million billion personalities, each one feeling 'I am', 'I am', 'I am'. But the feeling of 'I am' does not make you an independent reality. It is based on the cosmic 'I am', and therefore whatever is being done, is done by that 'I am'. There is no ego necessary for action. You did not create your eyes, the eyes are there and they see. You did not create your nose, the nose is there and it smells. You did not create your ears, the ears are there and they hear. The mind thinks, the heart feels - none of these is 'me' or 'mine'. This discovery is wisdom. That is anahamkara.

## 12. The Truth Concerning Sorrow

Janma mrityu jara vyadhi dukkha doshanudarshanam is the next sign by which a wise person is recognised. The meaning is : 'Perception of the defect (or evil) in the following : birth, death, old-age, sickness and suffering, unhappiness.' These defects are inherent in life. Birth is regarded as an evil or defect because that is the source of all your other troubles. Once when Buddha was asked, "What is the remedy for sickness, unhappiness?" He said, "There is only one remedy, not to be born!" Once you take birth, these things cannot be avoided. The moment you are born, you bring your death certificate with you. Can you escape old age? Yes, if you die young. It doesn't seem to make sense either. Can you escape illness? No, because the body itself is sickness.

There are some forms of sickness which we have accepted as the norm. Hunger, thirst, sleep and drowsiness are all illnesses from one point of view. From another, some Indians a hundred years ago regarded serious ailments like tuberculosis, cancer and leprosy as karma, not illnesses to be treated. You may or may not treat indigestion as an illness. You may have eaten too much and the stomach says, "I don't want any more. If you put one more morsel in, I will throw it out". That is not an illness, but a dialogue between the mouth and the stomach! So it depends upon you, again, whether you regard these as sickness or not, But the wise man sees even what is called 'normal life' itself as sickness.

Is there happiness in life? There are moments of happiness, there are moments of joy when you are tempted to laugh, but the wise man does not see those moments as real happiness or joy because they are plagued by some sort of suspicion that this is coming to an end. If your joy depends upon something which is transient, then that joy is no joy. Therefore both the Bhagavad Gita and Patanjali caution us against accepting these as desirable, natural or inevitable.

One of Patanjali's sutras is :

sarvam dukkham vivekinah (11-15)

'For the wise man, the entire life is sorrow.'

Gurudev Swami Sivananda also used to say that no one is really happy in this world. A bachelor thinks a married man is happy, a married man thinks a swami is happy, a swami thinks a millionaire is happy, a millionaire thinks a politician is happy. No one is happy. No one can be happy in this world because the very structure of the world is not conducive to happiness. Why is it so? Because phenomena are ever changing - which implies that if your happiness is derived from something outside you, that happiness is bound to keep changing.

There is one important factor here which one should very clearly understand. This truth, sarvam dukkham vivekinah - 'life is sorrow for the wise man', or dukkhalayam asasvatam - 'the whole universe is plagued by sorrow', can be regarded either as a noble truth in the words of the Buddha, or as a factor which

generates pessimism and depression (according to psychologists). The attitude of the wise man is not pessimistic or despondent. A pessimistic view of the truth concerning the sorrow that is inherent in the world leads to depression and to you fighting this sorrow, because you want to get rid of it. It is a stupid thing to do, because it is your attempt to get rid of sorrow that makes it!

Life is life. It has got some sorrow, no doubt about that. In trying to push that sorrow away, you make yourself more miserable. For instance, it is possible for you to have a little headache while you are in a class. A little bit of your mind watches this headache to make sure it does not become worse, and the rest of your mind listens to what is going on. It is no problem at all. But if you suddenly begin to think, "Oh, it is a nice class and look at me, I have this headache. It must go away ...", every second it becomes worse. Pain becomes really painful when you reject it, push it away. So, that is stupid. So, one thing is to resist sorrow and make it worse, and the other is to recognise that it provides inspiration for you to look at life. Don't rationalise it, but see it. Sorrow is there. This is all we are interested in. When you look around you see that sorrow and unhappiness are inherent in life. The world has not been created for the enjoyment of anybody. Wisdom arises when you see that as a fact, without getting excited, optimistic or pessimistic, or getting into any 'mist' whatsoever. What is the difference between an optimist and a pessimist? Very little - both are misty, they have no clarity of vision. One is tempted to say that in that observation sorrow ceases to be sorrow. But that is for you to discover. It is not to be used as a doctrine or a cliché, but you definitely adopt the teaching of Patanjali where he says *heyam dukham anagatam*. 'Don't invite more sorrows, avoid the sorrow that has not yet reached you'. There is a lot of unhappiness in life that you already have to endure. That is enough, don't ask for more. That again is the goal of wisdom.

Investigate into the truth concerning this sorrow "Is there something other than this? If there is constant change in this universe, what is constant in that change? You were born, and you are growing up - eventually you become old and you die. Who is the 'you' that underwent all these changes?"

Swami Sivananda was very healthy in His early life. He was fond of gymnastics. He was an athlete, and during the early sannyas days, too, He was very fond of yoga asanas and other forms of physical exercise and physical culture. He maintained very good health and (please understand this intelligently) He looked after His body very well. He ate the right kind of food after the ashram was established, and He could afford to determine what to eat and what not to eat, and He took regular walks, He exercised and took medical treatment whenever it was necessary. But all this did not mean that He was getting attached to the body or to the 'I am the body' idea. He recognised that illness was natural to the process of living. He recognised that the body which grew would also decay at one time or the other, and therefore when the body began to show signs of age, of weakness, of debility, He didn't sit and moan. He made the necessary adjustments appropriate to each condition, and He lived on as life had to be lived.

There was a time when He did not use a walking stick, even though He was finding it difficult to walk up and down because the ashram is on a hillside. And He used to ask His personal attendant to bring a walking stick along, so that if the body needed it really, not hypothetically or out of panic - it would be given a stick to hang on to. When that was not found adequate, He used to rest His arms around the shoulders of a couple of disciples and walk. There was a time when He found it difficult even to do that, because He had to climb stairs, He had to climb the road, and so He used a wheelchair. When the legs were strong enough to do without the wheelchair, He dismissed it and walked up to His office and to satsang. This is the realistic approach to life. You don't fight the natural conditions, you don't invite them, but intelligently understand what each condition means and act appropriately in each situation.

So, once again we return to the same factor - that the mind that engages itself in constant investigation of the truth concerning life, is wisdom. That wisdom does not go into a depression, thinking that 'all this is sorrow', but merely observes and becomes aware that any dependence on changing phenomena is sorrow. Here there is no "And therefore I must get rid of it , and therefore I must succumb to it, and therefore I must reconcile myself". Merely become aware of it. Once that happens, in that awareness there is freedom from sorrow. That awareness alone is freedom from sorrow. You cannot afford to suspend or terminate that awareness, thinking, "I have overcome sorrow" Then, immediately you have got it again! You keep observing life, and you are aware that this procession of changes in phenomena contributes to sorrow, and as long as there is dependence on this procession, sorrow is inevitable. This observation is what is hinted at - not a pessimistic outlook on life.

A wise man lives in such a way that he does not invite sorrow, and he does not foolishly fight against the sorrow that is inherent in life. But by becoming intensely aware of it, he transcends it. This is the path of wisdom. The path of un wisdom is to fight it, the path of wisdom is to flow along with it, understand it, know it. Realise that sorrow is inherent in life, and in that knowledge or wisdom is the key to its own transcendence.

*Asaktir anabhisvanganah putradaragrihadishu.*

'Non-attachment to wife, son, property etc.'

First I want to point out that this definitely implies that, in order to gain wisdom, you don't have to run away from any of these. You don't tell me, "Don't be attached to your children, Swami," because I have no children. So, when someone says, "Don't be attached to your wife and children," it is addressed to one who is married and has a family. Living in a family with wife, children and property and all the rest of it, is not taboo, because the wise man sees that the bondage is not there (outside) but here (inside). The attachment is not there but here. Realise, "My wife is not attached to me, my son is not attached to me, and my property is not attached to me at all. I am attached to it." That is the first step. The second step can be taken only if the first step has been taken, because you are

still thinking in terms of 'My wife and children are dependent on me' etc. - then you can never take the next step, your vision is blurred. You realise that they are not dependent upon you at all. They were there before you were born, they will probably exist after you are dead - but you experience attachment. In their presence and in their absence you keep thinking about them. You want to be near them, you want the feeling that they belong to you. Is that merely a feeling or an imagination, or is it real? Is this 'my' wife? Is this 'my' building, 'my' room? The wise mind investigates. Is there a truth or a fact called attachment? We are not going to deny that that girl is your wife. You got married to her. But is that a matter merely of convention or is it real? This can apply right through, from wife and children and property, right up to 'my' religion, 'my' church, 'my' temple, etc. This is the second and vital step. When it is seen that these things are not real, wisdom prevails. Wisdom led you there, and when these things are seen to be not based on truth, wisdom triumphs. That is jnana.



### 13. There is No Attachment

If you pick up a Sanskrit/English dictionary and look up some simple words, for instance 'hamsa' and 'vritti', you will be amazed at the diversity of meanings attributed to them. And yet we go on using them as if they had a single meaning. If you accept the traditional definition of a certain word like vritti, you go like a horse with blinkers on, so that you don't look this way or that way. The moment you look at the other possibilities you get a real shock.

Perhaps the realisation of the truth means the ability to look at the same thing from infinite points of view. Now you cannot look at a thing at any one time, except from one point of view. While looking at me you cannot look at the man sitting behind you, but it is possible for you, by turning around, to look at him. When you look at him, you don't look at me. This is the reason why we are asked to go around the temples and around the deities when they are taken out in procession. That is, don't be content with looking at God from the front, but look at his back and sides also! If you want a comprehensive knowledge of truth or an in-depth understanding of the scripture, you might find this method a bit more interesting. Suddenly you will wake up with a shock to realise that nobody has a monopoly on truth.

In the sixth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, there is a beautiful expression, where what appears to be confusion may be truly enlightening. Some people translate it quite simply, 'The atma is atma's friend, the atma is atma's enemy.' What does it mean? In Vedanta the atma means that which is beyond friend and foe, success and failure. Yet here it is said that the atma is atma's friend and enemy, and the atma must be controlled by the atma. Now translate it simply, without using your intellect. Visualise Krishna standing on the battlefield and talking to Arjuna, "You are your own friend, you are your own enemy!" The word 'atma' is used in the terms of you yourself. This self may not mean the vedantic self, but maybe the vedantic self also has a meaning like this. So perhaps self-realisation means a lot more than negating all these - I am not this body, I am not this, not that. Only that I am. So please learn to expand your vision and get a comprehensive view, an in-depth understanding of the simple expressions which you study and the concepts which you form. Otherwise you will get caught up in a straight-jacket.

Asakti to be unattached to wife, children, property, etc. is the characteristic of a wise man. It immediately suggests to you that a yogi or a wise man is not a cave-dweller, nor does he run away from what is called worldly responsibility. You cannot run away from the world. As long as the body is alive, you are in the world. What does it mean? If you call somebody your wife or your disciple, it means the same thing - you think they are other people. How should you live a life unattached to all this? Should you not smile at them, should you not recognise them as your wife and children? If your son is kidnapped by somebody and murdered, should you just sit there and say, "Om shanti, shanti, shanti"? That is not what is meant. Even now you are not physically 'attached' to your wife, children, property, etc. So, if someone tells you, "You should not be attached

to your wife," what are you going to do? You can pretend that even though you are living with her there is no attachment, there is love. That is one kind of nonsense. The other kind of nonsense is that you think you should not be attached to your wife, so you begin to hate her. Instead Krishna demands that you look into your whole life, your psyche, your mind, and try to understand what the nature of attachment is.

The uniqueness of the psychology of yoga is that it does not give you an answer, but inspires you to discover the answer within yourself. Sages, great yogis, great masters, might give some sort of broad hint. For instance, 'A man who is attached to his wife would behave in this manner; a man who is not attached to his wife behaves in that manner.' These are broad hints, not to be taken as definitions. In the Yoga Sutras there are descriptions of the qualities found in a yogi. You cannot cultivate them, for instance you cannot sit down and say, "I am diviner truth." The investigative mind is wisdom, the mind that is constantly alert - without assuming anything, and without getting caught in concepts - the mind that is constantly investigating the truth is itself wisdom, jnana. The sun not only provides light, but it is light.

Investigation, vichara, is most important. As it is not used to direct observation, the mind which has been trained in a discursive way, indulges in logic to begin with. You are not used to looking at a concept without raising a thought. If someone asks you, "What is attachment?", immediately the brain starts thinking. It hooks together a whole lot of other thoughts, mostly borrowed from past learning, and you begin to think that you know what this attachment is. That image that you have formed looks at another situation and tries to figure out, "Am I attached or not in this situation?" That is absurd! That image is made by you for your own convenience, and that image can never properly study and learn. It won't accept anything new. So, the moment this vichara is set in motion in order to understand the truth concerning attachment - asakti - the mind inevitably builds an image of attachment; and that image thinks about what attachment can be and what non-attachment should be. The whole game is absolutely ridiculous and a useless waste of time! But, if that is all you can do to begin with, - Patanjali suggests a very simple and beautiful method - if you must engage yourself in internal dialogue, raise a counter thought every time an undesirable thought arises:

*vitarka badhane pratipakshabhavanam (Yoga Sutras II-33)*

For instance, if your mind is quite dogmatic that God exists and has four hands, bring up a counter-argument : "No, he may have fifteen thousand hands." If the mind says, "God has a thousand heads and a thousand hands", the counter-argument says, "No, Vishnu has only four hands." This way knock out internal dialogue.

When this image that is formed in your own mind is knocked from all directions, a stillness arises. You cannot think anymore, because every thought

has its own counter-thought. I do not know if you are familiar with chess terminology, but that is a checkmate. There is absolute stillness. That stillness is very different from dullness of the mind or a 'stoned' state. It is tremendously alert. Buddha has described this in a very beautiful way. He said, "What happens if you are caught in a room with a deadly cobra and no escape? Would you sleep? You would not even blink your eyes, lest the cobra should strike you." That is the state of the mind in meditation. That is the mind of a wise man tremendously alert, but unable to move. All doors and windows are barred and locked. I am not saying that such a mind is wise, but such a mind is wisdom, and it can come to grips with the truth without distortion.

So, the mind that is wisdom, that is totally alert and totally concentrated, is able to do vichara. Only that wisdom (it is no longer the mind, it is wisdom) can look at a relationship and see that (let alone whether you should be attached or not attached to your wife, children and property) there is no attachment. You can show me your nose, your eyes, but there is nothing you can show that is called attachment. Then what was it? The mind which is wisdom, which is alive, alert, fully and properly concentrated and undistracted by thought, is able to see directly that 'attachment' is a word without meaning - sound without substance. At that moment you are free from attachment.

As long as the mind creates images of attachment or non-attachment, it can only jump from the frying pan to the fire - you are either foolishly attached to your wife and children and property, or you are equally foolishly detached from your wife and children and property (which means you have physically torn yourself away from these but are psychologically trapped). In the 'Durga Saptashati' there is a story of a king who was thrown out of his kingdom by his wife and children. He went away to the Himalayas and, roaming destitute in the forests, he continued to think about them. As we discussed in the previous part of this verse, one sees that all life is sorrow, and yet one longs for objects of pleasure. That is foolishness. That longing will not leave you, even if you physically tear yourself away from all these objects that you think you possess. If you leave home, you will still continue to think of your wife and children and property and so on. That is what they call attachment.

Can you get rid of it? How do you get rid of something that does not exist? Perhaps you have heard the expression 'phantom pain', meaning pain in a part of the body that does not exist. Sometimes in road accidents or in war, people lose their arm or leg, and long after it has gone they still experience pain in that limb. That pain is extremely difficult to get rid of, because it is imaginary. If pain is in your mind, it means it is imaginary and has absolutely no relevance to truth. Attachment is exactly like that, and therefore you cannot get rid of it by any means other than wisdom. If the light of wisdom begins to shine in your heart, you see that attachment is just a word, and it has no meaning at all. The attachment has gone, not because you have got rid of it, but it was not there!

## 14. Constant Even Mindedness

The next important factor of wisdom is stated in the following words in the Bhagavad Gita: nityam cha samachittatvam ishtanishtopapattishu.

'This chitta is the same at all times in the man of wisdom'. The yogi does not divide the mind arbitrarily into the conscious, subconscious, unconscious and superconscious. In the psychology of yoga, you have these four categories : manas, chitta, buddhi and ahamkara. These are not four different categories or entities, but one. The one that is described in these four ways is called antahkarana, which is singular - the inner instrument, not instruments. The inner instrument is one, and in accordance with the function it is designated differently. Buddhi is the faculty that enables you to understand a thing, and discriminate (it's a very bad word, but that is the popular translation) between the real and the unreal. Ahamkara is the feeling of 'I'ness. Chitta in this context is the totality of the mind, which has all the past impressions stored in it, but which is not directly involved in the production of thoughts. So, when they say 'chitta', they do not really refer to the thinking factor, the reasoning factor or the ego-sense as such, but to the totality of the mind. The memory bank, the computer at rest, is the chitta.

Now a slight complication is introduced. This is not a state of anaesthesia, a drugged, mindless, senseless state, but the state of equanimity which is undisturbed, even when certain things happen around you, when you get the desirable and the undesirable. This is a sign of wisdom. Now, how do you get there? Do you cultivate this, develop this? How is this attained? Or, is it attained at all? Can this be attained? What do you do? For instance, a long lost friend comes to you and you are really excited. There is no sense in then saying, "Oh, my God, I am excited. I am a yogi, I should not be, I am striving for wisdom - Om Shanti Shanti, Shanti." The thing is spoiled already! By creating this inner battle, you can only make it worse, you can never make it still. Once the sameness of the chitta is disturbed, it is disturbed already, though if you learn how to restore the balance, it is better than flying off the handle and continuing to be disturbed. In the same way it is possible that when you get something which you regard as undesirable, the mind is disturbed. The moment you detect that it is disturbed, it is possible that you try to restore the balance and not explode. This is 'Do good', which means that you do not pick up that desk and hit him - and that is welcomed by him because his head is not broken! You have controlled yourself and his head is not broken - therefore society encourages what is called control of the mind. Society is delighted with the formula, 'Do good', but your problem is not solved, and therefore there is no wisdom.

When the balance between these two forces - the force of excitement and the force of control - is tilted in favour of the forces of excitement, (which means you are unable to control yourself) you will invent a new philosophy to hit him. If you are able to control yourself, you have one philosophy saying, "We are all aspiring yogis, and so we must control ourselves. See! This man called me an idiot, I was

excited, and immediately I chanted 'Om shanti, shanti, shanti' - I controlled myself!" You are quite happy with yourself, and society is quite happy too. But there may come a time when the inner excitement is more powerful than the restraining force, in which case you lose your temper altogether, and you pick up that thing and hit him. Now you are going to have another philosophy "Yes, I am an aspiring yogi. I have surrendered myself completely to God, and therefore it is God who is working through me, and this God works through me in this manner in order to restrain this wicked man and stop him from being more wicked. This is not only my duty as a teacher, but this is how God works through me." A new philosophy! All this is there in the Bhagavad Gita, you can quote chapter and verse. The casualty here is wisdom. Wisdom has gone. So, 'Do good' satisfies society. Everybody is pleased when you exhibit an extraordinary self-control - which means you explode inwardly and then control yourself. This is a very good thing, but not the whole thing. There is still this inner battle.

The unspiritual man is subject to the movement of excitement, of excitation. Anything and everything excites him and puts him off his balance. The striving yogi tends to create the counter force, the nirodha parinama. The movement of this restraint does involve effort, and that effort also disturbs the sameness in the citta. The citta gives a sort of mild earthquake within. It does not bring the whole building down, but you can see the cracks on the walls! One step beyond that, are samadhi parinama and ekagrata parinama, where the movement of excitation and the movement of restraint become absolutely balanced. There is a big difference between the weight of a book and that of a desk. When you lift either, the intelligence in the arms determines what I call "appropriate effort". Every time I think of that, I am thrilled. It is an extraordinary intelligence that knows instinctively (if you want to call it that) the precise appropriate amount of effort and energy needed to lift that book, and a moment later to lift that desk. There is a big difference and the difference is not even noticed. Such an effortless adjustment in relation to the chitta is known as samadhi parinama. It is also known as samatvam in the Bhagavad Gita. There is a movement of excitation, and it is immediately countered by the appropriate movement of restraint, which is precisely of the same strength as the movement of excitation. These two happen simultaneously, and therefore the boat is not rocked one way or the other. That is what is meant here.

If this is not perfectly understood, then this samacittatvam might come to mean a sort of wooden hearted insensitivity, which is very, very far from the truth. Swami Sivananda was not only a complete human being - human in every aspect of the word - but He was extremely sensitive. He was not the dreamy-eyed dopey person that the immature and ignorant mind associates with the image of a yogi. One could see that He responded to the environment, responding to happy and unhappy situations, responding to honour and dishonour. But in that response there was samacittatvam, a balanced state of mind. During the All India Tour in 1950, Swamiji was literally worshipped as a god throughout India, by millions of people in hundreds of places. He recognised that 'this is honour', and He responded appropriately - not with pride, not with egotism, not with some kind of

a self-image which gloated over all that. 'This is honour that is paid by these thousands and thousands of devotees' - the mind recognised that and remained stable. And on other occasions, when He was subjected to severe criticism, even right to His face, even then He smiled, recognised it as criticism and remained in the same samacittattvam.

I remember one such incident : a super VIP visited the ashram. She was not a great devotee or admirer of Swamiji. She was received with great respect due to her status, and Swamiji entertained her with fruits, snacks and coffee, etc. Then, as usual, He handed her a whole bundle of books that were available then. It so happened that they were almost wholly biographical, none really by Swami Sivananda, but almost all of them on Swami Sivananda, though every one of these books contained a few pages of material written by Him. This wonderful lady thumbed through the titles and looked straight into His face and asked, "Swamiji, why do you allow all this rubbish to be published in your own ashram?" A couple of us who were witness to this were a bit shocked, taken aback, but not Swamiji. He sat there, graciously looking at her as He often did on such occasions with just one eye closed, and gave a one-sentence, terrific answer: "That is what brought you here, I think." That was all the answer. I am sure He took her remark as adverse criticism, no doubt about that, but the inner tranquillity was not affected. If the mind is too dull and too insensitive to be affected, then of course it is dead - whether the person is enlightened or stupid. That is not what is meant by samacittattvam. Samacittattvam implies that you recognise honour and dishonour, happiness and unhappiness, pain and pleasure as such - without reacting in an unenlightened way.

We go on to the next aspect of the same problem; ishtanishtopapattishu naturally implies that even a serious student of yoga, or a man of wisdom, may have some values, which he cherishes, and others which he does not. Your values may be completely different from the values of a businessman for instance, but you also have your values. There are things which you do not desire. These things in effect might continue to operate as long as you are alive. It is very, very foolish to think these can or will come to an end the moment you think you are enlightened. They may not. That is what we noticed in the case of Swami Sivananda. He often indicated that you cannot take a bath in the sea after all the waves have subsided. The waves will be there as long as the ocean is there. The waves are the ocean. And so, as long as you are alive (whatever that word 'you' may mean), and as long as the mind functions - as manas, chitta, buddhi or ahamkara - there will still be some things which are liked, some things which are not liked; some things which give you pleasure, and some things which give you pain; some things which make you happy, some things which make you unhappy. You recognise 'This is honour, this is dishonour'; 'This is success and this is failure'. But at the same time you recognise something that is extremely important - that whether it is called a wave or a whirlpool, it is all water. Pain and pleasure might still exist, happiness and unhappiness also exist, success and failure exist, honour and dishonour exist - but all these are made of exactly the same substance.

There is a very beautiful expression in the Bhagavad Gita, 'The enlightened man regards a nugget of gold and a piece of stone with equal vision.' That means he does not see any difference between the two. If you saw a naked sadhu sitting on the Ganges bank, picking up a gold watch with one hand and a piece of stone with the other and throwing them into the river, would you be impressed? Why would he want to demonstrate this? He was able to see a difference between the gold and stone, and perhaps merely wanted to impress you that he has risen above all this. If there is no difference at all, why would he show, "I do not care, I am the same in all this"?

There was a Swami here who was very fond of nice clothes. In those days, twenty five or thirty years ago, the ashram could not afford all that. Of course there was a reason for his affection for nice clothes, because he was what we called our 'foreign minister'. He used to go to government offices and so on to do the ashram work. That was alright, no problem ! But when he saw that we were all clad in tattered clothes, he would say, "To me, it is all the same. I have risen above all these things. Nice clothes and not nice clothes are all the same to me." Why did he want to say that? Sometimes Swami Sivananda wore very nice clothes and sometimes not. When it was cold, sometimes He put on a very expensive, well-tailored coat, and at other times an old rotten one He often used because it suited Him. He did not bother to point out, "Look, I don't care! - This is a nice coat, and that is not a nice coat, but I am the same to all of this!" The moment you are even tempted to demonstrate your sameness or saintliness, you betray its non-existence.

Wisdom always looks within. There is this perpetual movement of investigation, in the light of which you realise that 'this is pain and this is pleasure', because you regard them as such. In French 'regarder' means 'to see'. Hence, "I regard this as pleasure, I regard this as pain. It is my privilege to call it pain, it is my privilege to call it pleasure." Though different words are used, the user of those words is the same, and the instrument of experience is the same. Whether she takes a feather and rubs your cheek, or takes a pin and pokes it, the instrument of experience is exactly the same. It is the same skin, the same sense of touch, the same nerves and the same brain, the same mind. Where lies the difference? You have decided that there should be some difference! Do not try to invent a thing called sameness. Experiences are born of the same parents. The experience of pain is born of certain neurological excitations and the understanding that regards it as pain. Pleasure is similarly born of certain neurological stimuli, which again is regarded as pleasure by the same intelligence within. The words are different, but the dynamics of it are exactly the same. The experiences seem to be different, but the structure of experience, including the experiencer, is exactly the same. When this is clearly understood, one does not look for the cessation of experiences, one does not try to beat them all into demonstrable sameness, and yet one remains the same - putting forth precisely appropriate responses or effort, nothing more, nothing less. We saw that in Swami Sivananda. As I pointed out earlier, he was very human, which means He was subject (to use a wrong word) to pleasure and

pain, happiness and unhappiness, success and failure, honour and dishonour. He recognised all these as if they were real factors in His life. He could laugh, He could cry, He could apparently get angry, but on each occasion you noticed that there was an appropriate response, which was short-lived. That is, it was not as if He became excited and then controlled Himself, but the two arose together so one saw both of these quickly. One moment He appeared to be excited, and the next moment it was gone, because the matching effect had neutralised it. He could be very greatly shocked, again for a moment or two, then came the appropriate effect which neutralised it.

A yogi's life is normal life, as in all human beings. He is not a dead piece of wood. He is more human than all of us put together, but he recognises that the structure of all experiences is precisely the same. When this truth is grasped, there is sameness - which means effortless manifestation of appropriate action.



## 15. The Doer is the Deed

The orthodox view is that jnana is opposed to karma (action or activity) - that since self-knowledge is not the result of a cause, it cannot be reached through any kind of activity. The self is there, and it need not be produced by an effort or a cause. On the other hand, anything that is produced must also come to an end; anything that is brought into being must also cease to be; anything that is born must die; anything that is composed must decompose. So they said that action is not the antidote to ignorance, and cannot lead to jnana.

What is it that can lead to jnana? Jnana alone can lead to jnana! The sun shines. With what do you recognise the light of the sun? The light of the sun! This is an incontrovertible argument. But what orthodoxy seems to have missed, is that jnana is not static, inert and lifeless, as book knowledge is. If you want to find out the distance from here to the moon, you can pick up a calculator. But that knowledge is totally unrelated to your life, and therefore it is not jnana. Unfortunately that was considered jnana, and therefore we got hung up on intellectualism, or breadwinning jnana. Such jnana itself is not the path to self-knowledge or atma-jnana. This confusion between the two forms of knowledge led to the teaching that karma is detrimental to jnana.

This was the standard, until Krishna appeared on the scene. I hope I don't give you the impression that once Krishna appeared on the scene the whole thing turned upside down. No! Even he could not destroy the evil of rigidity of dogma. Dogmas don't die just because somebody waves a magic wand. Dogmas cling to you doggedly, they don't let go. If you dethrone one set of dogmas, the dogs still chase after you, and lick your foot, and you have to put them on the throne! So long as you are ignorant, dogmas don't let you go.

There are philosophers who read these dogmas into the Bhagavad Gita, and interpret it in their own way. But from our study we get a glimpse of how to harmonise life and wisdom. That is what our Master called Divine Life. It is not as though this is divine and that is life, and occasionally they meet. The divine and life are inseparable, and in the same way wisdom and life are inseparable. Wisdom can only be recognised by the presence of the qualities we have been discussing - and on the other hand these qualities cannot be cultivated unless you are wise. You cannot decide that on one fine morning you are going to be unattached. You will find new attachments, but you will call them by different names. You won't have wife and children anymore, you will have friends or guru or disciples to whom you are as madly attached as you were to wife and children. So, these virtues are not to be externally applied, but they are like your flesh, blood, hair and skin - they grow out of you, from within. When there is wisdom within, it manifests itself as virtue, as virtuous action.

The presence of this wisdom can be known by the virtues. If they are absent, you are a fool. Their absence can be recognised, and when you try to remove that which you recognise as the absence of these virtues, you come face to face with

that which you have been clinging to, the self-image called the ego-ahamkara. It works in a fairly round-about way, but it is very beautiful. When the self-image is removed, wisdom shines by itself.

All our efforts at the practice of yoga are intended merely to purify the self. What is the self that is purified, and what happens when it is purified? It is not like a brass image in your heart, which has become a bit dirty, so has to be cleaned. The ahamkara resembles a salt doll. If you pour water on it to clean it, it has gone! That is self-purification. It is a strange phenomenon. You cannot keep the self and purify it; it is like a salt doll. The self is there only as dirt, and when it is purified, it has gone. In its place (I don't even know if you can say 'in its place') you see the reality. Perhaps even that is not right. You do not see the reality. The reality 'is'. This is the process of realisation of the truth, which is wisdom. By courtesy you designate as jnana the whole process, right from the beginning to the end.

The next characteristic that we are introduced to is precisely what has just been discussed : mayi cha nanyayogena bhaktir avyabhicharini viviktadeshasevitvam aratir janasamsadi - with undivided attention, with one-pointed, total whole-hearted, whole-souled, undivided love which knows no other (or which knows no other-ananya yoga) the heart must be directed towards Me, towards God. The entire Bhagavad Gita is a commentary on this simple sutra. In different expressions, the same teaching occurs again and again. So, your vision of truth must not only not militate against your life, and your life against the vision of truth, but your life itself must spring from this vision of truth. It must become a vision of living truth, or a living vision of truth. It must be alive. There must be undivided love of God - bhakti or devotion or love which is not divided. There should be ananya yoga - the heart, mind or soul should recognise no other, must realise that there is no other. Here, other is not restricted to an other 'person', but it really and truly and literally means a love in which you do not even regard God as the other. This is ananya yoga. Does it mean that you must love God with all your heart and soul, without being devoted to anything else, anybody else, and without even recognising the existence of another? If you contemplate this formula, totally, without trying to bring it into the field of your logic, you realise you are trapped, whichever way you turn. Can you love God and God alone as is commonly understood by this expression? Does it mean that when you love God with all your heart and soul, you hate the world with all your heart and soul? No, because then you recognise God as the object of your total love, and the world as the object of your total hate. You have divided something into two. You have created something other than God - whereas Krishna says, 'Ananyayogena' - you cannot regard God as something other than you.

In this little sutra is contained the very essence of the yoga of the Bhagavad Gita, of the yoga of wisdom. First (first or last, it only depends upon what happens sequentially) if you are sitting and meditating upon God, naturally 'you' are meditating on 'God'. This is not ananya yoga. That God you are meditating on is obviously the creature of your own mind, not God. Sitting and meditating on God

in the conventional way is very good, but it is still not 'ananya', because there is the other, which is the object of your contemplation. You are thinking of some 'thing' called God. Instead of sitting in a corner and plotting against somebody, or even mentally criticising and condemning somebody, or falling asleep, you are doing something good. But please recognise that, as long as you are meditating or contemplating on a God, that God is a creature of your own mind. You can learn how to focus your attention upon that object - you can learn concentration and meditation, will culture, mind culture, thought culture, intellect culture - but that is not ananya yoga, for there is an other.

How does this psychological division arise? And what exactly is meant by the psychological division. It is a simple question, intriguing and almost impossible to find an answer to. You are sitting with your eyes closed, visualising the presence of Krishna, Buddha or Jesus. How is it that you are able to see this within yourself? What does it mean? 'I' see 'it'. There are these two. One becomes the subject, the other becomes the object. The object is the projection of the subject within itself. The example given is a dream. Patanjali is very emphatic about it and Gurudev Swami Sivananda also used to emphasise this : learn something from your own dream-state and sleep. From dream you learn that there can be diversity, where in truth there is none. Where do these dream objects arise? In you! All the diversity takes place in yourself; and sometimes you also sense your own presence in the dream as if you are the spectator. That is one kind of dream. The meditation you practise is another kind of dream. You are visualising the presence of God in your heart. There is a division. Who creates this division? By visualising God in your heart, you create this division. Contemplating this riddle deeply, you try to find the answer to it. How does this division arise? The day you find the answer you might discover that you have purified the salt doll by pouring a bucket of water on it. The division has gone, but with the division something else has also gone - the dividing ego.

Then perhaps you come out of that meditation room, look at all these people sitting there and think "Maybe there is another dream now!" Just as you were visualising in your meditation, practice the image of Krishna as if that image was different from you, and then that somehow dissolved, maybe here also you are dreaming or visualising that all of us are sitting in front of you, and you are sitting on the platform here. One more bucket of meditation and this salt doll dissolves, completely purified. That is ananya yoga. God alone exists, naught else.

When this ananya yoga happens, there is no division between life and spirituality, life and divinity. There is no distinction between jnana and karma, because that which said, "I am speaking" has been dissolved, purified. There was a salt doll called Swami Venkatesananda, which had been put together very nicely, and suddenly there was this contemplation which acted as a bucket of water with which this Venkatesananda was purified, and, look and behold, as soon as it was purified it was gone! So there is no ahamkara which says, "I am speaking", but speaking happens - as seeing happens. Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras says,

'Drashta is the seer.'

The seer is the same as the speaker, the bearer or the taster. The experiencer is the experience. The doer is the deed. There is no division. When you are writing, is there a writer apart from the action of writing? Are you a writer now? No, you are a sitter (you have ceased writing). Is there a sitter apart from the sitting? Please stand up. Are you a sitter now? You are a stander! It is so simple! But when you put it in metaphysical terms, it becomes difficult to understand.

The doer is the deed! The experiencer is the experience. Is there an experiencer independent of all these experiences? It is a mere speculation. Investigate it ! We are dealing now only with this entity which we assume to exist, known as ahamkara. Is there an ahamkara, doer or experiencer independent of the deed or the experience? It is quite obvious that it does not exist. Is there an 'aham' independent of all this? Perhaps there is, but that 'aham' is not the ahamkara that is the creator of all the problems in our lives. Aham is not the creator of problems. That aham or 'I am' is what remains after the salt doll has been thoroughly washed and purified - which is therefore indescribable, which does not have a name and a form, which is totally independent of all your thoughts and all your mental imagery. That is God. That is wisdom, where there is love and love alone. It does not recognise another, whether that other be another person, object or a God. So, in a relative sense, that love and love alone flows to all. That is what is meant by cosmic love.

I had a friend in Mauritius, a young man, who picked up girl-friends and dropped them by the dozen. One of them took him a bit seriously. She was a bit upset when she was dropped and the next one was picked up. She asked him "What is it?" And he told her, "You know, Swamiji says we should practise cosmic love. I am practising cosmic love." That is not cosmic love. That is comic love.

Cosmic love is love which exists independent of all objects, which is God, and in which there is no self. Only when the self has been completely and totally purified, in the sense in which the salt doll is purified with a bucket of water, does this cosmic love arise. It does not even need an object to love; when an object is presented, it loves, but not confining it to that object. When you love someone, you naturally if not hate, at least 'not love' someone else. There is a division there, and that is not what is meant here. When there is love, and when you 'are' love, that love does not even recognise an object. That is divine. That is God. And that is wisdom.

How do you see God and God alone? And adore Him throughout the day and night without neglecting what has to be done? Of course, the Bhagavad Gita comes to our rescue and says, "Constantly think of God, and do what has to be done", but it is natural for you to wonder, "But how is it done?" Here Swami Sivananda exemplified in His own daily life the marvellous Vibhuti Yoga

described in the Bhagavad Gita, particularly in the tenth chapter. He was extremely fond of this, and used to recommend it to all sincere spiritual aspirants. In His own way He also expanded this Vibhuti Yoga to include : "I am the flavour in coffee, I am the essence in orange" and so on. Krishna himself had given this freedom by saying, "I am not exhausting the vibhutis, I am only listing here the chief among them". If the mind is trained to see God and God alone in all manifestations, beginning with the special manifestations which the mind readily associates with God, and then extending this to exceptional beings, phenomena and situations, then it is possible, gradually, to realise that the energy which throbs in the entire universe is God's. That is what we saw in Swami Sivananda. He had made it almost a ritual or second habit. As soon as He came out of His room, He looked at the Ganges, at the Himalayas (these have been mentioned as the special manifestations of God in the 13hagavad Gita), and with folded palms He saluted them. He saluted the sun (not only in the exercise known as Salutation to the Sun, but literally saluted the sun) and offered worship in His own way (of course this also included sitting in the sun, sunbathing and such other practises). He worshipped the Ganges in His own way. Then came His first contact for the day with the disciples and guests. As soon as He came out of His kutir, when He saw a group of disciples and devotees assembled, outside or in some room, He used to recite a lengthy formula, including the name of everybody present.

haro hara, tat-tvam-asi, om shanti, banami khuda mubarak,  
namah shivaya, namo narayanaya, namo bhagavate vasudevaya,  
namo bhagavate .... (using the name of the particular disciple),  
namo bhagavati ganga ran!, hari om tat sat."

"I greet the Lord in you, I great the Lord in you."

If an extraordinary action of His was brought to His own attention - "Swamiji, you did something marvellous" - He would instantly switch back and say "This is all God's grace". Also, if something that was undesirable was brought to His attention - like a theft in the ashram etc. - He would again say "God does this all for our good".

In this way it is possible to recognise the hand of God in all events, to recognise the presence of God in all beings, to recognise the energy of God in whatever happens.

## 16. Virtue

There is no distinction at all between what are called jnana (wisdom), bhakti (devotion) and karma. Karma as karma is an action. For instance this tape recorder acts mechanically, because there is some electric energy in it. But in the case of sentient beings like us, mechanical action is what we call automatic action, impulse, or foolish, blind action. When you detect mechanical action in yourself, you will see that either it is impulsive, or a totally blind, foolish action, which springs from total prejudice or habit pattern or psychological tendency. So, if you are to walk the path of wisdom, this blind foolish action must be purified of its foolishness or blindness, and infused with wisdom. You can choose to be either wise or foolish - that choice and that choice alone is yours. If you are foolish, all your actions will be foolish; if you are wise, all your actions will be wise. So, action has to be linked to wisdom, intelligence.

Our actions unfortunately are always directed by something which we love and something which we don't love - raga dvesha - "I like this and therefore I strive to get it", "I dislike this and therefore I want to get away from it". Krishna indicates that there is another category, which is bhakti. It is neither raga nor dvesha, but it arises from the love which is the expression of the oneness that already prevails amongst us. We are already united in God, and when that is realized, there is love which is not attraction, nor does it give rise to repulsion. It is that love which governs the wise man's behaviour. Thus the three so-called different yogas are shown to be together, they are not separate or different from one another. This oneness must be realized - then there arises bhakti or love which becomes the guiding force of all your actions.

Though Swami Sivananda belonged officially and in theory to the Advaita school of philosophy of Sankaracarya, He was full of devotion to a personal aspect of God. He was greatly devoted to Lord Krishna, and He was incessantly active in the service of God in humanity - not God and humanity, but the service of God in humanity. In that there is neither a problem nor a difficulty. He first offered devout worship to His own chosen deity (often Lord Krishna or Lord Siva) in a small shrine in His own room, then came out of His room to the office where He worked, and where He was literally a servant of God in humanity. His attitude towards His own disciples and the guests and visitors to the ashram was that of a servant. He did not often say so in just so many words, but His actions and every one of His gestures revealed that this was in fact His inner attitude. From the way He folded His palms and spoke to you, whether you were a visitor, a guest or even His own initiated sannyasin disciple, the way He enquired after your welfare and, especially if you were an ashramite, "Do you need anything? Are you comfortable? Do you have a blanket? Do you have a sweater? Do you have a bed? Is your health alright?" - it was obvious that He was keen to serve you; not 'you', but God in you. So we saw that what is known as karma yoga flowed out of the depth of His devotion to God.

Yet, on occasions when He spoke, He thundered, Tat tvam as! (Thou art That),

or Sarvam Brahman mayan (Every thing is Brahman). This was His favourite formula and kirtan, especially during the main celebrations in the ashram - to see Brahman alone in all, Brahman alone as the only reality. "All indeed is Brahman, there is no such thing as diversity. Sarvam Brahman mayan." Having sung, having proclaimed this simple truth, He went on to prove it. I don't think that was His motivation, that was what we saw. We saw this illustrated in His life as a tremendous devotion to God in all forms - that He embodied in Himself - and the unrelenting service in which He engaged Himself throughout His life. Thus it became clear to us, as we were watching this yoga in action, that not only are jnana, bhakti and karma the same, but they depend on each other, and that true karma yoga and true bhakti are possible only for a true jnani.

On the one side, bhakti is a sadhana for jnana, and on the other side it is the fulfilment of jnana, the natural overflow of jnana. A jnani is one who has realised his oneness with everything, and therefore he loves all. Once you have attained self-realisation, it is only then that true love arises in your heart, and then you love.

You have gone to the top, and you are coming one step down, and then the next step is karma. So, what was started as the practice of karma yoga becomes the fulfilment of karma yoga only at that end. So you have come one, full circle. To begin with, you were asked to practise karma yoga in order to purify yourself, then bhakti in order to purify your mind, and then you attain jnana. Having attained jnana, you come back again to bhakti - this time it is true love, cosmic love - and then karma yoga, when it is true and real karma yoga, selfless service. Till then you do not know what service means, till then you do not know what cosmic love or love or God means, and - can I suggest - till then you do not know what virtue or goodness means. Till you are established in self-realisation, all the virtue you are practising is only an infantile attempt at virtue. You know why? If you examine your own daily conduct, you probably understand this very easily. Is it possible for you normally to do one good thing without inwardly asking, "Why?" and finding an answer for it. There is always a 'why' and an answer! You give the most glorious answer because you have read the Bible and Bhagavad Gita, and you give an answer from there. But the fact that your mind is asking 'why' is already mischief.

Say you do something nice for someone - Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita that just to serve is your duty and you should not look to the reward. So you don't look for any reward, but you reward yourself. There is self-satisfaction. This is not as gross and as stupid as saying "Oh no, I will do it only if you pay me two rupees," but to inwardly feel quite contented and blessed is another self-satisfaction. Whatever be the answer that we find to this 'why', the very fact that while planning an action, there is already a 'why' which shows that it is not unselfish action. To the yogi who tries to ascend this ladder, karma is inevitable. You have to do something, and you make the action as unobjectionable as possible. That is all that a student of karma yoga can do.

When your actions spring from jnana, from the realisation of the oneness, there is no 'why'. If a mosquito sits on the ear, the hand immediately drives it off. No question is asked, and no answer is provided by the ear or the hand. You call it reflex action, I call it built-in intelligence. There is a very beautiful saying in the Bhagavad Gita:

kayena manasab uddhya kevalair indriyair api yoginah karma kurvanti sangam tyaktva  
tmashuddhaye (V-11)

'The yogis, having abandoned attachment, perform actions only with the body, mind, intellect and even by the senses, for the purification of the self.'

Even here, the aim suggested is self-purification. Krishna says that yogis perform action with the body, the mind, the buddhi and the inner senses or indriyas. There is no motivation, no need for satisfaction; there is no happiness, there is no joy posed as the motive. It becomes karma yoga only when there is self-realisation, the realisation of the oneness.

In the same way, in bhakti, there is worship and different exercises and practices in your daily life to enable you to grow in God-love, but when there is jnana, there is fulfilment of bhakti, and you have real love of God and humanity. I am repeating all this in order to point out not only that bhakti, karma and jnana are one and the same, but also to remind you that true bhakti and karma yoga are possible only for - a jnani. For instance, if you are ringing the bell at puja, you are ringing the bell. Anybody can ring the bell - but to ring the bell and wave the lights in the right spirit is possible only for the jnani, not for the ajnani. There is, a beautiful mantra recited during puja... "If you want to worship God, you must realise, 'I am God' and then worship God." In the Yoga Vasistha there is a beautiful story of someone who wanted to worship Narayana, and said, "If I am not Narayana how can I worship Narayana?" The following may be a crude illustration or example : a human being loves another human being - you don't fall in love with a cat. Only God can love God - not you or me. So, the 'me' must first be purified, kept aside, and then love arises spontaneously, without any effort.

Human beings are considered to be social animals, we want company and in the absence of company we disintegrate, we are lost. But the man of wisdom (observe very carefully here) is not a social animal. Please don't apply the 'and therefore...' logic - 'and therefore one must seclude oneself in a cave.' That is not what is meant. Vivikta deshasevitvam aratir janasamsadi - 'He does not crave for company.' It is very different from running away from people. This is one extreme, that is another extreme. When you run away from people, you find that you carry them in your handbag! When you go away into the forest, open your handbag and you will see that all the people who you want to avoid are there - the handbag is your heart or mind.

You want company when you are not so sure of yourself, when you don't, like your own company, when you are worried and anxious, when you feel that something is wrong with you and you need somebody else's comment, approval,



appreciation. When your values are externally centred or dependent upon the opinion and the reactions of others, you don't want to be alone. You are frightened. If you don't like yourself you turn on the television or the radio or something else, because you don't want to look at yourself.

The attitude of the man of wisdom is precisely the opposite. If there is anxiety, he wants to study it, if there is fear, he wants to study it, if there is craving, he wants to study it. Whether he is alone physically, or in company physically, he is always alone, always observing what goes on within himself. If he is alone physically and he craves for company, he is looking at that phenomenon. If he lives in a crowd and there is an inner reaction, he observes all that.

You can be in the midst of a crowd, but you realise that you are alone. Whether there are people around you or there is no one with you, you are alone. That aloneness is very different from loneliness. There is no anxiety and there is no loneliness, because you are in the best of company-yourself. That is company enough. In the world we need others in order to awaken us to our own nature. Therefore in company we study ourselves. If you learn how to study yourself, you are always alone (all-one), and being all-one, you are wise.

## 17. The Mind Becomes No-mind

In Yoga-Vedanta there are many 'not this, not this' expressions. Ahimsa means 'not himsa'. It is described negatively, for the simple reason that if the description is given as your mind demands it should be, then the mind immediately makes an image of it and worships it. If you worship something, you distort it, and the essential and fundamental nature of jnana - the spirit of enquiry - is immediately dismissed; so they worded it in such a way that this spirit of enquiry was forced upon you. For instance, ahimsa is non-violence. You can recognise violence, and as you go on with your observation, this recognition itself sweeps the surface dirt away, and you discover more and more layers of violence. You thought that only hitting and killing was violence. When you remove that thought, you see something else. You keep clearing the ground so that one day you might realise the truth which makes you exclaim: "Is that what they are talking about?" That is something that is inexpressible. You merely gasp and wonder.

The wise man is constantly centred. The very act of self enquiry enables you to be centred. Whatever happens, you are examining yourself without allowing the mind to externalise itself. If you learn to do this, you are constantly in samadhi, constantly centred in meditation in the cave of your heart. Gurudev insisted and recommended that we seekers should spend a few minutes alone with ourselves without being distracted by others or by external circumstances. When He went into His room, no one dared to disturb Him. When He wanted to be alone, no one dared to go near Him. As long as He could, He Himself locked His gate and apartment. Even His personal attendants could go there only when He wanted them.

Here again you see great wisdom. That is, we should learn that we are alone in a crowd, but that should not tempt us to mask our gregarious nature by saying "Oh, it doesn't affect me, even when I am in a crowd I am all alone". It may be deception. Learn to live alone for some time. Taste it. When you are alone, undistracted by anyone, only then can you listen to your own thoughts, see your own thoughts arising, prevailing and dissolving. You have no other companion then, except yourself; there is no other distracting influence except your own mind, and so you see your mind. Then you come out into company and realise that here also -you are alone.

It is what happens in you that matters. One word is called praise, another censure, and a third a description. These are words, which are meaningless. The meaning arises in you, you give these words meaning. You call it praise, censure or description, and you get upset or remain calm. So, if in company you are able to do what you have learned to do while you were alone, that is the sign of wisdom.

In this manner you learn to find the source of thought and thus find your own-centre. I repeat - the centre is not some kind of spot in the body or the mind to which you can tie yourself by a rope. This enquiry itself is the centre. At that

moment what is known as adhyatmajnana arises. Adhyatmajnana and atnaajana are both the same, only there is a special emphasis here. Adhyatmajnana is the deepest, innermost truth, which is jnana (wisdom). Atmajnana (or self-knowledge) may not mean 'knowing an entity called alma'. Self-knowledge means knowledge that is the subject itself. It is not specifically called the subject, because in that jnana there is no object, for the very simple reason that when the object is placed in front of you even though you are looking, touching, tasting and doing whatever you are doing, you are endeavouring to discover the centre - where these sensations and feelings are experienced (if they are experienced at all). So the object was considered object, only as long as the mind (thought) was moving towards the object. When thought returned to the subject, as it were, the object got dissolved in the subject; and there is no subject without an object. He who has a son is called a father; in the absence of the son, father doesn't exist! It is the awareness of an object that makes the subject a subject. When the object is not there, where is the subject? That is self-knowledge - self that is knowledge, knowledge that is self.

What happened to the mind? As long as a thought was flowing towards an object, there was a disturbed movement in the mind. Only then it is called mind. For instance, now you sense wind in this room. If the movement of the air was not there, if everything was absolutely still, people would even complain that there is no air. There is plenty of air, but there is no movement of air. When there is movement in consciousness, that movement is called mind. Hence Gurudev defined the mind as a bundle of thoughts. This movement creates the object and therefore the subject, or the subject and therefore the object - it does not matter which came first. When this movement is cancelled out the mind becomes 'no mind'. It is like dehydrated water. This is not achieved by merely suppressing thought (even if you can do it), but by intelligently and with a lot of curiosity observing the source of thought. The very attempt to observe the source of thought turns the thought upon itself, so that the effervescence of the mind ceases.

Does thought totally cease or not? It is up to you to discover. Just as in sleep the body and its functions are carried on, even so it is possible that the brain goes on thinking - but there is no feeling 'I am thinking this thought' or 'I am experiencing this experience'. Even if such a thought arises, immediately that experience comes to an end; the experiencer also comes to an end, because that experience is not registered to form the chitta. I am told that this is the case with most animals, and therefore I am very jealous of them. You can also see it in a very mild form in children - they fight and quarrel, and a minute later they have forgotten the whole thing, because all that was not registered by the child, in whom the ego is not very well developed. That state is called manonasha, the death of the mind. When the mind dies, what remains is called atmajnana. If you are tempted to think about it now, you are feeding the mind and keeping it going. So that does not work.

I read a very beautiful story once. An old yogi was staying with a young couple

whose house was made of straw and thatch and so on. When the yogi was leaving them, he gave them a small metal container, and said "In case of fire please open this". The young man thought it was something very powerful, if such a small thing could extinguish a fire. After a week he became more and more curious. One day he could not resist his curiosity, and he opened the container to see what was in it. There was only a small piece of paper with these words written on it, 'Only in case of fire'. The moral: when the yogi says, "Get rid of this mind and what remains is self-knowledge", you are tempted to visualise what that self-knowledge would be, without getting rid of the mind; it does not work. Let your endeavour be to find the source of thought, which itself leads to manolaya or manonasha.

In the Yoga Vasistha we are given these three characteristics of enlightenment : vasana-kshaya, mano-nasha, tattva-jnana - a very beautiful expression. In South India the word 'vasana' is used in common parlance to denote smell. Say you are handling garlic. It smells, so you wash your hands with carbolic soap. Now you smell garlic and carbolic. If you apply some perfume on top of it, you will smell garlic, carbolic soap and perfume. The garlic smell does not go. That is called vasana. The most vital factor in our lives is that when we experience something, that experience leaves a mark; when we do something, that deed leaves a mark. The impression left there is vasana. But where? This is the most important question.

Is what is called the self like a flypaper already existing within you, to which all these experiences and expressions cling, or on which they leave an impression? Is it like a structure that forms itself when snow falls, the structure itself being made of snowflakes? We are not serious unless we are seriously involved in this search. Nobody can give you an answer to this. You have to discover it within yourself. One must deal with this in such a way that the snow melts without creating another structure. There, any attempt that you make in order to wipe out this vasana might create another one - however good or glorious it might be. You cannot get rid of this garlic smell by smearing some other thing on top of it. Even if you are able to mask the garlic smell completely, you have created a new smell there. You may call it good vasana or bad vasana, but eventually you must come face-to-face with that which is the basis of this vasana, whether it is of the form of the 'snow structure' or the 'flypaper'. That is the most important and vital question.

Till that is seen and dealt with, no meditation is going to be of any use. This is adhyatmajnana. When there is vasana-kshaya, what is experienced and what you do - the experience and the deed - do not leave an impression anywhere, and there is no craving for anything in its absence. The vasana is gone.

Then you also realise that it is possible to switch off the whole mechanism of the vasana getting formed. If you translate 'vasana' as an impression formed by the experience or the deed, then you realise that it can be formed only if you are impressed by the experience or the deed. If you are not impressed at all, there is

no impression there. You see a thousand people every day, but you do not remember any of them. If somebody's face has impressed you, you will remember that. Yesterday you did a hundred things, but you do not remember them. Only if something that you did was impressive do you remember it. I have a feeling that what is called the ego, the self or the 'me', is merely made up of these impressions. Once they are gone there is no more me!

To be established in this means that you are established in the centre, which is the spirit of enquiry. As long as the spirit of enquiry is brilliant and flaming, you are wise. When the vasanas have been defused (if not destroyed), the mind becomes no-mind - because apart from the movement that may be inherent in the mind, you are not disturbing its surface. In other words, you are not interested in thinking a thought. A thought appears on the horizon and it sets. It does not make any difference to 'you'. When you have reached that stage, then there is mano-nasha. It is like the thoughts of an infant. The infant merely responds to whatever is present in front of it, but it is not impressed. It does not carry in impression forward.

Tatvajnanarthadarshanam is a very beautiful expression. Tatva is truth, jnana is wisdom, philosophy. Artha is the thing in itself - not just the dictionary meaning, but the thing denoted by tatva jnana. Darshanam is seeing. I do not think any translation is really adequate. If you merely contemplate these four words, then you may discover more meanings than have been recorded in the commentaries.

You cannot think about philosophy, and you cannot think about psychology, because the psychology demands mane-nasha - the mind itself must come to an end. That is not taught in any school of psychology. How to dissolve the mind? When it ceases to be impressed by anything in the world, it takes no impression. That is the psychology of yoga. Tatvajnanarthadarshanam is the end of philosophy. The direct vision, not a conceptualisation, is tatvajnanam. This is what 'is'.

## 18. This is Wisdom

Wisdom is non-different from virtue; and virtue is not something which is put on, cultivated and applied, but it arises within. Virtue and wisdom are synonyms. Virtue is not merely a question of doing this or not doing that. This fact was also abundantly illustrated in the day-to-day activities of Swami Sivananda; it also posed a big problem to His immediate disciples and those who were in charge of the day-to-day administration of the ashram. Virtue that is natural to an enlightened sage is spontaneous; it transcends the do's and don'ts, but lends the rational support for those do's and don'ts. You realise it only after you have observed in the sage's behaviour how the do's and the don'ts were evolved, and what for, and how the sage transcends all this and remains established in spontaneous virtue.

There were occasions when even Swamiji's closest associates were puzzled by His actions and decisions. Sometimes it even created difficulties because His actions were unconventional, unorthodox - and yet here was the great master for whom it appeared to be the natural and the right thing to do. I can give you quite a number of illustrations, but perhaps just one might be adequate. Once an unmarried lady, who was expecting a baby, arrived at the ashram, wishing to commit suicide but not having the courage to do so. The care and the compassion with which Swamiji admitted her into the ashram, looked after her and sent her away after the baby was born, was unimaginably divine. To a bystander or even an administrator of an ashram this would be a frightening prospect - but in His case there was no fright, no fear. Swamiji did not even know who she was, and He did not bother to enquire. We rationalise this - call it compassion, love, cosmic love, this or that - but when He made that decision, there was absolutely no brainwork; it was a spontaneous manifestation of this supreme compassion, which only a sage can manifest in life. You and I, in such a situation, would do what we would do after a lot of weighing of pros and cons - which means brainwork and calculation. In His case all these things were totally absent - compassion was compassion, that's all. But that did not mean that it would be repeated every time such a thing happened. No, somebody else would be ruthlessly turned away, leaving us to wonder, "My God! He admitted So-and-so and refused to admit So-and-so. He helped So-and-so and refuses to help So-and-so." One day a man selling ice-cream appeared on the scene, and Swamiji called him and emptied his stock in five minutes, distributing ice-cream to everybody who was in the vicinity. A few days later the same man (or maybe another one who hit upon the bright idea) came and stood in front of Swamiji, parading his wares, but Swamiji didn't take any notice of him. That is it spontaneous virtue is unpredictable, because it is beyond all brainwork and calculation. That spontaneous virtue alone is virtue, all else is some form of hypocrisy.

When the consciousness moves towards God and not towards 'me' (the ego), then there is virtue - otherwise it is impossible to understand what virtue means. If you examine all the codes of conduct that man has invented (which may be very, very necessary), you will realise that it is the ego that invents this code and

lives up to it, considering itself very virtuous. Jesus said, "Sabbath was made for man and not man for Sabbath." In that is hidden quite a lot of interesting meaning. It is a very humorous statement which is full of wisdom. Take for instance the common thing called marriage. Indian swamis - like Catholic priests - don't marry. Long ago, when the former Archbishop of Canterbury visited Mauritius, I was introduced to him, and I discovered that in the Anglican religion you may choose to remain a bachelor or get married. So, Catholics and swamis should not marry and for Anglicans it is optional. I went to Israel and met Mr. and Mrs. Ben Gurion, a former Prime-Minister of Israel. His wife asked me, "Where is your home? Where is your family?" I told her, "Madam, I am not married." She said, "But if you are not married, that is sin. You are flaunting God's will. God created you a man !" Then she went on to explain that it is almost unthinkable for a Jewish rabbi to remain unmarried.

So, what is virtue? There are historical, sociological, psychological and other reasons why one remains unmarried and the other must marry. If you belong to a wandering group or community, you can't afford to have celibacy. If you want to lead a sort of missionary life, it is better not to marry. Also, if you want to be bold in what you say, and not think about the future - "What's going to happen to me, what is going to happen to my wife and children" and all that - then it is better for you to remain unmarried. You have greater psychological freedom and more freedom of thought, expression and movement. You are not worried. You can still say what you want to say, without fear and without currying favour. For all these purposes it may be a very good idea to remain a celibate. So, perhaps these were some of the considerations that determined what was considered virtue or vice. I am not suggesting that these are the only ones. You must go on contemplating and find your own truth.

Virtue implies proceeding in one direction totally. Brahmacharya also means that - 'charya' is to move; so brahmacharya means moving towards Brahman constantly, with all your being; not in a fragmented way (intellectually you talk about Brahman, but emotionally you are scattered and your life is in a mess). In brahmacharya the whole being moves towards God. That is wisdom and that is also virtue.

Where is that God? And how does moving towards Him mean both virtue and wisdom at the same time? It is not that virtue arises from wisdom nor that virtue leads to wisdom. The mere movement of consciousness towards God means virtue and wisdom together.

jyotisham api taj jyotih tamasah param uchyate jnanam jneyam jnanagamyam hridi sarvasya dhishthitam (XIII-17)

'That, the Light of all lights, is said to be beyond darkness; knowledge, the knowable and the goal of knowledge, seated in the hearts of all.'

This is another verse from the 13th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, and a very great favourite of our Master, Swami Sivananda. Gurudev often used to say that wisdom does not consist of the ability to give talks and discourses, but it arises

within and manifests as virtue. He exhorted : "Let the Upanishads come from your heart, not from your brain." Heart here does not mean the physical heart, but the very centre of your being. These are words. In order to understand the words, obviously you have to look within yourself. Yoga-Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga or whatever yoga you wish to practice, is merely a field of training to enable you to look within, at the centre of your being where the feelings arise, where the thoughts arise. If one is able to look within one finds absolutely no difficulty in life, no problems and no obstacles to one's spiritual practice. The Master was once asked, "Did you have any obstacles in your spiritual progress?" And He replied, "No. Absolutely none!" How was it possible for Him to have experienced no obstacles at all, whereas we are constantly warned about external obstacles, internal obstacles and cosmic obstacles? For the very simple reason that an enquiring intelligence does not regard anything as an obstacle.

You are tempted and led astray by pleasure, because the enquiring intelligence has been silenced during that period. When you forget this enquiry, then of course you are led astray by pleasure. If this enquiring intelligence is wide awake, then even while experiencing what is normally considered pleasure, you are not led astray, because you realise that this is something which the mind regards as pleasure. Pain does not bother you either, because you realise as the experience of pain arises, "This is what is regarded as pain." You might ask, "Then, is there not a headache that is independent of my definition?" Yes! Sleep, hunger, and headache are independent of your definition. From there on it is up to you to discover what that 'headache' is! It is 'something' which demands, "Lie down, please!" It might probably take you to bed and put you to sleep. If an animal has a sickness, quietly it curls up in the corner, but you and I have the functioning ego and it says, "No, I can overcome this headache." Why do you want to overcome it? You cannot overcome the headache unless you recognise the headache as headache. You regard the headache as a headache, and you are worried about it. On the other hand, the experience is, without being described or distorted by thought.

Such an experience arises when this spirit of intelligent enquiry prevails. In the light of that enquiry, pleasure ceases to be an object worth pursuing - but it is still there. I have seen my Guru, Swami Sivananda, enjoy a nice dish which a disciple might have offered Him, saying, "Hoh, it is very nice! Very tasty!" What is wrong with that? I have heard Him say, "I like this." He enjoyed whatever He did, and enjoyed whatever He had, not only the nice clothes He was wearing - His glasses, His pen, His disciples - but He also enjoyed diabetes, lumbago and typhoid, without any problem whatsoever. He would describe His illnesses with great joy: "Ha! I have lumbago, I have diabetes also", as we would say, "I have two cars and three bungalows"! Can you enjoy everything that you have? If you can, you are free. But the distorted mind, which is called the ego, defines things as pleasure or pain, and this distortion arises when the intelligence is asleep.

In the Yoga Vasishtha the master points out very clearly that there is no such thing as ajnana. You cannot point to something and say, "This is ignorance."



When this spirit of enquiry does not prevail, that itself is ignorance. When you do not enquire into the true nature of a thing - whether it is an object in the sense of a physical object, or an experience - that itself is ignorance. It is not as though when you do not enquire into the true nature of an object ignorance arises, but that itself is ignorance.

The opposite of virtue (if there is an opposite of virtue) arises directly from pursuit of pleasure and rejection of pain. Our whole life is plagued by these two. If you carefully look at all your actions, you will see that they are motivated by these two. But we take for granted that it is natural for us to pursue pleasure and avoid pain. This whole phenomenon is considered untouchable. We don't want to enquire into that, we are not interested.

If you examine your life (which means not analysing but looking at it), all your actions - especially those which are considered unvirtuous or vicious - arise from pursuit of pleasure and rejection of pain. Without trying to manipulate these, is it possible to find out why that is regarded as pleasure, why this is regarded as pain? Or, who determines this? At that very moment your intelligence is awake, and if you observe what happens to your mind, you realise that that awareness begins to flow towards the self, towards the centre of your being. You are keen now to observe and to discover your self.

When that intelligence is awake, you are able to study and understand any philosophy. If it is dead, then all the rest are paper and ink, if it is alive everything comes alive. That is also the meaning of the beautiful verse we recite after the arati:

ma na tatra suryobhati na chandra tarakam  
neiva vidyuto bhanti kutoyam agnih  
tameva bhantam anubhati sarvam  
tasya bhasa sarvam idam vibhati

It is by the light of That - not a mythical god beyond the clouds but That - that everything shines. It is the light of all lights, in the light of which you are able to recognise all other lights, in the understanding of which you understand all that needs to be understood.

What is needed here is the spirit of enquiry - not analysis, nor rationalisation. Rationalisation is a dangerous game, because the mind or ego which creates a philosophy will rationalise everything. One does not even say, "I must do this" or "I must not", though as a result of this observation you might spontaneously do what you are told you should do, and you might spontaneously refrain from doing what you are asked not to do. I will give you an illustration from Gurudev's works - supposing you are thirsty and love milk, and there is only one glass of milk available. Normally you pour the milk down your throat, but just as you pick up the glass you see a dead lizard inside. Would you want to drink it? Let us take another example. You like some hot chutney - it tastes good, and you swallow it - but then you have violent cramps and stomach disturbance. However much you like it, the next time you look at it, you do not want it. The mind still wants it, the

taste buds start functioning, but that which experienced the cramp and the violent pain is now awake and says, "No, I like it, but I don't want it." We tend to call this reflex action or instinctive action and so on, but in that there is great wisdom.

When this intelligence is awake, you do not take anything for granted. It examines everything that goes on - your experiences and your expressions. This awareness in me enables me to see you. When I see only you and not myself then there is a distorted vision: "This is something nice", "This is not nice"; "This is something beautiful", "This is something ugly". When this sort of diversification arises, if, with the help of the rays of this light, you trace those thoughts back to their source, then and there you realise, "This is the inner light". In the inner light there is no diversity. You see that it is all one thing, like hundreds and thousands of strands of hair all sprouting from the same head. That very moment all definitions cease to be real. Definitions are still definitions. You still use the words 'pleasure', 'pain', 'honour' and 'dishonour', but you realise that all these are your own creations. The moment one understands that, life takes on a very different meaning. That is jnana, and virtue arises there.

Such a life is full of virtue, such a life is virtue, because in your innermost being the light that shines has been unveiled. In that light there is no darkness. This light is present within us, but the awareness moves away from the source of this light. Light has these two inherent characteristics : (1) It illumines other objects, and (2) It illumines itself too, because it is light - it is self-luminous, and does not need another lamp to illumine it. But if we are satisfied with perceiving or experiencing the objects that the inner light illumines, we remain unaware of its source.

Virtue and jnana are indistinguishably one. Jnanam jneyaim jnanagamyam hridi sarvasya dhisthitam 'Knowledge, the knowable and the goal of knowledge, seated in the hearts of all.' 'Qneyam' is the only thing which is worth knowing, and there is absolutely no means other than jnana by which this can be reached. Jnanam, jneyam, jnanagamyam - these three words or expressions have to be understood together, otherwise you will make jnana an object of jnana. It is not an object of jnana. 'This is jnana, this is the object of jnana, this can only be reached by jnana' is a remarkable statement. Don't try to understand it with your intellect. It is extremely subtle. It cannot be intellectually grasped. When this is realised, that is the end of it, that is wisdom.

It is not the functioning of the mind, the brain, or the intellect, that is referred to here, but something which cannot be put into words. It is on account of that light that even the senses function, but it is independent of them. It is seated in the hearts of all beings.

The realisation of this is philosophy - the realisation of this is wisdom. The enquiry into the nature of this truth, is itself virtue.

## 19. The Inner Light Shines

The inner light shines, and in that light there is awareness of these millions and billions of objects, but this inner light, being the light of awareness, illumines itself without division. There are not two awarenesses in you - objective awareness and subjective awareness - if that were so, there would be two lights. There is only one awareness in which you become aware of the millions of objects, but that awareness, being awareness, is awareness itself - is aware of itself - without a division. Normally when the mind is distracted by the perception of the objects, you are not aware of the source of awareness, and self-knowledge is lost. The reestablishment of this awareness is self-realisation, self-knowledge, jnana.

Self-knowledge can be inadequately described in two ways. There is a feeling of 'I am', and that feeling flows as 'I am doing this' or 'I am experiencing this'. If, with the help of such feeling, the awareness is turned upon itself in order to investigate what this 'I am' is, then there are two possibilities. One : the ego that put on the guise of the 'I am' (or usurped the seat of the 'I am') seems to melt away and its own substratum becomes evident, just as when you shine a light on the shadow, you see the wall. What happened to the shadow is not our concern. It is not 'you' becoming aware of the substratum, but the substratum, being awareness, is aware of itself in a non-dual way. This is one interpretation of self-knowledge. Two : in the same way, when you investigate the source of this experience or action, that which said, 'I am' to begin with (e. g. 'I am speaking') has suddenly gone! Then there is ... I did not complete that sentence, because I do not know how to! And so you realise at the same time that that which we normally regard as self is non-existent, but 'IT is'. What that 'IT' is you don't know, but it is! The word 'self' is therefore used in two different ways. When you write it in English, you put a small 's' for one and a capital 'S' for the other. Both mean exactly the same thing. What we commonly know as the self - 'I am So-and-so' is no longer there. We don't know if it was ever there! And so, self does not exist. What exists need not be called Self. But it can be said : "This self was never there. That alone was there, and therefore that is the Self." There is no problem here, and we need not indulge in semantic wrangling.

The direct understanding of the mind and its activities (or the self and its activities) is self-knowledge, from which an insight arises. Psychology (according to yoga) is not fiddling around with concepts of mind, trying to analyse thoughts and mind, trying to distinguish good thoughts and bad thoughts, sick thoughts and healthy thoughts, holy mind and unholy mind, and all that. You can play all these games, but the psychology of yoga is not interested in all that. Even so, in Patanjali's Yoga Satras, where you have beautiful methods and goals suggested, he is not interested in these. He points directly into the nature of the self, the ego-mind, and says, "Realise that this is fragmented. Look into the nature of sukha-dahkha (happiness-unhappiness), look into the nature of raga-dvesha (love-hate)". Don't try to analyse or rationalise them. Learn to directly look within, then you suddenly realise that that which is within, looks within. The rays of light from

that lamp are flowing out to illumine all things, but if you follow the same ray back to its source, you discover the lamp. Then you realise that this is the source and not the goal. When the sun shines through the window, play this game. You must not be very clever, but enjoy it as a child does. A shaft of light comes in through the window, and in that shaft of light you are able to see something else. You are intrigued. There is no light in the room, but you are able to read this book. Then you are trying with the help of the same shaft of light to look at the source of that light. Now, the source of that light almost looks as if it is the object of this light, because it is through that that you are able to see the sun. At that moment you think that that is the subject and not the object, that is the source and not the goal. But it is both the source and the object. That is the end! Yoga is just this : the discovery that That is the source, though you pursued it as the goal. In accordance with the different temperaments of the seekers or students, yoga, seems to vary in form, but not in content or in spirit.

I explained in detail the simple thing of how the source of light appears as the object at one point, till you realise it was the subject. And here is a puzzling expression from the Bhagavad Gita:

dhyanaena tmani pashyanti kechid atmanam atmana (XIII-24, line 1)

'Some by meditation, behold the Self in the Self by the self.'

Can the Self be perceived as the Self, by the Self? Are there two selves, one perceiving the other? If so, is the reality the perceiver or the perceived? That's a puzzle!

Two apparently contradictory statements are introduced in the thirteenth chapter. Here Krishna says, "I'll tell you what should be known or what can be known! And a little later he himself says, "This Self is so subtle that it is not possible to know it !" You think, "My God! A minute ago you said you would tell what can be known, now suddenly you turn it upside down and say it cannot be known. What a contradiction!" But the contradiction is intended to teach, "Don't jump to conclusions, investigate!"

As you go on investigating, you will suddenly realise that this is something for which language was not meant. Language is inadequate, because people use words only to describe something which can be described. What can be described is an object, and therefore no words have been invented to describe Atma, the subject. Any description makes it an object - which is absurd. Therefore language is not meant to communicate Self-knowledge. As you go on investigating this, you stumble upon the truth. It is so simple. You have been battling with this for so long, and strangely enough the very struggle pushed it away. On the other hand, if you had not struggled, you would not have got it either!

It looks as though the Self sees the Self. But no. Can you put this into proper words? Would you say the light is illumining itself? How are you able to see the light? What does it mean? In order to communicate the incommunicable truth,

sages have always resorted to contradictory, conflicting statements. These occur in the Bhagavad Gita or the writings and talks of enlightened men, not because they were confused and therefore used conflicting statements, but because that is the only way in which the incommunicable truth can somewhat be communicated. And so people who are of a meditative temperament practise meditation and realise this. No mechanical meditation can ever lead you there. You can keep your eyes open, you can keep your eyes closed - the eyes are totally innocent, and the objects that the eyes see are also totally innocent! When the eyes are open, a feeling arises, 'I see you', and when the eyes are closed, the feeling continues, 'I see something within me'. It might be a picture of Krishna, Rama, Jesus Christ, Buddha or others. What is the nature of the object which is seen, and what is the nature of the seer?

Finding an answer to that question is meditation. If that happens when you have your eyes open and see there is the same problem: "Am I seeing that as it is? Or, what is the nature of the object and what is the nature of the subject?" Can you look at it without the mind or something within defining you as So-and-so, passing judgments all the time? When you ask this question, the awareness turns upon itself in an endeavour to understand it. Then another question arises, "How is it I am able to look at myself? Am I two selves or one self?" Then go beyond that. That is dhyana (meditation).

*anye samkhyena yogena karmayogena cha pare (XIII-24, line 2)*

'Others by the Yoga of knowledge, and others by the Yoga of action.'

The dhyana yogis like to be alone. The others who follow the path of jnana might hear from the teacher, discuss the matter with him and with others, contemplate - to some extent fusing their rational intellect or intelligence - and then go beyond. They who are of an active temperament might let actions be, and pursue that path. At first they may even appear to be ambitious, eager to do in order to achieve something, only to discover very soon if they are intelligent, and if the intelligence within them is awake, that (as Gurudev used to put it) whatever you do, the world is exactly like a dog's tail - straighten it, tie it with a stick to make it straight, and come back after ten or fifteen days, untie it, and it curls back up again. Whatever we have been doing, ambitiously, has been totally useless. All life is useless. Then, if you are still dynamic, still bubbling with energy, and you still want to do something, now you begin to watch, to observe. The ambitions, desires and cravings have dropped away, but still activity goes on. And while this activity goes on, you pursue the same wisdom, the same investigation again: "What am I doing? What is this life? Eating, drinking, sleeping. Doing exactly the same thing over and over again. I can't help doing it. What is all this? What is this self that wants to live? Or (if you want to commit suicide) what is it that wants to commit suicide?" It is the same thing, isn't it? That which wants to live at one point, wants to end the life at another point. What exactly is it? In and through karma yoga again, you come to the same truth. "Who am I serving, what is the nature of those whom I serve, and what is the nature of 'me' who serves?" And you arrive at the same truth.

anye tv evam ajanantah shrutva nyebhya upasate  
to pi cha titaranty eva mrityum shruliparayanah (XIII-25)

'Others also, not knowing thus, worship, having heard of it from others; they, too, cross beyond death, regarding what they have heard as the supreme refuge.'

There may be someone who is not interested in all this, and some great master tells him, "Never mind, sit down here, pick up this mala and hold it near your throat. Don't let it hang beneath your navel. Go on rolling it repeating 'Om namah shivaya' for six hours a day." And if he does all that, he also will reach the same goal through the path of surrender, of obedience. And while he pursues this path of obedience and surrender, a resistance is felt within "This is very difficult. This man is cruel. He wants me to sit here for six hours ... But he is my master, I want to obey him. What is this that says 'No'?" The resistance dissolves. If you are able to do that, this is the path of surrender, of obedience, of worshipfulness, of adoration, of total love. This way also you will get to the same truth - that being the mysterious appearance and disappearance of something which has no substance.

It is a mystery. You cannot say the shadow does not exist, you cannot say the shadow exists, it exists as long as you do not throw a light on it. The moment you flash a light on that, what can you say? 'The shadow went away'? It didn't go. All the doors and windows are locked. 'The shadow disappeared'? It didn't have any such psychic power. The shadow became enlightened! When the shadow becomes enlightened, what appeared to be shadow doesn't appear to be shadow any more, but that which was, is, will be, is seen. This is Self-realisation.

I have been considering myself as So-and-so, and you an object. Then came the other confusion that some things which were happening to the body, to the mind, were also taken on as if they were 'my' experiences, 'my' expressions. This is the worst play. Is there any truth in this? Is there any truth in 'mine'? The 'pursuit of this enquiry is philosophy. It may need some amount of analysis in the initial stages, and therefore Patanjali sanctions it when he describes vitarka. In the beginning you may have to start with analysis, but that analysis must quickly come to an end because the factor which analyses is the same as that which is analysed. You are using the mind to analyse the mind. It is an absurd game, diluting water with water. A total waste of time. So, this analysis must come to an end as quickly as possible. How does one do that? By picking up a counter argument and silencing this argument.

Then starts vichara. Vichara is not really argumentation or internal dialogue, but an efficient movement of awareness towards its own source. You are thinking about the mind, bringing up very nice answers, but these answers are also provided by the mind. So, instead of indulging in such fruitless tasks, you pick up a ram-rod, an impossible argument, then stop that analysis. The analysis drops away. That rod is vichara - "I have been thinking and analysing all these things, but what is the source of thought itself? What is the source of awareness in which

I am aware of any experience-pleasure, pain, happiness, misery, praise, insult, censure, whatever it is?" Silence! No arguments, no counter-arguments. Now you see that there is only one unassailable truth, that you are (for instance) upset. "I am aware I am upset." Is that which is upset one entity, and that which is aware an other entity? Then you realise, "I thought I was upset, and therefore I was upset. That became a disturbance, and that disturbance disturbed me." Crazy! You begin to laugh within yourself, but the 'I am' feeling is still there. Because it is still there, as soon as this enquiry comes to an end, the 'I am' wakes up again and picks up another problem. This process of enquiry is vichara.

Having finished with the objects and the experiences, this vichara turns upon itself (like getting hold of the shaft of light to trace its source) and leads you to Self-knowledge. This is the course of yoga psychology. All practices that lead to this are yoga.

Some years ago I met the previous Archbishop of Canterbury, and while we were discussing this yoga philosophy he asked me a question : "Can this be gained only through the practice of yoga ?" I answered "No. Anything that leads you to this goal is yoga." You may call it Christianity, Sufism, Hassidism, anything, but you immediately realise that no blind and unintelligent practice whatsoever, can lead you to this, but any intelligent practice will enable you to attain Self-realisation. Therefore, Swami Sivananda exemplified in His life every aspect of this yoga. He did His asanas, He meditated, He did His pranayama, He was regular in His scriptural studies, He studied all points of view, all philosophies; He worshipped and lived a life characterised by moderation in everything : eating, drinking, sleeping and so on. Highly disciplined, He served, He wrote, He broadcast the message of divine life in every way and manner possible; He was regular in satsang and He received and adored yogis of all schools of thought, without any distinction whatsoever. He emphasised that one cannot achieve perfection by a fanatic adherence to a onesided development of the personality, however grand this may look; and He pointed out that yoga can never be compartmentalised, that wherever you start, you reach the same point, where you find your oneness with yogis who have been practising in their own way with all sincerity and earnestness. Therefore He wrote about all the different aspects of yoga, even though such writing might even give rise to the feeling that each yoga is a different path which has no connection whatsoever with others. This is not so, and He proved it in His life and in His teaching, in His daily life and in the numerous books that He has left as his legacy.

The practice of yoga, which means integration (or integral yoga) leads you to Self-knowledge, supreme love of God and to the adoration of this omnipresent God in all beings. This is karma yoga. Only such a person can really and truly be 'devoted to the welfare of all beings' in the words of the Bhagavad Gita. One moving incident comes to mind. This was when Swami Sivananda was bedridden with typhoid in 1934, when He was well past 60 and the physical health was not good. After having been confined to bed for three weeks, one day He said to us, "How long will I remain in bed like this? I want to see the Ganges, I want to see

the Himalayas, I want to see the sun." So, hanging on the shoulders of two disciples, He stepped out of His room, and walked onto the verandah, which in those days only had a wire mesh fencing. He stood there, gazed at the Himalayas, gazed at the Ganges. Looking at His face, one could never say that He was not well - there was such radiance, such bliss, such health in that face. Then He saw an aged visitor sitting on the Ganges bank in the hot sun - He was moved. He turned to one of us and said, "Why is this Mataji sitting there in the hot sun? Ask her to move into the shade, and also find out if she has had her lunch, otherwise please arrange for it." That is compassion, spontaneous compassion. One could say it was irrepressible - this devotion to God which manifested as devotion to the entire humanity, to all beings. This was inherent in the sage who was enlightened and who had realised the omnipresence of God. Such is love, such is compassion and such is even health. We think that when the physical body is sick, we are sick, and when the physical body is healthy, we are healthy. It is not so. Health is total harmonising of our entire being, and when the entire being is whole and holy, you are healthy. It is then that you shine as an enlightened person, you shine as love incarnate, you shine as incarnate wisdom supreme. Hari Om Tat Sat